The Chase:

Historical and Ethnographic Observations on ‘Traditional Horse Racing’ in the Eastern Cape, c. 1850 to the present.

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Rhodes University

By

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-Abstract-

This thesis examines the development of a horse racing sport, *umdyarho wamahashe*, as it is practised in the former-bantustans of the Eastern Cape Province. Using varied source material – ethnographic, archival and oral – it provides a guide to understanding the historical development of *umdyarho* events and their meaning to participants. By drawing together available 'fragments' of material on horses and horse racing in the former-bantustans of Transkei and Ciskei, it argues that horse racing is derived from a pre-colonial cattle racing tradition which was made impossible by a collision of environmental pressures and colonial responses to them. It goes on to show how horses came to take on a 'symbol set' of masculine power and "growing up." The nexus of horses, rapidly assimilated into daily life, and the changing material conditions confronting the people of the Eastern Cape, made horse racing an ideal outlet through which men might regain a sense of power in conditions which eroded their sense of control over their daily lives, and, as a result, their perceived masculinity. This thesis argues that through horse races, people of the Eastern Cape were provided an space in which they could at once celebrate their legacy (by acting as their 'forebears' did) and their potential (by showing who they would like to be, through the deployment of the horse as a symbol). It concludes by discussing and how the imposition of change from outside threatens the 'spirit' of this sport.

Key words: horses, horse racing, Transkei, Ciskei, migrant labour, sport

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Figure 1: Fikile Joel Jojozi, of Mount Frere, prepares his horse, Nqonqoza, for a race. (Bajodini, 26 December 2014)

- Introduction -

First Encounters

On any weekend or public holiday at sites across the eastern half of South Africa's Eastern Cape province, you can find a group of people moving around from field to field, gathering to race horses. They are engaging in a sport known locally as *umdyarho wamahashe*, or simply *umdyarho*, which is usually translated in English as 'traditional horse racing'. The term is derived from the Afrikaans word *jaagtog* – 'the chase'.[1]

One such gathering occurred on March 21st 2013 in the Malungeni area of the Eastern Cape, near the town of Ngqeleni. March 21st is a holiday in South Africa: Human Rights Day. By mid-morning the venue was full of horses and people, with the animals outnumbering the attendees two to one. The race track extended along two sides of a large field with a rounded turn. It had been re-graded only the previous day by a bulldozer because the venue on which the race was initially planned had been unable to host the event. At the end of the track nearest to the gathering crowd, two poles had been placed opposite each other to indicate the finishing line.

A man, named Mr Bidi, was standing on the back of his car near the end of the track and was using a loudhailer to summon the groups of people milling around the venue. Bidi[2] then handed the loudhailer to Mr Madiba, the chairman of the O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association.[3] Madiba implored people to register their horses for the race, while Bidi – the secretary of the association – stood next to the car methodically taking registration fees from horse owners, noting their names, the names of their horses and the race in which the horses would run.

It was a very hot day in Malungeni, and dry, with a wind that whipped up the dust from the track, and which made the gathered group both listless and irritable. At around 1pm, Madiba and a few others – including Bidi and the local organiser, Mr Maqokolo – opened the proceedings with a prayer. Everyone bowed their heads; except one man, who shouted out mid-prayer: "We're not all Christian here, so why don't you just shut up!" He said it in English. I

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[1] "*Wamahashe*" meaning "Horses." Definitional material in this thesis is taken from the comprehensive work *Greater Dictionary of Xhosa* (University of Fort Hare, 1989), Editor-in-Chief H. W. Pahl.

[2] It is convention in the research area for people to be referred to by a single name, often a family name, clan name or conferred praise name. In this thesis I have stuck with the convention, referring to participants as I would refer to them during our interactions.

[3] The O.R. Tambo District is one of five districts which comprise the Eastern Cape Province, and is named after former ANC Party President, Oliver Reginald Tambo. It was in this district in the O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association was initially established to coordinate races. More about the ORTHRA can be found on page 6.

was the only person there who did not speak *isiXhosa*, so it seemed to clear to me that I was who this comment was directed to. He was ignored and the prayer continued.

After the prayer came announcements. The races were meant to start at 10am, and Madiba proposed that, because of the late start, they would reduce the number of races from the scheduled eight to six. Each horse would be allowed to race in only one race, rather than the usual two. Furthermore, the administrative cost for the day, usually 10% of the total, would be waived. “Amen, Hallelujah,” he said to his own announcement.

Then came the local mayor of Nyandeni Municipality, the main sponsor of the race. She stepped up, dressed in sequined running pants in the colours of the ruling African National Congress and an ANC t-shirt, to declare the race open. But then she also informed the group that the municipality had, unfortunately, been forced to reduce the prize money on offer from R20 000 to R10 000. This explained why the administrative costs had been waived. There was an uneasy murmuring from the crowd. One man began to raise his voice at the mayor and organisers. “I was told that the registration for my horses would be R100, but when I arrived it was R210! And now the prize money is halved!” A few people shouted in agreement, others heckled him, or else tried to engage him quietly as he shouted.

Figure 2: The Mayor of Nyandeni Local Municipality opens a race day as Mr Bidi sits alongside, diligently registering horses. (Malungeni, 21 March 2013)

Finally the races began. First was the 1000m race, with one- and two-year-old horses. The jockeys were young children. Some of them had safety gear, others did not. Some jockeys rode bareback, others with saddles. This variation was evident throughout all the races of the day. At the beginning of each race, the horses would be called to report for a final check of their registration before riding down to the starting lines. Around the field groups of people stood clustered around their preferred horses. Sometimes it was a horse from their area, or possibly a friend’s horse, and through their support they could show local pride. They would lead the horse slowly to its final check, singing and dancing all the way.

The starting lines were marked off with large stones and races would start with Bidi lifting his hand and then dropping it. As the horses cross the finish-line, a designated person runs to the

winning horse. Another would identify and run to the second-placed horse, another to the third and – usually, but not always – a final person to the fourth. The winning horses then stand, with their riders, in front of the organiser's car with their supporters and are officially declared the winners.

Figure 3: A man checks a horse's teeth to determine its age. (Ncembu, 21 March 2015)

After the second race there was controversy over the winning horse. The winner, one man protested, was a three-year-old horse, while the race was for horses aged between one and two years. Complaints over the age of horses can be quite common, because the age of each horse is verified by a few designated people and by examining the animal's teeth. Sometimes those two or three people have differing conclusions about what age the teeth indicate. At the same time, other complaints were aired. The late change of venue meant extra travelling for some horses, who were now exhausted. This gave the horses from around Malungeni an unfair advantage.

The two disputes of that day point to an important aspect of participation in *umdyarho*. There are roughly eight to 12 horses per race, and usually eight races per day. Each horse that day paid either R180 or R210 to enter their race. The winners took home R850; fourth place on that day received R350 (but on most days, fourth place would only mean a return of your entrance fee). The cost of transporting horses has to be taken into account, too. The distance each group has to travel varies considerably, but some people had transported their horse over 200 kilometres to get to the race, and the expenses for their day at the races would at least amount to the winnings they would receive if their horse took first place. *Umdyarho* is not an activity that participants earn money from. The relative expense of participating means that many participants will use a large portion of their expendable income attending, transporting and preparing horses to race, so any chance of relieving that cost of participation is taken very seriously.

Figure 4: Sizwe Notununu, avid racer, next to his horse following victory at the prestigious Bajodini Race. (Bajodini, 26 December 2014)

Between races two and three, the man who had shouted out during the prayer came over to me. He was dressed in traditional Mpondo attire, with colourful patchwork trousers and matching waistcoat with tassels. "Hi. I'm Philip," he said. "Philip is my slave name. My real name is Sizwe, but don't worry, you can call me Philip." "Can I call you Sizwe?" I asked. "If you can manage it," he said. As we spoke a group of people were escorting a horse across the area behind the finishing posts, while waving sticks in the air and singing. A young boy of perhaps 10 or 11 had decided to do a warm-up run along the track. He crossed the finish-line at high speed and crashed into the group. Their horses collided. The child flew into the air and hit the ground hard as people scattered. A few people chased after the two bolting horses. Sizwe ran over and cleared away the crowd. He picked the child up and moved him to the small bit of shade that was available. He checked to see that the child's limp right arm was not broken then popped it back into place. The child winced. Sizwe told him to get up. The child climbed back onto that same horse and won race three by a wide margin. His horse was called Qinga ("Think").

The next race was on Saturday the 30th of March. I had been advised to arrive at 10:30am, but - because of delays in Mthatha - we only drove north towards Tsolo just after 11am and only arrived at the venue at around noon. We turned directly off the highway through a small wire gate into the open field called Tsolo Junction, named because it is the area of land adjacent to the turn-off towards the town of Tsolo from the main highway. In the middle of the field was only a single car with Madiba standing next to it. "10 o'clock is 1 o'clock," Madiba said. Over the surrounding hills I began to see groups of men on horseback descending on Tsolo Junction. You could identify the horses that would race in these groups because they had no rider. (You can't wear out your horse by using it for transport to get to a race.) Cars started to turn in and park with horses on the back of their bakkies, or in trailers.

Tsolo Junction is a large, picturesque open field surrounded by grassy hills, with mountains in the distance. The track itself is loosely the shape of a lop-sided 'U'. At Malungeni the track

had been re-graded only the day before because of the issues with the original race venue: it was very dusty as a result, and the sides were marked by the ridge created when the bulldozer pushed the ground into mounds at the edge of the track. In the case of Tsolo Junction, however, there was a ditch dug alongside the track, with the earth pushed up into a mound next to it to indicate the track's edge. The track itself was grassy and only distinguishable from the land around it by this ditch along its edge. Two posts were being set into the ground at the end of the track closest to us, while two large white painted stones had been placed opposite each other at a number of points along the track – at distances of roughly 1000m, 1200m, 1400m, 1600m and 1800m – to indicate the starting-points for the various races.

Mr Bidi arrived and parked his car next to the finishing posts, as he had done at the previous race, and began the registration process. At around 1pm, Madiba called people around to begin proceedings. After the prayer, Madiba turned his attention to the previous race. The R10 000 of sponsorship money that had failed to materialise, he said, had led to him taking R10 000 of his own savings to add to the prize money. Everyone had been angry about not being paid, he said, so he had to drive around the whole province giving people their winnings during the week. He emphasised to those present the time and cost of this task alone, and outlined in great detail the various costs of administering the races. He announced he would take a small amount of each race's sponsorship money until he had recouped his R10 000. Then he made a plea to

Figure 5: Setting up the finish line at Tsolo Junction. (Tsolo Junction, 25 May 2013)

the crowd: “Everyone must work together. There is no need to quarrel about money at races. Everyone needs to work together for the good of the sport and not be selfish about it.” Finally, he announced that the prize money for the day was R10 000 and outlined how it would be divided up.

The horses for the first race were marched down to the registration area, and then two groups of riders went out. One group, consisting mainly of young boys, rode towards the 1000m mark. Another group of adult men rode towards the 1400m mark. We climbed into the car and drove down to the group at the 1000m mark. The horses there were restless and jostling about the track just behind the white stones, then bolted at full speed down the track as Madiba dropped his arm. This was what is called an *umphalo* race, a “flat race” carried out at a full gallop.

While that race was being run we continued in the car to the second group of older riders, mounted on horses who were calmly and neatly lined up across the track at the 1400m stones. The race was started and everyone rushed to the car, shouting: “Drive! Drive! Drive!” This was an *umhambo* race, translated into English as a “tripling race”, in which the horses must remain in a specific kind of fast trot. In the *umhambo* gait, the front legs must be alternately lifted, like a fast march, and the horse goes as fast as possible without entering into a gallop. Breaking into a gallop results in disqualification. I sped across the field alongside the track, catching up with the horses and nearly overturned the car twice by hitting ridges and dongas, while Madiba and another man in the back leaned out the window, shouting warnings to riders as they approached the point of breaking out of the required fast trot style and into a gallop.

Figure 6: The umhambo *gait. (Ncembu, 21 March 2015)*

This process was repeated each time a race began, as we alternated between the four *umphalo* and four *umhambo* races of the day. Each race would increase in distance, and the riders and horses would increase in age, until the final race of the day. The first race is referred to as

noqalinkundla;[4] the second, *abakweta*;[5] the third, *amadoda*;[6] before the final race – the *igqira*[7] race.

It is important to further understand the distinctions between these two main styles of racing. A horse must be well-adjusted to having someone ride it before it can be trained to ride in the *umhambo* style, and so race horses will usually begin their careers in *umphalo* prior to racing *umhambo*. Similarly, maintaining the *umhambo* gait requires greater strength and control of the horse on the part of the rider. It must be allowed to go as fast as it is able in the *umhambo* style, but must be held at that point by the jockey to prevent it from breaking into a gallop (and thus being disqualified). This is why the riders of *umhambo* races are generally adult men, and it is also the reason why those still learning to ride and lacking the strength and control necessary for *umhambo*, such as children, dominate the *umphalo* jockey pool. The younger riders are also simply smaller, meaning less weight on the horse and a greater advantage in the 'sprint' style of *umphalo* racing.

There are always far more horses at a race day than horses competing in the race day: some of these maybe used for transport, while others seem to have been brought along just to mill about. Many are not entered in the races, but are frantically ridden up and down in front of the spectators who cluster on the edge of the track along the final straight.

Between the races you also see ostentatious displays of *umhambo* riding, with some riders dressing themselves and their horses in an over-the-top fashion for this 'performance'. I have been told that these people can be seen as 'jesters' of sorts, and that the practice can be traced back to a way of mocking missionaries through mimicry. Missionaries, dressed in vestments – and looking ridiculous to the local horsemen's eyes – would ride around and be unknowingly mocked by groups of local

Figure 7: "showing off" and "playing the fool." (Tsolo Junction, 25 May 2013)

[4] I have heard *noqalinkundla* translated as "the opening of proceedings"; "one who only recently entered the *inkundla*"; and "one who just left the house" under different conditions. The definition of *inkundla* is similarly diverse and important for a deeper understanding of the term. See footnote 63 on page 42 for a definition of *inkundla*.

[5] Young men who have very recently returned from the *ulwaluko* rites of initiation from boyhood into manhood.

[6] "Men", but with a connotation of power and social stature.

[7] "Doctor", whether allopathic or traditional, and formerly including diviners (though diviners now more often refer to themselves by the Zulu term, *sangoma*).

riders at early races: "Maybe our grandfathers were challenging someone to a race and this priest would not realise he is interrupting when he rides between them and so they tease him."[8] The 'jester' is not a designated role at races: it is just a kind of role that some people enjoy taking on at races. Most do not associate it with missionaries at all, nor are most familiar with this story. For them it is simply a case of 'playing the fool'. However, their presence is often to the chagrin of the organisers, because – like the missionaries in the story – they are known to accidentally delay or disrupt the race schedule.

Still, the majority of riding displays between races are not performed by these 'jesters', but rather by young men showing off their riding skills, their horses, or both. At other times I have seen displays of training and tricks, such as a man who entertains the crowd by showing how he can tap his horse in a certain way to make it lie down and pretend to sleep, or else have the animal rear up on command by raising his hand.

After Race 6 there was an altercation over the fact that three- and four-year-old horses had raced together. One spectator told me that this categorisation was not unusual: three- and four-year-olds always raced together, but that day some people were arguing that the horses should race separately.

Most of the races that day had been carried out in a bad storm, though as the rain came in there was no hint of anyone moving to cancel or postpone the races. Madiba told me that the weather had never been so bad as to force them to cancel a race. Another man, once again, conjectured that this was down to money. People have invested financially to get to the race, and need the chance to recoup a little bit of money to support their racing, he said, so they won't easily cancel the race if it may bring that opportunity.

As we were preparing to head down to start the last two races, people stood holding money in the air, wagering at stakes of about R30 rand for the race. After starting the *umphalo* race, and while driving to the starting line of the *umhambo* race, an unscheduled *umhambo* race came past us. The two events – the group of betters and the unscheduled race – were related, with participants finding a way to make a little bit of extra money on an additional, unofficial race.

The two race days described above were organised by the O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association. This group formed about ten years ago to facilitate the organisation of races during a time of rapid growth in the popularity of *umdyarho*. The objective of the organisation was to

[8] Discussions at Tsolo Junction, 3 May 2014.

ensure that no clashes occurred in fixtures (as groups from different areas showed interest in hosting race days in their respective areas), and to help those in lesser-known racing areas to establish race days and draw crowds.

Figure 8: Small wagers are made to comprise winnings for extra races spontaneously organised at race days. (Tsolo Junction, 30 March 2013)

Included here was also an attempt at standardising the rules of the sport. For example, different areas could have different ages of horses grouped together in a race – like the situation that gave rise to the argument at Tsolo Junction – and having a series of fixtures facilitated by the O.R. Tambo HRA with standardised rules has helped to create consensus across the region.

Race days, such as the ones described above, occur frequently across the Eastern Cape. The O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association alone has 19 annual race days at set venues across the length and breadth of the former Transkei bantustan. These races are not organised by the association itself, but rather by local horse owners and - more and more commonly - local horse racing clubs, who maintain and prepare the track. Much of the job of the association is to prevent clashes in order to maximise attendance, as well as to help source race sponsorships and generally develop the sport. So, a club in Mqanduli – for example – will organise races at their venue in Mqanduli, and people from various other areas will bring their horses to race there. The majority of spectators will be from the local area, as will many of the participants. Some participants will travel from nearby, while others (particularly those who 'never miss a

race') will have travelled long distances. Broadly speaking, participation depends on the rider's availability and finances.

There was a large overlap in the people I saw at the various races I attended, particularly in terms of those riding or owning horses. There is also a core group who make up regular participants and spectators. I have at times referred to it as the *umdyarho* fraternity (not inappropriate because it is overwhelmingly male-dominated), or the *umdyarho* sub-culture, in which a few hundred core adherents, who live long distances apart from one another, will meet in a field to race and then disperse again. And when they gather, the local community will come out in large numbers to support the race day, be entertained and have some fun - much like when a travelling circus comes to a small town for one night only, except *umdyarho* is free of charge.

As mentioned, the O.R. Tambo HRA is not a strict regulatory body, but rather a loose affiliation or network. As Madiba put it: "individual members are at once a member of their local clubs and individual members of the O.R. Tambo HRA."[9] Other races, beyond the purview of the O.R. Tambo HRA, still occur regularly throughout the area.

A good example of how a club may operate in relation to the O.R. Tambo HRA can been seen by looking at the Laphum'ilanga Club, who race horses but are not a horse racing club *per se*. The Laphum'ilanga Club is a cultural association which formed in 2005 when five separate cultural clubs from the areas around Idutywa, Willowvale, Engcobo, Kentani and Butterworth – each with between 25 and 30 members – joined under an 'umbrella body'. Their main objective remains to organise and participate in cultural heritage activities, and they do this at weekly Sunday gatherings. Each gathering is hosted by a different club within Laphum'ilanga, with the goal of "promoting" their cultural heritage practices – including offering traditional dances at events, wearing traditional dress, as well as attending and participating in *umdyarho*. When a major race day is approaching, the preceding Sunday will be spent holding an *umhambo* qualifying race amongst club members. The winner will then have their entrance fee to the upcoming race paid for, in order for them to compete on behalf of the club. The club will also bring other horses along, dance at the races and provide displays of *umhambo* throughout the day.[10]

[9] Notes from Tsolo Junction Race, 30 March 2013.
[10] See pp.153-158 for more on Laphum'ilanga Club.

Another example is the Masibambane Horse Racing Club. This club was originally started in Pirie Mission and, unlike other racing clubs, established a branch system. The Masibambane Club in Pirie Mission is referred to as the 'mother body', with the other clubs considered 'branches' of the Pirie Mission club. Masibambane branches are not purely involved in racing, but may also organise stokvels,[11] burial societies and similar community-orientated activities. Branches will take turns offering races at their respective area's tracks and each branch will be required to find sponsorships for that race. At times, a race day will be organised by members of just one branch; sometimes amongst several branches of Masibambane; and at other times, major races are held with open invitations to horse owners from all over the province.

There are various other 'clubs' and local groups of horse owners who will schedule a day and hold a few races, all of which would fall under the banner of *umdyarho*. While the description of the races above is typical, what is most important is not how the race is conducted or the structure of the race day, but *why* the participants gather. Informants describe horse races occurring prior to *umdyarho*. People would have races at various gatherings for entertainment, but this – they all insisted – was not *umdyarho,* only people racing horses. *Umdyarho* is not simply an activity – the act of racing a horse – but an event in which people *gather to race horses*. This wider intention is an important aspect of the sport.

One of *umdyarho*'s essential features – the rotating circuit – is retained to help allay concerns about fairness and equity. The areas in which the sport occurs are relatively poor, thus moving the races around ensures greater accessibility and inclusion. In previous discussions about how to develop the sport, one proposal was that – because very little could be invested into each track – a single track should be invested in. The suggestion was that this should be Tsolo Junction (the most popular venue). However, there was an outcry over this proposal because it meant that participants living far away from Tsolo would be excluded from the sport's development. If, instead, the rotating circuit system was maintained, it would allow people to care for their own tracks – as they had been doing for more than a century, in some cases – and the burden of transport and participation costs, not to mention the advantage of a home crowd, would be shared amongst everyone. Sometimes you would need to travel far to get to a race (perhaps resulting in you not being able to attend or participate), but other times the race would be easily accessible.

[11] A savings or investment group. Members will make financial contributions to be invested collectively. Stokvels are popular in the rural areas, and many social groups will form them. (Laphum'ilanga Club is another group involved in *umdyarho* that organise stokvels.)

This isn't simply a matter of finances: it also enhances the contest. The courses are roughly cut into open fields and vary considerably in gradient and curve. Mixing up the tracks, therefore, has a dual function of fairness – as neither horses nor riders get to race exclusively on tracks they are used to practicing on. There is, moreover, added excitement in the variation of the racing experience for all involved, including the horses – and yet another reason relates to the fitness of the animals. A horse that has travelled for several hours to get to a race will be at a distinct disadvantage to those that have travelled only a short distance, and a rotating circuit system therefore works best for all in the long run.

Races in the northern interior are generally held in the highly mountainous areas alongside the Drakensberg Range. As you head south and west from these mountains, the hills become less pronounced and drier, until the greener Amatola Mountain Range juts out at the south-western extent of the research area. Several large rivers flow from west to east from both the Amatola and Drakensberg Ranges. These rivers have cut deep ravines in the lush north-eastern area along the KwaZulu-Natal border, but these coastal gorges and pronounced hills become gradually less pronounced as you move down towards the Great Kei and, later, Great Fish Rivers in the south-eastern reaches of the research area.

The research area is quite strictly defined by the erstwhile bantustan policy of the apartheid government, as the racing is itself confined to the former bantustan areas. This is quite simple to explain. Land in declared-'white' South Africa during apartheid was almost entirely privately-owned 'white' land, which prevented the gatherings from occurring on that land. The former bantustans, meanwhile, had forms of communal land tenure which facilitated gatherings and made the construction of tracks more feasible. Furthermore, this communal land is more often than not used for grazing purposes, and – since the tracks are not enclosed – outside of race times, the land is still available for its primary purpose. In this sense, *umdyarho* takes up no land at all. Despite the political and social changes which have occurred since apartheid was dismantled in the first half of the 1990s, these two aspects have remained in place. For this reason, the horse races only occur on land within the perimeters of the former bantustans, and tracks are solely established on this land.[12]

[12] This point doesn't only apply to *umdyarho* in the Eastern Cape, but also to other parts of the country in which varieties of it are practiced, such as former-Kwazulu and Lesotho.

Observations: Thoroughbreds, Racing Styles and Regional Variations

Predating the OR Tambo HRA is an association formed in the early 1990s called the Eastern Cape Amateur Horse Racing Association (ECAHRA). This group of horse owners and organisers specifically organise races for Thoroughbred horses, which, until 1988, had raced alongside the smaller mixed-breed horses[13] but were eventually refused entry to the races on the grounds of fairness. In response, a number of Thoroughbred owners across the former bantustans of Transkei and Ciskei began to organise their own races. In these events, the horses run only *umphalo* and they tend to replicate the more formal Thoroughbred industry. While the professional Thoroughbred industry will use starting gates into which the horses are loaded prior to the race, the ECAHRA races are carried out on the same tracks as all other races described here and have no racing infrastructure. Rather than starting gates, the horses are led down to the starting-point and must remain behind the starter's flag until it drops. The start of Thoroughbred races presents an impressive swirling of the group of horses, all of them jostling and spinning to gain an advantage by being as close to the starter as possible when the flag is dropped.

Figure 9: Mr Makaula, from Mount Frere, starts an ECAHRA Thoroughbred race. (Tsolo Junction, 3 May 2014)

The amateur Thoroughbred races differ from the more traditional races in further respects. The most obvious aspect is that the jockeys are generally adult men who are able to 'manage' a horse breed that is so much more powerful than the horses usually used in *umphalo* races. These jockeys often wear racing colours, not everyday attire as would usually be seen in *umdyarho*. There is also a clear class distinction. Upon arrival at an ECAHRA race you will immediately notice horse boxes and professional tack. The Thoroughbred owners are often wealthier businessmen, with

[13] Horses are not indigenous, nor has any intensive breeding been carried out which gives a distinctive appearance, characteristic or 'breed' to the horses prevalent in the research area. Deciding on the term to refer to the prevalent horses to distinguish them from the Thoroughbred variety has been an issue from the project's inception. The horses have variously been referred to as "African Horses," "indigenous Horses," "the small horses," and "Pondo Ponies." I have had to make a judgement call and refer to these smaller mixed-breed horses by the name which is most popular, that being "indigenous horses," though when I refer simply to "horses" it should be taken that I am referring to same.

more expendable income to devote to their horse racing hobby. The Thoroughbreds are purebred horses, bought from professional breeders and owners in the Thoroughbred racing industry.[14] As notoriously high-maintenance horses, they require intensive care, including specialised feed and comparatively expensive stabling, and – as such – are synonymous with a wealthier socioeconomic bracket in these rural areas. A significant part of the Thoroughbred community is also drawn from the local coloured population, in contrast to the almost entirely Black African participation found in other races.

Race days replicate professional Thoroughbred races rather than taking on their own forms – barring the manner of starting races (described above), and even this is largely a matter of cost. I have been told many times that while the distinctive start has become an appreciated skill, many would use starting gates if it was possible. Furthermore, several of the Thoroughbred racing participants see themselves as more connected to the professional Thoroughbred industry than traditional horse racing practices.[15]

Figure 10: A group of men singing and dancing around a horse as they lead it to registration. (Mount Frere, 6 April 2013)

[14] This is often called purchasing "off the track," and (mainly) involves professional Thoroughbred owners selling Thoroughbred horses that are either retired from professional racing, or else show little promise as professional race horses.
[15] See more on Thoroughbreds on pp.158-164.

ECAHRA operates on a racing circuit system which is decided upon annually at their AGM, in consultation with the various racing clubs of the area. The Thoroughbred contingent is comparatively small and in some of the areas where they race there aren't any resident Thoroughbred horses. This leaves the responsibility for the maintenance of those tracks in the hands of the local organisers of indigenous horses, and – while these non-Thoroughbred horses are not registered to race at ECAHRA race days – by special dispensation, they are invited to race on these days in an alternating race structure similar to those held by the O.R. Tambo HRA, with a race of indigenous horses followed by a Thoroughbred race, and so on.

The relationship between the indigenous horse owners and the ECAHRA is complicated at times. The ECAHRA has sponsorship for their races but this sponsorship does not extend to cover non-Thoroughbred races at the ECAHRA race days. The local community of riders are invited to race because they are considered custodians of the tracks – but some of the Thoroughbred owners appear to tolerate the indigenous horse racers, rather than embrace them. For example, the tradition of singing around the horses and guiding them down to the track is not done for Thoroughbreds, and some of the Thoroughbred owners expressed frustration to me about this delaying their races and identified it as the reason for late starts to 'their' race days. I heard similar frustrations about the manner in which some of the local horse owners treated their horses, or the tack they used. Others would say that they needed to invite the local horse clubs or else they wouldn't be able to find sponsorships, or would be prevented from using the tracks. This is despite the sponsorship money for ECAHRA only being used for winnings for the Thoroughbred races. The indigenous horse racers will place wagers prior to a race (during the initial singing), in order to have some winnings for the races they run at these ECAHRA events.

Some of the ECAHRA members argue they cannot register and organise races for the indigenous owners because of the variations of rules across the region. While the O.R. Tambo HRA has developed a consistent set of rules to govern their races, and these rules are becoming more widely accepted, there is still variety across regions. The ECAHRA race days typically draw indigenous horses and owners from the local area, rather than from further afield, and so it would be considered unfair to impose external rules upon their races. This reasoning extends to include the idea that it would be unfair to pay out winnings to people based on a set of rules not used in the area in which they usually race.

While, at times, its members may consider it a reluctant necessity to include the indigenous horses, the primary function of ECAHRA for *umdyarho* is to facilitate race days. Its fixtures provide impetus and opportunity for local clubs to race. Interestingly, this makes it far more important to supporting *umdyarho* than it may appear from simply talking to ECAHRA members.

The ECAHRA events also help to uncover an important aspect of *umdyarho*'s historical development, because the Thoroughbred racers invite local clubs to race, and the rules on display vary across the region. This lets us gain insight into the variations within *umdyarho* over a wide region, simply by attending ECAHRA races. Take, for example, the observation that at an ECAHRA race near Mount Frere in 2013, the races arranged between the Thoroughbred races were *umhambo* races; while further south at a race in Ngcobo a few weeks later, the races were *umphalo*. In my experience, there seems to be a kind of border running roughly along a north/south axis through Idutywa. To the east of it, *umhambo* predominates; while to the west, *umphalo* is more popular. Similarly, there is a far higher concentration of Thoroughbred owners in the western section of this divide than in the eastern section.

While developments in the network of races and exchanges over the last few years have seen more people in the western section riding *umhambo*, this trend is fairly recent. Six years ago, at the beginning of this research project, there was still a lingering animosity amongst some in the far-eastern section towards races in the west. In trying to ascertain the distances that participants would travel to races across the region, I found several cases of people in the eastern section saying that they did not enjoy races in the west,[16] because of the reluctance on the part of the race organisers to put enough of the winnings pool into *umhambo* – a style which riders in the west tended not to be involved in. It was also frequently mentioned to me, when I enquired as to why people chose the form of racing they did, that those in the eastern section tended to see *umphalo* as a child's form of the sport and invested more prestige in the *umhambo* style. *Umhambo* is "the way that men ride," I was told. Younger boys ride younger horses not yet trained for *umhambo*, while adults – "men" – graduate to, and are truly tested in, *umhambo* racing.[17]

[16] More specifically, they often referred to "the Ciskei," which is the most-westerly section of the area, adjoining the Fish River. The "western section" referred to here, however, extends beyond simply the area formerly known as the Ciskei. The references were quite frequent in 2013, but by 2016 very few references were made to this.

[17] This is discussed on pp. 84-92.

I noted a similar pattern when I spoke to Thoroughbred owners. Many of them had begun their horse racing careers in *umphalo* racing on mixed-breed horses before "decid[ing] to grow up" and buying Thoroughbreds. In some cases, particularly amongst Thoroughbred owners who grew up or live in the eastern section, they would be involved in both Thoroughbred racing and *umhambo* racing. And within this group there was a tendency to first be involved with Thoroughbreds and then to gain an interest in *umhambo*. I do not recall any occasions of people being involved in *umhambo* first and then later owning Thoroughbreds.

The east/west division was also evident when asking people about the historical development of the sport. Those in the western section describe the sport as having started around colonial settlements – and particularly those that stationed garrisons, where soldiers would race horses against locals. From these beginnings the local groups began to organise their own races, including the racing of Thoroughbreds. The story told in the eastern section, however, is that horses were raced for entertainment at gatherings since their introduction, but the sport was started by an Irish trader – L.P. Moore – near Qumbu at the turn of the century, from where it spread and grew. The prevalence of these two stories, and their correlation with the styles of racing and geographical positioning, are an indication of two distinct traditions which have merged, separated, and now merged again.

Figure 11: Mr Makaula's Thoroughbred, Facebook. (Mount Frere, 6 April 2013)

The Thoroughbred races, while they have a tendency to replicate the professional Thoroughbred industry, clearly derive much of their character and culture from the western section's tradition of racing. The connections between the shift from indigenous horses to Thoroughbreds, and the shift from *umphalo* to *umhambo* in the western and eastern traditions respectively, indicate a similar ethos in the two traditions, which lends some weight to the argument that the Thoroughbreds can be labelled as a part of *umdyarho,* rather than simply an amateur version of the formalised Thoroughbred racing industry. This is because, in the words of the riders and owners themselves, Thoroughbred races occur with and come from *umdyarho* practices, not from the settler-introduced Thoroughbred racing industry.

Central Arguments

The immediate question people should ask here, then, seems to be: *is* umdyarho *not just a form of the European racing tradition?*

Horses were introduced by Europeans, and both stories indicate a strong connection to the settler racing tradition, but this doesn't mean that *umdyarho* is simply an adaptation of European horse racing. In the following chapter I will discuss the emergence of horse racing in the Eastern Cape. A key premise in my argument is that the different styles, and the geographical split in those styles, is correlated to the limited but convincing accounts of yet another traditional sport: *uleqo,* or cattle racing. In the following chapter I argue that the sport of *umdyarho* emerged from the ashes of cattle racing.

Following a series of ecological disasters in the late-19th and early-20th Centuries, and the colonial responses to them, semi-independent African polities in the area (known at the time as the Transkeian Territories) could no longer engage in the most popular sport of the time: *uleqo*, cattle racing. Horses were a relatively new addition to the social landscape of the area, but were rapidly being integrated into the daily functioning of rural homesteads.[18] Through this integration, the horse assumed an elevated role in the homestead and became understood as a symbol of prestige. While cattle were still seen as a social symbol of wealth and power, the horse occupied a more personal position – almost an extension of the owner/rider – in a way distinct from cattle.

The impact of the transition from cattle to horses in racing sports in the Eastern Cape is an important part of understanding *umdyarho*. The first and second Chapters of this thesis discuss

[18] See Chapter 2.

the introduction of horses and their incorporation into the daily life of people in the region, as well as the symbolism that began to surround these animals. The thesis explores some of the ways in which the transition from cattle to horses may alter the motivations for engaging in *umdyarho*. The reappraisal of what these races mean to people – and how this has changed in the process of shifting from one species to another – is discussed in order to give an indication of how *umdyarho* came to take on its contemporary forms.

Another important point raised here is the question of the cultural significance of the sport and its use as an expression of identity and heritage. Neither horses nor horse racing has a long-standing presence in the region. This thesis asks how horses and horse racing came to be endowed with such cultural significance, and how horse racing came to be understood as a cultural practice despite its recent origin. It argues that the forms that the sport has taken are enactments of cultural identity based on a rural, agrarian way of life, and that the race events function as commemorative events for this way of life. They are commemorative events which have emerged 'from the bottom up'.

While it is well accepted that horses became integrated into society at large, along with guns, as technologies of war, less has been said about how horses were integrated into the everyday life of the rural homestead, and how they came to be associated with various practices associated with the stages of life: manhood, womanhood and marriage rites. Evidence indicates[19] that, as these various rites became less common, certain social functions traditionally fulfilled by them were transferred onto *umdyarho*. The manner in which these transfers happened occurred within the prevailing understandings of power and people's relationship to it within the broader context of colonisation, apartheid rule and the post-apartheid government's approach to culture, heritage and "development." My thesis explores these aspects of *umdyarho* to show how they are used today within the sport to represent a way of life eroded by the political and economic changes of the 20th Century.

Finally, the thesis will look at the current position of *umdyarho* and the political jostling that is presently occurring inside the sport – exploring links between the contemporary (post-2013) politics of the country and the sport. My goal here is to provide the reader with the resources to understand the sport as an exhibition or performance – in effect, a way to 'read' the horse race as they might interpret an art work more clearly with an understanding of art history and the biography of the artist, for example. In order to achieve this, my thesis shifts its focus away

[19] Based on ethnographic accounts and collected oral history narratives.

from the details of the sport's history (as one might find in a conventional account) and specifically examines the historical development of these *umdyarho* events. It does so with a view to providing an *understanding* of the events, rather than simply presenting a history of the sport, and this should account for the, at times, unconventional structure of the chapters.

The most obvious problem with a more conventional historical narrative for this subject is that often the history of a sport will proceed from a basic understanding of it on the part of the reader. A history of football, for example, could safely presuppose a large amount of knowledge of how the game operates. In this case, however, I can't presuppose any amount of knowledge of the sport. In fact, most people have never heard of it outside of the areas in question, and – where they have – the perception of it is often based on flawed observations, built to confirm a 'boogieman' which has plagued the 'white' South African horse community for nearly a century.[20]

I argue that it not only reflects the society as it changes, but also acts as a commemorative event for the conveyance of social memory of a way of life and cultural heritage. At once a psycho-social expression, and a site of performance for social memory, *umdyarho* becomes a symbolic representation of the changing society in which it is practised. I am not the first to propose that this social reflection may be contained within a sport, nor even within a horse sport. This thesis follows on the example set initially by Clifford Geertz in his seminal paper *Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight*,[21] and similarly in Whitney Azoy's *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan*,[22] which addresses the history and development of the chaotic sport of *buzkashi* as a way in which social relations in Afghanistan are expressed on the field of play. I argue that these traditional horse races are about identity and expressing power within the framework of that identity. I argue that horses came to symbolise power and that, as the relative day-to-day autonomy of households was eroded, horse races became one way amongst many – including political resistance to oppression, and the quasi-voluntarily entering of the migrant labour system – for people to regain a small amount of the power and autonomy they were losing at any given time.

Writing at this moment, in late 2018, I take it as a truism that during the "Zuma era" the machinery of the South African state was leveraged and manipulated by groups of individuals for personal economic gain. I argue that *umdyarho* has faced similar threats – not, in this case,

[20] See Appendix.
[21] C. Geertz, "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in *Daedalus*, Vol. 101, No. 1 (1972), pp. 1-37.
[22] G. W. Azoy, *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* (University of Pennsylvania, 1982).

for immediate financial reward, but rather for its potential to provide that reward in the future. It sits on the cusp between amateur cultural practice and professionalisation, and is thus in a pivotal moment of its development. The state and various businesses have, over the course of this research, continuously attempted to expropriate a (hitherto ignored) cultural product, and leverage it for their own ends. To state it plainly: there are ongoing attempts to steal this sport from its custodians, who have been practising it for nearly two centuries.

Figure 12: A map of the 'bantustans' of eastern South Africa. (https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSkREs4w0Q-y-69sTz_KOPNACjM0TYCXYzvzdnUQ9X2GYB_NvEb)

The Research Process

I first encountered *umdyarho* when I was hired as part of a research tender awarded to Rhodes University by the Eastern Cape Gambling and Betting Board. The goal of the research was to establish a baseline understanding of the "status of traditional horse racing in the Eastern Cape." The work dealt with the status of traditional horse racing as it stands today in the Eastern Cape Province with a view towards developing government policy. This meant that I held an interesting position in respect of research into the sport at a very important moment in its evolution. As an agent of the state, I was perceived as being in a position of power and was a locus of power around which *umdyarho* participants and hopefuls could potentially improve their position in the sport. Outside of the fieldwork, meanwhile, I saw how government policymakers operate: how they isolate and encourage, and make attempts to reconcile irreconcilable agendas. I saw how the myriad forces (and people who need to be pleased) pressing upon each individual politician influences the decision-making process and makes the difference between a successful and a destructive policy, and how individuals tend to help their friends and work towards self-enrichment. I will discuss this aspect of the research in Chapter 5.

There were two researchers employed to conduct the research: me and Michelle Griffith. She was familiar with the areas surrounding Grahamstown and the former Ciskei bantustan, while she had no experience of working in the areas beyond the Kei River. I was familiar with areas

beyond the Kei – I had worked there while conducting some of my MA research on the cannabis trade – and so I was assigned the vast area of South Africa between the Great Kei River and the KwaZulu-Natal provincial border, the majority of the area encompassed by the former Transkei bantustan.

My mandate was to uncover where, how and to what extent traditional horse racing is practised in that area. I had to identify the structures involved and assess the "drivers and intricacies" of the sport. I had neither seen nor heard of the sport. I did not know anyone who could help me find races or anyone involved with the races. No literature had ever been produced on the subject. My *isiXhosa* was shaky. I had never even sat on a horse. I had eight weeks to complete the research and all I had was a single research line: *The Status of Traditional Horse Racing in the Eastern Cape*.

Figure 13: Map of the former-Ciskei. (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/6b/Topographic_map_of_the_Ciskei.svg/220px-Topographic_map_of_the_Ciskei.svg.png)

My starting point was newspaper articles, which were scarce. I did find a few, mainly on the area around King Williams Town, which was outside of my research area. The articles mentioned a few names which I attempted to track down, but they led to dead ends. I read Sandra Swart's book *Riding High: Horses, Humans and History in South Africa*.[23] I found a documentary called *King Naki and the Thundering Hooves*,[24] which gave me some important insights but brought me no closer to finding the races. In sheer desperation, I searched through the *Daily Sun*, a tabloid newspaper. There I found an article with the headline "Rural Racing is Great Fun!"[25] which concluded with the line "Nkalane appeals to those who would like to join racing in the Eastern Cape to call him on 078 207 5437." So I called the number, and – reaching Nkalane – I told him who I was and that I would like to learn more about the horse racing. It was Sunday

[23] S. Swart, *Riding High: Horses, Humans and History in South Africa* (Wits University, 2010).
[24] *King Naki and the Thundering Hooves* (Plexus Media, 2012).
[25] "Rural Racing is Great Fun!," *Daily Sun*, 29 July 2009.

the 17th of March 2013 when Nkalane called me back, saying he had arranged a meeting for us near Mthatha on Wednesday the 20th. It was following this meeting that Nkalane mentioned a race day that was due to take place the following day. He offered to direct me in exchange for a lift, and it was from there that I began my fieldwork and exploration into the sport of *umdyarho*.

The initial report that the research team produced was entirely aimed at uncovering the mechanisms, procedures, extent and position of the sport, part of which is outlined above. The move from examining the sport to investigating its historical development required a shift in position, to one of explanation. Through an iterative process between the literature, fieldwork and oral interviews, I began to test hypotheses of the historical development of the sport. I

Figure 14: Map of the former-Transkei. (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/70/Topographic_map_of_the_Transkei.svg/300px-Topographic_map_of_the_Transkei.svg.png)

would move from race to race, meeting people, making notes, then – in the weeks between races – I would organise one-on-one interviews. My average distance of driving while conducting fieldwork was 150 kilometres per day. I conducted 10 separate field trips over three years, conducting multiple interviews with around 30 participants, attending approximately 20 race days as well as a number of group meetings around the subject of *umdyarho* in the process. Between these field trips, I would process the information I had collected, analyse field notes and dig through the literature on the areas in which the sport occurred – the former bantustans of the Transkei and Ciskei – identifying potential connections, developing interview guides and identifying possible participants to approach or re-approach during the next field trip.

While I have taken every precaution to use the threads of evidence given to me in the course of my research as they were intended to be used, the interpretation of the phenomenon of *umdyarho* presented here is entirely how I see it from my outsider's position. I have taken care to avoid misrepresenting the information I was given, and I hope that I have done justice to those who entrusted me with their stories, while still being able to interpret and present the information in a novel way. This compromise between writing about something 'not my own' – while still being honest about how I saw (and still see) that thing – is a delicate balancing act. It turns the story into a sort of co-creation between the people I met and myself, in which I, at once, have to tell their story as they see it *and* remain critical and write from my own point of view. There is a heavy ethical responsibility that comes with this and I hope I have managed to adequately navigate this space. I hope that if the people who contributed to the work might read it, they will say that I have offered a number of competing perspectives and have earnestly sought to bring them together.

A difficulty, related to this point, was the extent to which I became invested in *umdyarho* – in the sport, the lives of the people involved and their stories – in a way that hadn't occurred during any past work. It was as if I was carried by the sheer passion that the participants have for *umdyarho*. At times I was elated, at other times saddened and even angry. Acknowledging this, I have tried to avoid romanticising *umdyarho,* while still striving to tell the participants' version of "their" sport. At the same time, it is the emotional responses to *umdyarho* that lie at the core of its experience, and so I have not removed any words – my own or those of the participants – which convey the emotional impact of a given situation.

My evidence is drawn from various kinds of sources over time. It was important – if I was to avoid the trap of presenting a worldview as being static or homogenous – that I be conscious

of what Mitchell terms ‘ethnographic up- and down-streaming’. He describes “ethnographic upstreaming” as “project[ing] present-day groups and identities uncritically back in time.”[26] “Ethnographic downstreaming,” meanwhile, is its opposite: “assum[ing] that historically attested practices stayed the same in the absence of direct evidence for this.”[27] To avoid these pitfalls I have carefully had to navigate the process of triangulation that was involved in assessing evidence.

The process of triangulation was complicated by the abundance of literature. This area was a showpiece of sorts for the apartheid system in the 20th Century and, consequently, provided fertile material for critiques of that system. Similarly, it was a major reservoir of migrant labour and served as a case study for the impact of colonial and apartheid economic models, as it did for the colonial systems of both direct and indirect rule. Anybody who has examined the rural/urban connection, direct and indirect rule, apartheid spatial planning and legal pluralism in South Africa has been forced to write about this research area. This has meant that whole libraries of secondary material have had to be mined to ensure that an adequate framework of understanding is in place to properly examine the sport in question. This material naturally reflects its own historical position and its time of writing, and it often proved difficult to find the information and angle that I needed, as much of the research reflected the historiographical, theoretical or ideological blind-spots of past authors on Transkei.

What I found in both the literature and in the fieldwork was that I could not uncover the historical development of the sport by focusing on the sport itself, but instead needed to know the broader political, social and environmental history to see the patterns which correlated to the pattern of development found in the story of horse racing in the Eastern Cape. *Umdyarho,* ultimately, seems to be a fascinating side-effect of history: a product of the broader political and economic forces acting upon the former bantustans.

A related advantage of studying *umdyarho*, I have found, is that it reveals a more nuanced picture of the history of the former bantustans, one of the most-studied areas in South African history. For example, in Chapter 1, when considering the way in which Jacob Tropp’s focus on state-peasant relations can be refined by looking at the relationships between individual historical actors outside of the sphere of the state’s influence. In this way, this present study becomes a reflection on our understanding of history in the former bantustans of the Eastern

[26] P. Mitchell, *Horse Nations: The Worldwide Impact of the Horse on Indigenous Societies post-1492* (Oxford, 2015), p. 16.
[27] Ibid.

Cape. By focusing on the history and development of a horse racing sport, it asks how our observations and understanding of the sport's development can help us to better understand (or contribute to our understanding of) the broader historical themes of the Eastern Cape, including the effects of migrant labour and the impact of the imposition of colonial rule.

I am heavily indebted to Tropp's work on the Transkei's environmental regulations and the social history of the environment in the region,[28] which I use in Chapter 1, as I am to the work of Nancy Jacobs. Jacobs's social-environmental justice approach to the history of Kuruman in *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History*[29] informed my overall perspective of the way that people exercise agency in light of changes to their environment. Jacobs and Tropp make little appearance in this thesis, but the way in which I approached the *umdyarho* participants stemmed from insights contained in their works. The notion that we must view individual people as agents of history – who interact with both their environment and other agents and make decisions accordingly – is one still strangely absent even from many 'bottom-up' social histories of Transkei and Ciskei that profess to centre the individual historical agent.

Another little-cited work that was important to my research is Clifton Crais's *Politics of Evil.*[30] Crais crafts a narrative which attempts to understand the way in which the culturally-constructed worldview of the people of the former homelands of the Eastern Cape (and South Africa's black majority more widely) can be used to better understand and interpret the historical development of the area and South Africa. I do hold the view that Crais's work goes much too far in its emphasis on the cultural construction of evil in politics. However, his emphasis on individual and collective cultural understandings or worldviews, and how they influence the decisions people make as historical actors, is worthy of examination when the complexity of that worldview is suitably taken into account. I found this line of thinking to be very valuable in understanding how horses become intertwined with ideas of power, particularly through the notion of 'growing up' which is referred to throughout.

The view in this work, taken from Jacobs, is that during different times and places, "people differentiated by race, class and gender had different access to power and relations with the environment."[31] I read this broadly here, and understand it to mean that the 'rules of

[28] J. Tropp, "Dogs, Poison and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa," in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2002), pp. 451-472; J. Tropp, "The Contested Nature of Colonial Landscapes: Historical Perspectives on Livestock and Environments in the Transkei," in *Kronos*, No. 30 (2004), pp. 118-137.
[29] N. Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice: A South African History* (Cambridge, 2003).
[30] C. Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power and the Political Imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge, 2002).
[31] Jacobs, *Environment, Power and Injustice* (2003), p. 4.

engagement' for social and economic life were constantly changing, depending on the individual's environmental and social relationships to power. From social history, Jacobs brings an emphasis on agency in which the agents of history are not pawns in the service of powerful forces, personal or institutionalised, but seek to engage these forces and work within them every day. The manner of engagement depends on the kind of social and environmental forces at play, and the strength of those forces. The worldview of an individual provides a point of departure for deciding on the best course of action required for that individual, who is trying to survive or thrive as much as possible under those specific socio-environmental conditions.

Sandra Swart's work has also been instrumental to this thesis. I am very grateful to the work of Swart, which has been helpful and stimulating as I 'learned my way' through the story of *umdyarho*. I have, however, found myself regularly drawing slightly different conclusions in my interpretation of the evidence that Swart puts forward. While the conclusions have not been vastly different, they have continually had a different emphasis. The divergence in my interpretation and her work forced me to double-check my understanding and interrogate biases that I would not otherwise have interrogated. And I have found it important to note how, by having even a slightly different focus – Swart focused on the horse as a species, I focus on horse racing specifically – one can come to a different interpretation of the same body of evidence. (This, in turn, made me doubly-cautious about the way I used different sources throughout this work.)

To illustrate these points of departure, I can offer this example: while writing Chapter 2 (regarding the acquisition and incorporation of horses), I found that my emphasis was markedly different to Swart's. Swart had focused on Lesotho, and placed her emphasis on the role horses played in Basotho state-building. When I looked at the area more broadly – i.e. to include both the Eastern Cape and Lesotho, considering that the horses of both regions were acquired over the same expanding frontier – I found that while state-building was certainly an advantage, it was the benefits provided to the homestead that was the source of the strong desire for horses.

This concerned me because I was focusing on the Eastern Cape. The focus was narrowed to this province because of the richness of material and the popularity of the sport, but *umdyarho* is not limited to the Eastern Cape. Forms of 'traditional horse racing' can be found in a number of former bantustans, including KwaZulu, QwaQwa and Lesotho. KwaZulu-Natal has a large, well-funded annual event called the Dundee July (predictably held in the town of Dundee each July), while Lesotho has an annual race near Semonkong on the 1st of January each year. My

concern was that if the emphasis shifted when I looked at the Eastern Cape and Lesotho, instead of just Lesotho, how would I have certainty that the same thing would not happen if I looked at *umdyarho* in the Eastern Cape, Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal, instead of just the Eastern Cape?

An investigation into this convinced me that the dynamics of the Eastern Cape – including the nuances of the Thoroughbreds and the differing racing styles described above – were distinct enough from those of KwaZulu and Lesotho to justify my focus. Two advantages could, however, be gained from further examining the area of KwaZulu, specifically. Firstly, this research could provide greater insight into the extent to which current government interventions in the Eastern Cape are influenced by the sense of being 'left behind' by the KwaZulu-Natal government, who were quicker to offer greater support to the sport in that province. Secondly, the development of horse racing in KwaZulu seems to closely resemble the way in which *umhambo* racing developed in the Eastern Cape. But, beyond these two points, I felt assured that *umdyarho* in the Eastern Cape could be justifiably examined without conducting extensive work throughout KwaZulu and/or Lesotho.

Writing about land and animals in the former bantustans tends to place an author in the historiographical space occupied by environmental historians, some of whom have been mentioned above, but I am not attempting to write an environmental history here. I am informed by my reading of such histories, but attempt only to convey an understanding of the historical development of *umdyarho* in this thesis. This understanding comes from an examination beyond the details of the sport itself, and heads towards understanding the *spirit* of the sport, as it developed from a form of entertainment into a fully-fledged 'sport' in the sense that we understand the term today.

Structure of the Thesis

Regarding the structure of the thesis, I have decided to focus on a number of key aspects of the events and discuss the historical development of each of these aspects. These different key aspects are necessarily subjective, but are selected based on fieldwork observations and interviews to try and plot the clearest path to understanding *umdyarho*. Each aspect comprises a chapter which, when viewed together, forms a picture which can be used as an interpretive framework, a way to understand an *umdyarho* event, if one was to attend a race day.

A major problem which I encountered in trying to structure this thesis is that the overlapping themes and concepts, which express themselves in different ways over time, made me

concerned about a high degree of repetition across chapters. In some cases, I have overcome this by discussing these themes through illustration, but generally I have tried to minimise repetition by outlining the concepts and themes and explaining how they work when I am first required to address them, and then simply referring back to them, only adding as much further explanation as is required to advance my interpretation of the development of the sport.

In Chapter 1, I will draw together fragments dealing with sport in the pre-colonial Eastern Cape. The chapter begins with an outline of three sports – stick fighting, hunting and cattle racing – and argues that sport was intimately connected with socialising and entertainment. It also argues that, while sport was considered 'fun' and entertaining, participation had 'real world' social benefits and was not a strictly non-utilitarian frivolity. It then focuses on cattle racing and hunting to show how the environmental regulations implemented by the colonial government put an end to these sports. Thereafter, the focus falls on cattle racing. I argue that due to the colonial regulations, which made it impossible to race cattle, horses were integrated into racing to maintain this popular sport. This chapter argues that horses were incorporated into an existing cattle racing tradition, and that traces of that incorporation are still evident today. Some *umdyarho* traditions, therefore, pre-date the racing of horses – and even the introduction of horses to the region – and understanding the history of *umdyarho* is predicated on seeing beyond the introduction of a 'settler racing tradition', and towards the ways that colonialism affected the pre-colonial sport of cattle racing. Chapter 1 also accounts for the roots of the two main 'traditions' of *umdyarho* which we find in the sport today.

Chapter 2 uses the story of a sangoma named Thokoza as a platform to discuss the introduction and acquisition of horses in the 'native reserves' of the Eastern Cape. It argues that horses took on a symbolic position because of their use in administering the homestead, historically connected to the ideas of "growing up" and "being a man". The chapter discusses the acquisition of horses in both Lesotho and the still-independent areas of the Eastern Cape, and how they came to be a strategic resource in the process of 'home-building'. It goes on to introduce some of the ways in which horses were incorporated symbolically into rites to represent the stages of life, as expressions of both being and becoming 'a man'. It then outlines evidence that this same masculine symbolism of "growing up" is present in contemporary *umdyarho*, and is visible in the names of horses, the names of races and even the decisions of which kind of horse and style of racing to be involved with. How horses are seen by people, and how horse racing acts as an expression of an abstract idea of wisdom, strength and masculinity, is the thread that ties all *umdyarho* practices together. The way in which the horse

was moulded as a symbolic expression of a masculine ideal – of both power and wisdom, of "growing up" – and hence how horse races became instilled with a certain ethos or spirit of masculinity, is an important aspect of this thesis.

Chapter 3 will go on to provide a practical illustration of how this interaction between symbolism and social expression plays out in the context of *umdyarho*. It argues from the position that there were two racing traditions in the Eastern Cape at the time of horse acquisition in the region: an indigenous, cattle racing tradition and a settler horse racing tradition. It focuses on the neglected indigenous racing tradition to argue that the view of the 'promethean settler' in the development of *umdyarho* is fallacious. Horses were both a material and a cultural acquisition. With horses came horsemanship. Through this acquisition the indigenous racing tradition (formerly cattle racing) drew from the settler horse culture, but retained its core elements. Over the course of the 20th Century, incorporation into the colonial economy meant a concentration and ritualisation of horse racing around Christmas time. An inclusive and egalitarian spirit was fostered at Christmas races, and – through the deployment of the 'symbol set' associated with horses – horse races became a way of both building community unity and expressing social difference. The chapter concludes that *umdyarho*, while syncretic, hybridised, and drawing on elements of the settler horse culture, cannot be understood as being 'introduced' by settlers.

Much of the development of *umdyarho* can be illustrated through an examination of the annual Bajodini Race, and the discussions of Chapter 4 focus on how this race, established in the settler racing tradition, came to be viewed as 'traditional' and 'indigenous'. The focus of this chapter is on the Qumbu District and the settler community there, particularly the Moore family and the influence which L.P. Moore had in establishing the annual race at Bajodini. It argues that the unique process of colonisation in Qumbu gave rise to a distinct 'Mpondomise consciousness', which allowed the Bajodini Race to take on expressions of Mpondomise cultural heritage. It also discusses some of the customs which came to be associated with the transition from 'girlhood' to 'womanhood', and argues that the race can be viewed as an example of how traditions may emerge during times of turmoil. The manner in which horse races took on the social functions of defunct practices that made peripheral use of horses (as discussed in Chapter 2, on the symbolic value of horses) is not well documented, but a number of examples will be given and discussed. It ends around 1980, by which point the meaning of certain customs was shifting to reflect the changing political consciousness within the Transkei

bantustan. While the Bajodini Race bears a striking resemblance to what Hobsbawm calls "invented tradition,"[32] it is argued here that it is better understood as an "invented custom."

In the post-apartheid period the sport has seen a dramatic growth in popularity. The contemporary circumstances of *umdyarho* will be discussed in Chapter 5. Following the turmoil at the end of apartheid, traditional horse racing was "almost dead," but rose again to become the most popular sport in the region and something of a national pastime. It has grown to the extent that there is a sense within the sport that it is on the verge of professionalisation. In response to this, a number of stakeholders are leveraging and lobbying for their preferred view of the future development of the sport. As in contemporary South African politics more broadly, there are factions, interlopers, thieves, those in power and, vitally, the gatekeepers to that power. Chapter 5 deals primarily with how *umdyarho* events appear in the present. It describes the historical developments which gave *umdyarho* events their current form, including the introduction of *umhambo* into race days, the exclusion of Thoroughbreds and the increased organisation between different groups of *umdyarho* participants across the province. The chapter goes on to illustrate how these changes are reflected in the politics of *umdyarho* during the period of research. The central argument in this chapter is that the sense of being on the verge of professionalisation has given rise to political dynamics within the sport which are derived from earlier historical developments. In the final section, some of the ways in which private business interests, with the support of the government, are attempting to usurp the sport are discussed. The chapter ends by outlining some of the responses to this attempted usurpation.

Each chapter is structured similarly. The relevant aspect of *umdyarho* is discussed in relation to historical material, using oral narratives, historical accounts and ethnographic data and observation. Through this process, each chapter provides an account of the development of key aspects of *umdyarho* which, when viewed together, provide an understanding of the sport as it is today.

There is much more that can be said about *umdyarho* than is included here – the oral histories of various clubs, for example – but, considering the complexities and richness of the source material, I made the decision to omit anything which I felt didn't assist in providing clarity on my main objective. That objective was to offer the reader the resources to interpret the performance of an *umdyarho* event, and to understand the development of that performance.

[32] E. Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in E. Hobsbawm, and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1-14.

I should say I resisted the urge to retain anything which I felt did not contribute to that end, with one exception. This exception is the responses I received from a number of people involved with the settler horse community – in other words, by the ‘white’ horse community – who constantly and insistently said I must have animal cruelty in the sport as the main focus of my work, and often did so with reference to so-called “bush racing.” These elements did not fit into the narrow objective I had set, but because of the insistence (and the uniformity of that insistence), I include my views on these matters in a short Appendix.

Figure 15: Sarhili, amaXhosa *paramount from 1835 to 1892. (Peires,* The House of Phalo *[1981])*

- Chapter 1 -

The Effects of Colonialism on Sport in the Eastern Cape, or, How Colonialism Tried to Kill Fun

During the latter half of the nineteenth century and the final days of their independence, Sarhili was paramount chief of the Xhosa groups living in the area between the Sunday's River valley and the Mbashe River. These groups had been fighting British expansion and settlement for at least a half-century prior to Sarhili's paramountcy. At the time of his rise to power, the area west of the Kei River was already British territory. There would be no independent Xhosa territories by the time of his death. Sarhili had a friend named Nabileyo, "a wealthy owner of cattle,"[33] who lived near Teko. Nabileyo was a small man, with withered arms, and amongst his herd was an animal named Impuza'omtshayelo – "The Duiker[34] of Mtshayelo" – which was renowned in the area as a racing animal in *uleqo*: cattle racing.

One day a major cattle race was organised. With a distance of over 30kms, it was set to begin at Ngaxakaxa (near Idutywa), pass by Ibeka, and finish at Teko. It was a long race, but it was also going to be particularly competitive because two other well-known enthusiasts, Nyoka and Pama, had entered their finest animals. Sarhili, on this occasion, wished to see his friend's animal, Impuza'omtshayelo, run. The presence of Sarhili, such an important and powerful figure, only increased the excitement around the race. On the day, Sarhili and some of his councillors made their way to the top of a large hill called Ntabezulu ("the Mountain of Heaven"), from where they could overlook Teko and the finishing point. In the distance, Sarhili could see dust rising into the air, for, although only one of a herd would be entered for these races, the whole herd would follow and charge across the landscape. As the herds moved closer, crowds shouted and whistled at the animals, cheering them on, while others rode on horseback alongside. It was at the head of the Mkonkoto Ridge that Nyoka's prize possession fell down dead from exhaustion and Impuza'omtshayelo took the lead. But he was still facing intense competition from the ox belonging to Pama as they approached Teko until, all of a sudden, Pama's animal also dropped dead, less than two kilometres from the finishing line. Nabileyo's Impuza'omtshayelo came in a clear winner in the most prestigious and challenging race yet held and was commemorated for decades in a parable where a man "from which nature had

[33] J. H. Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale Press, 1932), p. 371.
[34] A small antelope.

withheld her physical powers, [came] to be honoured by the acclamations of the people and the congratulations of his beloved chief."[35]

Figure 16: The suspected course for the famous cattle race. (map: http://catalog.afriterra.org/zoomMap.cmd?number=1020)

While there is no date attached to this story, we know that Sarhili technically became the paramount on the murder of his father, Hintsa, by British troops in 1835, and was leader until his death in 1892.[36] It seems likely that, considering the prestige associated with Sarhili in the story, the events it recounts occurred after his position was secured. This sets the story sometime after the onset of the vicious fighting with the British in 1846. Between 1856 and 1858, Sarhili was a believer in the prophecies of Nongqawuse, and encouraged the destruction of all cattle and crops to facilitate a supernatural intervention that would expel European settlers

[35] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 372.
[36] J. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Jonathan Ball, 1981), pp. 123-132.

from the area and restore the land to indigenous hands.[37] The result was widespread famine and what has been described as "national suicide." In the course of the 1860s a large portion of the territory under Sarhili's control (including the area where the race described took place) had been taken over by Mfengu groups relocated from the Cape Colony.[38] Taking all these details into consideration, we can speculate that this race occurred sometime between the late-1840s and the mid-1850s, but it is impossible to say for sure. What is important is that the race occurred during a period of unprecedented turmoil in the region. The processes which were set in motion at this time disrupted and permanently altered everyday life there. And yet, through it all, people continued to live this everyday life. In the midst of the disorder people still gathered and raced cattle.

People used the conditions that surrounded them at any given point in time, whether social, ecological or political, to find ways to continue to live as they desired to live. And sometimes people just want to socialise and have fun. There is a persistent misapprehension that the havoc was the result of simple, linear conquest, in which a monolithic colonial juggernaut destroyed everything in its path. Colonisation was rather an ongoing erosion of the political and social fabric of the area through a haphazard and *ad hoc* approach to governance by European powers, particularly the British. The British approach was driven by changing political conditions locally (in the Colony), within Britain itself, and between European powers. This erosion was compounded by myriad ecological pressures, droughts and epidemics, and was made catastrophic by the colonial responses to them. The result was that over a period of two centuries the people of the Eastern Cape systematically had the means to control their own lives removed from them. The racing of cattle was one of the many social casualties of the changes which occurred during the nineteenth century. Few descriptions remain of the sport, despite its apparent popularity, and it appears to have been relegated to another minor footnote in history. But I what I wish to know is what we can extrapolate from this footnote. We cannot reconstruct the sport in any meaningful way – the material simply does not exist – but we can glean sufficient information from existent accounts to say what was lost and what remains.

[37] J. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Ravan Press, 1989), p. 87.
[38] T. J. Stapleton, "The expansion of a pseudo-ethnicity in the Eastern Cape: Reconsidering the Fingo 'exodus' of 1865," in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1996), pp. 233-250.

Uleqo was not the only precolonial sport in the Eastern Cape. The most commonly cited is stick-fighting. While much has been written about stick-fighting in KwaZulu-Natal[39] and the Zulu forms of the sport, less material exists about its practice in the Eastern Cape, where it is mostly discussed in relation to masculinity and violence in the twentieth century. Another sport was hunting, which is usually discussed as an economic activity rather than a sport. In this chapter I will outline three sports and use them to identify some general aspects of sports in the pre-colonial Eastern Cape. However, the focus will remain on cattle racing.

Pre-Colonial Sports in the Eastern Cape

Stick-fighting

There are strong similarities between the practices of stick-fighting in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. In both cases it was carried out with the same equipment. Each participant had a long stick for attack and a short stick for defence. Stick-fighting was apparently very common but informal, a pastime for boys. No rules existed for fights in the Eastern Cape *per se*, but it was understood by all that it was undesirable for the spirit of the fight to be broken and for it to turn into all-out violence. An appropriate amount of restraint was expected. Partly because of this, the game has historically been encouraged so that boys can learn restraint, making it an important site of masculine socialisation. Mager says that

Figure 17: "Mchunu brothers sparring (ukungcweka), Makhabeleni, KZN, 2006. Photo courtesy of James Hersov." (Carton & Morrell, "Zulu Masculinities" [2012], p. 41.)

> these contests linked uncircumcised boys across the Ciskei and Transkei through particular meanings of Xhosa manliness. Through them hierarchies of age, respect and physical prowess were established… they came together at strategic spots – the local store, the boundary fence, a large tree or some other distinctive feature of the landscape. They exchanged boasts, elaborated

[39] For an introduction to stick-fighting in KwaZulu-Natal, see B. Carton & R. Morrell, "Zulu Masculinities, Warrior Culture and Stick Fighting: Reassessing Male Violence and Virtue in South Africa," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (2012), pp. 31-53.

> schemes to settle scores and tested their prowess. Stick-fighting was a spectacle that older men might watch. More seriously, it was a ritual that taught boys the rules of manliness.[40]

She continues, citing a man from the Peddie district:

> It made youth respect each other; if a younger boy did not respect the older one he should expect punishment from him. At the same time you got to know each other. Some have the tendency of undermining old boys so stick-fighting would settle that once and for all.[41]

Stick-fighting frequently spilled over into violence and was a common part of various youth cultures in the Eastern Cape. Rather than being simply a 'game,' it was often, in the latter half of the twentieth century, an expression of 'war' used to settle inter-group rivalries, often ending in bloodshed. As it was put to me about large gatherings at homes:

> Once people started drinking tempers start to fly. Back then, stick-fighting was the order of the day. There were no knives. There was no boxing. There was none of this boxing. Even when I grew up the mode of fighting was stick fighting… it was a sport, but it was also a way when… Never mind the fact that people say it was a sport. It was never a sport. Stick fighting was never a sport…It was an excuse to fight. Because when you get hit, you get hit. So, that's the reality… but the elders in the group, they knew how to break it off. They could see when it was so serious that it could lead into other things.[42]

Nevertheless, stick-fighting was once considered a sport and encouraged amongst boys, not least as a kind of training in which they could learn self-control. It was fighting with sticks, and so entailed all kinds of aggressive behaviour common in masculine socialisation, but it was not a simple brawl. It was fighting with sticks in a way that made it distinctive. It was the 'correct' way for boys to fight. It was performed with specific tools and it required skills that were admired when performed well,[43] and adults might watch and admire the fights when they occurred.

I have never encountered a stick-fight, nor heard them mentioned except in a historical context. The sport's popularity appears to have dropped off substantially because of a breakdown in various routines of socialisation in the mid-twentieth century. This breakdown was brought about by labour migrancy, lack of employment opportunities and environmental degradation, which all contributed to a collapse in the rural economy.[44] The breakdown of structure led to stick-fighting's being more associated with violence than with boyhood games. I will for the present set aside the matter of reasons for the collapse of stick-fighting.[45]

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[40] A. Mager, "Youth Organisations and the Construction of Masculine Identities in the Ciskei and Transkei, 1945-1960," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1998), p. 658.

[41] Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), p. 658.

[42] Interview with Tantsi: 19 January 2016, Mthatha.

[43] "Champion fighters among the boys were said to have been 'idolised, even by women.'" (Mager, "Youth Organisations" [1998], p. 658).

[44] Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), p. 657.

[45] More can be found on some of the reasons that stick-fighting collapsed in Chapter 3.

Hunting

In *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (1931), J. H. Soga includes a chapter on sport. He describes two sports: hunting and cattle racing. Soga describes hunting as a sport "indulged in to the full," and notes that the Xhosa "kept several breeds of hunting dogs."[46] Each breed would have a role in hunting. *Itwina*[47] and *ingesi*[48] breeds were large and quick and would be used to chase down animals. They would physically catch the antelope as it fled the tree-line of a forest area before being set upon by the men with weapons and killed. *Ingqeqe* and *ibaku*[49] breeds were mongrel breeds that would accompany the beaters. Their role was to drive animals out towards the hunters and the *itwina* and *ingesi*.[50]

Soga describes two forms of hunt: *ingqina* and *ipulo*. *Ingqina*, an "ordinary hunt," lasted a single day and involved "a couple or so of neighbouring clans or a number of families."[51] *Ipulo* was a much larger version of *ingqina*, with many more people (Soga describes it as "a tribal affair"), and of much longer duration. In *ipulo*, women would join the men in an expedition that could last up to a month. Women would be tasked with catering, carrying food and utensils out to the designated hunting areas.[52]

The value of such an event went beyond simple economics or necessity. It is notable that Soga discusses hunting under his chapter on sport and not in the chapter which follows it on 'Economic Life'. The people living in these areas of the Eastern Cape tended not to live in centralised villages. Activities were instead centred on dispersed and largely self-sufficient homesteads, known as an *umzi*. For large numbers to gather together and remain together for up to a month, essentially forming a temporary village, would have been an important social gathering and source of interaction. Even in the case of *ingqina*, groups of families from a

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[46] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 377.
[47] The way in which *itwina* are described by Soga gives an indication of the connection between human and dog in the Eastern Cape at the time. He says: "Fifty years or so ago I saw individual dogs of this breed kept by a hunting owner in a sleek and well-fed condition, having as sleeping quarters a dried ox hide, hair uppermost, placed at the top end of the hut and next to his master's resting place. Fleet dogs of this breed sometimes changed hands at the price of a couple of cattle" (Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* [1932], p. 378).
[48] Both *itwina* and *ingesi* are described as sleek and greyhound-like. Soga speculates that *itwina* was the "earliest known variety" and the appearance "suggests a strain of the wild-dog of Africa," while *ingesi* he says "was probably acquired from Europeans about the middle of the eighteenth century" (Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* [1932], p. 378).
[49] The distinction between *ingqeqe* and *ibaku* are described by Soga as simply being a matter of ears. *Ingqeqe* had upright ears, while *ibaku* had hanging ears. The name is derived from the word *ukubakuzela*, meaning "to flop" (Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* [1932], p. 378).
[50] For more information on dogs see L. Van Sittert & S. Swart (eds.), *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern Africa* (BRILL, 2018).
[51] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 376.
[52] Ibid.

number of *umzi* would gather together and, though only men would go out to hunt, all would return for a gathering at a specific *umzi* at which the spoils of the hunt would be divvied up.

Figure 18: Women cheer and dogs bark as a horse trots through the inkundla *of a home in Komkulu.* (17 January 2016)

These social gatherings at an *umzi* are referred to as *isisusa* (sing.) or *izisusa* (pl.). They have been thoroughly documented in early ethnographies of the region and descriptions show a large degree of uniformity. Usually two forms are mentioned, 'beer gatherings' (*izisusa sotywala*) and 'meat gatherings' (*izisusa sonyama*), but this distinction may have been over-emphasised by ethnographers.[53] In both cases, no invitation would be issued, but rather, smoke would be seen rising from an *umzi*. Referring to beer gatherings, Soga writes that the quantity of smoke "indicates whether it is only the family pot for a humble meal, or the more imposing array of pots for a public thirst. From the day when the smoke was noted it is easy to know when the beer will be ready for visitors, consequently no need is there for conventional notices to be sent round." He concludes: "All know and all go."[54]

Hunting was significant, not only because it was an economic activity, but also because of the social aspects associated with it. The sport element inhered in the skill of the hunt, away from the home, but the hunt was, again, a site of masculine socialisation, itself a social event and also the reason for a social gathering at home later.

As to why the sport is no longer seen, Soga says that European restrictions on hunting prevented hunts from occurring, going so far as to say of *itwina* dogs that "the embargo on hunting has signed his death warrant."[55] "Besides hunting," he says, "which was the primary sport among

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[53] The distinction is important for understanding ritual, but the ritualistic, sacred emphasis is not as ever-present as it appears from first glance at the literature. See, for example, P. A. McAllister, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals: Power, Practice, and Performance in the South African Rural Periphery* (Carolina Academic Press, 2006).

[54] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), pp. 402-403. Hunter, writing around the same time, declares this to be "an innovation," and that for everyone to attend is indeed a change seems to be reinforced by the Native Affairs Commission of 1905, in which Zulu beer gatherings are discussed. Here the testimonies constantly reinforce Hunter's view. These changes will be discussed in Chapter 2.

[55] Ibid., p. 378.

the Xosas,[56] until by proclamation the civil authorities put a stop to it, another of the great tribal sports was cattle racing."[57]

Cattle Racing

Because of the prominent position that cattle hold in Transkei societies, economically and cosmologically, there is a large body of writing on the subject. Cattle racing (*uleqo*) is mentioned in passing in almost all the work on cattle in pre-colonial Transkei, although these references can mostly be traced back to three sources: Hunter,[58] J.H. Soga, and Tiyo Soga (the father of J.H. Soga) in his *isiXhosa* text *Intlalo kaXhosa* (1917).[59]

There remains little work on the racing of cattle itself, despite Soga's assertion that "this sport occupied, in the estimation of the people, much the same position as horse racing does in England. So much so was this that several of the famous races and actors in them are, after at least seventy years, still in remembrance."[60] Interestingly, Tiyo Soga uses a specific term, *iinkabi*, to describe the racing cattle. There are well over thirty words in *isiXhosa* to describe cattle according to their horns, patterns and colourations.[61] A cow kept as wealth or dairy is referred to as *inkomo*, after which the various descriptors could be used to specify its appearance. A cow used for ploughing, for example, would not be referred to as *inkomo*, but as *iinkabi*. *Iinkabi* is a term used to describe 'working' cattle, and racing cattle are apparently (if we are to accept Tiyo Soga's understanding) similarly classified by their function as *iinkabi*. Both Sogas write that weddings are concluded with a cattle race, while J. H. Soga also mentions cattle racing in relation to *umjadu* (*intonjane*).[62] It was a form of entertainment at social gatherings, with the finishing point being the *inkundla*.[63] Finally, the races described by Tiyo Soga in *Intlalo kaXhosa*, particularly in relation to weddings, do not seem to be the long distance races described by J.H. Soga. Given the likely difficulties attendant on arranging a long distance race to coincide with the end of a wedding, we must presume that these races

[56] At the time that Soga was writing the spelling convention varied. 'Xosa' is now most of spelled 'Xhosa'.
[57] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 371.
[58] M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1964).
[59] T. B. Soga, *Intlalo kaXhosa* (Lovedale, 1917).
[60] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 371.
[61] Ibid., pp. 386-388.
[62] The rite marking the transition from 'girlhood' into 'womanhood'.
[63] The *inkundla* is the central court in front of the main house in an *umzi*, and the centre of public life. Adult males will gather in the *inkundla* to discuss important matters of social life and hold court. The *inkundla* is not only spatial. An adult male who is allowed into the *inkundla* is said to be a part of the *inkundla*. The *inkundla* is a specific group of people. Furthermore, the gathering itself of that group is also called the *inkundla*. Thus the *inkundla* is 1) the place, 2) the group, and 3) the gathering of that group which administers social matters.

were over shorter distances. There are also reports that cattle were mounted and ridden like horses, with hide saddles, by Khoi groups west of the area that Soga writes in. The practice was taken up by the Xhosa, so it is possible that cattle racing involved riding the cattle, but I cannot state that this was the case with certainty.[64]

Hunter's description of cattle racing (which she refers to as *ukugqutsha*)[65] is the most detailed we have, although, she admits, she never actually attended a cattle race. Her description differs from the Sogas' accounts in three respects. First, the race is not technically a race at all. Cattle are selected from the herd of each *umzi* because of appearance or speed and are driven through the *inkundla* separately. The expectation is to entertain, not to compete. Secondly, the cattle are not mounted, but merely driven through the *inkundla*. Thirdly, since only a few select cattle from each *umzi* are brought to a gathering in order to be displayed, there are no large herds. The disparity between her findings and Soga's was clearly an issue for Hunter who, in later editions of *Reaction to Conquest*, included a footnote on her description of cattle racing which said: "So my Pondo informants insisted. Their evidence contradicts that given by Soga, op. ed., regarding Xhosa racing. As I never saw a cattle-race I cannot dogmatize."[66]

Figure 19: A large Nguni bull, similar to what would have been raced in the Eastern Cape. (2014)

[64] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), p. 20.
[65] Meaning "to jump."
[66] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), pp. 366-367.

In the absence of any evidence, there is little point in speculating on the reasons for the differences adumbrated above. Perhaps they refer to the practices of different communities, rooted in geographical difference. The areas around Idutywa that Soga refers to are quite open and flat when compared to the very hilly areas of Eastern Pondoland about which Hunter was writing. A long-distance race such as that described by J.H. Soga seems at face value unfeasible for the running of cattle in Eastern Pondoland. An *iinkabi* beast, while very impressive, is not the most light-footed creature. There would be a real danger of whole herds of beasts driving themselves off cliffs or down steep hillsides, with disastrous consequences.

What is outlined here, sadly, is almost the sum of our knowledge of how this sport was conducted, but Soga and Hunter both profess to know why it ended. "In eastern Pondoland they are still sometimes held, but cattle which are dipped frequently have not the stamina to race, and dipping regulations make it impossible for cattle to be gathered from different districts,"[67] says Hunter; while Soga writes that "the cattle-dipping regulations of the last two decades have practically put a stop to this sport, though occasionally sporadic efforts are made even now to revive it, but it is doomed to complete extinction in the near future."[68]

Sport and Socialising

An important consideration, particularly with hunting and cattle racing, is that these sports are connected to *izisusa*. Social gatherings take on a particularly important function within a decentralised *umzi* system of settlements, and Hunter was notably impressed by the scope of these gatherings. "During the five winter months," she notes, "I heard of seventy-three beer drinks, eight girls' initiation dances, three weddings, two feasts for the initiation of diviners, and a number of other ritual killings, within five miles of 'nTibane [sic.] Store."[69] Many anthropologists and ethnographers have highlighted the ritual elements of these gatherings – such as the manner in which meat or beer is distributed, or the distinctions between carrying out meat or beer gatherings for celebrations following, for example, *intonjane* or *ulwaluko* – and illustrated how these elements are important for understanding conceptions of life and cosmology amongst different groups.

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[67] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p. 367.
[68] Soga, *The Ama-Xosa* (1932), p. 371.
[69] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p. 356. I have, unsuccessfully, attempted to identify the location of the store mentioned. All I am able to ascertain is that Hunter was based in Eastern Pondoland: the area between the coast and Ntabankulu in the west, with the Umzimvubu River and Umtamvuna River as its southern and northern borders, respectively.

The manner in which each of these kinds of gatherings was conducted may have been distinctive, but whether a gathering served primarily beer or primarily meat seems to have been irrelevant to those attending. What seems to have been important was that there was a gathering to attend. As Hunter puts it,

> occasionally a goat is killed or beer made just for meat and drink, but in the great majority of cases the feast had some ritual significance, or is to reward those who have worked for the provider [the category into which post-*ingqina* gatherings would fall], or nowadays, to obtain money. Often those going to a feast could not tell me the reason why it was provided – to them it was just beer or meat, and the quality of it, not the purpose for which it was provided, mattered – but when enquiry was made from the provider the beast [sic.] almost invariably proved to be for some particular purpose.[70]

For those attending these gatherings, however, the ritual elements were a given and largely irrelevant. The vast majority of gatherings may have been laden with meaning, but they were primarily secular rather than religious.

In other words, gatherings would be hosted for a purpose, but the reasons why people attended the gatherings were seldom connected to this purpose. Hunter notes that it was the quality of the meat or beer, or put differently, the enjoyment to be derived from eating or drinking it, which was most important. People attended gatherings primarily for social enjoyment, and the key to understanding Soga's classification of hunting as a sport first, and as an economic activity second, also lies in the level of socialising and enjoyment derived from it.[71]

This consideration can be applied to the three sports discussed here. In each case they are considered social activities, with specific skill requirements appreciated by the sport's participants. This fits with our contemporary conception of sports. But at the same time we must not make the mistake of reducing 'sport' to our contemporary understanding of the term. Tantsi's comment on stick-fighting – "Never mind the fact that people say it was a sport. It was never a sport" – indicates that what was happening was not what we would conventionally envisage as a sport today. Tantsi had the same view of horse racing, saying: "it was never necessarily a sport. It was a way of people challenging each other."[72] He brings up an important issue. At which point does an activity constitute a sport?[73] Because it is unwise to try to apply

[70] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p.358.
[71] This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.
[72] Tantsi: 19 January 2016.
[73] For discussion on the way in which "modern sports" differed from their "pre-modern" counterparts, see A. Guttmann *From Ritual to Record: On the Nature of Modern Sports* (Columbia University Press, 2004), Ch. 1 & 2. Originally published in 1978, and updated in subsequent editions, Guttmann argues that certain characteristics have developed in modern sports, including quantification and the quest for 'records'. Earlier sports, he argues, were more about the ritualised practice of the sport itself, rather than a personal best, for example. Some of these characteristics are found more and more frequently in *umdyarho* as it undergoes government-led "development."

our contemporary understanding of sport in a pre-colonial environment, we must acknowledge that what we are faced with are activities classified as sports by those within the culture itself – rather than in terms of some definition imported from outside it.

Each sport served a social function beyond pure entertainment. Hunting was also economic, for example, while stick-fighting was about masculine socialisation and settling scores. Cattle racing also fulfilled a function beyond entertainment: because of the status of cattle in the society, to show off one's cattle was to exhibit one's class position – it was to say "look what I have." In other words, there was a utilitarian basis to such events. Yet at the same time, they were about socialising; more specifically, about entertainment while socialising, or entertainment while engaged in social activity. The importance of the hunt economically does seem to mean that hunting would have been carried out even had it not been considered a skill. And so it is non-utilitarian and utilitarian simultaneously. It is something frivolous and 'for fun' while simultaneously serving a social function. Stick-fighting would meet the criteria for being called a game, but had so little structure and was conducted in such an *ad hoc* manner that we would hesitate to call it a sport in today's understanding of the word. Cattle racing would come closest to the idea of a sport as we understand it today. In some cases, like the event described at the beginning of this chapter, people would specifically gather to race cattle. Even when gathering for another purpose (as seems to have often been the case), people would still bring cattle along to race them. In many cases it appears that cattle racing was not a contest as we conventionally understand it. Yet the similarities between those cattle races that are and those that are not contests are so strong that we cannot divorce one from the other. Each sport seems to be about an exhibition of skill performed in a way or in a space that contributes to socialisation. Each expresses the social position of participants and reinforces the way in which social positions were structured in the Eastern Cape at the time. Furthermore, the sport is an activity that is social and brings enjoyment. It is primarily about socialising and expressing social position. What makes a game into a sport is that it is both social and entertaining. Considering the central role of socialising and social gatherings in the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is remarkable that sport has been neglected as a field of historical study.

That these apparently popular sports have been neglected suggests that there has been something other than play, games and sport to write about. We see this in the absence of literature on both cattle racing and horse racing. It was considered "an inconsequential form of

entertainment spectacle."[74] While ethnographies have been written, their emphases were not on these supposedly 'frivolous' practices. And yet they were not "inconsequential." Just as stick-fighting was a vital site of socialisation, and just as being a skilled hunter provided a real advantage in trying times, cattle racing has a meaning beyond simply racing cattle because of the position of cattle in the society and the society's understanding of them. At the time, certainly, it was justifiable to see cattle racing as inconsequential in the light of the tumult that surrounded it. The chaotic process of incorporating the area into the British Empire meant that anyone at that time and place, or looking back on that time and place, will necessarily have their view of a sport like cattle racing obscured by political and social upheavals. And this is not unreasonable: it was after all the political and social turmoil that made the area what it is today, not cattle racing. The subjugation of the people and the creation of the region's political economy, in the words of Legassick, "was a product of British rule, and of the growing integration of South Africa into the world economy of 19th Century capitalism. British influence hardened the hierarchies of race, and strengthened the hegemony of white colonists."[75] Little of the Eastern Cape's history would have looked as it does without these processes unfolding as they did. And this appears to apply equally to sports in the area, as both Soga and Hunter attribute the end of sports to colonial regulations.

The Regulations that Killed Sport

The conquest of this region occurred throughout the nineteenth century. The changes in global politics during that time meant that modes of governance – the overall objectives and methods of governing – were changing as the modern state and modern statecraft were being developed. The conquest of the Eastern Cape was driven by a series of competing tensions. At times a policy or action might have been for the profit of the Crown, at another time an action was aimed at placating the political class of settlers. Either way, the action may have been held back or reinforced by a lack of certainty in the international political order. A tension between direct and indirect rule, and changing understandings of who was being governed and how they should be governed, made for a haphazard enterprise with little confidence in itself. Tendrils of policy extended and withdrew constantly in and out of the Eastern Cape, touching and

[74] K. McGarry, "Sport in Transition: Emerging Trends on Cultural Change in the Anthropology of Sport", in *Reviews in Anthropology*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2010), p. 151.
[75] M. Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape 1800-1854: Subjugation and the Roots of South African Democracy* (KMM Review, 2010), p. 105.

altering daily life, and drawing the independent people of the region gradually more under British influence and, finally, under British rule.

Colonisation was complex and nonlinear. By seeing it as such we can appreciate the growing lack of autonomy of those living in the Eastern Cape, not as a result of sudden conquest but as elements of colonial managerialism and bureaucracy crept in through different programmes, policies and practices. In the wake of the Mpondomise Rebellion of 1880,[76] the colonial government began to assert control more aggressively over the Transkeian Territories. Direct control was rapidly intensified after the eventual annexation of Pondoland in 1894, because this brought the last piece of independent territory between the Cape and Natal Colonies under British rule.[77] The government invested the magistrate system with even more authority,[78] further curtailing the already substantially reduced power of the pre-colonial political authorities.[79] The political independence of these political structures was lost as the Transkeian Territories were incorporated into the colonial, and later, apartheid state. This was not some relatively abstract political or economic incorporation, but involved a restructuring of the daily lives of people in the Transkei through, for example, an intensive project of road and bridge building to unite the Cape with Natal, thus circumventing the Boer territories[80] and further expansion of the trading store system.[81]

A series of proclamations was implemented from 1887 to 1903 to preserve certain species of animals in the Transkeian forests through applying controls on hunting. Hunting in these forests played an important role in the economic lives of local residents, both as a source of subsistence and trade goods in the form of meat and skins, and as a protective measure to control animals that attacked livestock and ate crops outside the forests.[82] In Tropp's words, "it was this interest

[76] In which King Mhlontlo of the Mpondomise rose up against British rule with his armies, and encouraged others to do the same, largely because of the erosion of systems of traditional governance under British "protectorate status." This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
[77] W. Beinart, "Joyini Inkomo: Cattle Advances and the Origins of Migrancy from Pondoland," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1979), p. 199.
[78] Upon being 'granted' protectorate status by the British, each district of the "Native Reserves" was assigned a European Magistrate. In theory the British policy was non-interference in customary law and the authority of the chiefs (as they were identified by the British), excluding crimes involving violence which were placed in the hands of the magistrates. The magistrate system also included an automatic right to appeal any conviction or sanction imposed by customary laws which, in effect, substantially reduced the authority of chiefs.
[79] D. Hammond-Tooke, "Chieftainship in Transkeian Political Development," in *Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 4. (1964), p. 516.
[80] KAB NA 521/A456.
[81] R. Volk, "'Red Sales in the Sunset': The Rise and Fall of White Trader Dominance in the United States' Navajo Reservation and South Africa's Transkei," in *Safundi*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2007), p. 16.
[82] Tropp, "Dogs, Poison and Colonial Intervention" (2002), pp. 452-453.

in pursuing and protecting their livelihoods that most vividly and directly conflicted with colonial priorities and schemes of wildlife preservation."[83]

This conflict was not limited to hunting. Colonial attempts at "wildlife preservation" and protecting valuable timber resources meant livestock access to the forests was also limited. The direct threat to the livelihoods of people through this dual enclosure of the Transkei forests was, as far as possible, resisted by them. Attempts by the colonial administration to enforce the laws simply led to greater and greater antagonism between forestry officials and local residents. Permit restrictions for both hunting and grazing in the forests, the greater enclosure of grazing land as forest reserve, closed seasons and species reservations for hunting, a pound system for 'stray' livestock and penalties in the form of fines, all failed to discourage people from using the resources of the forest. The most heavy-handed of all measures taken, however, was the systematic elimination of dogs used for hunting in the forests by shooting them on sight and, even more disturbingly, the laying out of strychnine-laced pork in the forest reserves. This practice began in the 1890s and became progressively more widespread over the next two decades. Tropp notes that by the "late 1890s and early 1900s, officers and guards regularly included a tally of dogs destroyed by gun and poison in their reports on vermin control."[84]

These two measures relating to access to the forests affected the lives of people in inevitable and tragic ways. The prohibition on livestock entering the forest reserves meant that access to streams, food and shelter during inclement weather (whether hot and dry or cold and wet) was removed. This exacerbated the effects of drought and losses during winters and storms, while affecting the overall health of herds. Large grazing areas outside the forests were made inaccessible by their inclusion within declared forest reserve areas, and even access to grazing outside of declared areas was affected because the paths from one pasture to another were often through the forest reserves.[85]

The prohibition on hunting not only prevented local groups from gaining access to foods and items of trade that they had previously hunted in the forest areas, but also meant that animal populations increased in those areas. Attacks on livestock by leopards and on crops by porcupine, bush pig and antelope increased, further weakening herds and the ability of residents to subsist in Transkei. Dogs were used for hunting but also for protection, acting as the homesteads' security mechanism against human and animal threats. Killing their dogs left

[83] Tropp, "Dogs, Poison and Colonial Intervention" (2002), p. 453.
[84] Ibid., p. 458.
[85] Tropp, "Contested Colonial Landscapes" (2004), pp. 120-121.

residents with no defence against the growing number of animals threatening their livestock and crops.[86]

The period from the 1890s to the 1930s saw the final subjugation of the people of Transkei. With subsistence already made far more difficult by colonial law and policy, Transkei was struck by a series of ecological disasters. The most important of these was the rinderpest epidemic, which effectively destroyed the cattle in Transkei in 1896 and 1897. This epidemic resulted in the death of up to 90% of cattle, either from the disease or efforts to control it. It occurred alongside a series of droughts which characterised the last half of that decade.[87] By 1904, the same year that rinderpest was finally eliminated from South Africa, another epizootic was entering the country: East Coast Fever.[88] In order to prevent a reprise of the enormous destruction wrought by the rinderpest, dipping tanks were built in Transkei from 1906 but did little to stop the East Coast Fever from entering the territory from Natal in 1911. The Stock Diseases Act of 1911 was extended to Transkei in 1912.[89] In this act weekly dipping at the stockowners' expense became compulsory and severe transport restrictions were imposed, making it very difficult to move cattle. The result was a higher financial burden for dipping and a collapse in the price of cattle.[90]

The cumulative effect of these various catastrophes on the people of Transkei reached a breaking point in 1912, which was yet another year of drought. In a letter dated October 30th 1912, Robert J. Callaway, a missionary in Eastern Pondoland, wrote to the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa saying:

> The East Coast Fever has swept away all but a very small percentage of the cattle. I do not know the exact figures but I doubt if there are twenty span of immune oxen left in East Pondoland.
>
> The mealie harvest was practically a failure this year. The natives reaped practically nothing. For months they have been buying in the stores. Now that Transport is so scarce a sack of grain is being sold at from 35/= to 40/= at all the stores in this district. I believe the price is somewhat lower at stores nearer Kokstad & nearer Natal. So far the actual pinch has not been acutely felt as the sale of hides of the beasts which have died of the East Coast Fever has kept the natives in cash. But the sale of hides is only a temporary matter.

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[86] Tropp, "Dogs, Poison and Colonial Intervention" (2002), p. 461.
[87] C. Van Onselen, "Reactions to Rinderpest in Southern Africa 1896-97," in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1972), p. 484.
[88] C. Bundy, "'We don't want your rain, we won't dip': Popular Opposition, Collaboration and Social Control in the Anti-dipping Movement, c. 1908-16," in W. Beinart, and C. Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape 1890-1930* (Ravan, 1987), p. 195.
[89] Bundy, "'We don't want your rain'" (1987), p. 195.
[90] Ibid., p. 196.

> In the meanwhile a new disaster has appeared. The channel of the mouth of the St. Johns River has silted up so that it is dangerous for the two small steamers [...] to cross the bar. [...] If St. John's is closed it means the whole of Lusikisiki district is carved out from its food supply.
>
> As regards the prospects for the future the outlook is indeed gloomy. The drought continues unbroken right through the ploughing-months. When the rain does come the ploughing will have to be done by hand....[91]

The collision of environmental pressures and the administrative measures put in place across Transkei resulted in an extremely difficult situation for residents. Festering distrust led to a complete breakdown in the relationship between residents and government. This was expressed in both overt and more subtle ways. Between November 1914 and 1916 troops were sent into several northern inland districts to quell dissent centred on the dipping regulations.[92] In people's attempts to access grazing land, innovative methods of dissent emerged as well as adaptations to land management practices in certain areas. Prior to colonial measures restricting movements of cattle and people, many groups migrated towards better grazing areas in dry seasons or times of drought.[93] Now, in the words of District Forest Officer A.G. Potter, writing in 1908, "the stock 'belonging' to natives living adjacent to the forest reserves increases miraculously during the winter months ... a man who may not have a fowl in the summer will possess great flocks and herds when the forest-grazing is sought after."[94]

The policies of the colonial government were far-reaching and went well beyond the political and economic landscape. As we have seen, a major factor in the economic circumstances of the people of Transkei was policy not aimed at economics at all, but at environmental management. And the environmental management policies collided with ecological circumstances, each feeding into the other in a viciously destructive way. It was this combination of material circumstances to which the people of Transkei were forced to respond.

<u>Notes on the Remains of Pre-Colonial Sport</u>

The above section on regulations is drawn from several sources, but primarily from two papers by Jacob Tropp: "Dogs, Poison and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa" (2002) and "The Contested Nature of Colonial Landscapes" (2004). Tropp's approach, in his own words, offers "fresh perspectives on state-peasant environmental

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[91] SAB VOL.1/1/300 PM 155/21/1912.
[92] Bundy, "'We don't want your rain'" (1987), pp. 191-221.
[93] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981), pp.14-15.
[94] Tropp, "Contested Colonial Landscapes" (2004), p. 122.

relations,"[95] where previous work had tended to "reflect state domination and definitions of resources ... more than those of African historical actors themselves."[96] Several valuable insights are gained from Tropp's repositioning of "African historical actors." Most notable is the way his analysis of environmental laws manages to show the impact of colonialism on everyday experience in Transkei. He manages to highlight how people aimed to improve their conditions on a day-to-day basis, not only by combatting the State in grand coordinated ways. Political action consisted of people doing what they could in a tough situation. But Tropp's focus keeps some aspects of life hidden. Concentrating on the state-peasant relationship neglects important ways in which colonial impositions changed daily experience. The "African historical actors" Tropp speaks of were actors not only in relation to the colonial state, but in relation to each other too. A change in colonial policy might change an aspect of life that appears to have little to do with what is being addressed in that policy.

Resistance is a major theme in the history of the area and in studies of colonialism more generally. Part of the motivation for this focus is to restore agency to historical actors who had been portrayed as only having history 'happen to them.' In the 1980s, Beinart and Bundy in *Hidden Struggles* effectively documented overt, collective acts of resistance and moved some way towards the goal of restoring agency to African political actors in the Eastern Cape. Later, Tropp, following a broader trend of exploring less overt forms of resistance, showed how African actors resisted the environmental regulations without the mass and extraordinary social action present in, for example, the anti-dipping movement. Again, this served to help restore agency. However, in each case an act of resistance is construed as an act specifically against colonial oppression and can, at times, give the impression that African actors were agents only in relation to the European presence. The various actions taken by historical agents to address changes brought about by colonialism, and changes in ecological conditions, deserve attention because they highlight the fact that these actors are agents in every aspect of their lives, and not only in relation to European people, politics and society. The story of cattle racing highlights this agency. And resistance would logically have been as much a part of pre-colonial politics as it was during colonial times. Perhaps the scale of upheaval was greater, the disjunction was greater, but the agent's nature did not change between the pre-colonial and colonial eras. The social histories of Transkei, even those which (like Tropp) intend to focus on 'the peasantry,' seldom make explicit the fact that people act as individuals in the world.

[95] Tropp, "Contested Colonial Landscapes" (2004), p. 119.
[96] Ibid., p. 137.

They did so before the colonial state and continued to do so during and after it. While Tropp acknowledges as much, he still fails to make it clear to the reader that there is a strong and complex nexus of specificities on which people act.

Viewed in light of Tropp's work on the "state-peasant environmental relations," the manner in which *uleqo*, *ingqina* and *ipulo* ended can be appreciated. But focusing only on state-peasant environmental relations obscures some of the meaning of these activities. As a result, we are not able to appreciate that the frustrations felt by residents of Transkei towards the colonial government went beyond the economic hardships that resulted from colonial measures and environmental conditions. By shifting our focus to ask how peasants saw these activities beyond the direct terms of their relation to the state, we have to recognise the indignity they must have suffered as a result of having their two favourite sports effectively cancelled. The state simultaneously removed what was not only an economic resource but also a major source of enjoyment and socialising. Such omissions from the historical record are common. The myriad ways in which changes in conditions affect areas of life not directly connected to these changes is given little attention in histories. The sheer inter-connectedness of aspects of life is hard to recognise and record. When one condition changes it may send ripples across various areas of life.

A better understanding of the socio-environmental conditions does complicate Hunter and Soga's emphasis on the effects of regulation on sports, though we must accept that Hunter and Soga, who were writing at the time when *uleqo* finally disappeared, accurately reported the prevailing belief that environmental regulations were the death blow to cattle racing and hunting. With regard to hunting, not just the regulations but also deforestation and a reduction in the numbers of animals in the area, as the population grew substantially over the twentieth century, would have contributed to the end of the sport. Certainly the regulations drove hunting underground. The time of having "some 200"[97] people in a hunting party was over. But, as with so many prohibited activities, it did continue. Even today, despite the laws against hunting with dogs, I know of several people who actively engage in the sport, all of whom I met in the course of fieldwork for this research. The dogs are most often used for hunting jackals. They take immense pride in their dogs and the training of them. Groups of five or six dogs at a time will be released and, on command, will begin to track jackals, leaving any other animal they encounter untouched. I have been told that some are trained to respond to certain species of

[97] Tropp, "Dogs, Poison and Colonial Intervention" (2002), p. 458.

antelope. The aim is to train the dog to kill the antelope as quickly as possible while doing as little damage as possible to the carcass. A well-trained pack will corner an animal with one dog delivering a bite to its neck, locking down and killing it in about 30 seconds.[98] Unfortunately it is difficult to ascertain more than this. People are secretive about the practice because of its illegality and the stigma attached to it; but the fact remains that nearly a century-and-a-half after the hunting ban, people still hunt and still do so with dogs similar to those that were used in the time that Tropp writes about.

Just as with hunting, it is impossible to know to what extent the racing of cattle was dealt a blow, not by the regulations, but by the conditions that gave rise to those regulations. The cattle killing movement of 1856 and 1857, precipitated by a bovine lung sickness epidemic, is said to have depleted Sarhili's herd from 6000 prior to the cattle killings to "sharing the milk of seven cows with his brothers and 60 women and children" by October 1857. "It was all he had."[99] The rinderpest epidemic, four decades later, killed approximately 90% of the cattle in the area, while less than a decade after that, East Coast Fever left some areas with as little as "twenty span of immune oxen."[100] With the information at our disposal it is not possible to know to what extent cattle racing was in decline prior to the regulations, but it seems likely that it would have been severely affected by the epidemics prior to the regulations. Perhaps the regulations are held responsible because they prevented a revival of the sport. Perhaps the sport was to all intents and purposes already extinct, but blame was placed on the regulations because of widespread antipathy towards the dipping regulations, and because the anti-dipping movement was still fresh in the minds of the people of Transkei.

Cattle Racing and Horse Racing

Soga was right, in a sense, when he lamented that cattle racing was "doomed to extinction in the near future." *Uleqo* never did recover and is seldom remembered other than in passing in academic histories of Transkei. Hunter saw the direction the sport would take, observing that "the galloping of horses through the *inkundla* is to some extent taking the place of cattle-racing."[101] Horses replaced cattle in the racing culture. There are several points of connection between the sports. With a comparatively small change from one species to another, *uleqo* could be saved. Horses are mentioned in accounts of cattle racing, so horses had already been

[98] So I have been told, but I have no other evidence of this.
[99] Peires, *The Dead Will Arise* (1989), p. 278.
[100] See letter on p. 50.
[101] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p. 367.

introduced to the cattle racing areas. Yet horse racing in the cattle racing areas we know of seems to have only begun to resemble a sport in the first decades of the twentieth century. Cattle racing was already in an advanced state of decline at that time. We know that cattle had significant status and cultural meaning in the area. We know that horses were only introduced to the area during the early stages of colonisation, but were rapidly taken up and assimilated into the society.[102]

From the mid-2000s to the present, greater facilitation and coordination of horse races in the Eastern Cape has led to an increasing homogeneity in the rules and styles of horse racing. Despite this, there is still a long-standing division evident in the preferences for and popularity of the different styles of racing. In the eastern areas the tripling style of racing, *umhambo*, holds the most prestige, while in the western areas the most popular style is *umphalo*, a high speed gallop. The preferences for different styles appear to resort around a loose axis along a north/south line through Idutywa, where, interestingly, a third, less common but still popular style of racing exists. *Umkhwelo* is a long-distance racing style which occurs only a few times annually, and usually in the areas just to the south and west of Idutywa.

Umhambo, in line with Hunter's description of *ukugqutsha* (*uleqo*), emphasises style. That is, the appearance of the animal as it races is important, not simply its speed. While it is true that *umhambo* is now a part of a race in the proper sense – the *umhambo* horse need only maintain the style while it crosses the finish line first – this is fairly recent. *Umhambo* became a test of speed only in the mid-1970s, prior to which competitive racing consisted only of *umphalo*. In the eastern areas there was a lot of out-of-contest performance riding in *umhambo* style that did not occur as frequently in the west. *Umhambo* is a display style of riding which featured prior to its incorporation into races as "curtain raisers" and "floor sweepers." It is about showing off your horse and its gait, and your prowess as a rider, in much the way that Hunter characterised cattle-racing.

The area in which Hunter was writing about cattle racing is the area in which *umhambo* predominated, and when the two are compared they reveal striking similarities. Both emphasised entertainment and style, rather than speed. And in both cases, the races were conducted at social gatherings of all sorts and were not held as events in their own right. The word *umdyarho*, denoting a horse race, was apparently not found in Pondoland or the former territories of Griqualand East (incorporating the districts beyond Mthatha towards KwaZulu-

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[102] See pp. 64-69.

Natal). People would not attend *umdyarho*, they would attend a celebration of another kind and would race horses there. *Umdyarho*, which, as I have mentioned, was until the mid-1970s held only in the *umphalo* style, is said to have been introduced to the eastern areas by an Irish trader named L. P. Moore: Moore is credited in Qumbu with the 'invention' of *umdyarho*.[103] This detail is a tribute to the impeccable accuracy of Hunter's information. She notes that "nowadays there are horse-races in which it is speed that matters, but they are held at special meets, organised by European and Coloured men."[104] Informants in the Qumbu district also say, in support of Hunter, that this was the first time that horses were tested purely on speed, in an all-out gallop.[105]

The implication is that in the eastern areas, *umhambo* came to replace the forms of *uleqo* which had been popular previously. There was also very little change in the form that races took, regardless of the animals participating. A similar pattern can be seen in the western region. The narratives of informants from the western and southern areas diverged from those of their northern and eastern counterparts by maintaining that people had regularly gathered specifically to race horses[106] for the duration of living memory, and that these races would be run at a gallop: *umphalo*. *Umhambo* was, until very recently, virtually non-existent in these areas.[107] This complements the Sogas' accounts of *uleqo*, where races were about who entered the *inkundla* first, meaning that the emphasis was on speed. *Umphalo* corresponds with Soga's descriptions of *uleqo*. From the little information we have on cattle racing, the district where Soga was writing was within the areas in which *umphalo* became popular, just as the areas of which Hunter wrote preferred *umhambo*. Furthermore, the long-distance race described by J.H. Soga occurred in the same area where we now find long-distance horse races.

The Sogas both speak about weddings finishing with a cattle race. In the course of fieldwork I encountered frequent mention of horse races at "traditional weddings." Several informants insisted that one of the main occasions for horse racing now was weddings, with some going as far as to say that "without horses there would be no weddings in our culture."[108] In Tiyo Soga's description, horses are mentioned as being present at weddings but not as being raced. No mention is made of horse racing by either of the Sogas, barring J.H. Soga's observation that

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[103] See Chapter 4.
[104] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p. 367.
[105] See Chapter 4 and 5.
[106] Ibid.
[107] See M. Griffith, C. Paterson, & J. Roberts, *The Status of Traditional Horse Racing in the Eastern Cape* (Rhodes University, 2013).
[108] Whittlesea Stakeholder Meeting, 25 October 2013.

the position of cattle racing was similar to that held by horse racing in England. It seems probable that horse races, whether *umhambo* or *umphalo*, were incorporated into weddings in a way almost identical to the way in which cattle races are described by the Sogas and Hunter.

To state the point clearly: the areas where the *umhambo*, *umphalo* and *umkhwelo* styles of horse racing predominate correlate geographically with the kinds of cattle racing that used to occur there. And practices which involved cattle racing as a part of the day's proceedings, such as weddings or *umjadu*, replaced the cattle race with a horse race. *Uleqo* did not just disappear, but was transformed into *umdyarho*. Furthermore, from the facts that horses were already in the area during the time of cattle racing, and that horse races appear to have been occurring only in the most southern and western reaches of the area at that time, we can assume that cattle racing became horse racing as cattle racing became less possible. Horse racing developed as an adaptation to keep a sport alive.

By the time that Soga and Hunter were writing, the Transkeian Territories formed a crucible where politics and the environment were acting as catalysts in social change. A thriving cattle racing culture existed. Like horse racing, cattle racing was a sport that necessarily extended beyond the events themselves and into the everyday lives of participants. In both sports, participants had to consider which animals to enter into a race. They had to invest time in preparing an animal for a race, and had to remain in contact with other participants throughout in order to organise the race, or, at least, to know that one was happening. People had to invest in the sport in one way or another outside of the racing events. Horse racing did not supersede cattle racing. Horses were brought into an already existing cattle racing culture, almost without alteration in the manner of performance. The geographical uniqueness of style was retained, and the social events that hosted races continued to do so (even for events at which cattle racing was considered customary). Only the species changed. The transition from one species to another occurred in order to keep this popular entertainment alive.

This does not mean that *umdyarho* is simply *uleqo* with a different species. *Uleqo* allowed you to exhibit your class position through a display of your cattle. Horses are not cattle, the function they served was different, as was the symbolic understanding of species. The horse had been only very recently introduced into the areas under study and the functional and symbolic value of the species was only newly developed. The way in which horses came to be understood, and the way in which this changed the culture around cattle racing, are discussed in the chapter that follows.

Figure 20: Thokoza. (Mthatha, 20 January 2016)

- Chapter 2 -

'Spirits of Iron': "Growing up," the Symbol of a Horse and Its Expression in Horse Racing

"I am from Tsolo. It is an Mpondomise area. But I am not Mpondomise, I am Hlubi."[109] This is how Thokoza[110] began his story. He told me that a few months after his grandfather had passed away, in 2007, he had a dream in which he heard his grandfather calling him. For many a dream like this would have passed without incident. But to Thokoza, recently in training ("*thwasa*") to be a sangoma, it was an exciting moment. Sangomas – spirit healers and herbalists – rely on dreams to connect with ancestral spirits. To *thwasa* is a calling. In Thokoza's case, he had attended an *intlombe*[111] ceremony in Ntambalala near Port St Johns years before. During the ceremony one of the sangoma's threw their *tshoba*[112] at Thokoza's feet indicating that he had received a message to convey to him. The gesture is common, and the recipient can choose to have the sangoma speak to them there, or to move away from the group for the message to be conveyed. A nervous Thokoza opted for the latter. He and the sangoma left the circle, and outside he was told that he was *mntu hlope* – a person of the light.[113] He was meant to *thwasa*, train to be a sangoma. He was shaken by the message, but did not *thwasa* immediately, nor when that same message was again conveyed to him during another *intlombe* by different sangomas. It would be almost a decade before he began his training.

Thokoza narrated his story to me over several hours, almost without interruption, and explained elements of his cosmological system in close detail and with a clarity which I had not encountered before. It is difficult to describe an entire cosmology exhaustively, and what I offer here is necessarily a simplification of a complex belief system. Thokoza's frame of reference for his dream is based on the connection between the living and their deceased ancestors. The power or strength of a person in his system of thought grows from birth into adulthood as their

[109] Interview with Thokoza: 20 January 2016, Mthatha. The entirety of Thokoza's story is from his own narrative presented to me that day.

[110] Thokoza was not born Thokoza. The name was acquired when he became a sangoma.

[111] A healing ceremony involving dance and drumming. Interestingly, early-stage *thwasa* who are tasked with drumming at *intlombe* are sometimes referred to as *noqalinkundla*, the name used to refer to the opening horse race of a race day.

[112] *Tshoba* is a ritual item carried by a sangoma. It consists of a short beaded stick with a cow's tail placed at the top. The cow's tail is that of the cow slaughtered during the *thwasa*'s final graduation to being a sangoma.

[113] Directly, a "white person," *hlope* meaning the colour "white." Interestingly, translated descriptions of dreams have sometimes spoken of ancestors as 'white' (*hlope*). For example "A 'white' woman (ancestor) was standing on the stones (at a river)" (Schweitzer, "Dream Interpretation" (1996), n.p.). So the reference to *mntu hlope* may refer to a connection, or an ability to connect to, the deceased ancestral guides and mentors, who area also '*mntu hlope'*.

strength and wisdom increases. A person does not peak in adulthood, but continues to accumulate wisdom and influence, as is believed in many parts of the world, into old age and even beyond death. Elders are thus respected and ancestors revered.

The connections among growth, wisdom and power are strong. There is a single thread from childhood up to and beyond death and into another 'place' from which one can maintain a connection with the living, giving guidance and wisdom. Importantly, the conception of "growth" is intimately connected to personhood. Personhood is a process of becoming, socially bestowed rather than immediately attained. Thus being and becoming are intertwined. This does not mean, of course, that a newborn is not a person, but rather that personhood – or manhood, or womanhood – is something which you learn and achieve. Thus you are a person by virtue of acting as such. You become a person by living and growing, and as you grow you become wiser and stronger in your role as a person in a society. This begins at birth and continues beyond physical death. That is, "on dying, the deceased adult becomes an ancestor who still shares in the activities of their daily living"[114] by acting as "guides or mentors."[115] Should the family neglect those who are (in principle) their more senior members, the family may incur misfortune. This misfortune would not come directly from the deceased, but would rather result from the deceased's withholding protection against some other cause or force that is now able to affect the family. Peires's emphasis is well placed when he observes that "it seems probable that most of the important features of Xhosa religion are extensions of household worship, relating as they do to ancestor veneration or the life cycle."[116]

Thokoza's father had had a similar experience of 'being called', but did not *thwasa*. Then, in mid-2007, he died after a short illness. "So my father passed away," he said to me, "and I think that it took a toll on my old man as well. You know, his son going away before him, and then the next month he passed away." It became a concern in the family that Thokoza would be faced with bad luck in the future. His father had been meant to *thwasa* and had resisted it, so that now his life had "been cut short because he wasn't answering his calling." And with death of his grandfather shortly afterwards, the family began to worry about Thokoza. He had already decided to *thwasa* and had been trying to save up money to do so "because I'm moving around

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[114] M. V. Buhrmann & N. Gqomfa, "The Xhosa Healers of Southern Africa," in *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol. 26 (1981), p. 297.
[115] Buhrmann & Gqomfa, "Xhosa Healers" (1981), p. 297.
[116] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981), p. 72. Through this emphasis it is possible to see the way in which the politics and metaphysics of the area were intertwined. Political power and authority was by way of lineage, in which specific senior family members were required to exercise authority over specific branches of a lineage.

in circles for the past ten years after I left 'varsity. I'm not progressing, I'm living, I'm moving, I'm not struggling, but for some reason… no." Amid growing concern in the family, his grandfather's sister offered to pay for a portion of his time in training. The month after his grandfather's death, Thokoza moved to Bizana and got initiated as a *thwasa*.

His grandfather had been a diabetic and walked with difficulty. He nevertheless needed to eat regularly because of his condition. When his sugar levels became too low he would call out for someone at the house to bring him food. "Sometimes it would be frustrating," Thokoza tells me, "because he'd call three or four times during the night … in the dream it was one of those days when he would, like, just keep on nagging and nagging."[117] Thokoza went to his room to help his grandfather, and his grandfather asked why it had taken him so long to get there. Thokoza said that he was outside and hadn't heard him call. His grandfather, seeing that he was frustrated, said to him "Oh! You know what you need? You need to slaughter a horse. And it must be a wild horse. That's what you need! And that will help you to get more balance up in your head."[118]

The process of training relies mainly on one's dreams and it is through dreams that the deceased, the ancestors of the living, will most often convey messages or instructions.[119] So to have a recently deceased relative visit him in a dream and request something of him was considered a powerful sign. As a trainee one is assigned a mentor to guide one through a process of recognising the significance of one's dreams. As Thokoza put it "you need to learn your dreams,"[120] because they will show you what ceremonies need to be performed, where they need to be performed and how they need to be performed. While some dreams will simply be dreams,[121] others will convey messages that need to be heeded.[122] It is the role of the mentor to teach the *thwasa* to understand the language of his or her dreams. Each morning as a *thwasa* you will visit your mentor and kneel in from of them while burning a wild sage plant, *impepho*, under your face, and narrate your dreams of the previous night. Through this process you will be able to develop a kind of 'fitness' and become better at remembering the details of your dreams through practice. Through your mentor's guidance you will learn to distinguish *iphupha* from *ithongo*, dreams 'from within' from dreams 'from without'. You will further learn to

[117] Thokoza, 20 January 2016.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] *Iphupha*, a word which refers to any ordinary dream.
[122] Dreams which contain messages or which are "from the ancestors" are referred to as *ithongo*.

interpret *ithongo* correctly. In Thokoza's school of training to be a sangoma,[123] the process traditionally requires several steps which are dreamed. "First," says Thokoza, "you are meant to dream a spear." The *thwasa* must then find that specific spear. After the *thwasa* has their spear, they will dream a specific goat which they must ritually slaughter. This marks entrance into the second phase of training. Then the *thwasa* must dream a specific cow which will be ritually slaughtered during the final "graduation ceremony" as a *sangoma*.

The morning after the dream an excited Thokoza rushed to his mentor for the morning routine. He did not get the response that he was hoping for. "Hayibo[124] – a horse! – I'm still expecting you to dream a goat and now you're telling me you dreamed a horse…. Now you're telling me about horses," she said. Thokoza spent the following week watching his dreams, expecting some more information or even just some validation of his dream, but nothing came. The following week his mentor said to him "you know that dream you told me about last week? I had a dream last night. We were at your home and it was your final ceremony. In front of me was the cow being slaughtered, but now I looked to the side and there is a horse that was slaughtered. The cow is just being skinned, but the horse is skinned already." Thokoza got excited. "I don't know what I'm going to do about this because who's going to eat a horse? I've never heard about this with a horse being used in ceremonies, and people here don't eat horses." A few days later another sangoma has a dream where, in Thokoza's words, "she's shown now that the horse must go down first, and then just as it's been slaughtered, you must skin it and take out the liver, cut a piece and then other pieces and give it to me raw, and I must eat those. Okay, good, and then that was sorted and then *mama* knew when I go for my final ceremony, the horse must be slaughtered."

"The horse dream got quiet" after that, he says. He found his goat and spear and entered into his second stage of training. But then the dreams started up again. He was standing next to a field in his dream. There are several horses in the field but there is one that interests him: a red stallion. He walks over to the horse and it looks up at him. As he approaches it he wakes up. A while later he has another dream. He is riding the red stallion. It breaks into a gallop and Thokoza realises that he has no reins, so he holds onto its mane. Beside him are cliffs and he panics and wakes himself up. Near the end of his training and after a ceremony on the coast, a third dream comes: Thokoza is in his neighbour's garden looking at plants and the horse comes through the gate and stands grazing next to him. "I just grabbed the mane and I was on top of

[123] I use the term 'school' here in the sense of a school of thought and tradition, not a specific establishment.
[124] A common exclamation of astonishment.

it," he says, "and we walked out. And then we rode. Now, no reins, but no fear. We were like one. On top of the horse. Before I didn't have any control, but this time, just before my final ceremony, I got on and we moved and I didn't get scared or anything throughout the dream."

Thokoza needed to find his horse, as he had with his goat and his cow. The trouble that Thokoza had was that, in his words, "people don't simply sell horses." But just before his ceremony, a man was found who had a red stallion like the one Thokoza had seen. It was a trained tripling horse which Thokoza convinced the man to sell. "But, see, my cow didn't have a tail. And we need to make the tail into the *tshoba*. So after we slaughtered I used my horse's tail. And that's how I'm the only sangoma with a *tshoba* from a horse instead of a cow."

If you ask Thokoza why this dream came as it did, why his ancestors wanted him to slaughter a horse, he'll tell you that he thinks the main reason is "the Hlubi connection." The Hlubi, he'll tell you, have a closer connection to the Basotho than the Mpondomise. Hlubi groups who had moved into the Mpondomise areas during the late nineteenth century had initially moved from Natal via Lesotho during the upheavals of the early part of that century. Thokoza thinks that this may be a kind of tribute he must pay to the Hlubi/Basotho line of his ancestors, an aspect of his personal heritage that he was required to recognise. In support of this, Thokoza told me about the two main forms of *ulwaluko* – the rites marking the transition from boyhood to manhood.[125] One form follows the "Xhosa tradition," the other the "Hlubi tradition." In the Hlubi tradition, he tells me, even the language spoken is Sotho. And as for the relationship with horses, "it's kind of different there in Lesotho because people don't just ride them and work with them, but they also slaughter them and eat them."[126] Thokoza's placing emphasis here makes sense because it is *ithongo*, and his daily life is centred on his lineage through the metaphysics of ancestral connectedness and presence. His interpretation is intuitive, as is all dream interpretation by Thokoza and other sangomas, and is only one of several layered meanings that may be attributed to each dream. Two other possible meanings will be discussed here. Both can contribute to our understanding of the connection between Thokoza's dreams and the symbolic value of a horse in the area of research. The first is Thokoza's primary understanding of his dream, and this requires a discussion of the position of horses in Lesotho. Lesotho is the most well-known African 'horse culture' and is a convenient place to discuss

[125] See pp. 72-81.
[126] Thokoza: 20 January 2016.

how horses were assimilated there and in the Eastern Cape. The following section outlines the acquisition and spread of horses into Lesotho and the Eastern Cape.

The Introduction and Incorporation of Horses

The position of horses in Lesotho is well known, and horses, along with rifles and the attire of blankets and flat-cone hats, combine to form the image of an archetypal 'Basotho warrior.' A common saying describes the Basotho as "horse people," or, as Sandra Swart puts it, "only one African group became a wholly mounted polity – the Basotho."[127] It is also true that the "long link with horses is acknowledged in the ironic identity *majapere* (the horse eaters) adopted in jest by Basotho themselves,"[128] but Basotho don't systematically slaughter and eat horses, at least not in the manner found, for example, in the parts of central Asia where horses are traditionally eaten. Horses are eaten in Lesotho when necessary, but they are not considered a source of food *per se*. Horses are more valuable alive than dead.

The incorporation of horses in Basotho culture and society is discussed in detail by Swart in *Riding High: Horses, Humans and History in South Africa*, notably in a chapter entitled "The Empire Rides Back: An African Response to the Horse in Southern Africa." Swart clearly outlines the process by which horses and guns were removed from the imperial and colonial monopoly, and used as a strategic military and economic resource by the Basotho in the process of state-building. In that same chapter she argues that the role of the horse shifted from the technology of war to that of a "socio-economic utility" over the course of the nineteenth century, that is, "from military usage to general transport and retail purposes."[129] She argues that the introduction of horses into the Basotho territories and their acquisition by the Basotho provided a strategic resource by which the Basotho could, first, adopt and design a military strategy. This allowed them to offer stronger resistance to the various incursions and expansions by the new political groups that threatened them. Secondly, horses could provide the transport and communications improvements through which the process of modern state-building could occur in Lesotho; and thirdly, the horse trade could help meet the economic requirements of both defence and state-building.

The immediate need driving the acquisition of horses was military. With the Drakensberg forming a natural barrier along the eastern rim of the Basotho proto-state, the major threat to the decentralised and largely independent Sotho-speaking groups came from the South and

[127] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), p. 79.
[128] Ibid., p. 78.
[129] Ibid., p. 101.

West. These threats consisted of various loosely-affiliated groups of runaways, deserters and displaced indigenous people commonly referred to as the Griqua and Kora (among others).[130] There were also groups of Boers who later formed the Free State and Transvaal Republics, as well as British forces. The key advantage held by all these groups over the local inhabitants was the possession of guns and horses. It became a matter of urgency for the proto-Basotho to acquire both guns and horses,[131] and they did so rapidly. When Moshoeshoe established himself at his mountain stronghold of Thaba Bosiu around 1824, he had not seen a horse, though Boer frontiersmen on horseback had likely been in the southern reaches of Sotho-speaking areas for over half a century.[132] It is thought that Moshoeshoe acquired his first horse in 1829 from Moorosi, leader of the neighbouring Baphuti.[133] By 1838, Moshoeshoe had imported 200 horses, and by 1842 he would have access to 500 trained and mounted soldiers.[134] A decade later "the Basotho had an estimated armed force of between 5000 and 6000 'almost all clothed in European costumes and with saddles'."[135] The colonial report of 1895-96, cited by Swart, claims an exponential growth in the number of horses in Basotho hands: 10000 in 1860, doubling five years later, exceeding 35000 by 1875 and reaching an astonishing 81194 by the 1891 census.[136]

Another reason for the importance, and position, of horses as a part of Basotho identity comes from the horse market. The highland areas, being devoid of equine disease such as African Horse Sickness, were an ideal place for horses to live and breed. Thus the Basotho became regional suppliers of horses and the animals played a role in establishing the economic base from which state-building could occur. The improved communication and transport network similarly aided state-building through improved governance. Swart makes a strong case that through the application of horses as a "strategic resource" in the triad of defence, governance and trade, the Basotho state was able to gain an advantage in the state-building enterprise.

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[130] Griqua and Kora are likely remembered because a certain degree of national identity developed. This nationalism was an important way in which colonisers made sense of local inhabitants not under their control and the national sentiments occurred alongside the state-building of Sotho, Zulu and Mpondo groups. It was likely overemphasised by the colonial administrators in their schema, still poorly articulated, of scientific governance. It should be mentioned that historians have tended to carry this overemphasis into contemporary historical understanding.

[131] This was at a time when the Basotho were in the process of becoming more unified under the leadership of Moshoeshoe (in large part as a result of the threat from these groups).

[132] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), p. 81.

[133] Ibid., p. 83.

[134] Ibid., p. 84.

[135] Ibid., p. 88.

[136] Ibid.

The manner in which horses were introduced into Lesotho provides some insight into the way in which horses came to be common in other independent African political groups, pointing to reasons why horses were so sought after and spread so fast. But this process of acquisition was carried out across the region. As it had with the Kora and Griqua, so it did with the Basotho. The case was the same with the Xhosa, though for the Xhosa acquiring horses was apparently less important than guns because of the heavily wooded areas in which they were fighting. The nature of the terrain in Lesotho meant that a fully-mounted army provided significant advantage. The reliance on horses was taken on wholeheartedly in the defence and consolidation of the new Basotho state, thereby creating the image of the Basotho as horsemen that we know today.

It is likely that horses entered the Eastern Cape through the same expanding frontier and for the same reasons as in the future Lesotho. The earliest reference that I have found to horses in areas of potential contact with Xhosa-speaking groups (which incorporate all the groups known to have settled in Transkei and Ciskei) is from 1789, when the Scottish explorer Paterson entered the area beyond the Sundays River on horseback.[137] The kind of fighting which occurred on the Southern Frontier was sporadic and extended over many decades, but escalated from the 1820s to the 1870s. Unlike the Basotho, Xhosa raiders would not have found an enormous advantage in sizable parts of the frontier zone. Much of the terrain in the more south-westerly Xhosa areas is covered in thick bush with deep river valleys. When fighting a mounted enemy, as the Xhosa were, it may have been more advantageous to be on foot. Yet despite providing little military advantage, horses were certainly found to be of use.

During that time there was extensive raiding and counter-raiding of cattle stocks by both sides. Cattle were the most extensively stolen, but a large number of horses were also taken in these raids. Between February 1836 and December 1846 the "Diplomatic Agent of the Colonial Government with the tribe of Gaika" was C.L. Stretch, a meticulous bureaucrat.[138] He records figures and assesses the "depredations" of cattle and horses by the Xhosa against the settlers. According to the records of the Agent-General, the period from September 1836 to December 1843 saw the theft of 8775 cattle and 2171 horses. The Parliamentary Paper of 1851 records 9593 cattle and 2160 horses taken from the start of 1837 to the end of 1843, while settle, J.C. Chase, based on a list he compiled in 1844, put the figure at 11234 cattle and 2469 horses from

[137] M. Cosser, *Images of a Changing Frontier: Worldview in Eastern Cape Art from Bushman Rock Art to 1875* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1992), p. 15.
[138] C. B. Crankshaw, *The Diary of C. L. Stretch: A Critical Edition and Appraisal* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1960), p. 2.

September 1836 to December 1843.[139] Stretch's diary strongly indicates that the raids focused on cattle, not horses, but it appears as if horses were taken at every opportunity. Horses would usually be taken in numbers of three or four at a time, whereas cattle would be taken in herds. This makes sense if the raids were largely opportunistic and it corresponds to the lifestyle and animal numbers on settler farms.

By 1876, the area known as Emigrant Thembuland, which sits north of the area covered by Stretch, recorded a total population of about 40 000, of which approximately 7000 were adult men, with 5384 horses and 107 wagons.[140] Maitland in 1846 wrote in a letter to Stanley that

> since the last war of 1835, [Xhosa groups] have possessed themselves of a very large number of horses and arms, the former chiefly stolen from the colony; the latter, we blush to admit, supplied to them by unprincipled traders on the frontier.[141] They are thus rendered an enemy of a very formidable character, having it in their power to overrun and lay waste the settlement, before a military force could be brought up against them.[142]

By that year, 1846, the Xhosa groupings around the edges of the eastern frontier zone were said to be able to call on as many as 7000 mounted and armed soldiers,[143] roughly 10% of the total population according to one estimate.[144]

It is also worth noting that breeding was not strongly controlled or directed, and while in Lesotho horses were quick to take on a common enough appearance to be counted as a horse breed,[145] this doesn't seem to have ever occurred in the Eastern Cape. This lends weight to the proposition that most horses came from the southern frontier, where raiding would have constantly added heterogeneous[146] stock to the horse population and resulted in considerable variety among horses there.

The terrain of the Basotho eastern territories was suited to horse breeding as the altitude was such that the equine diseases common in the lowland territories were absent. This conferred an advantage which allowed the Basotho to export horses. While many of these horses were exported west, sold to arms traders in what is now the Free State Province of South Africa, others would likely have found their way into the then independent territories of the Eastern Cape Province.

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[139] Crankshaw, *The Diary of C. L. Stretch* (1960), pp. 88-89.
[140] E. J. C. Wagenaar, *A History of the Thembu and Their Relationship With the Cape, 1850-1900* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, 1988), p. 24.
[141] Traders are discussed extensively in Chapters 3 and 4.
[142] A. G. K. Brown, *The Diary of James Brownlee* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1980), p. 16
[143] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), p. 79.
[144] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981), p. 7.
[145] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), p. 85.
[146] Brown, *Diary of Brownlee* (1980), p. 30.

The territory inland along the mountains, particularly the Mpondomise areas, is the part of Transkei most renowned for horsemanship. In the Mpondomise areas horsemanship is a point of pride for many.[147] Horses would have been acquired from the Basotho, who shared a large frontier along the Drakensberg with the Mpondomise. We know that there was extensive contact between the two populations, as well as the settlement of other groups (such as the Hlubi) that moved gradually from KwaZulu-Natal into Lesotho, and finally into the Eastern Cape. There were also Basotho settlements in that border region of the Eastern Cape.

The terrain in the Mpondomise areas is similar to that in Lesotho, albeit at a lower altitude. The Mpondomise took advantage of this by incorporating horses into their military strategy, just as the Basotho had. This is clearly visible in the strategy of Mhlontlo's forces during the 1873 Mpondo-Mpondomise War, where the Mpondomise based their entire approach on a guerrilla campaign using mounted warriors with guns to outpace and outwit a much more numerous enemy.[148] The similarity between the Basotho and Mpondomise military strategies may also be a consequence of interaction between the peoples. Madiba, chairman of the O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association, describes the story he was told of horses in what is now Mhlontlo Local Municipality (incorporating Tsolo and Qumbu – the former "Mpondomise areas") first being

> used as transport. During the war days people used to ride their horses travelling distances to fight their enemies in other tribes. And actually then quarrelling was around the issue of stock theft … stock theft, yes, as well as border cattle raiding on the borders of Qumbu around Mount Fletcher and Matatiele. They were raiding the cattle of Lesotho from the Sothos. And [Sothos] are good at stealing the cattle and everything. They used to take some cows, on the border to Transkei, to the Lesotho side, you know. So horses are being used now to actually go and look for cattle around the veld and everything. And at times when they fight, they use horses to actually chase their enemies and defeat their enemies.[149]

It is also possible that a number of horses entered the independent territories via what was to become KwaZulu-Natal province, parts of which were Boer territories from 1839 and British territories after annexation in 1843. This is given credence by the presence of the style of riding accompanying the tripling gait that was common among Boer riders. The tripling style is found in the eastern section (as discussed in Chapter 1), KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho. Finally, the Griqua migration with horses into what became known as Griqualand East in 1862 would have allowed some access to horses. The extent of horse trading between the Griqua and adjacent

[147] Interestingly, many "groomsmen" working on professional Thoroughbred livery and training yards in Cape Town come from these areas. This thesis deals extensively with the Mpondomise areas of Tsolo and Qumbu later.
[148] See NA 159 Orpen Diary (23/08/1873, 29/08/1873 and 09/09/1873) and MS 15 662 Cory Library (Autobiography of F. P. Gladwin). Thanks to Jeff Peires for these accounts.
[149] Interview with Madiba: 28 April 2014, Mthatha.

groups is unknown, but it makes sense to suppose that horses were traded there, particularly into the Mpondomise areas adjacent to those settled by the Griqua.[150] By 1880 horses were a part of life in most of the areas discussed here.

In Lesotho the initial reason for bringing in horses seems to have been, as Swart argues, their value as a strategic resource in defence: the improved endurance, strength and speed available to a man on horseback. This does provide military advantages in many terrains, but it also provides a more general advantage. Horses in the Eastern Cape were used for the same reasons as in Lesotho, but despite this horses in the Eastern Cape did not contribute to the same kind of state-building process. When the use of horses is viewed in isolation, as it may be tempting to do in the case of the Basotho – they are, after all, the most obvious example of an indigenous African polity with a 'horse culture' in the region – the purposes of state-building and war seem clear and obvious. But if the frontier of colonial expansion is seen as a whole then a picture with a different emphasis emerges. The spread of horses over the whole region shows that their initial incorporation as a technology of warfare was soon overtaken by family and home imperatives. The triad of defence, governance and trade remains, but the triad is applicable to the home, not the state. Examples include herding, protecting and retrieving cattle, driving off predators, quicker travel carrying more weight over longer distances, improved communications. Individual Africans wanted horses for the general improvement they could make to managing the household, including defending it, though defence soon became a minor consideration.

When we broaden the area beyond Lesotho to include the entire extent of the expanding European (and equine) frontier, it becomes clear that defence was the primary reason for their initial acquisition, but not for their rapid spread and incorporation. Horses spread and were incorporated as readily in areas of the Eastern Cape as they were in Lesotho, but they just did not become a part of the national identity. Horses were assimilated most readily into the home and home-building. It was through the advantage they conferred on home-building that the symbolic understanding of a horse developed.

The Symbol of a Horse 1

The symbolic understanding of a horse can be seen in the words of King Mhlontlo when he fled from his home in Qumbu, first to the Mpondo territories and then to Lesotho, as a wanted

[150] Large portions of the Mpondomise areas were considered within the borders of Griqualand East by the British. In effect they remained largely independent of the weak Griqua state.

man after leading the failed Mpondomise Rebellion against the British. “Mhlontlo said, ‘Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! I miss my Horse!

> Gcazimbana,
> Land-of-equals,
> I’m just a human,
> A thing that has to move;
> I’m just a person,
> A thing whose spirit is not of iron!
> Where will I sing my praises to you,
> Gcazimbana,
> Land-of-equals!

And he wept.”[151] Gcazimbana was the name of Mhlontlo’s horse, which had been stolen by a group of Bhaca. Mhlontlo was forced, in the fray, to settle for another horse stolen from his Bhaca attackers.[152] And in an unrelated case an *igqira* (sangoma) described a song which, when sung, helped to facilitate divination during ceremonies. It was delivered to him during a dream and went

> Here comes Vumani
> My divining horse is coming,
> My horse bring me news,
> I *vumisa* [divine] with him, divining horse,
> I will die divining.[153]

Vumani was the name of the horse which his ancestors told him to invoke and helped him to ‘divine.’ The name of the horse is connected to the word “to divine,” *vumisa*. Schweitzer, who has done extensive work on the phenomenology of the dreams of sangomas and *amagqira*, says “it is no coincidence that Vumani is a horse, as the horse is neither a domestic nor a wild animal, but is born wild and is domesticated by man. It embodies the qualities of power and instinct. In the process of divination, the horse mediates and imparts its power and instinctual nature.”[154] For both Thokoza and Mhlontlo, and as Mhlontlo’s lament indirectly asserts, horses are

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[151] H. Scheub, *The Tongue Is Fire: South African Storytellers and Apartheid* (University of Wisconsin, 1996), p. 270.
[152] Ibid.
[153] R. Schweitzer, “A Phenomenological Study of Dream Interpretation Among the Xhosa-Speaking People in Rural South Africa,” in *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, Vol. 27, No. 1, n.p.
[154] Ibid.

perceived as having “spirits of iron.” Horses are also personal items. When riding a horse, the rider acts as one with the animal. A rider has to learn to communicate individually with each horse he rides, as will a horse with each individual rider, making the rider-horse relationship a personal one. Because of this personal connection to an individual horse and the ‘one-ness’ of the riding experience, the rider does not access the “spirit of iron” by simply owning a horse. The rider acquires it when riding, when physically mounted on the horse, not when next to it. To use Mattfeld’s term, the rider “becomes centaur.”[155] Mhlontlo’s lament is a cry of personal loss. He had another horse, but he did not have Gcazimbana.

A man without a horse was at a disadvantage compared to a man with a horse. And the better a man knows his horse, the more he can receive it’s “impart[ed] power and instinctual nature.” The view of a horse as “imparting” power and wisdom are rooted in practical experience. I have heard of several cases dating back to the turn of the century in which a horse is particularly loved by an owner because it, not the owner, is credited with saving a child’s life. Horses could get you out of danger quickly, they could save the lives of the sick by bringing help or taking them to help. Thokoza described the value of owning a horse through a story about being lost in the dark. He trusted the horse and dropped the reins. The horse got him to his destination safely, whereas alone he would have been lost for the night. And in yet another case, a man who was afraid of horses got too drunk to walk. His friends put him on a horse and smacked the horse’s hind leg to get it moving, returning him safely to his house.[156] They provided a vital supporting role in many human activities in the daily life of the society, conferring on their “only human” owners the “spirit of iron” that they lacked. A man with a horse was more able to care for his dependents and himself, and was thus held in higher regard than a person who had no horse. Horses’ value lay in their ability to provide a sort of auxiliary service to daily life. The incorporation of a new species like a horse made practical sense.

Across the region a horse was leveraged for power by any person who acquired it. Moshoeshoe and the Basotho leadership astutely and adeptly leveraged horses for power – they built the Basotho state. But all who acquired horses did the same, and the main advantage of horses was

[155] M. Mattfeld, *Becoming Centaur: Eighteenth-Century Masculinity and English Horsemanship* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

[156] Another case of drunken horsemanship emphasises the communication between horse and rider: a certain man frequently got “paralytic drunk … and they used to put him on his horse, and this horse would take him home. But as he sat on the back of this horse he would start falling off and the horse would [shift to the side] and balanced him, you know, because it realised, I’m sure, that if he fell off he’d have to wait there all night for this guy.” (Interview with Adrian Moore: 26 June 2015, Camperdown).

the additional power it brought to the owner personally, particularly the advantage it gave the owner in the domain of his home.

Considering that the main reasons horses were advantageous in war were the same as the reasons they were advantageous domestically, and that war was the exception, we might conclude that everyday life's being made easier or more efficient had a greater impact on people than a new technology of war. Placing overwhelming emphasis on horses and warfare in southern African history is an error engendered by a shallow reading of the colonial archive. The records of horses' earliest use by African groups in the Eastern Cape emphasise warfare and defence. Horses were acquired by indigenous Africans with extensive European contact. Extensive European contact was the trigger for major conflict between European and African groups. And this conflict was the priority of colonial record keepers, official or otherwise, with the colonial records reflecting that priority. This is what makes it tempting to come to the conclusion that horses were primarily valued for warfare. But it was not the case. They may have been initially acquired for warfare, but they were valued primarily because they were highly effective in improving the administration of daily life. To illustrate the argument that it was in the home that horses made their major contribution, I will discuss how the extent of that contribution led to horses taking a symbolic position in the rites associated with family and home management by men.

Considering that an emphasis on age and growth through experience is so central to the system of social and political life, it should not be a surprise that an equivalent emphasis is placed on the various rituals and rites separating the various stages of life. These rites are primarily associated with preparing the participants for the vital task of establishing and managing a family and home. Three main rites stand out. The first is marriage and the processes which surround it. The second is *ulwaluko*, which marks the transition from boyhood to manhood. The third is *intonjane*, which marks the transition from girlhood into womanhood. As horses began to feature more prominently in the everyday life of people living in the Eastern Cape, they began to be incorporated into different social practices, including sacred ones like those associated with the stages of life. By looking at the manner in which this incorporation occurred we can build a picture of what horses 'mean' in the Eastern Cape, what they symbolise.

A rite is often described as an individual process. This makes sense, considering that each is a process that an individual goes through to transition from one social position to another. But such processes together form a coherent system. Viewed as a complete system of thought and

belief they constitute an ongoing process of social reproduction and generational continuity. It is when one views this social reproduction and generational continuity as a whole, not when one looks at its individual constituent parts, that we can properly understand the 'meaning' of a horse in the Eastern Cape. Horses, as I mentioned in the Introduction,[157] took on a telling peripheral position, sometimes in the spaces between these rites. I argue that horses have a meaning rooted in a specific understanding of masculinity that incorporates the notion of growing up. Because of this I will begin by discussing the process of *ulwaluko* and the idea of *ubudoda* – "manhood" – before moving on to view the practices pertaining to the process of maturation as a whole.

Notes on *Ulwaluko*, *Ubudoda* and Masculinity in the Eastern Cape

Ulwaluko is the rite of initiation from boyhood to manhood. The process involves the boys entering a secluded space away from the everyday life of others in the society. They are circumcised there and, at least in theory, are taught and prepared for the 'responsibilities' that accompany manhood.

While many people have spoken to me and described in detail the activities and teachings which they underwent in 'the bush' (as it is commonly referred to), speaking of what happens within the rite is largely taboo and intended to be a secret.[158] Suffice it to say that the space is hyper-masculine, though the manifestations of that masculinity seem to vary considerably depending on the 'initiation school' which one attends. In some cases it appears to encourage a paternalistic care system of 'responsible masculinity,' in others a callous and sexually violent misogyny. In some cases it encourages abstinence from alcohol, in others a drinking culture as an expression of manhood. I have heard of cases of extreme violence against initiates passed off as a trial by ordeal and I have heard of others that emphasise self-mastery and self-control. In short, I must draw the conclusion that there is no single core teaching in *ulwaluko* beyond a common conception, at once varied and subjective, of what it means to 'be a man.'

This inference is backed up by the work of Vincent, who characterises the great diversity in teachings about 'being a man' as part of a "highly complex contemporary socio-sexual context

[157] See p. 20.

[158] I've attempted to respect this as much as possible, particularly considering I am an "outsider" from these cultural practices, though some discussion is necessary if I am going to be able to discuss elements of masculinity relevant to the horse racing.

that is shot through with themes of violence, familial breakdown, resource scarcity and inter-generational conflict."[159] She remarks that

> within the circumcising culture of the *Xhosa* of South Africa's Eastern Cape, traditional and community leaders are in wide agreement that historical mechanisms for the sexual socialization of youth have largely broken down. The role that circumcision schools play in this regard has been eroded, to be replaced by the emergence of a norm in which circumcision is regarded as a gateway to sex rather than as marking the point at which responsible sexual behaviour begins.[160]

The paper referred to here deals specifically with sexual socialisation, but its perspective applies more broadly to notions of masculinity taught to boys in the Eastern Cape. The ethics of masculinity, 'proper manhood,' is referred to as *ubudoda*[161] and, beyond sexual socialisation, "had to do with one's ability to administer a household, settle disputes within it, decide differences between family members and ensure peace and productivity."[162]

It is impossible to know the degree to which this variation in teaching is a contemporary phenomenon or has always been the case.[163] *Ulwaluko* is a formal space for the teaching of *ubudoda*. *Ubudoda,* in line with masculinities globally, contains within it certain values – power, wisdom, managing a family – but does not bear any specific ethical content. In its idealised form, *ubudoda* involves self-control and an adherence to normative codes of respectful behaviour that was not expected of boys. "Boys were expected to engage in pugnacious behaviour,"[164] Mager says, while men were expected to exhibit restraint. But, again, self-control and restraint do not connote a specific code of behaviour, only that the behaviour one believes to be correct or incorrect should be adopted or avoided in a considered manner. Thus the behaviour associated with *ubudoda* may vary dramatically. Mager argues, in line with Vincent, that "the decades following the Second World War saw accelerated social change reaching deep into rural African society and generating disruption of established modes regulating age and gender hierarchies,"[165] and posits that "ideas and practices defining masculinity were fluid, shaped by unstable household units, changing economic conditions,

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[159] L. Vincent, "'Boys will be Boys': Traditional Xhosa Male Circumcision, HIV and Sexual Socialisation in Contemporary South Africa," in *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, Vol. 10, No. 5 (2008), p. 432.
[160] Vincent, "Boys will be Boys," (2008), p. 432.
[161] Literally "manhood".
[162] T. Dunbar Moodie, "Ethnic Violence on South African Gold Mines," in *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1992), p. 598.
[163] Though recent studies have indicated that *ubudoda* is still a large part of *ulwaluko*. See J. G. Kheswa, T Nomngcoyiya, P. Adonis and S. Ngeleka, "The Experiences and Perceptions of "*amakrwala"* (Graduated Initiates) towards the Traditional Male Circumcision Practice in Eastern Cape, South Africa," in *Mediterranean Journal of Social* Sciences, Vol. 5, No. 20 (2014), pp. 2789-2798.
[164] Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), p. 658.
[165] Ibid., p. 666.

political uncertainty and local rivalries."[166] This seems to indicate that the normative codes of *ubudoda* became more varied from the 1950s onwards, though it is impossible to be certain about this.

In the past the rite of *ulwaluko* would have held a different political position from that which it does now. Increasing urbanisation and the shifting of rural political power away from the *inkundla* means that the requirement of being initiated is less about being admitted to the *inkundla* than previously. *Ulwaluko* became less about political power, but only, I would argue, because of the draining of political power from the *umzi* and powerful family lines. *Ubudoda* focused on the *umzi*, the locus of political power and the emphasis also of *ulwaluko*. *Ubudoda*'s focus on the *umzi* has remained but does not equate to political power any longer, and consequently *ulwaluko* has ceased to be as much about political power as it was previously.

In other words, initiation used to be a rite through which a male would assume full civic power but is now the process through which full responsibility in the family is assumed. Previously, only after *ulwaluko* could a man take his position in the *inkundla* and thereby engage with the society's civic, political and legal life. *Ulwaluko* is a sign that one has grown in age, strength and wisdom to the point that one can engage in and contribute fully and responsibly to the civic life of the society.[167] This makes *ulwaluko* a rite through which the political continuity of the society could be perpetuated over generations.

This was the case not only in terms of the politico-legal system – the *inkundla* – but also in terms of securing powerful families and perpetuating the political status quo and class relations over generations. For example, a 'chief' or paramount would have a group of trusted advisors. He would be the single 'most powerful' individual, but the group surrounding that individual in the *inkundla* would have power too, depending on their relationship with the 'chief' (or perhaps more correctly, the 'lineage head'). Advisors, that is, the trusted friends of a chief, could secure inter-generational family power by ensuring that their sons joined the son of the chief in *ulwaluko*. It was no guarantee of inter-generational family power (that would depend upon the relationships between individuals remaining strong) but it went a long way towards cementing those relationships. Inter-generational political continuity could be created by

[166] Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), p. 653.
[167] This is borne out by the fact that it is the boys themselves who are meant indicate the desire to attend *ulwaluko*. While in reality a number of social pressures drive boys into *ulwaluko*, it is meant to be the decision of the boy to go. The boy is therefore believed to have developed a sense of maturity prior to leaving for *ulwaluko*.

ensuring that the sons of the most powerful would attend *ulwaluko* together. It was, in short, a political continuity based on Realpolitik.

Notes on "Growing Up," Cultural Change and the Role of Horses

I mention the above because I wish to emphasise the function fulfilled by rites such as this: social continuity over generations, both in the past and in the present. Rites of the stages of life provide a framework in which generations are born, grow up, assume responsibilities and, importantly, reproduce, thus beginning the process all over again. And while there may be great divergence in practice over time, there is also continuity in aim and function. Elements of the performance can vary and change because it occurs under changing material conditions, but the aims and function of the performance need not be affected.

Figure 21: Boys undergoing initiation rites are required to paint themselves to symbolise their position. (https://twitter.com/imzansiextreme/status/800631421144616960)

This can be seen in many different aspects of the *ulwaluko* rite. There are several parts of the rite that have remained stable over several generations, such as the seclusion and the circumcision itself. Mpondo groups, however, only recently reintroduced circumcision as a part of *ulwaluko* after abolishing it during the nineteenth century.[168] It was restored after

[168] Faku, the Mpondo leader, is said to have abolished circumcision "sometime during the 1820s," partly as a way of keeping males unmarried and thus available for military service to Faku at short notice, and partly to increase the size of the available workforce by ensuring that males were at home rather than in seclusion. Another story

pressure from men who returned from the mining areas complaining of maltreatment at the hands of their fellow miners as a result of their uncircumcised status.[169]

Figure 22: Amakrwala. *(https://www.dailysun.co.za/News/National/CULTURE-GETS-A-COLOUR-SHOCK-20150116)*

Another aspect that has remained constant is the burning of the hut in which the seclusion took place at the end of the process (along with the blankets and implements worn and used during seclusion). The initiates (referred to as *abakweta*) then leave 'the bush' and return to the home of one of the initiates for *umgidi* – the final celebration to welcome the new men home. They must not look back at the fire. In some accounts given to me the initiates then rush to a river and at a certain spot must wash themselves off before returning to the home for *umgidi*, at which point they are referred to as *amakrwala*[170] ('graduated initiates').

The *amakrwala* wear distinctive clothing and continue to do so for around six months. This clothing consists of European attire of an early twentieth-century fashion – caps, jackets, trousers and formal shoes – which I have heard referred to as 'adult clothes'. Their wardrobes are replaced: the clothing worn as boys (*amakhwenkwe*) before *ulwaluko* is disposed of and associated styles eschewed (short pants, for example). The European fashion must clearly be a colonial-period innovation. This is one example of change not affecting the foundational principles of the rites. By wearing a kind of ceremonial "adult" wardrobe the *amakrwala* emphasise their new adult status. Of greater interest for our purposes is that while all accounts describe a race to the river to wash, most of the accounts I have heard explicitly describe the *abakweta* as being actively chased to the river by the gathered men. A commonly mentioned change which occurred in the Tsolo/Qumbu area during the twentieth century is a shift from the *amadoda*, the adult men, chasing the *abakweta* on foot to the river, to chasing them on

goes that Faku was concerned for the health of his sickly son while in seclusion and thus prohibited the practice on the basis of its health risks. (T. J. Stapleton, "'Him Who Destroys All': Reassessing the Early Career of Faku, King of the Mpondo, c.1818-1829," in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (1998), pp. 75-76.)

[169] For an overview of the rivalries and violence in mining compounds see Dunbar Moodie, "Ethnic Violence on South African Gold Mines," in *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1992), pp. 584-613.

[170] *Amakrwala* directly translates as "unripe fruits."

horseback. Such a shift changes very little in the performance of *ulwaluko*, but provides insight into the function served by the performance. A man with a horse is more than a man without, better able to carry out his social functions as a man. Until the initiates wash and cease to be *abakweta*, they are not *amadoda*. Chasing the *abakweta* on horseback emphasises this division.

The now-man can enter and participate in the *inkundla*, but can also now marry and develop his own *umzi*. This is the central purpose of the rite. While women are not *iinkundla*, they too should be initiated from girlhood to womanhood prior to marrying. This was done through a rite known as *intonjane*. *Intonjane* was not a prerequisite for marriage and one could marry without having undergone it, but should any misfortune befall the young bride or couple, it could be attributed to the failure to undergo *intonjane*.

By all accounts the popularity of *intonjane* in the Eastern Cape dropped substantially in the course of the twentieth century, though I have been told it is enjoying a revival of sorts. In this rite a girl will be secluded in a hut for about a week during which time she'll be attended to by designated girls (who have not undergone *intonjane*) and women (who have). Unlike with *ulwaluko*, teachings preparing the girl for the responsibilities of womanhood are, generally speaking, not a feature of the rite (it is not a 'school' in the sense that *ulwaluko* is).[171]

Figure 23: A stamp of "Republic of Transkei" from 1984 depicting an intonjane *dance.*

The *intonjane* rites appear to have been as much about what happened outside the hut as what happened inside. Each evening girls would gather outside the hut, where they would perform songs and dance. Also present would be boys, the audience for the performance. This space, I am told, is one where burgeoning teenage romances are formed, where "you can see a boy or girl that you like." Considering the dispersed homestead system described previously, it seems that such opportunities for young lovers would have, at least a century-and-a-half ago, been rare.[172] The *intonjane* dances provided a context in which boundaries might be pushed, teenage romances blossom, feelings and 'growing up' experimented with as they might in any society. Children could not openly

[171] W. G. Mills, "Missionaries, Xhosa Clergy and the Suppression of Traditional Customs," in H. Bredenkamp & R. Ross, *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (WUP, 1995), p.160.

[172] Recall that children generally did not attend the beer- and meat-feasts discussed in the previous chapter, though this seems to have changed during the early years of the twentieth century, and perhaps it is worth noting that this is the time that *intonjane* began to die away. Furthermore, there was extensive socialising amongst young people during the period after 1945, as well as intricate codes and traditions for sexual socialisation. For more information on this refer to Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), pp. 653-667.

be in romantic relationships, only adults could. Upon leaving the *intonjane* hut, no longer a girl but a woman, the initiate was permitted to marry.

The reason for the drop in popularity in *intonjane* seems to have been mainly economic. The cost of the process and the fact that it was not an absolute prerequisite meant that it simply became more and more uncommon through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore it was strongly discouraged by missionaries who saw it as "destructive of female modesty"[173] and, along with *lobola*,[174] as part of what was perceived as the degraded servility of women in African societies that preoccupied missionary minds.[175] It is interesting that the time that *intonjane* started to wane in popularity coincides with the time during which women began to convert to Christianity in greater numbers – a time coeval with an enormous rise in mass migrant labour. It has also been noted that some of the elements of *intonjane* have been incorporated into Christian marriage ceremonies.[176] Here we see another social function being transferred from one practice to another.

I speak of *intonjane* as another example of cultural change, but also use it to highlight the way in which relationships might be formed among youths. This points to another important process in the continuity of a society, that is, how love might lead to union and partnership (in this case, marriage). Many young adults completing *intonjane* or *ulwaluko* will already have 'sweethearts'. If the young man had been through *ulwaluko* when his sweetheart is exiting the *intonjane* hut, or if he had returned from *ulwaluko* and knew that his girlfriend was eligible for marriage, I am told, he would arrive on horseback and fetch the young woman.[177] Together they would simply ride around the area and be seen together in public, in a manner that seems very close to the idea of 'walking out' in Victorian English society. This would be understood by the families involved as an indication that a preferred suitor had been identified. This in turn would be a cue for marriage discussions to begin. Again, we can see how the horse's incorporation in this custom might be advantageous, symbolically conferring greater strength and greater suitability on the candidate as a husband-to-be.

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[173] Mills, "Missionaries, Xhosa Clergy and the Suppression of Customs" (1995), p.160.
[174] "Bride price," paid by the family of the groom prior to or during the marriage, usually in the form of a number cattle previously agreed upon.
[175] Mills, "Missionaries, Xhosa Clergy and the Suppression of Customs" (1995), pp. 158-164.
[176] Ibid., p. 166.
[177] For example: interview with Bikitsha: 1 April 2013, Mbentsa; interview with Bikitsha: 29 April 2014, Mbentsa; interview with Madiba: 28 April 2014, Mthatha; interview with Tyali: 4 April 2013, Tsolo; & several mentions in fieldnotes from Tsolo and Qumbu.

Messages asking to begin marriage negotiations were apparently particularly fraught with danger, and the advantage provided by a horse for staying out of trouble while delivering said message made the whole process a lot safer. This was so much the case that I heard it said one day that "without horses there would be no marriage in our culture," as the functional role of horses in marriage had become entirely customary. I have been given the description by a young woman who said she came back to her home and saw horses tied up outside. "I knew – I just knew! – that that day one of us, me or one of my sisters, was about to leave. It was me," she said.

It was not just in the negotiation stage of marriage that horses featured, but in the marriage celebration itself, albeit for different reasons.[178] Tiyo Soga, in *Intlalo kaXhosa*, speaks about the marriage celebration closing with *uleqo* – a cattle race – after which the wedding party disperses. He continues: "on this day the bridegroom's side will compete with the bride's side in singing, horses and different kinds of costumes, wedding cakes, the handsomeness of girls, the singing of young men and so forth."[179] Speaking to people now, many have alluded to "traditional weddings" and how they are properly finished, not with a cattle race, but with a horse race. The demise of cattle racing at weddings, as with other events, saw the incorporation of horse racing in its place, to the extent that the horse race became a significant element in the day's proceedings.[180]

Yet although important, the horse race is not a vital part of the marriage rites themselves. Should a horse race (previously a cattle race) not occur it would not mean that the couple are not married. Similarly, whether the *abakweta* are chased on foot or horseback does not have any bearing on the ritual validity of the final wash prior to *umgidi*. In each of the cases outlined above, from the chase to 'walking out' to marriage negotiations, the horse is ever-present, but always peripheral. It is accorded a place in these processes and practices, not because of any requirement for having a horse involved in them, but because, first, of the practical value of a horse, and secondly, because of the symbolic value that the practical value confers on the horse. With the practical value of horses in the *amadoda*'s management and protection of their household and family, incorporating a horse shows that you have that advantage. Furthermore,

[178] Discussed in Chapter 1.
[179] Cory Library MS 16 369. (T. B. Soga's *Intlalo kaXhosa* was first published in 1917 by Lovedale Press. The translation provided here is from a translation of the text given to Lovedale Press, who declined to publish it because the press did "not think there would be much demand for this English translation of a book already published by us in Xhosa.")
[180] See Chapter 1.

horsemanship allowed for the expression of certain values associated with *ubudoda* such as power and self-control. Thus horses became symbolic of *ubudoda*, specifically, the masculine maturity of the owner or rider.

Within this psycho-social and cultural framework, the symbol of a horse became remarkably standardised and homogenous. Never central in rites, but ever-present and vital in a peripheral role, horses were a necessary auxiliary. Take, for example, the great literary work *The Wrath of the Ancestors* by A.C. Jordan. This novel has nothing to do with horses. It is a novel about the clash between political tradition and modernisation, about the effects of rapid and imposed social change, and yet on each occasion on which horses appear they become central to the narrative:

> It was late in the afternoon. The shadows on the Hills of Ncholokini had lengthened and touched the valley down below. A group of ten horsemen suddenly appeared on the horizon. They descended the slope at a steady pace, crossed the evening shadows, ascended the opposite slope and came to a halt in the nkundla [sic.] of an imposing homestead overlooking the waters of the Thina River. The horsemen dismounted smartly and unsaddled the horses. It was evident from the size of the baggage that the party had prepared themselves for a long journey. The horses, however, showed no signs of fatigue; but, because of the warmth of the summer's day, those with light-brown coats had turned speckled brown, while the grey had become dun-grey with sweat. They did not appear hungry; nevertheless, when they were relieved of their saddles, they bent down their necks and cropped the grass; each steed now rolling and tossing and tossing and tumbling, now straddling and urinating, now giving a long drawn-out snort. In this way they gradually widened the distance between themselves and their masters who lounged in the grass and lit their pipes, their day's travel evidently ended. It was clear that they had come to a house they knew well, for although none of the people of the house were to be seen, they seemed quite at home. There was obviously no fear of being sent away.[181]

That the horses were allowed to "distance themselves" is indicative of their being at a home "they knew well," and the very presence of the horses tells of the importance of their journey. We also note that Jordan uses the horse symbolically to describe a scene which has very little to do with horses. Other events are described through the horses, which are placed in the foreground despite their peripheral role in the events described. Furthermore, the symbolic value of horses in Jordan's work is consistent with other representations of horses. The 'spirit of iron' from Mhlontlo's lament is, again, clearly visible.

The Symbol of a Horse 2

The horse wasn't just *for* something, it *meant* something. It was acquired as a strategic resource for a specific purpose. Initially, no doubt, the acquisition of horses was driven by the imperatives of self-defence. Horses would have been seen as necessary to neutralise the distinct

[181] A. C. Jordan, *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (Lovedale, 1980), p. 3.

disadvantage faced by African polities when they engaged with mounted enemies. But the reason for the rapid spread and assimilation of horses into the society was different.

The advantages that horses conferred in the area of defence were soon trumped by the multitudinous advantages to the everyday functioning of the household and family as it was embedded in the broader society. Families and homes were improved through the acquisition of a horse or horses.[182] The value of horses lay in the general improvement in efficiency that they afforded: they enhanced their owners' wellbeing, competence and status, enabling them to live 'better'. In this way the horse acquired meaning beyond its use-value, as a symbol of power and prestige. And as a symbol of power and prestige, the horse could function in a number of different contexts. Most obviously, and most easily, it was incorporated as a symbol into the practices around the idea of growing up and the stages of life. This is because the idea of growing up and the successive stages of life are themselves associated with an increase in power and prestige. The *isiXhosa* word for 'growing up' is not only used in the context of aging, but in reference to an increase in wisdom, position, or class.[183] Just as the horse formed a necessary auxiliary to the home, so it formed a necessary auxiliary to the ideas, practices and rites associated with growing up and the stages of life. In particular, horses fulfilled a masculine position, used by men to accentuate masculine maturity, such as a young man courting his intended, or *amadoda* emphasising their maturity over *abakweta*.

Much of this material may appear to have little or nothing to do with horses and horse racing. Running through it all, though, is the notion that the peripheral role of horses means that there is much one cannot understand about horse racing by looking directly at it. Like a faint star in the sky, one can only see it by looking out of the corner of one's eye, in the field of peripheral vision. My intention, therefore, is to provide what is required to interpret the kind of masculinity on display in the races. A small shift in focus, a slight reframing of information related to another aspect of life, can shed important light on some aspect of horse racing. In the previous chapter it was a reframing of ethnographic evidence used by Tropp in his exploration of "state-peasant environmental relations" that yielded results on why certain forms of racing

[182] The motivation for the rapid spread and assimilation was, in a sense, the same as the motivation for the acquisition. This motivation, however, was not applied to providing advantage or overcoming disadvantage in war, but rather in the home.

[183] The word *–khula* refers to a) 'grow, increasing in size and height'; b) have one's life-span increased; c) become more fully developed mentally; mature in mind, understand things better than one did when one was younger; d) to grow old; e) to describe an increase in wealth or debt. In the form *–khulile* it may also refer to growing old, or being old, or being used in the context of a girl who starts menstruating. While the closely related word *–khulu* is used to refer a) to things of large size; b) in the abstract to things that are momentous, far-reaching or drastic; c) of people, to people of advanced age, as well as people who are venerable, honoured or famous.

predominated in different areas and, indeed, why horse racing caught on as it did in the first place. In this chapter it is the minor changes in the stages of life rites that provide an understanding of the way in which a change of species can change the meaning of a sport. A pattern emerges in the manner in which horses are assimilated (more of this will be discussed later in the thesis). They are consistently and continuously incorporated into practices, not only because of their practical value, but because of the symbolic value which that practical value confers. The idea of a horse elevating the masculine spirit, making it greater than it would be in the absence of a horse, is ever-present. It is a symbol of being bigger, stronger, and wiser than before, mirroring and accentuating one's passage through the stages of life. Horses aided in the symbolic expression of that process of aging. Because of this they could easily and conveniently be incorporated into rites, not as vital parts, but on the periphery of them – ever present, never central – as a form of reinforcement to the statement that is being made. Just as in the process of growing up a man accrues wisdom and strength, so it is with owning a horse, and a horse is a visible living symbol of that accrual. To rise socially is to grow up, and this parallel can be understood from the rising stature associated with aging and the cosmology as discussed by Thokoza. From the connections outlined above between the animals, the human rites of passage and the stages of life, we can conclude: The horse, that symbol of power, is a symbol of a man "growing up."

To return to Thokoza: Thokoza's grandfather visiting him in a dream and telling him to slaughter a horse was not simply a literal command for a sangoma. There was an additional layer of meaning: it was his grandfather telling him that through the slaughter of a horse, through taking command of the horse as a symbol, he could take control of his life, which had been going "around in circles for the past ten years." He could accrue wisdom and strength. He could grow up.

Remarkably similar patterns of symbolism can be found elsewhere.[184] In each case, horses are interpreted according to the area's distinct social and cultural framework. While in contemporary urban environments horses and horse racing are not as evident and so are less on people's minds than was the case when the horse was ever-present in daily life, horse racing is

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[184] And not only with horses. Nancy Jacobs argues that a symbolism was built around donkeys and class in the Bophuthatswana bantustan (H. J. Jacobs, "The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass and the Politics of Class and Grass," in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2 (2001), pp. 485-507.) Geertz famously described the connection between cock fighting and masculinity, and the use of cock fighting as reflective of Balinese society in C. Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *Daedalus*, Vol. 101, No. 1 (1972), pp. 1-37. Cats are connected to class position and killed by apprentice printers in R. Darnton, *The Great Cat massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Vintage, 1985), pp. 75-106.

often associated with elitism and "toffery." So the position of horses as a symbol of power, strength and value (as a commodity) remains intact. In each social or cultural context the symbolic understanding of a horse will vary, and yet the notion of being 'more-than' or 'better-than' remains remarkably consistent. Mattfeld (2017) describes a similar process in eighteenth-century England when men "became centaurs"[185] and horsemanship formed a strong part of masculine identity. Interestingly, horsemanship became understood as a man's skills in dressage – absolute control and precision in the movement of the powerful animals. The skills of horsemanship were connected to class position. Mattfeld describes the situation elsewhere, saying that

> Britons of the 17th and 18th centuries understood horsemanship, or the governing of horse and human, as the embodiment of proper masculinity, and by extension, the embodiment of man's ability to govern the world around him. Horsemanship was political, and in this understanding the man represented the ruling monarchy (the father), and the horse the nation (the rest of his household). How well the two interacted, and how well the rider governed the horse as centaur, illustrated the man's ability to be the patriarch of the house and the nation.[186]

Swart (2008) argues that a specific breed of horse – the American Saddler – which is also associated with dressage and 'leisure riding' became an expression of upward class mobility among the rural Afrikaner bourgeoisie in the first half of the twentieth century.[187] These notions of masculinity and upward mobility ("growing up," in the broader sense of the word) find constant expression in *umdyarho* too, though they do so according to the local understandings of masculinity as these are outlined in the earlier parts of this chapter.

The Expression of Masculinity and "Growing Up" in *Umdyarho* Events

These associations are most obviously visible in the naming of races on race days, with each race being named after positions in the stages of life and accrual of power as they increase in distance. The first race being *noqalinkundla*: one who has only recently been admitted to the *inkundla*. The second is the *abakweta* race. The third, *amadoda*. The final and longest race is called the *igqira* race: the race of the most powerful and wise – the doctors, the diviners.

The symbolism is also evident in both the decision to engage, and the manner of engagement, with *umhambo* and *umphalo*. From my fieldwork notes I was able to identify some major trends

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[185] A "horse-man." M. Mattfeld, *Becoming Centaur: Eighteenth-Century Masculinity and English Horsemanship* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017).

[186] M. Mattfeld, "Centaur or Fop? How Horsemanship Made the Englishman a Man," Published online: https://aeon.co/ideas/centaur-or-fop-how-horsemanship-made-the-englishman-a-man

[187] S. Swart, "High Horses: Horses, Class and Socio-Economic Change in South Africa," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2008), pp. 193-213.

regarding the styles, some of which have been discussed above. As a brief reminder, these include:

1) There is a rough but dissolving geographical boundary, running along a north/south line through Idutywa. The most popular style at horse races in the eastern section is *umhambo*. In the western section, it is *umphalo* that predominates.
2) Race days organised within the eastern section consist of both *umphalo* and *umhambo*, with races alternating between styles. The *umphalo* jockeys are usually young boys – I have seen as young as 9 – on younger horses. The *umhambo* jockeys are almost entirely adult men and the horses tend to be older.
3) Thoroughbred owners are spread throughout the region (both in the eastern and western sections). It is notable, however, that
    a. There is a far greater concentration of Thoroughbred owners in the western section,
    b. There is a clear class distinction between the Thoroughbred races and other horseracing events. The Thoroughbred owners are wealthier and far better resourced than the average indigenous horse owner, and
    c. There is also a racial distinction evident, with the coloured communities of the rural areas almost exclusively engaging with Thoroughbreds, while the indigenous horse races are almost entirely black African.

One line of enquiry which I made during my fieldwork was "why does a participant engage in *umhambo* or *umphalo* or with Thoroughbreds, rather than another form or breed? How does a participant select a style preference?" I was attempting to ask both why they chose their style, but also what their perceptions were of the styles of racing in which they were not involved.

The *umhambo* participants were most emphatic in their responses:

1. *Umphalo* is how children learn to ride. It's how horses learn to run. A horse must first be trained in *umphalo* before it can be trained for *umhambo*. I know a child will be a good jockey if they can hold on, so when I choose a jockey I will call all the children from around the location and put them on a horse and smack it's rear and the child that doesn't fall off for the longest I know will be a good jockey and I will teach them.[188]
2. *Umphalo*? That's kids' stuff! It's the same as those Thoroughbreds. What's the point? You blink and it's done. I want to watch skills. You know? <gestures the alternating pattern of a horse moving in *umhambo*> It's beautiful! And you need to be able to control your horse. I'm not interested in people just being able to hold on.[189]

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[188] Interview with Maqokolo: 30 April 2014, Malungeni.
[189] Interview with Sizwe Notununu: 3 April 2013, Mthatha.

3. In *umhambo* you need strength. So it needs skills. Only men can ride *umhambo*. I think it's [more popular] because you can show off with it. It's more beautiful to watch.[190]
4. When we were children we could learn on *umphalo* and when we're good at that we can learn *umhambo* because you must be able to just be on a horse before you can learn to ride a proper way…. You see with *umhambo* we have men riding because you need power and strength to control the horse. It needs to go fast but also you need to hold it back because otherwise it gallops. So boys find it difficult.[191]
5. [I race *umhambo*] because in our culture it is the correct way that men ride. It is the traditional way for men here, if we are in *umphalo* we are riding with little ones… it doesn't matter if I win a race against children.[192]
6. *Umhambo* is the way that real men ride.[193]
7. [I like *umhambo*] because I am not a boy.[194]

I have selected these quotations from a plethora of available material because they collectively cover all the reasons mentioned for preferring *umhambo* over other forms of racing. Amongst these participants, skill and strength is repeatedly emphasised. *Umhambo* requires an adult rider, because it requires strength and control. *Umhambo* requires skills (skills in riding and skills in training horses) that are perceived as absent from *umphalo* racing, whether on a Thoroughbred or an indigenous horse. Children ride *umphalo*. It is proposed that since only men can ride *umhambo, umhambo* is the only way that men should ride. Both premise and logic may be questionable, but the perception is that because *umhambo* is an entirely masculine domain that involves expression of some key elements of *ubudoda*, "*umhambo* is the way that real men ride." *Umphalo* is associated with youth and childhood. It requires no skill or control or power. The *umphalo* performance contains within it elements considered consistent with boyhood, including bravery ("who can hold on the longest") and a lack of control. *Umhambo* is its antithesis, an expression of being in control, of being grown up, of being a 'man'. Understood in the terms used earlier by Schweitzer,[195] a horse is "born wild" and "becomes domesticated." An *umphalo* horse is still wild, its rider is also still "wild" in the sense of not having yet developed self-control and restraint. An *umhambo* horse is domesticated and its rider, the adult man, is no longer "wild" but has learned to practice self-control and restraint.

Other elements evident in discussions amongst *umhambo* participants include the reference to culture. *Umhambo* is frequently mentioned as the 'culturally correct' form of horse riding. This is notable because race days that occurred prior to the mid-1970s consisted entirely of *umphalo*. *Umhambo* was the style of racing that occurred at the various cultural gatherings already discussed, but when it came to race days – to *umdyarho* events – the style had always been

[190] Fieldnotes, Tsolo Junction Race: 3 April 2014, Tsolo.
[191] Fieldnotes, Tsolo Junction Race: 25 May 2013, Tsolo.
[192] Fieldnotes, Bajodini Race: 26 December 2014, Qumbu.
[193] Fieldnotes, Tsolo Junction Race: 3 April 2014, Tsolo.
[194] Fieldnotes, Ncembu: 21 March 2015, Ncembu.
[195] See p. 70.

only *umphalo*. Considering the context of *umhambo* prior to its incorporation into *umdyarho*, and its contrast with the *umphalo* style in use at these "new" race days, the fact that it came to be perceived as 'culturally correct' should come as no surprise. It is also telling that, while many did not even hazard a guess at the reasons *umhambo* became a part of the race days, those who did told of how some people wanted to introduce it and simply started to organise *ad hoc umhambo* races during race days, not without encountering some resistance. A deciding factor was the support of the chieftaincies (which had their full political power restored and expanded in 1976). The chiefs, now known as "traditional leaders," were immensely powerful in Transkei and Ciskei, though they were not a feature of *umdyarho*. While many of them owned horses, raced horses and attended races, they attended as fans of the sport and not as chiefs.[196]

Another interesting question that emerged was that of who first began to train their horses specifically to race *umhambo*. While *umdyarho* embraced *umhambo* in the eastern section it did not draw many more people into the sport until the 1980s, when the sport's popularity increased dramatically. The *umhambo* racers came from within *umdyarho*. What drove the mood which conduced to the desirability of *umhambo* in *umdyarho* will be dealt with in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, but what is important here is who among the participants made the transition to *umhambo.* The first to embrace *umhambo* at race days were people employed in positions of social standing – teachers, priests and civil servants, people who were "known in the community" – and wished to act out their social status in *umdyarho*.

A legendary rivalry was described to me by Madiba, between a Reverend Mlombile and a school principal, Mr Bikitsha, in the Qumbu district. Both were early converts to *umhambo* and had the two strongest horses. He said Bikitsha started *umhambo*

> because he was a teacher, you know, and the teachers in those days were somebody that is well recognised in the community. And this Reverend that I talk about, Reverend Mlombile, because he grew up in that area and he ended up being [in *umhambo*], you know, the Reverend is a big man in the community and he ended up now participating in those things….[197]

[196] I recall arriving at my first race in 2013. It was far from any major roads and I, being 'white' and knowing very little Xhosa at that point, looked very out of place. Armed with a notebook, a tape recorder and a camera around my neck, and knowing only one person at the race, I struggled to know where to begin. A man approached me and asked me what I was there to do and whether he could be of any assistance. I explained myself and he immediately said to me, "Ah! You must meet Mr Madiba. He is in charge and can introduce you so that nobody gives you trouble." He introduced me to Mr Madiba and I thanked him. We encountered each other at almost every race in the eastern section that I attended. Only in 2015 was I told that he was a very senior Traditional Leader. The next time I saw him I confronted him about it, "You didn't tell me you were a senior chief?" He laughed and said, "Not here. Here I'm just watching horses."

[197] Interview with Madiba: 28 April 2014, Mthatha.

Both had been involved in *umdyarho* before *umhambo* was introduced. Bikitsha is a legend of the sport. Born in 1929, he started riding horses and attending horse races at the age of twelve. He first started riding *umhambo* in 1948, aged 19, and first raced a horse in a set fixture in 1959. By 1968 he had purchased his first Thoroughbred to race with.[198]

Figure 24: Mr Curnick Bikitsha, with Madiba on his right. (Ncembu, 21 March 2015)

A number of great names associated with *umdyarho* began with indigenous horses and made their way to Thoroughbreds. Names like Mlombile, Bikitsha, Naki and Myendeki are all remembered as legendary horsemen from the time before *umhambo* was introduced. All raced indigenous horses before purchasing Thoroughbreds. Naki[199] and Myendeki were both from the Idutywa area, on the edge of the western section, and continued to focus on Thoroughbreds after the expulsion of their breed from *umdyarho*. Bikitsha and Mlombile continued racing Thoroughbreds, too, but, as residents in the eastern section, they also embraced *umhambo*.

Bikitsha described his first thoroughbred experience to me with some pain in his voice. He only had it for two years before it died. He attributed this to a lack of experience. He didn't know at the time that Thoroughbreds required special care and had treated it like any other horse; but he learned from that sad event and his next Thoroughbred was well cared for. When I asked him why he had bought a Thoroughbred, he explained that it was because they are "so beautiful. Biggest. Strongest. Fastest… and difficult." He wanted to go faster than he could on an indigenous horse, so he wanted a Thoroughbred. It was expensive, he said, but it was worth it.

[198] At the time Thoroughbreds raced alongside indigenous horses. They did so until 1988 at which point they were expelled for reasons of fairness and formed the ECAHRA. There were also other avenues for Thoroughbred racers to pursue by that stage, with a small but committed, multi-racial professional Thoroughbred association in Transkei. It is unclear at which point Thoroughbreds started to race with the indigenous horses. Thoroughbreds were initially prohibited from entering the races organised in the area in which Bikitsha raced (this will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5). It is interesting to note that the trader who sold Thoroughbreds, including to Bikitsha, did not allow them to race with the indigenous horses at races he organised.

[199] Naki's son, also referred to simply as Naki, is a well-known amateur Thoroughbred jockey. His story is the subject of a documentary mentioned on p.23 called *King Naki and the Thundering Hooves* (Plexus Media, 2012).

Thoroughbred participants are much rarer in the eastern section in which Bikitsha lives. Generally they have either learned from their fathers who became involved with Thoroughbreds prior to the incorporation of *umhambo*. A handful of participants, all wealthy businessmen, got involved with Thoroughbreds directly as adults after watching professional thoroughbred racing and without much engagement with *umdyarho* before. Overall the Thoroughbred participants were more reserved than the *umhambo* participants about their reasons for engaging in the style, but through the interviews I could identify certain trends in their attitudes. Many, particularly the coloured participants in the Thoroughbred races (which constitutes a large minority of the Thoroughbred group) had only ever raced Thoroughbreds, many introduced to them by their fathers or uncles or family friends when they were children. For many of them it's a "no brainer. They're faster and more powerful horses. They're race horses. That means they're better for racing."[200] Most, if not all, the coloured participants whom I met lived in eastern section, though many had lived and worked at several places throughout the former Transkei.

Those who did transition from indigenous horses to Thoroughbreds are overwhelmingly born, raised and live in the western section. They form the majority of the Thoroughbred participants. They make it clear that they made the jump mainly because they could afford to do so, and imply that there is a natural progression from one to the other, hindered only by a lack of means. If you can afford to race with Thoroughbreds, you do. As one person put it: "I had been racing the small horses for years and years, but then I decided I should grow up."

Those in the western section who race *umphalo* on indigenous horses have a fairly stock response about their choice of style, saying "this is how we have always done it," or "these are the horses we have."

The distinction between the two sections is increasingly blurred. When I began my research it was in the process of being dissolved but was still clearly visible. Described as "problematic" and "a source of quarrels," it was being actively dismantled by regional and provincial race organisers, and government officials with dreams of professionalising the sport. At the time of writing, the distinction is less apparent and seems set to disappear completely, as greater interaction and investment in horse racing occurs across the province, unifying the participants and codifying the rules. In this process the real growth has only been in *umhambo*. Within the areas that *umphalo* has predominated on race days, now *umhambo* is making an entry. With

[200] Fieldnotes, Mount Frere ECAHRA Race: 6 April 2013, Mount Frere.

prize money set aside for *umhambo* races, many *umhambo* participants are now making trips to these races. Five years ago there were murmurings about neglect[201] when I asked *umhambo* participants if they attended races in these areas. Government sponsorship is changing that, and the presence of *umhambo* races has encouraged people who have never raced in that style to begin doing so.

The Thoroughbred race meetings are increasingly subsumed under the format used by OR Tambo HRA. In 2013 ECAHRA events focused mainly on the Thoroughbreds, with alternating races between Thoroughbreds and the style which predominated in the area, whether it be *umphalo* or *umhambo*. The last several events I attended at which Thoroughbreds raced were jointly organised events (much to the chagrin of some sectors of the Thoroughbred community), and featured a triple alternation, as it were, of an *umphalo* race (indigenous horses), then *umhambo*, then Thoroughbred. A similar trend to what was seen in the 1970s is now occurring in respect of Thoroughbreds. Several Thoroughbred owners have either expressed the intention to begin, or have already begun, racing *umhambo* alongside their Thoroughbred racing. I have not noted any case of the reverse.

All the evidence outlined above points towards one conclusion: the decision to engage with either Thoroughbred or *umhambo* styles of racing reflects the symbolism that horses have taken on. In both cases it is about expressing one's power, strength and self-control: it is about acting out one's elevated social position, whether simply as an adult, or a male, or a successful businessman. The horse you ride and how you ride shows people how "grown up" you are. In the areas when *umhambo* has predominated, your social position as a man, your "manliness" – including your ability to provide and protect, your strength, power and self-control – is best expressed in horse racing through *umhambo*. In the areas where *umhambo* has until recently not been a feature of *umdyarho*, these same values of masculinity are expressed by participating with the biggest, strongest, fastest and most costly breed of horse – the Thoroughbred.

It is not that *umhambo* or Thoroughbred racers see themselves as 'more manly' than men who do not ride either Thoroughbreds or *umhambo*, but rather that they are maximizing their own masculinity through their horse. The quality of the horse and the rider's skills in horsemanship allow participants to express and contest their 'manliness' against other participants within the same style. The quality of their horse and their horsemanship both permit the expression of

[201] "I don't like those races. They don't like *umhambo* there, so they don't want to give prize money for it." (Fieldnotes: 29 April 2014, Port St Johns).

certain values of *ubudoda*. Any two Thoroughbred horses, for example, are not equal. One may better express the values of *ubudoda* than another, by being faster or bigger or more beautiful. The same applies to *umhambo* horses, but with more emphasis on the skills of the rider whose horsemanship, requiring power and control, may also better express the values of *ubudoda*. The contest in the race is a way of showing that an individual is 'more' than his opponents. The rider competes in manliness against the other men. These aspects of masculine contests are also taken into consideration when a horse is named.

I noticed a trend over the course of research that, like the east/west division, the way in which horses are named is changing as rapidly as the sport is. Names like Facebook, Firelighter and Nqonqoza[202] are becoming more common, but the method of naming is still an important way of expressing the bravado of the contest. As Puzi described it, the "naming of horses is a statement."[203] A few examples include:

1. Sula – to wipe – a shortening of the phrase *sul'iinyembezi zezifede* meaning "wipe the tears of those who always come last."
2. Sirhalarhala, from the word *rhala* – to crave – referring to "the horse that craves victory."
3. Ndenzeni? – meaning "what have I done?" This references a question one might ask of people who are treating you badly because they are sore losers.
4. Bantubanjani? – literally "how are these people?" There is an element of incredulity in the word and an English equivalent might be someone saying "why are they jealous?" It is another reference to people being angry at having been defeated fairly.
5. Bhunganezityebi – "to rub shoulders with 'the have's,'" in other words "one that associates with wealthy and powerful people."

In each of these cases the bravado and challenge to other participants can be seen, once again bringing home the way in which horses are understood and the way in which this understanding is on display in horseracing. Throughout the day of horse races we see masculinity on display. It is a masculinity which takes on local forms, drawing from *ubudoda* and the idea of "growing up." From the foundation of what it means to "grow up," whether into a man or a successful businessman, the notions of "growing up," of being more "grown up," of being powerful and in control, are all emphasised in the names of the races, in the names of the horses, and even in

[202] An onomatopoeic name, meaning "knocking," referring to the sound of the horse running.
[203] Interview with Puzi: 11 April 2016, telephonic.

the choices a participant makes about which horse to buy and which form of racing to participate in. In each decision the horse races are confirmed as sites in which men can express the extent to which they have "grown up."

Figure 25: "The Qualities of a Real Man." Billboard advertising Commando Brandy overlooking the Kei River Bridge. (January 2015)

Figure 26: Approaching the finish line in an umphalo *race. (Bajodini, 26 December 2014)*

-Chapter 3-

On the Purity of the Turf: The Invention of Christmas and the Re-Awakening of an Indigenous Racing Tradition in Twentieth-Century Transkei

Horse racing in the Eastern Cape was driven by colonial expansion and European settlement. European powers brought horses to the Cape, and horses eventually found their way into the hands of African communities. But horses differ from many other species that have been incorporated into human society in that, as Schweitzer puts it, they are "born wild and [are] domesticated by man."[204] Horses need to be trained and ridden, and are of no value to a society without horsemanship. European powers introduced not only horses but also horsemanship. African horsemanship was acquired, either directly or indirectly, through observation and adaptation of the European settler 'horse culture.' The horses that Africans acquired were trained in a certain way, and Africans needed to know how to communicate with their animals. An example of this is the 'tripling' style of *umhambo* which was a common riding style of Boer riders. Thus a particular culturally-defined style of riding those horses came with their acquisition. Horses were also acquired at a time when European settlement was expanding and the people along that frontier of expansion would have had contact with the ubiquitous 'horse culture' of the settlers.[205]

Horse racing and turf days followed closely on the establishment of settlements. Grahamstown, a major centre in the 'frontier' region during the time when the settler colonial project was deliberately encouraged by Britain, is a good example. By 1820, the infamous year marking the arrival of large numbers of British immigrants to settle the area, horse races were already being held there. By the 1840s the Albany Turf Club was well established and held three-day annual Albany Turf Club meetings. They involved several races held over one or two miles and "always in two heats."[206] A steeplechase[207] was included in 1840, 1849, 1850 and 1852. These events happened on "the flats above the town,"[208] presumably the site of the town's present industrial area and the Waainek prison. Similar events are known to have been held elsewhere by the 1850s, including in "Bloemfontein, Burghersdorp, Cradock, Fort Beaufort,

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[204] Schweitzer, "Dream Interpretation" (1996), n. p.
[205] Swart, *Riding High* (2010), pp. 18-37.
[206] R. T. McGeoch, *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs, 1820-1877* (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Rhodes University, 1965), p. 19.
[207] A distance race in which various obstacles such as ditches and hedges need to be navigated by the horse and rider.
[208] McGeoch, *Thomas Stubbs* (1965), pp. 19-20.

King William's Town, Quagga Flats, Sidbury and Uitenhage."[209] Two names stand out in this list of sites: Fort Beaufort and King William's Town. Both border the area later known as Ciskei and so adjoin historical "native reserves." In the areas of Ciskei adjoining these towns there is a popular and longstanding tradition of horse racing. King William's Town in particular has a strong horse racing tradition. We know of a turf meeting organised by settlers in King William's Town, sometime during in the 1850s, when the fourth day had been "enlivened" by "'Kaffir races' on horseback and on foot."[210] The use of the verb 'enlivened' suggests that this was not a regular occurrence, but it was an occurrence nonetheless, showing clearly that there was direct interaction with and involvement of indigenous Africans at settler turf days. To the north of King William's Town, in Glen Grey, we find a later example of this. There, on November 11th 1919, there are reports of "native" races occurring alongside races for settlers. The races themselves were segregated, but they occurred during the same event.[211]

Mr Puzi of the ECAHRA relates how horse racing began in the Ciskei when British soldiers raced against local people in the nineteenth century to "gain acceptance."[212] "Mounted regiments started racing local inhabitants during the time of King Ngqika," Puzi tells me, "locals raced occasionally against mounted soldiers. [It] developed into a sport and they made it their own." [213] He also observes that "it's the settlers who are most closely connected with the sport. So you find it's most popular around these small towns."[214] On the outskirts of King William's Town on Saturdays, horse races became a "focal point, growing up."[215] Prizes included "baked bread, sugar and tea."[216] Soldiers stationed in the areas Puzi speaks of are said to have been enthusiastic about horse racing, which broke the mundane routines of peace-time.[217] The soldiers would also have been well-trained horsemen. And sites with the longest-standing traditions of horse racing in that area are those closest to the towns, many of which

[209] Cited in McGeoch, *Thomas Stubbs* (1965), ft. 4, p. 19, without reference to the source. If we consider the time of the 1850s and compare it to the dates that the sites named here were established, the degree that the 'horse culture' was a ubiquitous part of the culture of the European settlers becomes evident.
[210] G. F. Hofmeyr, *King William's Town and the Xhosa, 1854-1921: The Role of a Frontier Capital during the Commissionership of Sir George Grey* (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1981), pp. 58-59. Cited in A. Odendaal, *South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, Race and Class in South Africa before Union* (Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, No. 38, 1990), p. 15.
[211] S. Swart, "Race Politics: Horse Racing, Identity and Power in South Africa," in M. Adelman and K. Thompson (eds.), *Equestrian Cultures in Global and Local Contexts* (Springer, 2017), p. 246.
[212] Puzi: 11 April 2016, telephonic.
[213] Ibid. Ngqika died in 1829, so we are speaking about the early nineteenth century, roughly half a century prior to major settlements in the Transkei interior.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Puzi: 11 April 2016, and, McGeoch, *Thomas Stubbs* (1965), p. 19.

had large numbers of soldiers. It is also clear, as can be seen in the case of Grahamstown, that the turf club meetings of settlements were popular spectacles. It is unlikely that such spectacles would have gone unnoticed by the indigenous inhabitants. It is a seemingly straightforward story: settlers brought "turf meetings," and Africans began to organise their own.[218] But it is not so straightforward, because *Umdyarho* is seen as a cultural heritage practice, in some sense deeply connected to participants' identities as indigenous Africans.

We do not know to what extent the tales of races organised between British soldiers and local inhabitants are apocryphal or true. But we can say that, considering the rapid uptake of horses by the Xhosa-speaking groups in the Eastern Cape, and the popularity of horse racing amongst the settler population, encounters between the local people and horse racing – and transference of the associated skills – occurred early on. While the kind of horse racing popular today may be very different from the horse racing popular in the nineteenth century Eastern Cape, it is almost certain that organising festival days around racing horses was a transference from the European tradition. This transference comes with adaptation which must be carefully interrogated to avoid the notion that the sport we see today is simply the European settler tradition carried forward by indigenous Africans. As Puzi put it, "they made it their own."

In this chapter I explain why the promethean settler narrative regarding *umdyarho* is fallacious. Odendaal describes how "Africans were introduced to Western sports, both on a formal and informal level, in a way correlative to their other activities. Informally, the Xhosa were interested spectators at the cricket matches and horse races that came to be staged in the new frontier towns that were springing up in the conquered African territories from the onset of such events in the 1850s."[219] While cricket was introduced at mission schools as part of the civilising mission to ensure "profitable employment of leisure,"[220] it became very popular amongst indigenous Africans from these schools. During the decade from 1875-1885, and at the time of South Africa's 'mineral revolution,' there was a burgeoning of sports clubs of all varieties, as well as organised competitions. "Native" cricket clubs and teams were a part of this growth, frequently beating 'white' teams and producing players, in some cases, of exceptional standard.[221] Cricket "reflected not only the strong desire of the [African] elite to be

[218] It is worth repeating that the word *umdyarho* is thought to be derived from the proto-Afrikaans/Dutch *jaagtog*, implying a European connection with horse racing, though it is also worth pointing out that European settlement in the area was overwhelmingly British by the time horse races are recorded.
[219] Odendaal, *South Africa's Black Victorians* (1990), p. 13.
[220] Ibid., p. 15.
[221] Ibid., p. 16.

assimilated into colonial life but also the opening up of class cleavages among Africans," Odendaal writes; "in adopting British cultural values and seeking upward mobility in Cape society, the aspiring black petty bourgeoisie often distanced itself from the mass of Africans who remained within the traditional framework or were becoming proletarianised."[222]

Despite efforts at assimilation, Cape liberalism was to fall in favour of racial segregation and the proletarianisation of Africans. While African elites in urban centres did establish cricket and tennis clubs, they did not survive the political and economic processes already under way. As Odendaal puts it, these sports "no longer reflected the material context and became more elitist in nature, going into decline instead of expanding, and exacerbating class difference."[223] Other sports were to rise and become more popular, particularly boxing, athletics and, of course, soccer.

Soccer, in keeping with the new "material context," grew immensely in the 1930s. The Johannesburg Bantu Football Association, for example, was established in 1929, had 39 teams in 1930, a number that rose to 103 in 1935.[224] Requiring fewer resources than many sports, it served as an "arena of cultural autonomy and opportunity that relieved the lives of people deeply affected by the drudgery of underemployment and the painful constraints of institutional racism."[225] From this burgeoning popularity, 'vernacular modes' of play developed, "crowning football the king of black sport before the advent of apartheid in 1948."[226]

There are strong parallels between the development of the settler horse racing industry and the development of cricket. Both were initially focused on the frontier towns and followed the settler advance into the interior. Both horse racing and cricket were popular events for settlers and indigenous Africans alike. Both were heavily affected by the racial segregation and proletarianisation of Africans in the early years of the twentieth century. Viewed as a European sport like cricket, *umdyarho* might appear as a simple "vernacular mode" of settler horse racing. And *umdyarho* might, when viewed from a certain angle and with certain allowances made, seem to mimic the history of cricket.

[222] Odendaal, *South Africa's Black Victorians* (1990), p. 18.
[223] Ibid., p. 23.
[224] P. C. Alegi, "Playing to the Gallery? Sport, Cultural Performance, and Social Identity in South Africa, 1920s-1945," in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2002), p. 22.
[225] Alegi, "Playing to the Gallery?" (2002), p. 26.
[226] Ibid.

This is the approach taken by Swart who describes *umdyarho* as a "robust hybrid of various imported traditions combined with local agency and vernacular adaptations."[227] Despite paying detailed attention to African horse races, her focus is not on *umdyarho* as much as it is on the way in which racial prejudice affected African entry into settler horse culture (mainly the professional Thoroughbred industry). Drawing on work done as part of this research in 2013, she seems to suggest that the development of *umdyarho* was somehow connected to the exclusion of Africans from the settler horse industry. In doing so the approach treats *umdyarho* as if it is a European sport akin to cricket or soccer. In other words, it neglects the indigenous African origins of the sport through the cattle racing tradition and presumes that, because horses were introduced by Europeans, and Europeans brought a culture of horsemanship, that that must have constituted the origins of horse racing by indigenous Africans. African horse racing was never "driven underground"[228] as a result of exclusion, only to emerge in a vernacularized form. It has always been there for all to see if they had looked. Few have.[229] More than a cursory examination of the races we are discussing reveals that *umdyarho* developed as an active expression of – not reclamation of, nor resistance through – horse racing. It is, indeed, a "robust hybrid" that has continuously translated an enjoyable activity into an evolving local "vernacular." *Umdyarho* was certainly made more popular through indigenous contact with European traditions, including the settler horse racing tradition.[230] And the social, political and economic conditions brought about by colonialism and apartheid, particularly migrant labour, heavily impacted on the way that *umdyarho* developed. This is simple logic. But emphasising hybridity, rather than the process of hybridisation itself, obscures the early point of divergence in development, understates the distinctiveness of the traditions, and exaggerates the role of 'white' people in creating the sport we see today. In Odendaal's words: "These myths need to be countered because not only have black people a long, indeed remarkable, sporting history but the development of South African sport has always been closely influenced by wider political and economic factors."[231] We could add that the way in which the history of sport is written also seems to have been closely influenced by these same factors.

[227] Swart, "Race Politics" (2017), p. 260.
[228] Ibid., p. 263.
[229] I recall speaking to an eminent anthropologist who, upon hearing what I was working on, said "fascinating. Well they certainly don't do it in *this* area." The area he referred to is one of the biggest horse racing areas in the country, with its own popular racing club. He had been working on the area in question for three decades.
[230] See Chapter 4.
[231] Odendaal, *South Africa's Black Victorians* (1990), p. 13.

To an extent more like soccer than cricket, horse racing fitted with the recreations and the material context of indigenous Africans in the twentieth century. While soccer became popular in the urban areas as a result of proletarianisation and racial segregation, horse racing became popular in rural areas. Like cricket, horse racing was a sport that came with European settlers, but it was never introduced and encouraged in the same way that cricket was. Importantly, and shattering the idea of parallels between the history of cricket and that of horse racing, horse racing is not used to distinguished *from* African tradition, but rather became emblematic *of* African tradition. The settler horse racing tradition fitted with cricket as emblematic of Europe – it was "the sport of kings" – but the rural races came to be seen as diametrically opposed to European-ness, whiteness and elitism. The horse races were egalitarian expressions of social position, in which people might socialise and express growth and upward mobility on an even, though gendered, footing. In order to understand how this happened, we must look at the "wider political and economic factors" that influenced the time when and the place where *umdyarho* developed.

Trade, the Migrant Labour System, and Some of Their Effects

The dynamics of the settler racing tradition was mainly a factor in the development of *umdyarho* in as much as its development occurred alongside other developments in the colonial project, primarily trading and migrant labour. The early development of *umdyarho* came about through an adaptation of the cattle racing tradition which saw horses replacing cattle at racing events. In areas where contact with settler horse culture was less or minimal, that is, deep in the reserve areas, these races – derived from the cattle racing tradition – became the focal point around which an indigenous horse racing tradition began. The manner in which the tradition developed was influenced by the deliberate incorporation of Africans into the colonial economy. This came about through the incursion of settler traders into the reserves, and their synergistic relationship with the colonial state's need for labour, which led to the establishment of the migrant labour system. Prior to 1830 trade between settlers and indigenous African communities was prohibited, discouraged or heavily regulated. The about-turn in policy was a consequence, first, of the recognition that despite the efforts at containment, a thriving illicit trade existed. Secondly, it was because the government saw trade as one way of inducing change in the indigenous society. Trade could be used to draw local inhabitants into the colonial economy and increase their dependence on it.

A small number of licences to conduct trade in the independent areas were initially issued to "people of good repute."[232] These men would travel up for several months at a time to trade in the independent areas beyond the borders of the Cape Colony before returning to replenish supplies. Large traders would hire and "set up poor settlers as agents."[233] In the early years of 'white' trading stores, exploitative and unethical trading practices by many unscrupulous traders hampered the success of the initiative. Widespread killing of traders during the period of war in 1834/5 between the British and the Xhosa[234] brings into question the effectiveness of

Figure 27: The Transkeian Territories, 1887. (map: http://catalog.afriterra.org/zoomMap.cmd?number=1020)

[232] R. Volk, "'Red Sales in the Sunset': The Rise and Fall of White Trader Dominance in the United States' Navajo Reservation and South Africa's Transkei," in *Safundi*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2007), pp. 14-15.
[233] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981), p. 115.
[234] Ibid., p. 116.

the authorities' vetting of trading licences. The initial number of "more than 100"[235] traders dropped substantially by 1842 to "about 30"[236] due to the implementation of stringent licencing procedures by both colonial and Xhosa authorities. Archival records show that it became common practice to ensure that consent was sought from the local, indigenous authorities prior to making an application to trade, while in some cases local authorities would request that a trader be sent to serve the needs of their area.[237]

Stricter vetting of traders for licences appears to have had the desired effect. The initial 'hiccups' of the first forays of traders were soon forgotten. Entrepreneurially-minded settlers, many of whom had emigrated to the Colony explicitly to take advantage of economic opportunities, leveraged the relative efficiency of European transport systems (such as wagons) and access to global commodities to dominate trade in the independent or nominally-independent areas of the Eastern Cape.[238] The number of traders (a measly 38 at the time) began to increase dramatically after 1847/8, with the colonial government's new policy of deliberately drawing indigenous groups into the economy and "teach[ing them] the use of money."[239]

The area was annexed piece-meal by the colonial and British governments over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, [240] and the network of trading stores expanded as the colonial government bureaucracy was entrenched. By last quarter of the nineteenth century a customary process of application had developed for the issuing of trading licences. A prospective licensee would need permission from the headman or chief of the area in which the proposed site for a trading store was located, as well as an outline (often including a simple map) of the location of surrounding trading stores and their distance from the proposed. A letter of support from the resident magistrate was also attached (though this should not be a surprise

[235] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981),p. 116
[236] Ibid.
[237] KAB LND 1/872 L16093, Application by WC Wright for a Trading Store Site at Ntaboduli, Qumbu District (1903).
[238] Peires, *The House of Phalo* (1981), p. 115.
[239] B. Hutchinson, "Early European Trade Among the South African Bantu and Some Social Consequences of it," in *Revista de Anthropologia*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1956), p. 27.
[240] These annexations of the Transkei areas were as follows: 1874 – Griqualand East; 1876 – Fingoland & Idutywa Reserve. In the same year all but Pondoland 'agrees' to 'Protectorate status' and the Magistrate System is implemented. 1878 – The mouth the Umzimvubu River in Pondoland. 1881 – Port St John's (at Umzimvubu River Mouth) and the Umzimvubu River; 1884 – Thembuland, Emigrant Thembuland, Galekaland and Bomvanaland; 1885 – The annexed territories are unified, renamed the Transkeian Territories, and authority transferred from Britain to the Cape Colony. In the same year, the Pondoland coast becomes a British Protectorate, but not Pondoland itself; 1886 – Xesibeland (around Mount Ayliff), control is transferred to Griqualand East territory and then back to the Cape Colony, while parts of Pondoland (St Johns River Territory and Rode Territory) are given the use of Cape administration, but not protectorate status or annexation; 1887 – annexation of Rode Territory in Pondoland to the Cape Colony. 1894 – Annexation of Pondoland to Cape and Incorporation into Transkeian Territories.

as the resident magistrate was required to accept the application and forward it to Cape Town for final approval).[241] Furnishing this information was not yet a legal requirement[242] but it became customary to the extent that magistrates specifically requested this information to be supplied when an application was received from one not familiar with the custom.[243]

By 1932, a century after trading began, 650 traders were active in the now 'native reserves' of the Transkeian Territories. This number would increase to 705 by 1945.[244] The immense success and economic dominance of the 'white' traders can be attributed to two major factors. The first is the entrepreneurial drive of the traders combined with the advantage of access to commodities. The second relates to the disastrous geopolitical conditions and ecological misfortunes which befell the independent areas in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A third factor, less directly connected to the traders' success, but a contributor to it, was the need for labour and the inducement to encourage it on the part of the colonial administration.

One of the explicit goals of trading in the eyes of the colonial administration was to introduce money. This was expedited in some areas by applying taxation (a 'hut tax', and a 'dog tax,'[245] for example). It was further encouraged by the use of tokens at trading stores. The introduction and desirability of new commodities (available through the traders) further promoted the use of money. Money also became more accessible through wages from employment, which was readily available in the burgeoning and labour-intensive mining industry. Traders acted as agents for mining companies and facilitated credit services. By offering barter, credit and other such "extensions of goodwill"[246] traders could improve their standing in the community.

[241] There are several hundred examples of this, some of which include: KAB LND 1/ 850 L15404, L15410 & L15411; 1/853 L15511; 1/873 L16111; 1/827 L16092 & L16093; 1/870 L16025; 1/865 L15846; 1/858 L15605; 1/857 L15599 & L15589. An example of an exception was the Tsitsa Bridge Store and Hotel, purchased by M. Parkyn in 1898 (KAB LND 1/858 L15618), which sought no permission from local headmen, though it is noted in the application that the permission being sought somehow did not encroach on "native land rights." The strategic position of the store and hotel at the Tsitsa Bridge, rather than in a "native location" may be the reason for the absence of the headman's permission.

[242] At least two customs of trading became legislated. Proclamation 11 of 1922 enforced a rule preventing the establishment of new trading stores within 5 miles of existent ones, and Proclamation 164 of 1934 limited ownership of stores to one within a radius of 20 miles.

[243] See KAB LND 1/839 L14999, Application to erect a Trading Store at Milane's Location (1902).

[244] Volk, "'Red Sales in the Sunset'" (2007), p. 16.

[245] L. Van Sittert and S. Swart, "Canis Familiaris: A Dog History of South Africa," in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2003), p. 146.

[246] Volk, "'Red Sales in the Sunset'" (2007), p. 18.

Katkop,

13th Sept, 1902.

The Resident Magistrate,

Q U M B U .

Sir,

I am in receipt of your favour of the 11th instant and note contents. In compliance with your request and instructions I herewith have the honour to forward you a sketch map showing the particulars for information:-

1. The exact spot upon which I propose erecting the trading station.

2. The names of the traders and the names of the places where they are trading in the neighbourhood and surrounding the site upon which I propose erecting the shop.

3. The extent of land I shall require for that purpose.

4. The distance of the said shops from the site proposed.

5. The situation of Churches and Schools.

I have, etc.,

(Sgd) A.J.Mc.Luckie.

Figure 28: An example of information requested in the trader's licence application process. (KAB LND 1/839 L14999)

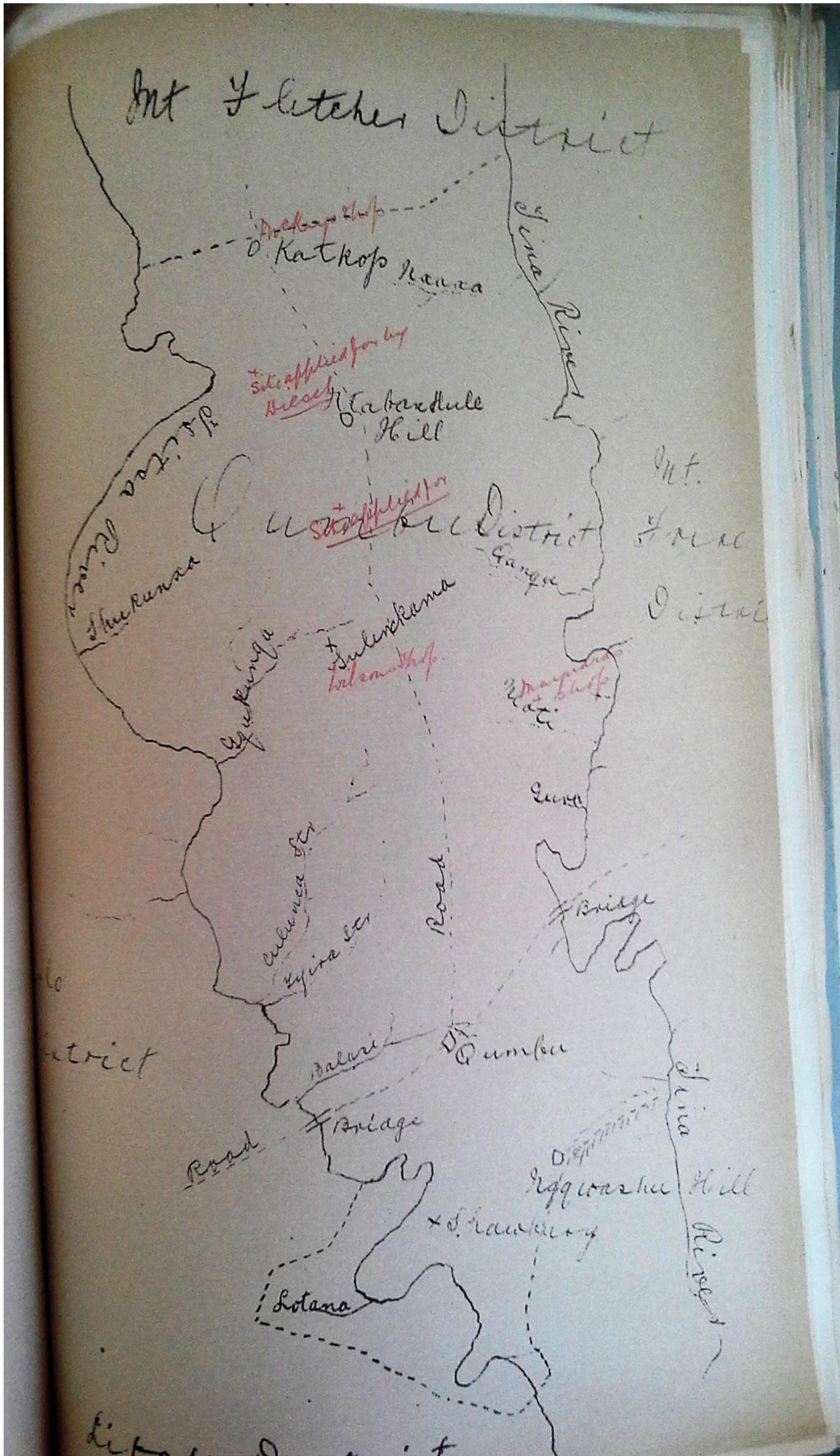

Figure 29: Example of a sketch-map provided for trading licence applications. (KAB LND 1/872 L16093)

However, because their endeavour was purely economic and largely unregulated, the "services" they came to offer were lucrative for them, but exploitative for the communities and damaging to the social fabric of the 'reserves.'

Credit, for example, came at a high rate of interest. Barter could secure tokens redeemable only at the trading store from which they were received. Money lending, sometimes with exorbitant interest and using cattle as surety, led to a problem of widespread indebtedness to the traders. Several traders also acted as recruiters for mine labour and received commission on recruits. Indebted men could be pushed into contracts to pay off their debt to traders. Some traders would then offer further (interest-laden) credit to their families for the duration of their time on the mine. All debts, from credit or money-lending, could be paid out of the wages from the mine contract. Additional services were also offered, such as bus services between trading stores and train stations to facilitate movement to and from mining areas.

The new commodities on offer were accessible through those wages. Labour migrancy to the mines appealed to many people because it enabled access to money, particularly after migrants returned and showed what was available to prospective migrants. The return of migrants encouraged others to migrate for work, when, for example, they wished to have their own income or to emulate aspects of the returning migrants' lifestyles. Migrancy was also seen as a potential avenue of escape from family or social controls which previously had been unavoidable. Those who chose (or were pushed into) the migrant labour system further removed themselves from social controls and the social and political orders of the rural areas. The incorporation of migrant workers into the colonial economy fostered expressions of individualism, hitherto absent in the social order of the reserves. It provided new ways of seeking social recognition and prestige, and allowed for ways of expressing upward mobility that had not previously been available.

The migrant labour system, aided by the traders, fundamentally changed the day-to-day management of the home and other social dynamics in the reserve areas. The returning migrants brought money, commodities, ideologies and expressions which eroded the social order. New commodities and wages opened up new avenues for individuals to express social difference, while the experiences of migrants introduced new ideas and ideologies. These differences, coupled with the routine absence of the majority of men and a significant portion of the women (varying according to the area) from a population that still called a rural area "home," meant that retaining a strong sense of community became an important challenge.

As the bonds of family and social controls – the social order – changed, so did the political order. An increasing number of males spent the vast majority of their time away from home, and this meant that they were physically unable to fulfil the roles that they would otherwise have fulfilled, including involvement in the *inkundla* and managing family life. While away from home the migrants could live outside of the political order and gain experience that enabled them to see the rural areas from new perspectives. Furthermore, the returning migrants possessed an expendable income which set them apart from rural, subsistence farmers. Their change in class position would change the position from which they engaged with the rural political order. The political authorities, whose power had already been eroded by the magistrate system, had further to adjust their role and manner of engaging with the people they governed.

The threat to the structure of political authority was not only a 'side-effect' of the presence of traders. It did not just result from the growth of a money economy, migrancy, individualism and new ideologies. It was also a direct consequence of the traders themselves. A powerful home was only powerful as long as it was of use to the people who paid tribute to it. As the power of the household was eroded, so was its value to ordinary people in terms of adhering or deferring to its authority.

In Ainslie's words, "the position of the chieftaincy remained an ambiguous one: chiefs who failed to redistribute wealth to their followers could quickly find themselves deserted in favour of others who did."[247] The value of the trading stores to people living in the 'reserves' was increasing. The value of retaining allegiance and loyalty to the old political order was being reduced at the same time as the value of developing an allegiance and loyalty (albeit of a different kind) to the local trader was growing. Practically speaking, the 'value' of the local trader to the average person was more than that of the local chief.[248] Political leaders of the old order responded by invoking 'culture.'

While the power of 'the chiefs' was indeed greatly increased later on in the twentieth century, the idea of what we now call "Traditional Leaders" as being "custodians of culture" is a necessarily modern phenomenon. The transition from a judicial to an executive role, and thence

[247] A. Ainslie (ed.), *Cattle Ownership and Production in the Communal Areas of the Eastern Cape, South Africa*, PLAAS, Research Report No. 10 (2002), p. 20.

[248] This was reversed when the apartheid government restored the power of the chiefs to well beyond pre-colonial levels in an attempt to justify their apartheid policies. In the second half of the twentieth century, chiefs had an immensely powerful hold over the daily lives of people in Transkei. See W. D. Hammond-Tooke, *Command or Consensus: The Development of Transkeian Local Government* (David Philip, 1975).

into the role of "custodian of culture," can be seen as a form of resistance against colonisation on the part of the undermined authorities. In the first half of the twentieth century the older chieftaincies invoked 'culture' as an attempt to retain an element of authority as they saw their own power diminished by the colonial authorities, and their subjects' power diminished by economic, political and cultural breakdown in the social organisation. The patterns of everyday life changed irrevocably with the changes in political economy. More was invested in the maintenance of social cohesion and a sense of community that colonisation was tearing apart. In this way, a new emphasis emerged in the role of the chieftaincies, that of custodians of a threatened culture.

A long-standing mechanism for social cohesion vested in the chieftaincies was the hosting of gatherings. Through these gatherings a redistribution of wealth could occur, community sentiment developed, and the leader's position might be entrenched through a show of the benefits of their holding office. With the migrant labour system the situation changed. Personal income from labour migrancy meant that the economic hierarchies were disrupted and the economic benefits to be derived from these gatherings became marginal. Furthermore, many people simply were not there to attend such gatherings. Many migrants moved permanently to urban areas, although for most the rural areas remained 'home'. Those who lived permanently in urban areas had family connections and in most cases kept 'roots' in these rural areas. The result was that people who had little contact (geographically and socially) in their everyday life would meet in the rural areas which they all called "home" and had to live peaceably together. The need for social cohesion and a sense of community became even more important than it was in the past.

"Christmas Time," Socialising and Horse Racing

A major effect of migrant labour was the creation of a "Christmas time" in the reserves. As a time during which the majority of migrants returned home, it was replete with different kinds of celebrations, socialising and rituals.[249] Some social events, including some sacred events, were held during this time for convenience' sake. It was the only time people were present to 'sort out' business that had been left unattended in their absence. Other events and rituals developed to occur during the Christmas period because of the extraordinariness of this time. Some of the rituals that developed were directly connected to migrant labour, others were not.

[249] I speak here of rituals as practices conducted in a prescribed way and at a prescribed time, whether sacred or secular.

The urban areas were created by rural migrants, while the rural areas were re-created and changed by the migrants and their return. It was a time when, after a year of being away, migrants would return *en masse*, completely changing the social dynamics of the rural areas for a period of roughly two weeks. In this process, "Christmas time" formed a temporal nexus of ideas and transactions. The period is particularly well described by Ngwane, who outlines what he terms "the struggle for the household"[250] at Christmas. The two-week period was one where migrants returned and exchanged stories, and where feasting and displays of material success abounded, far beyond affordability. Renovations were done on houses; new commodities, fashions of clothing and styles of music were introduced. It was also a time of what Ngwane describes as a "re-domestication of the women," who had for a year been

> haggling with the chief over something or other, re-negotiating a credit-line with the local store owner, attending parent meetings at the local school, or killing a goat for meat. During Christmas time there is a general withdrawal of women from this sphere of public negotiations with the result that, for the most part, domestic economies themselves often come to a standstill, to pick up only in the New Year.[251]

He describes the way in which the extraordinariness of Christmas gave rise to a number of ritual practices. This was partly a result of convenience, with everyone being able to gather together to conduct certain rituals or duties and practices around rituals.[252] There were also rituals around the labour migrants that were performed during the Christmas period. The best documented account of this is the work of McAllister, who analysed the transition from the ritualised drinking of beer to the eating of meat at rituals that celebrated the return of migrants in the Willowvale district of Transkei.[253] In Cancele where Ngwane was writing, there are secular rituals in which the returning migrant will sponsor a drink during the first week of his return at Christmas, "volunteered by the migrant her/himself as a form of greeting the local people."[254] Another ritual centred on the departures of migrants, but Ngwane says that this became less popular and is now generally practised "when there is a problem, such as going back to work after being home as a result of an accident."[255] He also describes a ritual performed towards the end of the Christmas period where, amidst festivities, a "ritual expert"[256]

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[250] Z. Ngwane, "'Christmas Time' and the Struggles for the Household in the Countryside: Rethinking the Cultural Geography of Migrant Labour in South Africa," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2003), pp. 681-699.
[251] Ngwane, "'Christmas Time'" (2003), p. 695.
[252] Ibid., p. 696. Ngwane cites "weddings, circumcision, *lobola* negotiations and the unveiling of tombstones."
[253] See P. A. McAllister, *Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals: Power, Practice, and Performance in the South African Rural Periphery* (Carolina Academic Press, 2006) and P. A. McAllister, "Beasts to Beer Pots: Migrant Labour and Ritual Change in Willowvale District, Transkei," in *African Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (1985), pp. 121-135.
[254] Ngwane, "'Christmas Time'" (2003), p. 697.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.

will walk the boundary of the home and drive nails into specific important points. According to Ngwane, "aimed at strengthening the homestead against evil spirits during the absence of the migrant, this ritual performatively culminates Christmas time, itself a very ideologically intense period."[257]

The "ideologically intense period" wasn't necessarily about the rituals themselves (whether secular or sacred), but the rituals provide insight into a broader ideologically intense cultural discourse around migrant labour and the rural areas that played out at Christmas time. Some obvious reasons for this intensity include the concentration of rituals at Christmas due to the migrants' presence, which draws ideological discussions to the fore through the focus on rituals like marriage or *lobola* discussions, different commemorations and rites of passage. In other rituals, such as those associated with migrancy itself, there is an emphasis on the presence or absence of the migrant. This can be seen in, for example, celebrating the safe return of a migrant and reincorporating them into the home. It is also seen in the departure of a migrant, when his absence is marked through rituals to safe-guard the home, and in the oratory (covered in detail by McAllister) which emphasises that the migrant should not forget where he comes from, including the way of life associated with the rural home. Migrants are encouraged to remember the values they have been taught and exhorted to save money to buy cattle and care for their home. And while it certainly occurred, migrants would be hard-pressed to forget their roots. African migrants were classified and divided up by the colonial and apartheid governments. After classifying each person according to 'tribe,' each 'tribe' was assigned a 'homeland.' In the mining compounds where the majority of male migrants worked, different 'tribes' were housed together and conflicts between different groups were rife. This encouraged the strengthening of bonds within 'tribal' classifications and the weakening of bonds between different designated groups based on language and tradition. It also meant that each group had a place from which they were considered to have 'correctly' derived. The idea of being a certain kind of person, and the attachment of place to that classification, further reinforced the idea that a migrant's "home" was in a specific rural area. This was particularly strongly emphasised once the apartheid government began to make different 'homelands'[258] 'independent,' depriving migrants of South African citizenship and forcing them to return to their designated 'homeland' in the absence of employment.[259]

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[257] Ngwane, "'Christmas Time'" (2003), p. 697.
[258] Elsewhere here referred to by the more honest term of "native reserves" or bantustans.
[259] This was an advance on the 'pass system' which prevented indigenous people from entering into settler areas without the correct documentation in terms of the infamous Group Areas Act. In the Group Areas Act, urban

The widespread feasting and extravagance of the Christmas time provided an opportunity for those who remained behind and those who migrated to retain a sense of community identity. It became common for chiefs to draw all in their areas together around Christmas for a major gathering. This is another example of a ritual practice that developed over the Christmas time, similar to the practice noted by Ngwane of returning migrants sponsoring a drink. Much like cattle racing, horse racing occurred at all sorts of social gatherings. And horses featured prominently at these large gatherings. Lusindiso Tantsi, great-great-grandson of King Faku of the Mpondo, provided a narrative of these gatherings to me.

Tantsi began by describing the events that take place.[260] Starting on December 23rd, and lasting until after Christmas Day, various events and gatherings would occur at the local Great Place. Each home would send a cow a few days prior to allow time for preparations to be made. If a home could not afford to send a cow they could send another contribution, perhaps a sheep or sorghum beer. Asked what happened at these Christmas gatherings, Tantsi says: "Cooking – nicest food – people singing, dancing and celebrating … people in different colours. It was a 'colouring event'. People love a bit of colour. So you'd see all these bright colours, you know?"[261]

Then he started speaking about the horses:[262]

> … horses used to get dressed up. All the women in the rural area were involved in making sure that – they will dress up the horses,[263] nicely and they were neat. They used to knit some really nice things. And that way, even the courting, or the dating, as it were, the nicest horse used to reflect how nicely the gentlemen is being loved by ladies. That's how it was done. [It was] a show of popularity, and a show of being … the most sought after man. He had the nicest horse. He had the nicest clothes, because his women would dress him up. On that day – he was literally eccentrically – you know what I mean?... [It was] December time because in those areas a lot of the men worked in the mines, alright? For many, many years. And December time was the only time they came back… And my father's place would be a central point. All of them, with their horses will come, will ride, from those places, those other rural areas, going to the Great Place[264]…So all of them gather there. So *umhambo* was a sign of a man who knows how to

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areas were divided up and allocated to different racial groups. The grand apartheid plan implemented this on a national level.

[260] It is unclear when exactly these types of events began, though the reporting of them as happening since earliest memory of those interviewed, and considering the age of those interviewed, seems to place them as having begun prior to the 1950s. It is also unclear how widespread they were, though they seem to have been fairly common in Mpondo administered areas (a point which is of relevance later).

[261] Tantsi: 19 January 2016.

[262] To the greatest extent possible I have chosen to let Tantsi's words speak for themselves here. He provides a lucid description of events which provides evidence of claims made elsewhere and as such is valuable quoted at length. The tendency for the researcher to draw inference from chosen phrases or words often allows a reading of narratives which both distorts and disentangles the whole picture of ways of life. Often how different understanding and facets relate to each other is lost. By providing Tantsi's own words I hope to show how the different ideas spoken about here connect together in the participants lived experience.

[263] "*bahobisa amahashe.*"

[264] "*Unhlunkulu.*"

> train his horse. He was not galloping. The horse was not galloping. It showed discipline. Even the man on the horse, the way he – he was not working the horse – he took care of his horse. His horse was well taken care of. It was well built. It was brushed nicely. It was shining. The horse was clean. The hooves were properly cleaned. Neat. There was a whole lot of neatness that went into it. The horse would be properly, properly – even the fur would be nicely done and decorated, the tail would be neatly shifted and done properly. Everything was done in such a nice order. So all of these rural areas, as they are going to Great Place, they would show different skills as they ride in… Saddles. The man who had the most expensive saddle, you could tell. So these men were working very hard, long hours and long months in the mines. So this was a time for them to splash out.[265]

I asked Tantsi if he would expand on the delivery of the cows for me. He said:

> They send that before, because they're preparing for that day. But it doesn't mean that on that day they're not carrying gifts. Sometimes they'll be – boys – having a few [for example,] cattle, and others, just as a gift to the chief. It depended on how they wanted to give. It was more like [a gesture]. Maybe on that day because everybody has to see, on the day, Christmas day, because [the first cows] are just part of these little rules that they've [stipulated]. So that contribution of a rural area, each stand, is for everybody. An individual contribution will be on that day, where people want to show [off], maybe bottles, the most expensive brandy, or anything.

"So you could say the first one would be a tax of sorts?" "Yes, exactly," Tantsi replied:

> But then after that, then you're showing off. "I've got this. I've done that." That's what they used to do. So *umhambo* and that type of racing – maybe someone will break off from the group, and his horse will show the most amazing skill. He'll race off and, say, maybe 5 [kilometres] to my home, and you'll see a horse, because you'll see them coming from [that far] and they'll race off. And he will get there with every excitement, and women ululating, and all of those kind of things. So all of these things were done in celebrating. It was sometimes because there used to be a few little battles and wars, so being a chief in those days, because they used to fight over grazing land…. So they used to fight over stock, grazing, all of those things. So those used to cause conflict. Chiefs and other chiefs would not always properly get along. Because they would fight over boundaries…. So my dad was always caught up in those things. So [the time of celebrations] was always a time of peace where if that area is peaceful, they'll invite others to come and take part in celebrations…. If there's peace then others would come participate. Or that would be another way of creating peace, inviting them over, which was a bit tricky, because once people started drinking tempers started to fly. Back then, stick fighting was the order of the day. There were no knives. There was no boxing. There was none of this boxing. Even when I grew up the mode of fighting was stick fighting … it was a sport, but it was also a way when…. Never mind the fact that people say it was a sport. It was never a sport. Stick fighting was never a sport…. It was an excuse to fight. Because when you get hit, you get hit. So, that's the reality… but the elders in the group knew how to break it off. They could see when it's so serious that it could lead into other things…. So all of these things are related to each other. Horses were the mode of transport. So that's where all these things built up. Now, this horse racing, just like in all the other areas, it only became a competition or a form of competition, only purely because people were challenging each other. It was never necessarily a sport. It was a way of challenging each other. "My horse can do better. My horse can do that. My horse can do this. My horse is a breed. It's a breed of this and this and that." So it became a type of competition. Which is what we see today.[266]

This provides an interesting picture. Remembering the earlier time when the focus of entertainment at social gatherings shifted from one species to another – from cattle to horses – we are reminded of how this shift changed the way in which people engaged with the sport. Although this was entertainment, it was simultaneously a form of expression that, like all

[265] Tantsi: 19 January 2016.
[266] Ibid.

sports, included serious elements. Taking the symbolic understanding of each species into account, the process of moving from cattle to horses was a process of moving from saying, through display, "look at what I have," to saying "look at what I am."

The idea of "look at what I am" features prominently in Ngwane's analysis of Christmas time in Cancele, though without reference to horses. In Cancele, he speaks about the emphasis placed on the returning migrants 'wallet.' "The sheer act of underwriting the material transformation of the home by their wives – whitewashing the buildings, and reinforcing the floors and walls with fresh mud, for example – is a gesture of distinction that sets apart the house of a working man," Ngwane says; and "a migrant derives value from walking importantly about the settlement with 'cattle in his pocket.' A migrant reinforces this perception by strategically sponsoring the occasional consumptive event … which in turn calls attention to his 'wallet'."[267]

Horses and horse racing became the perfect vehicle through which to express the individual's growth and stature, in much the same way as Ngwane describes the 'wallet.' The use of the 'wallet,' renovations to the home, and the gifts brought to the chief all constitute a performances of status – whether real (if one can, in fact, afford them) or purely symbolic (if, in fact, one cannot). The 'wallet' is an expression of class position and rising economic stature. Whether the person is able to afford the claims made on behalf of the "cattle in his pocket" is immaterial, because either way it is a transference of economic capital into social capital through performance. The gatherings at the houses of chiefs allowed for the expression of this transference in a wide variety of ways, particularly through the inclusion of horses.

The structure of gatherings at the Great Place at Christmas meant that they were able to bring people together in a manner in which the simple expression of wealth could not. Horses and horse racing similarly permitted the performance of status, but – in Tantsi's description – horses and the way that they were used enabled more accessibility to, and flexibility in the performance. The horse as a masculine symbol allows the individual man to express elements of *ubudoda*. But the intertwined notions of 'growing up' and masculinity, and the complex understanding of 'growing up,' allowed for various kinds of capital accrual to be expressed through one symbol: the horse. This enabled the horse to, in a sense, 'level the playing field' for men in the social performance at Christmas. One person may give the most ostentatious offering for the Christmas feast, or have the most expensive saddle or horse; another person

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[267] Ngwane, "'Christmas Time'" (2003), p. 695.

without the means to afford these items may have a horse which is the strongest, or the fastest, or the best trained, or perhaps have the most attractive horse; yet others may have none of these, but can still express their social standing by showing off their current status amongst women of the area, who dress them and their horses up for the occasion. Through this, migrant and farmer alike, rich in money or cattle or neither, are all able to express various aspects of their manhood, socially, through their horses. Through this performance they can lay claim to power, knowledge and growth closely allied to manhood. And with horses being such personal items, they afforded a safe outlet for any animosities and rivalries between their owners. They could settle conflicts that might otherwise be expressed as violence. It allowed this in a non-violent, but public and entertaining way. Because horses and horse racing were an outlet for masculinity in all its guises, for the expression of *ubudoda*, the Christmas gatherings, through their horse races, could do more than just bring people together. The accessibility and flexibility of performance through horses allowed people to find a sense of place in an insecure community, and helped the community to strengthen the ties between its individual members in the process. The displays both drew people together, reinforcing community and social same-ness, while at the same time asserting social difference through the horse. They enabled people to share as part of a community while allowing the individual man to distinguish himself from the group.

While the horses and horse racing remained a masculine domain, women were by no means excluded. It was not simply men as isolated individuals, or a series of individual performances, but a composite performance in which the whole community were players. Women would attend the festivities, but would not ride horses. Women entered the performance by dressing horses and men, a role which is at once a public statement and yet within the "re-domesticated" space of women who had been managing the traditionally masculine public sphere during the year. If we consider these Christmas festivals as a space where men could express their standing (or desired standing) through horses, women's engaging with the horses and dressing up the men allows women to play a central role in the community's expression of the different forms of manhood on display. They could, in a sense, 'cast a vote' and influence the individual exhibitions of masculinity. Women could also express local loyalties and rivalries through selecting which men and horses to engage with and how.

These events highlight the invention of ritualised traditions and performances around the Christmas period, and show how this period created a complex pattern of socialising and performances within it. A large part of the Christmas performances involved horses and *umhambo* horse racing. This happened because of the changing social conditions and the

versatility of the horse as a symbol in the context of these conditions – levelling the playing field amongst the diversifying forms of social expression created by migrant labour, traders and incorporation into the colonial economy. By drawing on elements of the settler horse culture – the horse itself and the *umhambo* riding style – and bringing that into the circumstances in which cattle-racing was conducted, it becomes clear, not just how cattle racing became horse racing, but also why horse racing became so popular. Given the kinds of performance described above and some its meanings, horses, because of their versatility as a symbol, appear perfectly suited to the new context in which horse (rather than cattle) races were performed. Horses are being utilised for a symbolic purpose in a way that cattle could not have been. The Christmas gatherings and their horse races allowed people to both reconnect with the place they called home and express the changes that had overtaken that home.

The horse races would not have been organised with these specific outcomes in mind, nor would the 'dressing up' have been consciously and deliberately instituted. The development of such practices would have been organic. In this case it was the coming together of a new species and new material conditions that created new practices. The new species, because of the symbolism associated with it, provided an outlet for various forms of personal and social expressions appropriate to the time. The cattle racing tradition which had become impossible to maintain had been adapted, and through that adaptation the new conditions in which people gathered could be expressed.

Summary and Conclusion

At the time of contact and acquisition, there were two distinct racing traditions in the Eastern Cape. The first was the settler horse racing tradition which drew upon settler horse culture. Settler horse culture involved certain ways of training and riding horses which helped to provide indigenous groups with basic horse skills. Importantly, the horses acquired from settlers would likely have been trained (unless they were very young) in a certain way by the settlers. And this training is strongly defined in cultural terms. It involves knowledge of how to ride horses, how to communicate with them. It is, in effect, the 'code' through which the species may be made use of. The settler racing tradition made use of these same 'codes' of horsemanship, but expanded on them and transformed riding horses into a sport and a social event. The settler racing tradition followed settlers. Settler racing events sometimes lasted up to three days for annual "turf meets," and included various distances with horses of different ages and sizes, outrides and steeplechases. They were social events, with large numbers of

people being drawn to watch, in a carnival sort of atmosphere. The larger "turf meets" occurred at larger settlements, but between these "turf meets" and at smaller locations, settlers organised horse races and 'race days'. Where there were settlers, there were horse races.

Indigenous Africans acquired horses from the settlers, and indigenous Africans acquired horsemanship from the settlers. In some areas along the border of the Cape Colony and reserves, the settler horse racing tradition was also acquired. In these areas the number of settlers was higher, and as a result the contact with settler horse culture and the settler racing tradition was greater. Indigenous groups took up the horse racing tradition of settlers almost entirely as they observed it to be. In at least one case, which I will discuss in detail in the chapter that follows, the settler horse racing tradition was incorporated with the assistance of settlers.

The second racing tradition at the time of contact and acquisition, and which preceded European settlement, was that of cattle racing. At least one report equates its popularity with that of the horse racing tradition in England. We know that there were distinctive styles of cattle racing, including long-distance races, short races and 'races' based on display. We also know that there was, at least in some areas to the west and south of the reserves, a tradition of riding cattle, possibly in races, but there is no evidence specifically indicating that this was the case. We know that cattle racing had come to be considered customary at some religious events (a cattle race would customarily close a wedding, for example), and that it featured as a form of entertainment at social events of all kinds.

There was some overlap between the settler horse culture and the cattle racing tradition, temporally and geographically, but there is no indication of an overlap between the two kinds of racing. So while horses and aspects of horsemanship were acquired in areas where cattle racing was ongoing, horse racing does not seem to have supplanted cattle racing; rather, as cattle racing became less viable, horses were incorporated into the cattle racing tradition. This was the way in which the settler horse culture was transferred to indigenous groups and how it became a part of the indigenous horse racing tradition we see today. Christmas gatherings, for example, are direct derivations from the cattle racing tradition, but involving a new species acquired from settlers. An aspect of the settler horse culture which remains is the style of riding, *umhambo*, the tripling style of the Boer riders, a settler group who traded both horses and guns to indigenous groups. The Boers also drove the frontier forward while on horseback, thus providing indigenous groups with early contact with horses, though not necessarily a large

number of them. The 'equine frontier' expanded faster than that of Europeans. The cultural acquisition of *umhambo* almost certainly came from the Boer strain of settler horse culture. But, just as *umhambo* was to become understood as indigenous and 'culturally correct,' so was the horse racing tradition.

The key to understanding the development of *umdyarho* as discussed in this chapter lies in recognising how the material context in which the races occurred changed dramatically as a result of the colonial project. The transition from cattle to horse racing was itself a part of this process, as was the way in which people engaged with the sport. This is because horses are understood in a different way from the way in which cattle are understood. The species mean different things. While cattle are symbols of wealth, horses are personal items, extensions of the owner. As I have suggested, the change that occurred can be succinctly put as follows: cattle racing is saying "look at what I have," while horse racing is saying "look at what I am." The development of the symbolic status of horses is discussed in Chapter 2.

The horse was a versatile and powerful symbol which could be deployed to express other changes in material conditions. The migrant labour system and trade combined to draw indigenous Africans into the colonial economy and gave rise to a greater diversity in expression through experiences of migrancy and access to a broader economy. One major effect of the migrant labour system was the creation of "Christmas time." During this period various ritualised practices developed, including large gatherings in which horses were raced (as cattle had been before). These gatherings were a site in which *umdyarho* could thrive. The sheer scope of migrant labour meant that it was the Christmas period when new social 'traditions' and practices were created. The Christmas races, through the racing itself and the display of horses and horsemanship, created the ground on which both unity could be fostered and the social position of individuals expressed. It thus fulfilled a dual desire for the participants, who, while living apart and having divergent experiences, all called the same rural area home. These social gatherings were inclusive and egalitarian, and although they were highly gendered, all found a space for expression within them. This inclusivity and egalitarianism was made possible through the deployment of a 'symbol set' associated with horses and created in the nexus of ideas around "growing up."

None of the above means that *umdyarho* is a 'pure' and indigenous tradition. *Umdyarho* would not exist had not settlers brought horses and horsemanship, nor would it look as it does without the settler racing tradition and its adaptation by indigenous Africans. *Umdyarho* remains a

hybrid, syncretic tradition, but the hybridisation consisted largely of drawing the settler horse culture and racing tradition into the moribund cattle racing tradition to re-invigorate it.

Here an overview has been provided of changing historical conditions and how they influenced the development of horse racing. I have described the general effects of migrant labour and colonialism, and the general response to them. But different spaces were colonised differently in Transkei. As I pointed out in Chapter 1, colonialism was non-linear. It was an *ad hoc* and disjointed process of subjugation, not a monolithic juggernaut. Local peculiarities of colonisation cannot be discounted. In the chapter that follows I discuss Qumbu district. Many of the aspects dealt with above are re-examined, but in a specific place and in greater detail to highlight the peculiarities of the area where horse racing is most popular and where the longest standing annual race is held. It is in the following chapter that the adaptation of the second racing tradition is discussed, including one example of how the settler racing tradition became an expression of African cultural heritage.

Figure 30: Judges rush to identify winning horses at Bajodini. (26 December 2014)

-Chapter 4-

Christmas in Qumbu: The Transformation of a Horse Race into a Celebration of African Cultural Heritage

Tsolo and Qumbu are the most popular areas for *umdyarho*, and have been so for several decades. Tsolo and Qumbu are areas that were mainly controlled by the Mpondomise political lineages in the time immediately prior to colonisation. They also comprised the site of their last desperate stand against colonial subjugation. The tragically apt name of this last stand was initially Hope's War. It was named for the magistrate, Hamilton Hope, who was murdered under order of the Mpondomise paramount, Mhlontlo, in 1880, triggering what is now more-often called the Mpondomise Rebellion.[268] It occurred simultaneously with what has been called the Gun War, a general uprising in Lesotho, triggered by enforcement of the ironically named Peace Protection Ordinance that aimed to disarm the Basotho. The rebellion in Lesotho was an embarrassing political fiasco for the Cape Government, which had the administration of Basutoland wrested away from it by the British Government in London (hence Lesotho not being a part of South Africa today). But the Mpondomise Rebellion was quickly crushed when the Mpondo armies failed to materialise quickly enough to join the Mpondomise as they marched on Mthatha, seat of Britain's Chief Magistrate for the areas of "native reserve" under "indirect rule," and which would later become Transkei.[269]

In 1883 the Cape Government received the report of the Griqualand East Land Commission (known, insultingly, as the Vacant Lands Commission). The commission was established in the aftermath of the rebellion "to allot land to those whose recent conduct had led to their 'deserving' it, and generally to confirm the pattern of land settlement throughout the northern Transkei."[270] Large areas of the western boundary of Transkei were reclassified as 'European land', while a divide-and-rule strategy of structured resettlement was applied to the Qumbu and Tsolo districts, but more so in Qumbu. Mfengu communities formerly settled in the reserves later named Ciskei were allocated lands in the district, as were Hlubi and Thembu

[268] C. Crais, "Chiefs and Bureaucrats in the Making of Empire: A Drama from the Transkei, South Africa, October 1880," in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 108, No. 4 (2003), pp. 1034-1056.
[269] Crais, "Chiefs and Bureaucrats" (2003), pp. 1034-1056.
[270] R. Ross, "The Historical Origins of the Transkei's Boundaries," in *African Perspectives*, No. 1 (1976), p. 44.

groups who were settled along the western border with Lesotho, in the Cape Colony 'proper' and parts of "Emigrant Thembuland," which had been re-designated for European settlement.[271] Each "location" was assigned a certain "tribal" classification, governed under that "tribe's" customary law by a "tribal headman" or "chief" identified by the British.[272] The land was divided up according to the classifications, forcing relocations and disjunctions of leaders and laws. Qanqu, formerly the site of Mhlontlo's 'Great Place,' was designated a Hlubi location. Such moves could only lead to animosity.

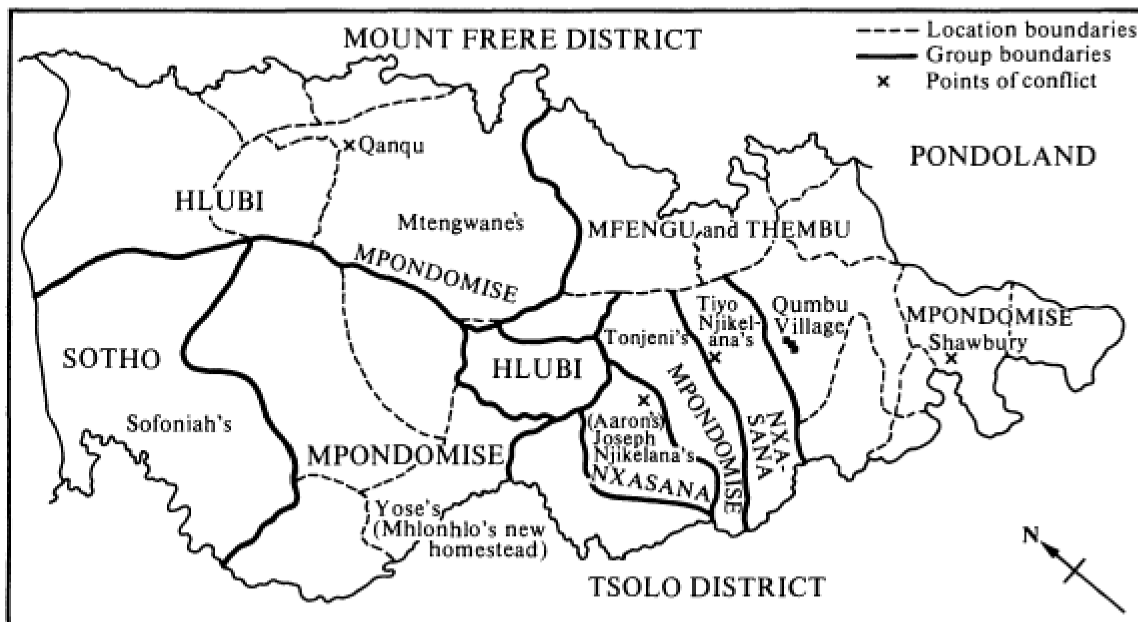

Figure 31: Qumbu District as it was divided up by the Vacant Lands Commission. (Beinart, "Conflict in Qumbu" [1981], p. 96.)

The result was high levels of inter-location conflict over settlements and grazing which resulted in fights and reciprocal attacks, including the burning of homes. The conflicts are catalogued in an uncharacteristically thick folder in South Africa's National Archives labelled "Tribal Disturbances: Qumbu District."[273] Later, from 1914 to 1916, the area was a site of major opposition to the dipping regulations implemented to halt East Coast Fever, despite there being no East Coast Fever in the area. This resulted in soldiers being sent into parts of Griqualand

[271] Ross, "Transkei's Boundaries" (1976), p. 45. Note that there was already immigration and settlement by, for example, Mfengu, Nxasana and Sotho prior to the rebellion, but it was not codified, nor did it approach the scale established in 1883.

[272] To complicate matters, the ability of designated headmen or chiefs to implement customary law was also somewhat farcical. All 'crimes of violence' were automatically heard by the European magistrate, while in all other cases the accused would have a right to appeal to the magistrate. This made the authority of the chiefs and headmen hollow, and it was a major factor in Mhlontlo's discontent which led to the rebellion.

[273] SAB NA Vol. 82 5022/1912/F164, Tribal Disturbances. Qumbu District. (1912).

East to quell the anti-dipping movement.[274] Surrounded by this social turmoil, traders engaged in their business in Qumbu district.

The settler community in the 'reserves' was small in comparison to elsewhere in the colony. It was largely geared towards trade and activities around it that might support the grander purpose of drawing indigenous groups into the colonial economy. It is important to remember that the traders were first-and-foremost entrepreneurs who had moved into the rural areas of the annexed reserves primarily to conduct business. Many excelled at business on this uneven field, and accumulated a fair number of stores as well as other businesses. The business environment may have been of a kind distinct from that of the Cape Colony but this was still, to the traders, simply entrepreneurship carried out in the typical quotidian manner of business and investment elsewhere. Ideologically speaking, most traders presumably supported the colonisation of the area in varying degrees and in different ways, but they were not primarily there in order to advance either Christianity or 'civilisation' (as the missionaries were), or explicitly to carry out the orders of empire (as the magistrates and bureaucrats were). They were there, primarily, to make money. The early traders were migrants and interlopers, who made forays into the independent areas to trade, while the trader class that emerged in the latter years of the nineteenth entry were distinctly settlers. They moved with their families to the rural edges of the empire and established homes, not simply shops.

The experiences of these traders would have differed in important respects from those of the settlers elsewhere in the colony. While the settler sovereignty in Cape Colony and Natal Colony removed indigenous title to the land, the sovereignty of the trader settler class in the 'native reserves' was more ambiguous. The space which they inhabited (physically) was at once a part of the British Empire and subject to a political dispensation that relied on 'indirect rule'. The trader class held a privileged position as settlers among a subjugated people, but 'indirect rule' meant that, in theory, the area was governed by the subjugated people themselves.

In this environment the logic of the settler was the inverse of settlers in the Colony. Where settlers outside of the reserve continually transferred (and relied on the transfer of) indigenous populations out of the colony, either literally or figuratively,[275] those who settled in the 'native

[274] See Bundy, "'We don't want your rain'" (1987), pp. 191-221.
[275] Various forms of "transfer" found in Settler Colonialism are discussed in Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* (2010), two 'figurative' transfers discussed by Veracini which might apply here would be "Transfer by conceptual displacement: when indigenous peoples are not considered indigenous to the land and are therefore perceived as exogenous Others…" (Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* (2010), p. 35) and "Perception transfer: when indigenous peoples are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered…" (Veracini, *Settler Colonialism* (2010), p. 37).

reserves' were clearly and consciously situating themselves in spaces where this logic could not apply. And while still retaining the European settler notions of propriety in terms of segregation, their contact with the indigenous population was far greater than that of settlers in the colony 'proper.' The small 'white' settler community retained the social taboos of integration and a white supremacist ideology.[276] They remained powerful and wealthy compared to their indigenous Africans neighbours, even though there were marked differences in wealth within the group. They developed into a tight-knit community, with deep connections between "trader families" through business dealing, socialising and inter-marriage, and so bore a striking resemblance to an aristocratic class.

The traders – permanent settlers – could not build a claim to sovereignty in the same manner as settlers elsewhere in the country. Rather they had to suffice to live as an aristocratic class there, and retain faith that the colonial and settler colonial project would secure their position through a delicate balance of power. The balance of power was to hold for a century. The position this community filled can be seen in the ambiguity of their actions in relation to the Colony. They would request permission from Cape Town to set up a fence,[277] but circumvent monopoly regulations by buying stores beyond their maximum allowance and register them in the names of their wives and children, or 'gift' and 'swop' the stores to another entrepreneur.[278] Large-scale migrations of settlers to the reserves were, neither desirable, nor a political option, thus the settler community remained small and consisted largely of traders, bureaucrats and missionaries with a smaller group providing necessary services to this community.[279] While there were the invariable lawsuits that come along with people doing business together, a sense of community developed, with each person fulfilling a role in the settler community to forward the community's objectives and help others to do the work they were there to do. Traders, for example, would assist bureaucrats by collecting data regarding the area they serviced for censuses requested by the Cape Colony,[280] or they would work with missionaries to establish and sit on the boards of hospitals.[281] At the heart of the settler community sat the traders, and

[276] See, for example, the furore around an application to own a trading store by indigenous Africans, in KAB LND 1/900 L17001, Application by Messrs T. T. Ngono and C. Jafta for a trading site at Nxaxa, Qumbu District (1904).
[277] KAB CMT Vol. 3/1343 25/19/1/4, Boundary Fence. Upper Culunca Location – Moore's Post. Qumbu.
[278] See, for example, KAB LND 1/842 L15093, Application by Mr. Macner to Erect a Trading Station in Qozo's Location, Qumbu (1902-1904).
[279] I use the term 'community' in a conventional, not technical, sense here, connoting having a sense of unity and being committed to mutual cooperation.
[280] KAB STK Vol.1 21/103, Census 1921. District File. Qumbu.
[281] Obituary of L. P. Moore, supplied by Adrian Moore.

the activities of settlers were geared predominantly towards facilitating trade and developing infrastructure to that end.

While it may be hyperbolic to say that the trading families 'made their fortunes,' they certainly managed to accumulate wealth and land over the three or four generations in which they were active. As a small and largely rural community with little in the way of social amenities found elsewhere in the colony or in Britain, the traders themselves developed social amenities. This is particularly true of the early years of the twentieth century. For example, David Black, owner of the Tsitsa Bridge hotel and store built a (rudimentary) golf course on his property. [282] He also built a tennis court. L.P. Moore similarly built tennis courts at his Moore's Post station, along with a (small) polo field[283] and a swimming pool carved out of a single piece of sandstone.[284]

Social amenities were generally built at trading stations, as might be expected because of the priorities of governance in Transkei. European settlement was not encouraged and there was not a large enough settler population to establish a locally-driven government, as had happened elsewhere in the colony.[285] This meant that many social engagements and the 'social scene' of the 'white' settlers often centred on different trading stores. The thriving 'dance scene' amongst the settlers is evident in the memoirs of Les O'Hagan, whose father took Tsitsa Bridge over from David Black. There, O'Hagan describes settlers coming from Mthatha to Tsitsa Bridge[286] for an evening's dance. And people would go from Tsitsa Bridge to Tsolo[287] for the same reason, returning home the same evening. In the 1940s, the Moore family formed a family band in the Qumbu district called 'The Shamrocks'.[288] They provided music at dances, including dances at Moore's Post and Tsitsa Bridge. Another name mentioned as providing music at Tsitsa Bridge dances is a certain "Dillon Preston from Umtata."[289] Social events also occurred in the towns at the various hotels and churches. Regional clubs – sports clubs, for example – were established with open membership and generally in the towns.

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[282] M. C. Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations of the Central and Southern Transkei* (Brevitas, 2013), p. 119. I recognise the hagiographic nature of this text. Despite its historiographical shortcomings, it remains a valuable resource which provides insight into the lives of the traders as they saw themselves.
[283] Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* (2013), p. 126.
[284] Adrian Moore: 26 June 2015.
[285] See L. Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 53-74.
[286] About 50 kilometres. Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* (2013), pp. 118-119.
[287] Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* (2013), pp. 118-119. A distance of about 15 to 20 kilometres.
[288] Ibid., p. 130.
[289] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

As with elsewhere in the colony, settlers brought with them a thriving settler horse culture. African groups were exposed to the settler horse culture in the areas where settlers established themselves, even in the reserves. Settler horse racing was found across various towns in the Transkei,[290] as was ‘gymkhana’.[291] In Mthatha a race track was built on an area of commonage land that is now the site of the Walter Sisulu University campus.[292] Adrian Moore relayed a story involving his grandfather L.P. Moore (who died in 1958, thus placing the date prior to this), in which he described a “close friend” of his grandfather being an importer of Thoroughbred horses into the Transkei for racing. In one case L.P. Moore, himself, imported a horse from Ireland in order to beat his friend in a horse race. The prize at stake was a trading store. L.P. Moore was convinced by his friend that it was only fair to ride the horses themselves, duly lost the race (ostensibly due to his weight). He honoured the bet by handing over one of his stores before immediately purchasing it back from his friend.[293]

The Horseracing and Betting Restriction Ordinance of 1913 and the Horse Racing and Betting Ordinance (No. 8 of 1914) required registration of racing areas and permission to be sought to host races. While these Ordinances were not made with the ‘reserves’ in mind, they applied there nonetheless. The Qumbu Gymkhana Club[294] was one of the social clubs established by the settler community in Qumbu. It was hosting horse races around Qumbu town prior to 1914, but the exact date when this started is unknown. In 1914 the Qumbu Gymkhana Club applied

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[290] Archival records include the following: KAB PAS 3/1 BT12/1, Bizana. Horse Racing and Betting (1920-1924); KAB PAS 3/1 BT15/1, Butterworth. Horse Racing and Betting (1913-1924); KAB PAS 3/3 BT48/1, Idutywa. Horse Racing and Betting (1913-1922); KAB PAS 3/3 BT55/1, Libode. Horse Racing and Betting (1913-1927); KAB PAS 3/3 BT70/1, Mqanduli. Horse Racing and Betting (1919-1921); KAB PAS 3/3 BT69/1, Mount Frere. Horse Racing and Betting. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1913-1926); KAB PAS 3/4 BT87/1, Qumbu. Horse Racing and Betting. Sporting Club. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1913-1926); KAB PAS 3/5 BT91/1, Cofimvaba. Horse Racing and Betting. Gymkhana Club. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1920-1923); KAB PAS 3/5 BT102/1, Tabankulu. Horse Racing and Betting. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1914-1922); KAB PAS 3/5 BT106/1, Tsomo. Horse racing and Betting. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1921-1923); KAB PAS 3/6 BT119/1, Willowvale. Horse Racing and Betting. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1913-1921); KAB PAS 3/8 BT122/1, Cala. Horse Racing and Betting (1915-1925); KAB PAS 3/21 P5/43/30, Flagstaff Gymkhana Club. Horse Racing and Betting Ordinance (1913-1924); KAB PAS 3/23 P5/43/66, Mount Fletcher. Horse Racing and Betting (1913-1922); KAB PAS 3/25 P5/43/104, Umtata. Horse Racing and betting Ordinance (1913-1925).

[291] “Gymkhanas were popular in the early days. Teams from Kokstad, Franklin and Cedarville would compete against the Transkei teams. Engcobo, Idutywa and Qumbu were always well represented. I can still see the horses thundering down the course with the riders brandishing their sabres to cut in half an orange, suspended from a pole, or else galloping down the course with a lance pointing to the heavens and then dropping it to spear a wooden peg stuck in the ground. There was a real art to carrying out such manoeuvres.” (Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stores* [2013], pp. 587-588.)

[292] This was to become a large, developed Thoroughbred track in the 1980s before being demolished for the construction of the University of Transkei campus, with horse races documented from at least 1913 (KAB PAS 3/25 P5/43/104; Umtata. Horse Racing and betting Ordinance [1913-1925]).

[293] According to Bikitsha, his grandfather similarly imported and sold Thoroughbreds, particularly to interested Africans in the area around his stores, though it was not a part of his core business (Bikitsha: 29 April 2014).

[294] Later renamed the Qumbu Sporting Club.

for official registration of the race course sited on the town's commonage land.[295] This request was granted with the express condition that should the Gymkhana Club become defunct, permission to use the site as a race course would be rescinded.[296]

A number of applications were made by the Qumbu Sporting Club to host race days at the site, with a totaliser. All requests were granted, but several instances of these races being cancelled are diligently noted by bureaucrats.[297] The wealth of archival material generated by these ordinances show that horse racing was a hugely popular pastime among settlers in the

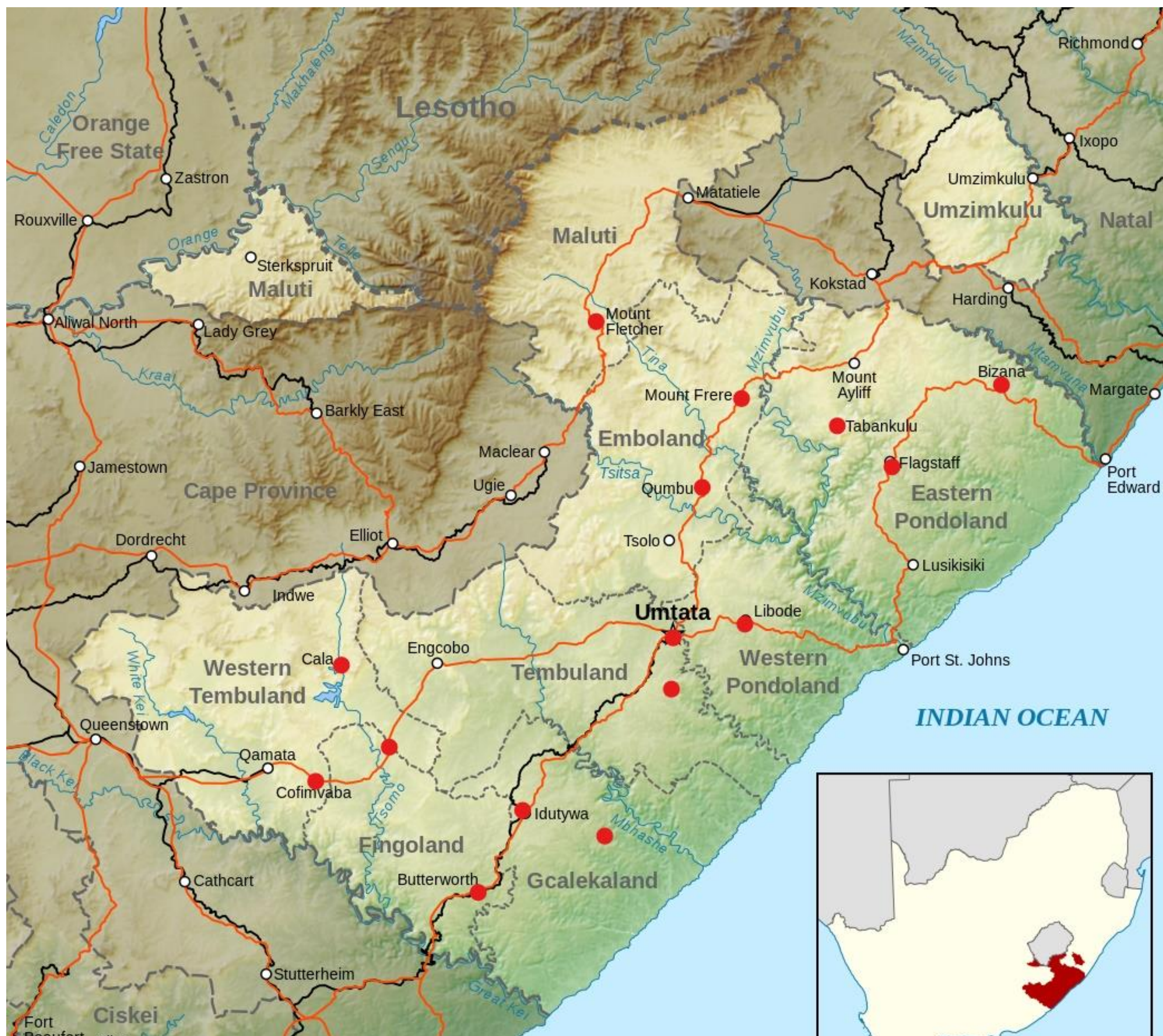

Figure 32: Sites in Transkei where applications were sought by settlers to host horse races prior to 1920, indicated with red dots. (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/70/Topographic_map_of_the_Transkei.svg/300px-Topographic_map_of_the_Transkei.svg.png)

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[295] KAB PAS 3/4 BT87/1, Qumbu. Horse Racing and Betting. Sporting Club. Licence to Hold Race Meetings (1913-1926). This remains an active race track located about 2km south of the Qumbu town centre.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.

Transkei[298] – as was the case elsewhere in the colony, where equestrianism was both a part of everyday settler life and a form of entertainment.

The Moore Family and the Origins of the Bajodini Race

The Moore family mentioned above, a family typical of the trader class, is central to this story. Their story in Transkei began when James Power Wilson was emigrating from Ireland to Australia around 1840. He stopped off at the Cape Colony and did not complete his journey. He bought a trading store at Cala Bridge where he met Mary Haze Lynch, another Irish Catholic emigrant who had been sent out from Ireland to stay with relatives in Cala following the death of her mother. They married, sold the Cala Bridge store[299] and moved to Sulenkama in the Qumbu district, then a part of Griqualand East, some time prior to 1880. In 1880, while still retaining the store at Sulenkama, Power Wilson invested in another store nearby in the Qumbu district known as The Downs.[300] He then acquired at least two further stores close to The Downs – Tyira[301] and Black Hill[302] – hiring settler managers for each. Power Wilson, alongside the core business of trading from his stores, also speculated, purchasing stores and licences for resale and 'gifting.'[303]

At the same time as the Power Wilsons were running a strong business in the Qumbu district, another family of Irish settlers – the Moores – were attempting to establish themselves in the regional capital, Kokstad, to the north. But following the death of the family's mother in 1885, the father of the family returned to Ireland, abandoning his children at the Kokstad Convent. Lawrence Patrick (L.P.) Moore was one of those children. As a matter of policy the Kokstad convent would raise orphaned or abandoned children[304] until the age of 13, and it was

[298] See footnote 290.
[299] The Cala bridge store would later become a Dutch reformed Church mission station. (Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* [2013], p. 126.)
[300] Records are a bit vague and anomalous for the allocation of trading licences. While James Power Wilson was trading at Sulenkama prior to 1880, Thompson reports that the *Kokstad Advertiser* contains an announcement of a licence to trade in Sulenkama being granted to Power Wilson in 1897 (Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* [2013], p. 132). Similarly, a certain Peter McGlashan is listed as having been granted The Downs licence in that same year (Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* [2013], p. 126). It is possible that from 1897 publication of licence announcements, including renewals, became more common. It is also possible that various 'gentleman's agreements' existed to circumvent regulations. Unfortunately, it is not clear to me what those regulations may have been, and they may have been simply customary practices (as with the licence application procedures). At present, the case of Peter McGlashan's 1897 licence remains a mystery.
[301] Which he appears have established himself.
[302] Black Hill was previously owned by David Black, hence the name.
[303] See, for example, KAB LND 1/842 L15093, Application by Mr. Macner to Erect a Trading Station in Qozo's Location, Qumbu (1902-1904).
[304] Presumably European children, but the exact details of the convent's activities haven't been determined.

Figure 33: Contemporary satellite image showing the position of the three, main Moore family trading stations - Moore's Post (formerly The Downs), Tyira and Black Hill (site of the Bajodini Race) – in relation to Qumbu town.

apparently "fairly common"[305] practice that at age 13 these children would be apprenticed to Catholic traders to learn the business. Such was the case with L.P., who, in 1899, was taken in by the Power Wilsons at The Downs while on a tour of the parish's Catholic trading stores with the resident priest. Three years later Power Wilson offered Moore his Tyira store to operate as manager. Four years later, in 1906, Power Wilson sought to retire and sold his three most central sites – Tyira, Black Hill and The Downs – to Moore.[306] Moore married Margaret Hampson, who was locally born to Irish parents who had immigrated to farm near Mthatha. According to Adrian Moore, grandson of L.P., at times L.P. owned dozens of stores. In order to navigate the regulations placed on trading in the area he would, for example, front money to others or, in one case, place stores in Margaret's name.[307] The Downs he renamed Moore's Post. It eventually grew to be one of the largest trading sites in Transkei, totalling 50 acres. Moore set his two sons – Mervyn and Basil – up in business in Qumbu town under the name Moore Bros, and purchased the rights to sell Dodge/Chrysler vehicles in the territory (a business based in Qumbu town). On retirement to a farm he had purchased near Mthatha, Moore assigned his three primary trading stores to his children. Mervyn Moore was given Black Hill, Basil Moore took over Tyira, while Moore's daughter, Maureen, remained at Moore's Post with Moore placing the store under the management of Maureen's husband, Bobby Reynolds. Basil was known to manage other stores in the Qumbu and Tsolo areas, while Mervyn established a bus business to serve the road from Qumbu to Maclear train station for mine recruits. He also acted as a recruiter for mining companies. Four generations of the family thus lived on trading stores locations in Qumbu.

[305] Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* (2013), p. 129.
[306] Power Wilson retired to farm near present-day East London, but after a number of failures he returned to trading near Centane in the Willowvale District (Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* [2013], p. 129).
[307] Thompson, *Traders and Trading Stations* (2013), p. 127.

Adrian, who wished to continue the trading tradition of the family, could not. Over the course of the 1960s the apartheid bantustan policies meant the expropriation of ‘white’-owned trading stores in anticipation of the ‘self-rule’ required to justify the grand apartheid social plan. Following expropriation, Basil stayed on for two years as a store manager in Tsolo before leaving with his family for Natal.[308]

L. P. Moore was a diminutive man, though apparently of some weight. On account of his being barely able to see over his shop counters, he became known amongst the community as Notiki, a reference to the small token coins that he issued to customers as credit to his stores, each store having its own *notiki* with a distinctive shape. Notiki is still remembered around Qumbu, despite dying in 1958, largely because he is credited with being the “inventor” of *umdyarho*. He was actively involved with the thriving settler horse community in the area. As with the regions further west, local inhabitants would certainly have encountered these settler horse-related activities, including races organised by the Qumbu Gymkhana Club. While in the western areas it seems that local inhabitants very quickly started organising their own race days on the model presented by the settlers, everybody I spoke to insists that these race days did not occur until they were introduced and organised by Notiki himself. Bikitsha, who knew Notiki, was insistent on this point: The races started with Notiki, prior to this time there was no *umdyarho*. There was *umhambo*, but it was not *umdyarho*. *Umhambo* races occurred at other social gatherings, so people would not gather for *umdyarho* but for another reason and race there. It was Notiki who first organised what were called “native races.”[309]

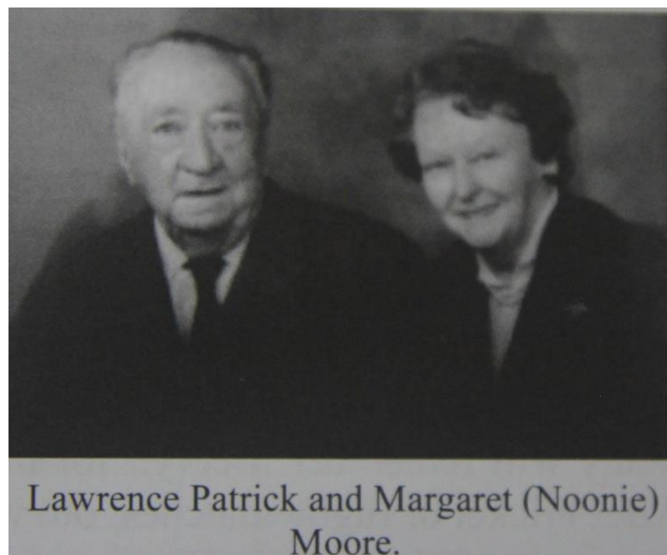
Lawrence Patrick and Margaret (Noonie) Moore.

Figure 34: Thompson, Traders and Trading Stores *(2013), p. 129.*

The race at Bajodini is the largest and longest-standing annual race in the Eastern Cape. It is the race that is spoken of as the “oldest” and the race credited to Notiki. It is important to note that while the Bajodini race grew increasingly popular and became a traditional part of the

[308] Adrian Moore: 26 June 2015.

[309] I fully acknowledge that this may be apocryphal, and that to assert this is playing into the very same promethean settler myth which I refuted in the previous chapter. I do not mean it as such here, rather I use this point to illustrate the influence and ubiquity of Notiki in the horse racing culture of Qumbu.

Christmas calendar in Qumbu over its first 20 years, it was not the only horse race. It was likely the only annual one, but at least two other races are recorded in the archives: one was a special event organised by Notiki in September 1922, and the other by F. Maynard in March of 1930.[310] These are two races organised by settlers that are on record because permission was sought to hold them, but other races undoubtedly occurred.

The archives include a poster and discussion regarding the race organised by Notiki in September 1922, which differs from the description of the races organised by Notiki at Christmas time. This was the first time that permission was applied for and granted for a 'native race' in the area. And this was no ordinary race. It appears in the programme to have borne a much closer resemblance to the 'turf days' described of settler racing events than any description I heard of early races in Qumbu.[311] Among the "Rules and Conditions" are "2. All horses must be ridden with saddles, and Jockeys must wear colours and name of horse to be given" and "8. All competitors to draw for places." Some races' entry criteria are based on the age of the horse, others on the height thereof. The opening race is reserved for any horses that have never "won any value in cash or goods prior to this meeting," another for any horses owned by Qumbu district residents, another for any horse if it is "ridden by owner." Also uncharacteristic was the cash entrance fee, ranging from 5 shillings to 1 pound. The horse placed 2nd would receive their entrance fee back while the remainder of entrance fees would be the winner's prize. And "all owners of horses must subscribe 5/- to the Club." No mention is made of which club this is.[312]

The race meeting was held near Moore's Post, and Notiki was one of the organisers of the event. Permission from the Chief Magistrate in Umtata[313] was personally sought by the Magistrate of Qumbu. The application seems to have been compiled by W. Brann, Esq., of the Magistrates Office. On the poster the "judge" for race day is listed as J. N. Doran, Esq., the Resident Magistrate of Qumbu District. Brann is listed as the "official measurer" for race day,

[310] KAB PAS 3/4 BT87A/1, Qumbu; Horse Racing and Betting. (Native Races). (1922-1934). The application by F. Maynard was held at "Mngqunqu Flats." His application contains a note from the Native Commissioner that "This is not a racing area and I am not prepared to recommend it be declared as such, but I would recommend that permission be granted in this instance."

[311] The poster, for example, is printed in English, and the names of the races similarly follow the English tradition ("Trial Stakes," "Pony Plate," "Culunca Handicap"). One race was named "Criterion Race," which may be named for the "Criterion Stakes" held annually in England. Another is named "Ladies' Purse," which is the name of a well-known horse race held annually in Hong Kong.

[312] My initial speculation was that this might have referred to the Qumbu Gymkhana Club, but this seems unlikely as the race was expressly for "natives only," and the secretary of the Gymkhana Club was local lawyer, Mr Barrange, while this lists Notiki as the secretary.

[313] Now Mthatha.

Native Races

TO BE HELD ON

SATURDAY,

At CULUNCA, QUMBU, 9th September, 1922

Commencing 10 a.m., on the DELEZA RACE COURSE.

Officials:

STEWARDS :—Messrs Valelo, Ugobozi, Joseph Njikelana, Gxoyiya Matanga, Johnson Mbeceni, Ntwana Matanga, Nolangeni Gomo, Ndevu Jubase, Tabankulu Mhlontlo.

OFFICIAL MEASURER :—W. Brann, Esq.

JUDGE.—J. N. Doran, Esq., (R.M.)

SECRETARY :—L. P. Moore.

Programme:

1 **Trial Stakes.** Entrance fee 15/-, Distance 6 furlongs. No horse will be allowed to run in this race who has won any value in cash or goods prior to this meeting.

2 **Criterion Race.**—Entrance fee 10/-. Distance 5 furlongs. For all horses 3 year old and under.

3 **Pony Plate.** Entrance fee 20/- Distance 7 furlongs. For all horses 14

Figure 35: Poster for the 1922 September Race. (KAB PAS 3/4 BT87A/1)

with a note signed "LPM" on the poster saying "the stewards trust that you won't mind them electing you official measurer." The stewards' names are interesting too, as they include prominent headmen, including Joseph Njikelana (an Nxasana location headman whose name features prominently in the "Tribal Disturbances" folder), as well as Tabankulu Mhlontlo, of the deposed king's family. Finally, the racing area around Qumbu was 3 miles from the village. It was established at 3 miles to legally incorporate the Qumbu race course in use by the Gymkhana Club. Debeza, the race's venue near Moore's Post, is 12 miles from Qumbu. In order to host this race the Resident Magistrate applied for the racing area to be extended out to 12 miles around Qumbu, thus incorporating Debeza.[314]

Every effort seems to have been made to create a settler race day for "natives." The whole process appears to have been very deliberate, insofar as the applications and organisation of the race are concerned. Prominent people representing groups that at the time were in conflict with each other were made stewards for the event. The Resident Magistrate was the 'judge' of the event and one of his functionaries was "elected" by these local stewards as the "official measurer." Apparently, they only notified that functionary when supplying the already printed poster for him to include in an application for permission! The application stands out from all the other applications to host races in the Transkei. The race was carefully planned from beginning to end to ensure that it happened.

I have considered many possible reasons for the effort put into holding this race, all wildly speculative because I have already supplied all the available evidence, above. One possibility is that L. P. Moore had been hosting races without permission and needed to design the most innocuous, and most European, race possible, in order to have the Debeza area declared a racing area. He did so by bringing in a number of prominent people to expand the race area from 3 to 12 miles. Perhaps, bearing in mind the endemic conflict in the area, this was part of a broader scheme to draw people together. Perhaps it was part of a deliberate attempt to introduce "native racing" by Moore and the local community, or by the local community through Moore. The note scrawled by Moore to Brann makes it seem likely that the drivers were Moore and the stewards, while the Resident Magistrate and Brann's involvement make it implausible that they were not supportive of the idea prior to the application, especially considering that the application sought to treble the size of the racing area around Qumbu. Whatever the reasons for hosting this race, it had an important effect: Moore could now legally host races at any of

[314] KAB PAS 3/4 BT87A/1, Qumbu. Horse Racing and Betting. (Native Races). (1922-1934).

his stores in the area. It was in December of that same year that he first held a state-sanctioned race for Christmas.

While nobody could give me a year that the Bajodini race started (it was there before anyone was born), the British magazine, *The Mirror*,[315] published an article in 1951 entitled *The Pondomisi Ascot* which says: "in 1912 Mr Lawrence P. Moore, a young trader, advertised that on December 26th there would be a race meeting for native horses … the first meeting was held in Tyira, in the Qumbu district. Later, in 1916, it was moved to Moore's Post and then to Black Hill. At this latter site, also in Qumbu district, the meetings continue to be held."[316] The applications for permission by Notiki began in 1922 and continued each year until 1934. Every race applied for by Notiki barring the September 1922 race were hosted on December 26th, except for 1925 (28 December), 1926 (27 December) and 1927 (29 December). From 1921 until 1925 the races were held near Moore's Post at Debeza, after which they were hosted in Tyira. Considering that both the Tyira store and the Black Hill store are in the area known as Tyira, it is possible to fit the dates outlined in *The Mirror* article with the archival material. It seems that the race would have first been hosted at the Tyira store from 1912 to 1915, moved to Debeza near Moore's Post between 1916 and 1925, and then moved to Black Hill in 1926. There it continues to be held at a site now known as Bajodini – "the place of games."[317]

The report in *The Mirror* also says that it was in 1935 that "Moore realised that this event was now a tradition in the Transkei. It was that year that Mr Moore suggested that the race be held on Christmas Day … but the Africans said 'no'. Christmas Day was the Christmas for human beings; December 26th was 'Notiki's' Christmas for the horses."[318] Notiki's eldest son, Mervyn, speaking to the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper in 1998, describes "a 600-strong delegation [coming] to see them when there was a suggestion that [the] race day might be stopped."[319]

By the mid-1930s the Bajodini race was properly established as an annual event and was becoming more and more popular. Each year Notiki would sponsor prizes[320] for different categories of horse determined by him. The categories were apparently based on the age of the horse, though size was also a factor. Thoroughbreds were prohibited from these races. By the

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[315] Provided by Adrian Moore.
[316] "The Pondomisi Ascot," *The Mirror* (1951).
[317] Adrian Moore: 26 June 2015. The term Adrian uses is *bajadini*, though the site and race are now most often referred to as Bajodini.
[318] "The Pondomisi Ascot," *The Mirror* (1951).
[319] "The Pondoland Ascot," *Daily* Dispatch, 30 June 1998. The year in which this event occurred is undated.
[320] Initially of blankets but later adding other items from his stores, including some horse tack (Bikitsha: 1 April 2013).

early 1940s a pattern had emerged as to how the event would unfold. At around 5am people would begin to gather in front of each of the three trading stores. In Adrian Moore's memory the crowd that gathered outside his home at the Tyira store consisted of about two or three hundred people. Over the horses would be blankets with beadwork sown into them. One employee of the Moores,[321] Adrian recalls, used to prepare the horses by curling their manes and plaiting their tails. He would attach beads to the mane of the horses, as well as their brows and reins. The horse Adrian describes was not for racing, but simply dressed in finery for the procession to the race grounds. "The men rode. The women walked," Adrian says. Men would gallop the horses out to the top of nearby hills and back as the procession made its way towards the race ground with riders, swamped by crowds, occasionally jumping off their horses, dancing and singing *amagwija*.[322] This process of moving in a group around the horses, stopping occasionally, singing, racing off and returning, continued from the Tyira store that was Adrian's home for the entire 5kms to Bajodini.[323]

After our meeting in June 2015, Adrian made plans to attend the Bajodini Race after an absence of nearly 50 years. In an email sent to me afterwards, he says:

> As I approached the Race Course memories flooded back. I saw in my mind's eye, the Tyira clan[324] gathered on the north eastern Hillock. The Blackhill clan gathered to the south above the makeshift race track. The Mabolomba[325] clan on the east side, the women in their beads and Embola blankets, the young girls in their outsized bloomers, all dancing and singing, the men on their tough ponies waving their sticks up high and egging on their champion horses held together by their grooms in a tight knot.[326]

Each year, L. P. Moore would position two trucks and stretch a large piece of canvas between them, and the family would provide free food and drink to all settler attendees. In attendance would be the magistrates from the surrounding areas, including the chief magistrate from Mthatha, as well as traders from the district, and priests and doctors from the hospital in Sulenkama. Adrian estimates the number of 'white' 'dignitaries' at approximately forty to fifty.[327] Once the groups were all at the race track, the *umhambo* would begin. It was not a race,

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[321] While I have no record of his name, Adrian tells me he was the groomsman at the Tyira site. I must also make it clear that this memory is from the 1950s but it gives a general indication of the kind of dressing that would occur.

[322] Chants or songs intended to galvanise or inspire.

[323] Adrian Moore: 26 June 2015.

[324] Adrian refers here to "clan" in the sense of a group, not in any ethnographic sense.

[325] The group from near Moore's Post.

[326] Adrian Moore: personal correspondence (29 June 2016).

[327] It's unclear when the 'white' 'dignitaries' stopped attending, though presumably this was after Transkei was given "self-governance" status in 1968. It was also then that the Moore's finally left Transkei, as did many other settler families, as the XDC (Xhosa Development Corporation, and later Transkei Development Corporation) expropriated trading stores in the region, including the Moores' stores.

but rather a show, with *umhambo* horses pushing back and forth along the edge of the track and beyond in the manner spoken of by Bikitsha, who describes them as "floor sweepers."[328]

The description of the races given above seems valid from the 1940s to the 1960s, based on the memories of Adrian Moore, Curnick Bikitsha, and the evidence gathered from archives and two newspaper articles. The two newspaper articles date from 1951 and 1998, the latter referring to the former and incorporating an interview with Mervyn Moore (Notiki's son and Adrian's uncle). With the paucity of available information it is very difficult to say with certainty what happened when. And perhaps to do so would be missing the point. It does not really matter whether the race was first organised in 1912 or 1922. There remain a number of phases through which the Bajodini Race passed in order to change into what it is today. As I mentioned previously, I wish to describe how the Bajodini Race was transformed from a distinctly settler horse racing form into a distinctly local and indigenous horse racing experience.

In the initial phases, from the late 1800s until around 1920, the race days that occurred in Qumbu district were either run by the Qumbu Gymkhana Club in the settler racing tradition, or were *umhambo* races at gatherings of one kind or another derived from the cattle racing tradition. While some race days may have been organised at which indigenous Africans raced horses, these were certainly rare and remain unrecorded. Following this was a period in which Notiki and at least one other trader hosted races specifically for indigenous Africans in the style of the settler racing tradition. The most regular of these events were his 'Boxing Day Races,' held at different locations connected to his three main family stores of Tyira, Moore's Post and Blackhill. By the mid-1930s the race hosted by Moore was an annual December 26th fixture, acquiring a permanent venue soon after this at a location near the Blackhill store. It was effectively a tradition. As mentioned above, Notiki is said to have proposed in 1935 to move the race to Christmas Day, but the idea was vetoed by the local community. Exactly why the race would become an unstoppable fixture is an interesting question. One possible explanation is the requirement for the registration of horse races: following the horse racing and betting ordinances, it might have been easier for a settler to secure permission than an African. Another may have been the sponsorship and prizes attaching to Moore's race, which would not have been found at self-organised race days. Both may have been contributing factors, but neither seems a suitable explanation for the attachment felt to this race in particular. It is one thing to

[328] Bikitsha: 29 April 2014.

say you wish a race to continue, but it is another to send a "600 strong delegation" to demand that it remain in place.

A new practice assumes elements apposite to the time and place of its introduction. In this case, the 1930s was a time of immense change in the political economy of the Qumbu area. The attachment to this particular race, and its cementing as an annual tradition, reflect that. In the first place, the changes brought about by migrant labour, as discussed earlier, would have meant that the Christmas period had special significance. As a time of gathering, the Bajodini Race would easily have been incorporated into the annual pattern of migrant return. Considering the short span of the Christmas period, a fixture during that time has a major impact on how the period is envisaged. If we consider the timeframe of 1922-1935 as a basis, 13 years is ample time for a generation of migrants to build an expectation of the horse racing day as a distinctive part of their two weeks at home each year during their time away. In other words, for migrants, the horse race became a part of their expectations of what they would be doing while on their annual trip home. It became a part of the ritual that was the entire Christmas period, a feature of the memories of past Christmases that are projected onto future Christmases. It became a part of what is envisioned by people from Qumbu when they envision 'Christmas time.'

The same reasoning that explains the importance of the Christmas gatherings elsewhere may apply here. Traditional leaders organised large gatherings at Christmas with a view to maintaining a sense of community and social connectedness at a time when large numbers of people would be away from home for the majority of the year. Interestingly, there are no reports of this from the horse-laden areas of Qumbu and Tsolo. We also know from the descriptions provided that there are resemblances between those gatherings and the Bajodini Race in, for example, the effort put into dressing both horses and men on the day.[329] It is not a large jump to consider that the same function served by the gathering at the *unhlunkulu* ('Great Place') elsewhere was served by the Bajodini Race. This would be in spite of differences between the political situation in the Qumbu district and elsewhere in the Transkei. The so-called "tribal conflicts" of the half-century from 1880 to 1930, and the resettlements which both partially created and exacerbated them, need to be taken into account. In the context of the Bajodini Race, the position of L. P. Moore may have been a unifying factor. There is little evidence to indicate whether or not this was common amongst settler traders, but it was definitely the case

[329] Though the detail of women dressing men and horses does not occur in the reports of Bajodini.

that Notiki, by all accounts, was well respected among local Africans in the Qumbu district.[330] Furthermore, with the changes in traditional leadership brought about by the colonial project, some of the roles fulfilled by traditional leaders came to be fulfilled by traders. In Notiki's case this could have included, for example, granting credit and thus material support at times of scarcity, or loans for events such as weddings. He was also a Justice of the Peace in Qumbu, served on the board of the Sulenkama Hospital, was Chairman of the Qumbu Village Management Board and Secretary of the Civic Association of Qumbu. With his experience in these positions, he could offer advice and assist with official documents and procedures. In short, Notiki was a good person for an African in Qumbu to know. It is possible that in a space of division and conflict, Notiki was best positioned to fill the space that was filled by chiefs in other areas. Bajodini was a neutral space in which the conflicts present elsewhere could be avoided. As a result, it was a space in which the focus could remain on community and the social connectedness among those living in dispersed designated 'locations'.

The descriptions of the race from the 1940s until the 1960s tell of a large social event, with a carnival-like atmosphere. Its stability as a tradition of the Christmas period in Qumbu, occurring on the same site and on the same day each year, endowed it with the capacity to grow and adopt new aspects which might not otherwise have found root within it. This period of stability was another phase in its development. For the period between the 1940s (the time during which we know it became 'fixed' at Bajodini and on December 26th) and the 1980s, it was adapted by participants in two ways. It became a site for assuming certain functions around the stages of life discussed in Chapter 2, and it took on cultural significance. It became known as "the Mpondomise national gathering" and understood as a cultural event in its own right.

Transference of Tradition and the Traditionalising of the Bajodini Race

In Adrian Moore's memory, quoted earlier, the mention of "girls in their outsized bloomers" would likely stand out to many readers. In one obituary supplied to me by Adrian Moore, Notiki is described as having "instituted what came to be known as the Ascot of Pondoland… The Pondomisi Ascot was both a social and sporting event and after 40 years has become virtual custom which the young women must attend in all their finery before they are allowed to go through the Tribal Coming of Age."[331] This comment is technically correct, though presented

[330] An example of this is that, I am told, Moore's Post is still not occupied since the family's departure, on the grounds that it is "Notiki's place." I am aware that this may sound hagiographical, but this is what I have been told. I have heard many negative things said about traders in the Transkei, and in Qumbu, but I have never heard a bad word said about Notiki.
[331] Obituary of L. P. Moore, supplied by Adrian Moore.

in a colonial manner consistent with the time of its construction. In my early discussions with participants from Qumbu, I was consistently being told about a time "in the past" when the "girls who turned twenty-one" would be "fetched" on the day of the Bajodini Race.

In one of our discussions, Bikitsha provided clarity:

> We have girls called *izipotwana* according to Mpondomise tradition, these are small girls that are dating small boys, there are also girls called *amaguda*.[332] Now in order for the *izipotwana* to qualify to be *amaguda* they will have to go through a rite of passage at the race during Christmas time, they will be on a horse with their respective boyfriends. They will both be adorned with traditional clothing. Especially the girls will be wearing traditional ornaments and some nice colourful decorations on the parts of the bodies that are covered by clothes. All this to show off during Christmas festivities. A boy will come and fetch his girlfriend from her home, the boy will be accompanied by other boys. Sometimes the boyfriend will not be the one to fetch her but some of his friends. When boys are on this mission they will do it as a group, and *izipotwana* will ride on the horses. They would be flying flags as well. All the way to the Christmas activities, this is how the girls go through a rite of passage to be *amaguda* … the only way for them to be promoted to *iguda*,[333] was to be part of *izipotwana* and be part of Christmas activities… The issue of *izipotwana* going through to *ebugudwini*,[334] well I don't know quite well, because I was *ikhumsha*,[335] Mpondomise tradition's staunch supporters were the ones who took part in those activities. We as *amakhumsha* had our *imbizos*,[336] our young girls who were not dating young men yet. We would do things together and they would stay with us, when our girls are ready for an open dating the young men will come and get them from us on Christmas day and only the ones that are old enough to date. In terms of how Mpondomise did it before the race, I really don't know… This came from Mpondomise but *amakhumsha* were not doing that, the Mpondomise`s *izipotwana* came through the belt to be *iguda*. Nowadays, they are no longer practising that tradition, the Mpondomise of today are modern.[337]

I am unsure of the "traditional clothes" mentioned by Bikitsha here. This seems to have been attire customary to the *izipotwana* rite of passage, specifically, because the two primary items that were customarily worn by the *izipotwana* during the late 1940s until, at least, the late-1960s, were black European bloomers and basher hats. This doesn't, of course, preclude the practice as having important cultural significance, as can be seen in the *amakrwala* wearing European clothing for the period after *ulwaluko*. It is also possible that, later, this became 'traditional clothing' more in line with the understanding we have of it today. Upon arrival at the event, the *izipotwana* would parade across the grounds – avoiding the track itself, I am told – and pass by the crowds. In Adrian Moore's memory it was not at a specific time – between races, for example – and would simply happen "at some point" during the race day,[338] though Madiba suggests it occurred before the programme for the day began.[339]

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[332] Adult women.
[333] Singular of *amaguda.*
[334] Womanhood.
[335] Translated for me as "those inclined to do things in modern ways."
[336] A meeting in which important matters are discussed.
[337] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.
[338] Adrian Moore: 26 June, 2014.
[339] Madiba: 28 April, 2014.

The exact origins of this tradition at the Bajodini Race, as is apparent from Bikitsha's words, are not clear. But considering the drop in the popularity in *intonjane* during the time which the Bajodini Race was being properly established, it is highly plausible that the same function fulfilled by practices around *intonjane* (known as *umjadu* in the area under discussion) was transferred onto the horse races. Where, at some stage before this race existed, a man would ride out and collect his girlfriend when she was old enough to be openly in a relationship,[340] now the same process occurred *en masse* on a specific day, with the parade being taken as the marker of being old enough to be romantically involved.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, horses were readily incorporated into the stages of life rites, and in symbolic ways. They were not central to these rites but came to be ever-present on the periphery of them because of their symbolic value. The social position of horses at such rites, I propose, allowed for a simple shift to the horse race when the original practice fell away. So while *umjadu* (*intonjane*) was less common because it was costly, optional and discouraged by Christian missionaries, the desire for a statement of readiness to be in a relationship, to marry and start a family – in other words, to be an adult woman – remained.

At some point responsibility for this social rite was taken on by the Bajodini Race. It was an event which was very popular and which involved horses – thus it was easy for the past practice of being picked up on a horse to occur on that day. After being taken to the races, all the *izipotwana* would be collected in one place and signal their status through a parade at the race. The manner in which it became seen to be 'proper', and for how long it was considered so, will likely never be known. We can safely assume, however, that this occurred after the race was already an annual expectation. It would also have further enshrined the day as part of the social fabric of the area, and would at least partly explain the strong resistance to cancelling the Bajodini Race.

It also sheds some light on the Bajodini Race being seen as an 'Mpondomise cultural event'. This is the reason for quoting Bikitsha directly earlier. An important reference he makes is to the word *amakhumsha*, which was defined to me as "someone who is inclined to do things in modern ways."[341] The manner in which Bikitsha describes *amakhumsha* places it in opposition

[340] See p.79.

[341] *Amakhumsha* are what would, in the anthropology of the latter half of the twentieth century, be referred to as "school": more likely to be educated at mission schools and to embrace Christianity and European notions of 'Christian moral practices' that are associated with them – including a rejection of polygyny, *intonjane*, ancestor veneration and the like – as well as being more likely dress in European clothing and generally take to a European way of life. This is placed in contrast to "Red," named for the ochre colour some people would traditionally wear on their faces. "Red Xhosa" are presented as the antithesis of the "school Xhosa": traditionalists who reject

to the beliefs held by the Mpondomise, thereby portraying this group as 'traditionalists.' While identity should not be portrayed as fixed, nor should "ethnic" identity be portrayed as a single factor at the exclusion of – for example – race or class consciousness, yet Mpondomise in Qumbu and Tsolo (former Mpondomise territories) who I met have notably tended to place more emphasis on their identity *as Mpondomise* than other groups settled in the area by the Vacant Lands Commission.

In the course of my fieldwork I regularly found references to certain "ways" being culturally "correct" or "African." People would make reference to "how we do things here" or "us in Transkei" or "in our culture," but I noticed that in only a handful of cases was any pre-colonial national identity mentioned. Thokoza, for example, makes reference to his Hlubi ancestry. Tantsi makes reference to his Mpondo ancestry. But, in each case, it was in a specific context directly affecting the story being told. Thokoza wished to emphasise the Hlubi connection as an explanation for his dream; Tantsi wished to explain why his father was a chief.

In contrast, my field notes and recordings are replete with references to Mpondomise identity and cultural heritage. While sparse on details, there are regular references to "us, Mpondomise;" "this is the Mpondomise way;" "this is Mpondomise culture," etc. Despite, for example, the area east of Mthatha being colloquially known as Mpondoland and being mainly people of Mpondo heritage, I didn't hear the areas there being referred to as "Mpondo areas."[342] Similarly with all the other areas which fit the (admittedly, colonially-defined) geographic territory of Thembuland, in which Thembu heritage predominates. And yet I found a number of references to Mhlontlo Municipality,[343] which incorporates the former Mpondomise territories and colonial districts of Tsolo and Qumbu, as "Mpondomise areas." Because of the resettlements in the wake of the Mpondomise Rebellion, and the movements into the area from KwaZulu-Natal in the early parts of the nineteenth century, these "Mpondomise areas" have a far greater diversity in cultural identity than the areas where pre-colonial identities were not

European innovations and introductions. Each is portrayed as a 'cultural type' used to look at social change and the effect on culture in the Eastern Cape, particularly in terms of black urban communities. I must be clear that this distinction is problematic and has often be used to grossly simplify the processes of cultural change in the Eastern Cape, and I do not adhere to the distinction here. I mention it only by way of a simplified explanation for Bikitsha's words: that there was tension between those who, in one way or another, sought to deviate from pre-colonial practices and beliefs (to "modernise"), and those who sought to hold onto former practices and beliefs in the face of colonisation.

[342] Except by people from Tsolo and Qumbu placing themselves in contrast, when, for example, I asked "Do they do that in Tabankulu?" and the response was "No, that is more of an Mpondo area thing."

[343] Named for the Mpondomise king.

mentioned, and yet they remain understood as "Mpondomise areas." Thokoza starts his story: "I am from Tsolo. It is an Mpondomise area. But I am not Mpondomise, I am Hlubi."[344]

I argue from the point of view put forward by Beinart that "the specific pattern of colonisation in Qumbu shaped the formation of ethnic consciousness which, though it was by no means rigid… took on its own dynamic within the changing political economy of the region."[345] Through this distinctive shaping of Mpondomise consciousness in the process of colonisation, the Bajodini Race came to be seen as an Mpondomise cultural event in its own right.

As Beinart points out, "ethnic identification did not preclude the pursuit of their interests by the rural communities. On the contrary it could be an integral part of the way in which they defended themselves both from each other and from the pressures imposed in colonisation."[346] Such was the case in Qumbu among Mpondomise. Following the Vacant Land Commission Report, the Mpondomise-designated 'locations' were dispersed. This 'redistribution' of land was partly a conscious approach of divide-and-rule; partly a means to punish Mpondomise for the rebellion; and partly reward for the 'loyalty' of the resettled groups.

The various 'tribal' designations included the locations of Mpondomise, Mfengu, Hlubi, Sotho, Thembu and Nxasana. Of these groups, Mfengu, Nxasana and Hlubi would all have been considered by the colonial government as "Fingo." The idea of "Fingo" – as it was understood by the colonial government – included any stateless people who had fled the upheavals in KwaZulu-Natal during the early-nineteenth century. These upheavals were usually attributed to the rise of the Zulu Kingdom under Shaka. Because of this, the colonial government treated these people as 'refugees' of sorts, allowing them entry into the Cape Colony to supply labour on settler farms.[347] The groups now known as Mfengu – 'Fingo' at the time – were those seen as entering the colony both stateless and nationless, and forging a national identity within the colony itself.

Other groups, such as the Hlubi, moved through Basotho areas into the Cape Colony around the settlement of Herschel, stateless but not nationless, before migrating up to Griqualand East

[344] Thokoza: 20 January, 2016.
[345] W. Beinart, "Conflict in Qumbu: Rural Consciousness, Ethnicity and Violence in the Colonial Transkei, 1880-1913," in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1981), p. 96.
[346] Ibid., p. 98.
[347] Stapleton, however, convincingly rejects this notion in "Reconsidering the Fingo 'exodus'" (1996). Here he argues that the identity of "Fingo" was taken on by many who sought work in the Cape Colony as a way of escaping the ecological hardships of the mid-19th Century – including droughts and, in particular, the "cattle killing" episode – rather than those dispersed by the upheavals in KwaZulu-Natal.

and receiving territory in Qumbu and Tsolo.[348] Nxasana were similarly seen as 'Fingos' – rendered stateless by the rise of the Zulu Kingdom – but, rather than having come via the Cape Colony, they apparently made a direct move into the Mpondomise territories, settling there. In each case they, along with some Thembu groups who also received land in the allocations, were loyal to the Cape Colony during the Mpondomise Rebellion. Because of the kind of contact they had with the Cape Colony, these groups also tended to have higher proportions of Christian converts within their ranks, more often dressed in European-style clothing and had higher levels of European-influenced education than Mpondomise in the area [349]

The allocations of land caused disruptions for the Mpondomise. The population of Qumbu doubled in the decade following the rebellion. Mpondomise who were "squeezed onto an area of land which would not permit more pastoral forms of subsistence… expanded crop production"[350] with the aid of new technologies and techniques used by the resettled groups. Without the necessary space for this expansion, Mpondomise were forced to spill into the land of neighbouring locations; land which had been Mpondomise before the rebellion, including the area containing the site of Mhlontlo's home, which had been allocated as a Hlubi area. Now, as they looked to spread into designated Hlubi or Nxasana or Mfengu locations, Mpondomise were forced to request permission to settle from the colonially-appointed Hlubi or Nxasana or Mfengu 'headmen' who, the Mpondomise complained, would allocate them poorer lands on which to settle. The result was a sense of marginalisation, and of the Mpondomise in Qumbu feeling themselves at the receiving end of prejudicial treatment at the hands of both the colonial government and the new immigrant groups, who – collectively – came to form a kind of 'proxy colonising force.'[351]

The resentment felt by the Mpondomise found expression in uniting around the symbol of Mhlontlo. "Their concepts around rights to land and the other resources within the boundaries of the former chiefdom were specifically attached to the institution of the [dismantled] chieftaincy," Beinart writes, and "[Mhlontlo's] particularly dramatic rise served to cement the association of his name with resistance to the state amongst people throughout the East Griqualand districts."[352] The punishment for the 1880 uprising and prejudicial treatment of the

[348] Here I speak only of the Hlubi who finally settled in Tsolo and Qumbu. Hlubi groups splintered outwards from KwaZulu-Natal and are settled in various pockets around South Africa.
[349] Beinart, "Conflict in Qumbu" (1981), pp. 101-102.
[350] Ibid., p. 103.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Ibid.

Mpondomise continued well into the twentieth century. Despite numerous appeals requesting the recognition of Mhlontlo's lineage as legitimate customary rulers of Mpondomise areas, Sigidi, grandson of Mhlontlo, was only finally given recognition by the state in 1930.[353]

One explanation, therefore, for the emphasis placed on Mpondomise identity and 'Mpondomise areas' is that the maltreatment faced by this group facilitated a reinforcement of Mpondomise identity, as they became united in their punishment as a 'nation' for the rebellion. This investment into national identity made sense as a protective measure, while the symbol of Mhlontlo provided further investment into the idea that identity could function as a form of resistance. The increasing popularity of traditionalist sentiments – formed in opposition to the "sub-colonis[ing]"[354] of the resettled groups – resulted in ideas sprouting about what constituted "correct" Mpondomise beliefs and actions. Thus, the emphasis on Mpondomise identity and traditionalism found in Tsolo and Qumbu was because of, and not in spite of, the resettlement of these groups in the area.

Of all the groups settled in Qumbu, Mpondomise were the most populous. They were also the only group that settled mainly in that area. While Hlubi, Sotho, Thembu, Nxasana and Mfengu groups were settled in different sites over large areas of South Africa, Mpondomise were almost entirely restricted to the Tsolo and Qumbu districts that were their former territories. As Mpondomise were most numerous, and because they were the only group that might be able to draw the entire 'nation' to one place – specifically, because of the migrant labour system, during the month of December – the Bajodini Race could constitute an Mpondomise "national gathering." Add to this the fact that, elsewhere in the region, the Christmas period was celebrated through gatherings at chiefs' homes, which were central locations for social activity – but the way in which Mpondomise political institutions were dismantled, and the settlements of Mpondomise were dispersed, made this impossible. Hence in Qumbu, a situation developed where a group with a strong sense of national identity was left dispersed in an area without centralised sites or strong unifying leaders to gather around and express that identity.

On a final note, there may also be a connection between Mpondomise identity and idealised notions of 'the agrarian way of life'. We know that horses were a major part of life in the Mpondomise areas, before and after colonisation, and we also know that (in the present) horsemanship is a major point of pride for men from the area. In a 2013 interview, Chief Tyali

[353] Beinart, "Conflict in Qumbu" (1981), p. 120.
[354] Ibid., p. 103.

from Tsolo described horsemanship as connected specifically to Mpondomise identity. He said that:

> Horse racing, it's an indigenous game. *AmaMpondomise* are the… the land belongs to the *amaMpondomise*. Everyone knows that the *amaMpondomise* are the people who never went to school. Our forefathers and fathers were never properly educated. They believed only in stock and living [on the land]… animal farming. So horses are their main… it's an identity thing. It's a point of pride. It's a part of our indigenous animal farming. You see, you find one man owning… having 20 horses, ja… and when you go to other tribes [sic.] for *umgidi*, they don't even have horses. But Mpondomise are mainly believing "When I've got a horse, I've got everything."[355]

It isn't clear whether this connection existed at the time in the same way we find it now, but it does fit with the 'traditionalism' found in constructions of Mpondomise consciousness. The Bajodini Race was fated to become seen as the annual Mpondomise "national gathering," but a combination of the factors outlined above explains why it did. It was not only Mpondomise who attended each year, but Mpondomise identity found easy expression at the race. And once it was accepted by Mpondomise as a site for the expression of their identity, we see practices emerging which are, specifically, expressions of that identity. The parade of *izipotwana* is one such example.

Another tradition that emerged is what people described to me as "the boys" being "whipped" or "chased out." In each version I have had described to me, what occurred at the Bajodini Race was that boys who dressed in European clothing were chased around with canes or whips by boys dressed in traditional clothing. The accounts, however, vary slightly in terms of the exclamations used during the chase. In some cases I was told that the boys would shout "Hlubi, Hlubi, Hlubi," with each strike of the whip. In others: "Bhaca, Bhaca, Bhaca."[356] Madiba described it to me as follows:

> Because you know, there were, you know, Qumbu people and Tsolo people are purely Mpondomise people, you know? And they are the ones who are practising this kind of cultural tradition, celebrating in that fashion. And within the very same community there are Hlubis, you know? Hlubis are the people who first had knowledge of education before other people who became literate – go to school, go to church, go to everything – and those people were taken on this eastern side of Transkei, as well as Ciskei. Butterworth, Tsomo, Nqamakwe and part of Ciskei. So those Hlubis, they are called *amaMfengu*, they are called Mfengus and those people, because Mpondomises were resistant people to colonial invasion, they used to fight with colonial everything. And to defeat them and tame them, you know, these Hlubis and Mfengus and different kinds of people… were imported from various places and brought here… They were brought there, in Qumbu and Tsolo, they became now part of Qumbu people. Now as Mpondomise we would go in traditional attire. Ja, those that were wearing those things were

[355] Tyali: 4 April, 2013.

[356] Bhaca are another group settled in the area north of the former Mpondomise territories. Also sometimes classified by the British as a sub-category of 'Fingo,' but less so than Hlubi and Nxasana. Bhaca oral history tells of them moving into the area from southern KwaZulu-Natal during the upheavals of the early-nineteenth century. See A. M. Makaula, *A Political History of the Bhacas from Earliest Times to 1910* (Unpublished Master of Arts, Rhodes University, 1988).

> actually attacking people that were dressed as you are doing, ja. Saying "*'bhurukwe*! *'bhurukwe*! *'bhurukwe*!"[357][Madiba gestures a whipping motion with each call]… Any person who does not bow down to their culture, you know, are not wearing those things, they conquer them in a way, they fight them, and leave only those who are wearing what they wear.[358]

This was the predominating story of these events, but Bikitsha had a different recollection. Upon telling him what I had heard, he responded:

> Yes, that is true. Mpondomise amongst themselves will fight with those who are riding horses with their girlfriends, they will be fighting because of their *ndlamu* grudges, this was amongst Mpondomise only, but they did not like to fight. People who liked to fight were *amakhumsha*, amongst *amakhumsha* there were those who would dress in traditional attire and those who would dress in trousers. And those boys wearing trousers will be beaten up by those dressed in traditional attire, and they will be telling them at the same time that they are being beaten up because of wearing trousers. Everyone was welcomed to *umdyarho* but if you are a boy and not wearing the *umdyarho* attire you will be beaten up by those dressed for the occasion.[359]

As my interpreter and research assistant, Yanga Qinga, explained to me during that interview:

> A lot of the attire is also significant of where in your life you are, whether you are a boy, or a young man, or a man. Also you'll find that a lot of people are now taking the western attire, which has already got a designated place for grown-ups and elders. So you'll find that young boys will still dress up in their traditional regalia, you know, and everything that went with it there… [So only men would wear suits?]… Yes, but now boys will come wearing trousers anyway, so then they will face the brunt of those who would dress in the traditional regalia. So it wasn't just being beaten for the sake of wearing them but because they were now playing a role.[360]

The distinction between the two accounts is interesting. Different people may engage in (or view) the same practice, yet understand it differently. The meaning of a practice may also change over time. In Madiba's description, which fits with the other descriptions I heard, the practice was about expressing a kind of pride in your cultural identity, a reinforcement of the cultural heritage embodied of the event, and driving out those who had symbolically 'turned their backs' on their cultural identity. It is, simultaneously, an act of resistance – a symbolic expulsion of colonial influence, and an affirmation of its antithesis – one's indigenous cultural heritage – which, in this case, becomes representative of freedom and self-determination.

Bikitsha's version is not much different. A boy is acting out of their social position by wearing the same attire as a man, and – as such – is contravening the norms of an event considered to have cultural significance. The implication of Bikitsha's words, and Yanga's interpretation of them, is that on a daily basis it would not be considered an issue for the person wearing trousers

[357] Meaning "trousers."
[358] Madiba: 28 April, 2014.
[359] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.
[360] Ibid.

to do so, but as the Bajodini Race was considered a significant event for the expression of a specific (and antithetical) cultural identity, a person needed to act – and dress – accordingly.

The understanding given by Bikitsha further complicates, and contributes to, our understanding of the race. Alongside the general expressions of *ubudoda* in *umdyarho*, and the view of horses as reflecting the specific kind of masculinity from which these expressions are drawn – alongside the *izipotwana* parades, and the retrieval of the *izipotwana* on horseback – yet another connection is seen here between the Bajodini Race and ideas that revolve around the concept of "growing up."

As with the Christmas *umhambo* races held elsewhere, in Qumbu the changes brought about by migrant labour opened up the possibility for horse races to be utilised as an expression of "what I am." Just as had previously been the case, where a boyfriend arrived on horseback to show that he is "more than" if he had arrived on foot, so at the horse races he is showing eligibility. However, in this situation, as with the Christmas races elsewhere, he is showing it – not to a potential bride's family – but amongst other boys and men.

The horse races became exhibitions of eligibility. And the eligibility of the *izipotwana* on show at Bajodini makes it a site of symbolic intergenerational continuity. But this is not only about eligibility "as a man." Eligibility is built on a number of different criteria, and the "what I am" that makes one (more or less) eligible is about the whole person, not one aspect of them. In a place like Qumbu, where consciousness of culture was a resource deployed as resistance to colonial change, showing eligibility cannot only be understood in terms of the relative masculinity of the boys or men. What it means to be 'a man' is culturally defined. Where a cultural consciousness is strong, *ubudoda* doesn't only mean acting 'as a man' – it means acting 'as a man of your culture'. This may include – as in the 'chasing out' of the trouser-wearing boys – actively defending this culture against 'outside forces.'

Some aspects of customary practices may be made explicit, but many are interpreted by engagement. A person often 'reads' a performance and understands it based on intuitively placing it in the world around them. As Hobsbawm put it when discussing 'invented tradition': "the crucial element seems to have been the invention of emotionally and symbolically charged signs of club membership rather than the statutes and objects of the club."[361] The reasons for the 'chasing out' were not explicit: performing it was a sign of "club membership," but why it

[361] Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions" (1983), p.11.

was done was an "undefined universality"[362] – that is to say, the performance came before the reason why.

Hobsbawm goes on to say that one reason why studying 'invented traditions' is important for historians is because "they are important symptoms and therefore indicators of problems which might not otherwise be recognised, and developments which are otherwise difficult to identify and to date."[363] What we find in the two distinct understandings of the same practice at Bajodini is indicative of a shift in political consciousness from Bikitsha's generation to Madiba's more contemporary one. (Bikitsha was, in fact, Madiba's school principle.)

I don't propose that this shift in consciousness would be invisible or unintelligible to historians had we not seen it in the context of the Bajodini Race. I simply propose that this change is a "symptom or indicator," amongst others seen across the country, that there was a shift in political consciousness occurring during this time. The emphasis on cultural heritage – and the expulsion of those not adhering to it – could have been deepened by the escalation of state efforts to legitimise apartheid through, for example, the "granting" of "self-rule" in 1963 through to the "independence" of Transkei in 1976 and its aftermath. This was the same period as the banning of the ANC, PAC and Communist Party and the establishment of the anti-apartheid factions and military wings, and also one bookended by the Sharpeville Massacre (1960) and the Soweto Uprisings (1976). It was also during that time that the "Tribal Authorities," in the form of chiefs and headmen, were given immense power and became the main political force in Transkei. In short, we can observe a shift in consciousness during the course of Madiba's life, where ideological movements such as Black Consciousness placed a greater emphasis on one's position as resistor to the forces of apartheid and colonialism.

In Bikitsha's version, the 'chasing out' is framed as being a matter of acting outside of your position within the group; in Madiba's, it is acting as if you are outside of the group. Taking into the account the changes of the second half of the twentieth century (briefly sketched above), one is able to see the reasoning behind such a shift. Group membership becomes more important, and one's position within the group becomes less important. The imperatives of unifying as a group – to manage an increasingly hostile social environment characterised by a collapsing rural economy and greater political repression – trumped the need to show off (or assert) one's individual status within the group. One did not eclipse the other, but the emphasis

[362] Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions" (1983), p. 11.
[363] Ibid., p. 12.

begins to shift in the younger generation as the political consciousness of that generation is formed in the changing material context.

Conclusion

Horse racing, in forms drawn both from the cattle racing tradition and the settler horse racing tradition, has come to be understood as an indigenous cultural practice. The process by which horse racing came to be understood as culturally significant is due, in large part, to the changing material conditions faced by people in the former reserves. The 'invention' of Christmas time in the reserves was a result of the migrant labour system, which – along with the trading store system – was used to incorporate indigenous groups into the colonial economy. It was during the "ideologically intense" period of Christmas that we find possible reasons for the 'traditionalisation' of *umdyarho* through a process of ritualisation.

'Ritualisation' here doesn't refer only to sacred rituals, but to a process through which a practice takes on a ritualised performance, and becomes customary to be performed in a certain way at a certain time or place. In both of the cases discussed in these last two chapters, a process of ritualisation occurred around Christmas time in the form of gatherings. This occurred because of the imperatives for celebration and the need to foster social connection, and Christmas was the only time when all could be gathered together to do so.

In the case of the social gatherings at the *unhlunkulu*, the individual chiefs sought to produce a cohesive society from disparate groups of migrants and farmers, all of whom called the area 'home' and had it classified as such by the apartheid government. The short Christmas period, in which most migrants returned back to their rural homes, was rife with ritualisation and the creation of 'traditional' events. Because of the extraordinariness of the period, it was easy to build expectations of an event's recurrence within only a few years of it occurring for the first time. This is an important point. If an event has become 'customary' or 'traditional,' then it can be invested in. Thus, we see a number of practices emerging within the gatherings which occurred at Christmas time, and one of the clearest examples of this process – whereby possibilities are opened up by an event becoming customary – can be seen in the Bajodini Race, where a direct transference occurred in the form of the rite of passage into womanhood.

The former custom of being fetched on horseback by one's boyfriend when a girl is old enough to start being romantically involved – and so to prepare for marriage and a family – found expression in a new setting once the older rites associated with the custom became less common. An important question to ask here is: *Why was it transferred onto the Bajodini Race?*

As discussed, this has to do with the perception of horses and how horses became customary at certain events to symbolically illustrate the being and becoming of manhood. The connection between 'becoming a man' and 'becoming a woman' are directed towards the same end: intergenerational continuity, which (of course) relies on both male and female aspects. Furthermore, it makes sense that the transference occurred because of a connection between horses and horse racing. This was a time when horses were at the forefront of performances and expressions of manhood, and manhood is intimately connected to starting a home and family. Therefore, an expression of womanhood being incorporated into these sorts of events is cogent. It is a performance of manhood and a performance of womanhood, both of which are performances of "growing up" – taken, in this instance, to mean 'marrying and starting a family'. If public expressions of courtship were the intention, and announcements of eligibility the outcome, then a situation which maximised the presence of interested, eligible parties would form the perfect site for the performance. The Christmas period was a perfect time for such an event, simply because everyone was there.

While the performance of the race varied between the *unhlunkulu* gatherings and the Bajodini Race because of the specific conditions in which each tradition developed, another custom emerged at the *unhlunkulu* gatherings which reinforces the point made above – albeit without the rite of passage involved. While horses are masculine items, and horse racing is a masculine domain, the gatherings at both Bajodini and Great Places allowed for women to enter into the performance. Because the event was social, women – facing an enormous change in role brought about by migrant labour – were able to engage and assert themselves in certain ways at these events. They did not ride, but could express their own views on the events which occurred. Though masculinity was contested through the horse races at Christmas, women could enter into that contestation through dressing the horses and men, thereby inserting themselves into the masculine realm using horses as the medium. In a sense, this was playing out at the Bajodini Race, too, as gendered roles began to emerge at events which expressed and incorporated the erstwhile social dynamics of the rural areas into the current material conditions that people in the region were experiencing.

So two kinds of ritualisation can be seen as having emerged from the collision between migrant labour and the symbolic use of horses. In the one case, it was the creation of a new social space. These social spaces were based on the same older model of social gatherings, but – because of their occurrence at Christmas time – they took on new elements of ritualisation. They became customary and extraordinary themselves because of the extraordinariness of the Christmas

period in the rural areas. In the second case, seen at both the Bajodini Race and the *unhlunkulu* gatherings, we have a kind of performance becoming ritualised within the customary event – the *izipotwana* collection and parade, and the custom of women dressing up the horses and the men, respectively. These performances are similar in that, in both instances, we see that women have successfully integrated themselves into what was otherwise a masculine performance. They differ in that, in the case of Bajodini, we see a previous practice *transferred* onto the race day, whereas in the *unhlunkulu* example, we see a clearer *creation* of a customary practice within the context of a customary gathering.

In both cases, and over time, the races at Christmas – one derived from the cattle racing tradition, the other from the settler racing tradition – took on the understanding, in the minds of participants, that they were events in which cultural heritage was expressed. In the case of the events at *unhlunkulu*, the process may be quite linear. It was at a traditional leader's home for 'subjects' of that leader, and therefore was automatically endowed with a cultural heritage aspect. It was also a gathering which – while occurring at a new time (Christmas), and with races featuring a new species (horses) – was, in other ways, similar to gatherings which had occurred before.[364]

In the case of the Bajodini Race, the process was more complicated, but it can be accounted for when we consider the complex and unique way in which Qumbu was colonised. In the face of collective punishment as Mpondomise, a unity was forged amongst those classified as such, and the icon of Mhlontlo (as absent leader) further assisted in ballasting this cultural consciousness and identity. The lack of traditional leadership structures (which had been dismantled following the Mpondomise Rebellion), and the view that the land was legitimately Mpondomise, meant that the activities – which might otherwise have taken place at the *unhlunkulu* or elsewhere – were transplanted onto the race at Bajodini. In the process, the race originally established in the settler racing tradition became indigenised.

The examples presented in this chapter and the last show how horse races became a part of the changing social landscape of Transkei in the twentieth century, and how they developed into cultural heritage events. In a sense, they have shown how "horse racing" became "traditional horse racing." And, in doing so, they provide a snapshot of the process by which a tradition may emerge within a dynamic material environment. They show us how a practice becomes customary and takes on 'cultural heritage' connotations, and also how those connotations

[364] See pp. 44-46 on different feasts.

change. In other words, the snapshot is not just about the creation of a new tradition, but also how the *meaning* of that tradition begins to change.

I have referred extensively to 'custom' and 'tradition' in this chapter, largely interchangeably. While I shall provide more discussion of Hobsbawm's notion of 'invented traditions' in Chapter 5 of this thesis, a short explanation of the concept is required here.

This is because the Bajodini Race does bear a striking resemblance to what Hobsbawm terms an 'invented tradition'. This is any tradition which emerged "within a brief and dateable period – a matter of a few years perhaps – and establish[ed itself] with great rapidity."[365] It also fits with the definition of being

> a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies a continuity with the past.[366]

Furthermore, "they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations,"[367] he says, and practices which

> we should expect to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated.[368]

But Hobsbawm also makes a clear distinction between 'tradition' and 'custom' which I have not made here. In his formulation, 'tradition' is characterised by "invariance."[369] 'Custom', however, "does not preclude innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations on it."[370] And this is ultimately why, while it has been a helpful heuristic tool, I have resisted the urge to employ the concept of 'invented tradition' extensively.

In the Hobsbawmian sense, the Bajodini Race is less of an 'invented tradition' and more of an 'invented custom.' It fulfils many of the criteria for an invented tradition, but these characteristics are more accurately seen as 'custom' in his view, not 'tradition.' The characteristic difference between 'tradition' and 'custom' may be variance, but – I postulate – the characteristic difference between an 'invented tradition' and an 'invented custom' is

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[365] Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions" (1983), p. 1.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid., p. 2.
[368] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[369] Ibid., p. 2.
[370] Ibid.

contestation. This is because custom doesn't preclude innovation. An 'invented custom' can be harnessed and sculpted by people in positions of power to better suit their ideological objectives; an invented tradition is implemented already sculpted by those ideological objectives.

The chapter which follows will describe how the appearance of *umdyarho* developed from the second half of the 1970s until the present day, and will focus on how these contestations around the customs of the sport play out. It will also describe some of the ways in which different objectives, belonging both to those within and outside the sport, are attempting to shape its future.

Figure 36: Two men from Laphum'ilanga Club display the club banner at their meeting in Komkulu. (17 January 2016)

-Chapter 5-

Maximum Benefication

We'll remember the heroes of our land of birth, clothed in the attire of our people,

upon our return to them to witness the dancing hooves of our horses compete.

Our women ululate and the men stomp.

Mares stampede as we turn the tide

to return the tradition to where it was born. [371]

On January 17th 2016 I drove to the remote village of Komkulu, located between Idutywa and Ngcobo, to attend a meeting of the Laphum'ilanga Club. I had met members of the club at various races over the previous three years. They stood out at races because they would all wear club attire[372] and, unlike many horse racing clubs I had encountered, they had a number of female members. The women of the club did not race, nor ride for that matter, and the club did not explicitly describe itself as a horse racing club, but rather a "cultural association."[373] The whole drive from Idutywa I tried to ask my host, Kolanisi, some questions – but she would simply say: "Let's rather wait. You can do an interview when we arrive."[374]

We arrived at a line of three houses bordering what, if not for the severe drought, would have been pasture. In front of the house were a series of pots of varying sizes set up on fires, full of food, with a few women sitting and tending to them. Beyond them was the thick wood fencing of a cattle kraal. Several men and horses were also milling about. All the men were dressed in a form of traditional attire, consisting of long bands of blue and white beads around their necks, meeting at their throats and running down the centre of their bodies, sometimes to their knees. Some wore white blankets with beaded linings. Some men carried *sjamboks*,[375] and some of these *sjamboks* were also beaded. The horses, meanwhile, seemed under-dressed in their saddles and bridles.

Kolanisi introduced me to some of the men of the club. I walked around taking photos and talking to them. I asked if I could interview them. They said: "Not now. After." As one man

[371] Vision Statement of the Laphum'ilanga Club.
[372] Traditional attire with a red, branded club t-shirt.
[373] Notes and recordings from Laphum'ilanga: 17 January 2016, Komkulu.
[374] Ibid.
[375] A thick whip.

put it, “You must see first and ask later.”[376] So I kept mingling, answering questions about who I was and why I was there. We spoke about horses and horse racing. Many of the men I had met before, some I had even photographed, but I didn’t know any of them well. When the time came for proceedings to begin, Kolanisi approached me and ushered me into the room that everyone else was filing into. Benches were set out around the wall of the rondavel.[377] At the back of the rondavel and directly opposite the door, a table was set up with two chairs behind it. A man and a woman were seated there. On the table I could see a large rectangular Tupperware container and three bottles of Gordon’s London Dry Gin. I was told to sit on the benches stationed at the far left of the room. Kolanisi moved over to the benches on the far right and sat down with the other women in attendance. Senior men who had entered sat to the right of the door, while younger men sat to the left.

When proceedings started, it was the man at the table who spoke first, giving the floor over to the woman sitting next to him. She opened the Tupperware and showed the group that there was some money in it. Then she proceeded to berate two people who hadn’t paid their club fees;[378] they tried to defend themselves, but eventually approached the table and handed over some money. The woman looked at them again and asked where the rest of the money was. After some negotiation, they agreed to bring the balance of what they owed to the next meeting.

The first man got up again and spoke for a while, welcoming everyone – and acknowledged my presence in the rondavel. He then handed over to Kolanisi to explain in more detail why I was there. When she was done explaining, the man again stood up and deferred to one of the senior men who – standing to be heard – seemed to be saying that it was okay that I was there. I say ‘seemed to be’ because I was not sure of what was being said, and the formality of the proceedings made me feel like I couldn’t interpret conversations in the way I had become accustomed.

Over and over, the first man would stand up, speak a while, then gesture to someone else in the room, who would also stand and speak for a short turn. After some time spent doing this – as one man sat down after speaking – the first man blew a whistle. Everyone in the room immediately jumped up, starting singing, and danced in a circular shuffle around the room for a few minutes. Then the whistle blew again and everyone sat down. The man with the whistle

[376] Notes and recordings from Laphum’ilanga: 17 January 2016, Komkulu.
[377] A round, single-roomed hut.
[378] Contributions are used for expenses and also towards the *stokvel,* which means that someone not paying their contribution impacts the total amount received by each member.

spoke, gestured; another person spoke and sat down; then the man stood up again, spoke and gestured, and the cycle repeated itself.

Figure 37: Singing and dancing in the rondavel at Komkulu. (17 January 2016)

After a few rounds, the whistle came again – causing another eruption of the singing and dancing, which was then halted by yet another blow of the whistle. I was completely lost. The third or fourth time that this happened, however, I felt confident enough to start taking photographs. The woman behind the table was singing and dancing on the spot with an enormous smile on her face. She picked up the Tupperware and opened it, turning the money towards my lens and showing it off. Later, she did the same with the gin. After an hour or so of this pattern, drinks were passed around during the dancing. Without skipping a beat, the woman from behind the table was armed with a bag of wine, pouring it out into cups carried in the hands of the dancers as they passed by her. Others opted for brandy. Two men sitting next to me offered me a jug of *umqomboti*, a traditional beer. I took a big swig. It was the strongest *umqomboti* I had ever tasted and I immediately feared for my five-hour drive home that evening.

As quickly as they started, however, the proceedings ended. Everyone filed out of the room, except the senior men. The women fetched them large plates of food – Kolanisi fetched me the same – and then everyone came back inside and ate and chatted. After that, people started to drift around, chatting in small groups both inside and outside the rondavel. A man walked up to me and said: "Okay, now you can ask me anything."

Figure 38: Some members of the Laphum'ilanga Club poses for a photograph. Kolanisi, my host for the day, stands fourth from the left of the photograph. (17 January 2016)

Flanked by several other club members (who were silent), he told me that the club was a conglomeration of five clubs from the surrounding areas who had decided to form an umbrella organisation under the name Laphum'ilanga Club. Each Sunday they would meet at the home of a member from one of the five clubs, rotating between them. I was trying to gain some insight into what I had just witnessed, but could not. All he chose to say was: "We gather every week for a traditional gathering."

I asked him what kind of activities are on the club's agenda. "Traditional activities," he said,

> We wish to celebrate our culture, so we dress in traditional clothes and have traditional gatherings. We also do traditional dance at some events. Sometimes the government will ask us to go and dance at something. But they give us, maybe, one thousand [Rand], so it's not enough.

I pressed on. "So what is it that you are doing today?" I asked. "We are just having a traditional gathering and celebrating our culture," he said. He asked if there were any more questions. I

said I didn't think so, unless anyone else had anything else they thought I should know. Nobody did, so he said, "Do you want to watch a horse race?" and we walked up to the road. There I was told that they race horses some Sundays to decide who from the club will be sponsored to race in the next *umdyarho* event. They raced *umhambo* down the road, and when it was done, we returned to the home and carried on socialising. With a long drive ahead of me, I thanked everyone and bade them farewell, then climbed into my car to drive home.

I was feeling extremely confused, and on the drive home I let my voice recorder run and started narrating my impressions of the day.[379] After a while, it dawned on me: what I had seen was strikingly similar to the descriptions of social gatherings in the area that I had read about in the old ethnographies from the early 20th Century. Here were all the elements of the gatherings described in Chapter 1, distilled into a crystal-clear exhibition. When he had said to me that they were holding "traditional gatherings," simply to "celebrate our culture," he had explained to me exactly what they were doing. There was no important detail he had left out. It was literally a celebration of the way of life that their forebears had lived through doing as they had done, albeit in the context of a formalised re-enactment.

Figure 39: Preparing for a "qualifying race." (Komkulu, 17 January 2014)

[379] Notes and recordings from Laphum'ilanga: 17 January 2016, Komkulu.

At Komkulu I saw a truly invented tradition – "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past"[380] – and one that didn't present the contrived idea of 'culture' so often seen in South Africa's current politics. This was one in which culture was understood in its proper, technical sense: of how people live(d) on a day-to-day basis. It was a celebration of a past way of life through performance, in which a connection to one's forebears is brought about by consciously doing as they did.

In the previous chapter I described *umdyarho* as an 'invented custom,' rather than an 'invented tradition'. The vital distinction between the two is that the 'custom' of *umdyarho* allows for variance, while the 'tradition' – as instantiated at the Laphum'ilanga gathering, for instance – does not.

The changes which have occurred within *umdyarho* have not been changes imposed from outside: they have always come from within. While the social, political and environmental conditions have altered the ways in which life has been lived in Transkei, those inside the sport have taken the new conditions and adapted *umdyarho* to respond to them. In other words, the way that *umdyarho* has developed is through the contestations of individuals acting within the sport. What happened at the Laphum'ilanga gathering provides insight into *umdyarho* because it shows how people understand these 'traditional activities'. In Laphum'ilanga, the remembrance of the past is 'fixed,' invariable; while in *umdyarho,* the remembrance varies depending on the circumstances of the present. The present conditions (at any given time) – and the interpretations of those conditions – are the drivers of change in *umdyarho*.

Umdyarho **in the 1970s and 1980s**

It was in the mid-1970s that "the races gained momentum, blossomed and ripened,"[381] Bikitsha says. By that time, people from Qumbu were going as far as Mthatha for races. Moreover, the horse racing fraternity around the area from Mthatha to Qumbu began to develop connections with the horse racing fraternity around Idutywa. Idutywa participants would join races in the north and, from around 1978, those racing in the north would be invited to join in races held around Idutywa.[382] These groups then connected with people racing in Centane, Ngcobo,

[380] Hobsbawm, "Introduction" (1983), p. 1.
[381] Bikitsha: 1 April, 2013.
[382] Ibid.

Qamata and Malungeni. "The Idutywa racers are the ones who first crossed and went to Ciskei to compete there," Bikitsha says, "because we were also racing with Idutywa as well. This is how we got to meet the Ciskei racers. The Idutywa racers like Myendeni, Naki, Kolisi… and Sangotsha from East London... they are the ones who brought together Ciskei racers and racers of this side."[383]

*Umdyarho'*s growing popularity in the 1970s can be attributed to the changing socio-economic and political circumstances of that decade. Upon Transkei becoming 'independent' from South Africa in 1976, the apartheid government was able to remove the South African citizenship of people classified as Transkeian. The economic crisis of the late 1970s led to the retrenchment of many migrants who were no longer considered South African citizens. As unemployed foreign nationals, these migrants were forced to return to the 'independent' Transkei. The Transkei they returned to, however, was also facing economic crisis. This was due, in part, to the disastrous "betterment policies" of the bantustan government from the 1950s, which attempted to force community relocations and unfamiliar farming practices on the rural peasantry. Environmental degradation, which these ill-conceived policies had intended to halt, further exacerbated the problems of subsistence farming, as did the rapid population increase which resulted from the migrant retrenchments. The result was a population which, in places, looked more like a "displaced proletariat"[384] than a rural peasantry.

Many returning migrants had encountered professional Thoroughbred racing during their time spent in urban centres, and some had been enthusiastic punters. Some elder participants who had returned to Transkei upon retrenchment[385] began to organise races after becoming enamoured with the sport at Turfontein Race Course in Johannesburg.[386] Others, life-long avid horsemen who had found employment as 'groomsmen' in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth's Thoroughbred livery yards, began to join or organise races in their respective areas of Transkei.[387]

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[383] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.

[384] J. Peires, "Unsocial Bandits: The Stock Thieves of Qumbu and their Enemies," paper presented at *Democracy: Popular, Precedents, Practice, Culture*, University of the Witwatersrand (13-15 July 1994), p. 7.

[385] The date cited for their retrenchments seem to be strongly clustered around 1976. This may be a coincidence, or possibly that the seminal year of 1976 forms a marker in many people's memory.

[386] Mr Maqokolo, race organiser in Malungeni, is one such example. He returned in 1976 and organised *umphalo* races in what is now a predominantly *umhambo* area. He didn't purchase Thoroughbreds, but rather organised these races for the indigenous horses. (Maqokolo: 30 April 2014, Malungeni.)

[387] These participants seemed to be mainly from the areas around Idutywa and Mthatha.

More important than direct contact with Thoroughbred racing in urban centres was the establishment of networks amongst participants. The changes brought about by improvements in communications and transport facilitated the process, particularly among civil servants and the emerging entrepreneurial class who were able to purchase vehicles large enough to bear a substantial load, such as bakkies. This allowed them to move horses to race in areas further away than had previously been accessible. It made the connections described above by Bikitsha possible, and the establishment of these connections showcased the sport in areas where there was not only a dearth of social activities, but many horses and high unemployment levels: a combination which drew many into *umdyarho*.

The small class of more affluent participants in Transkei increased the demand for Thoroughbred horses in *umdyarho*. The sheer power of Thoroughbreds in comparison to the smaller and more common 'indigenous horses' was a great advantage in the races, and the Thoroughbred racing industry's reputation made the breed a potent symbol of high status.

But this demand was not for a new commodity. Thoroughbreds had been found in Transkei from the earliest colonial settlements[388] and the ownership of Thoroughbreds was not limited to settlers. Thoroughbreds were well known already, and even owned by indigenous Africans and the Transkei coloured community by at least the 1940s.[389] Some settler Thoroughbred importers were found in the Transkei, and though many of the elderly African Thoroughbred owners first purchased Thoroughbreds from them, both African and coloured Thoroughbred owners also frequently told me that they travelled to Durban and Port Elizabeth to buy Thoroughbreds "off the track" even in the 1960s.[390]

By the early-1970s, a small but dedicated Thoroughbred racing community had formed in Mthatha, drawn from the settler and coloured communities of the area. Of particular note here is Marlene Dreyer, a hotel manager by profession, who began breeding Thoroughbreds in Mthatha in an endeavour she describes as "bloody expensive."[391] She drew her stables' bloodline from top-quality French horses of the mid-twentieth century, including a famous race horse named Djebel, and South African genetics from such horses as Persian Wonder and Sweet Song.[392] Dreyer's major claim to fame came in the form of Gatecrasher, who won the

[388] See p. 124.
[389] See footnote 293.
[390] A number of people said that they purchased their first Thoroughbreds from "Birch Brothers in Durban."
[391] "Woman Looking for Winners," *Daily Dispatch:* February 18, 1983.
[392] I must confess that these names mean almost nothing to me and I have no idea about their implications, but I have it on good authority that these bloodlines are not to be guffawed at.

1976 Metropolitan Stakes in Cape Town.[393] Dreyer, along with Mount Frere-based businessman Billy Noble,[394] drove the establishment of a professional Thoroughbred facility and race course on the site of the track formerly used by the Umtata Gymkhana Club.[395]

It was the coloured community of Transkei, including Billy Noble, which provided the link between Thoroughbred racing and *umdyarho*. I know of no case where settlers participated in the *umdyarho* race days (barring the early "native races" organised by settlers), nor do I know of any case of African participation in the Thoroughbred races in Mthatha (barring as grooms or jockeys), but the coloured community straddled both of these groups.[396] The coloured horse racing community involved in *umdyarho* were predominantly racing Thoroughbreds, and there was a clear preference within the coloured community for Thoroughbreds over indigenous horses. The racial dynamics of South African society, though not as explicitly regulated as in 'white' South Africa, played out in *umdyarho* and Thoroughbred racing in Transkei.

We see this observation hold true in the example of the Bajodini Race, and in a number of ways. Moore, after all, was 'white'. He hosted races for indigenous inhabitants who were classified as "native" (with all the colonial connotations that that classification entailed).[397] And, in a telling comment about the Bajodini Race day, Adrian Moore describes riding "proudly" in front of the procession when he was young. "I felt very important and they encouraged it, you know. I didn't really think of [the racial aspect] at the time," he said, "they were just the people who lived around us – but of course, in retrospect, it was because I was 'white' and the position of my family and all that sort of thing."[398] Then, there was Hunter's comment on what became *umdyarho,* in which she describes "horse-races in which it is speed that matters, but they are held at special meets, organised by European and Coloured men."[399] In short, the racial hierarchies of both the colonial and apartheid political systems were

[393] Now named the J&B Met. Her win was touted, farcically, as the Metropolitan Stakes' first "international winner."

[394] I tried to make contact with Billy Noble, but was told, sadly, that he was murdered in Qumbu during an armed robbery in 2010 or 2011.

[395] A facility which was subsequently demolished to make way for the University of Transkei campus (now the Walter Sisulu University's Mthatha Campus).

[396] I do acknowledge that this doesn't mean settlers *never* raced in *umdyarho*, nor that there were *no* indigenous Africans meaningfully involved in Thoroughbred races, but the absence of available evidence does indicate that these instances were, at best, rare.

[397] In a sense, they hosted him, too. He was a settler. It was indigenous African land upon which he established his trading stores and family home. As Notiki's sons discovered in the decades that followed their father's settlement, this hosting was not unconditional. Poqo attacked Mervyn's home in the 1960s. This prompted his brother, Basil, to build an escape tunnel behind their Tyira homestead. (Adrian Moore: 26 June, 2015.)

[398] Adrian Moore: 26 June, 2015.

[399] Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest* (1964), p. 367.

reflected in the choices (and the ability) to engage with different kinds of horse racing in Transkei.

For settlers, the preferred engagement with horse racing was largely the prestigious "sport of kings" (as it was seen in Europe): Thoroughbred racing. While settlers did, at times, involve themselves with "native races," it was in the capacity of organiser or overseer – the person with authority and in control of proceedings. Indigenous Africans were largely excluded from the settler racing tradition, even in Transkei, and where they were involved it was in positions perceived as suiting the lowly position designated for them by the colonial and apartheid racial hierarchy: as jockeys, or (more often) as stable-hands and groomsmen.[400] Indigenous Africans could express an elevated social position by purchasing Thoroughbreds, and did so, but their access to Thoroughbreds was hampered by the structural prejudices of the social systems at play. Any equality within Thoroughbred racing between 'white' and 'black' was made almost impossible.

The position of the coloured community, meanwhile, reflected their position between 'white' and 'black' on the racial hierarchy. Their social position, and relatively higher class position, allowed them greater access to the Thoroughbred racing community in Mthatha. But it still would have remained easier for the coloured community to engage with *umdyarho* than with Thoroughbred races: they were still barred from the Thoroughbred racing industry in South Africa, and the Thoroughbred racing community in Transkei was small. Many settler Thoroughbred racers in the region, such as Dreyer, wouldn't confine themselves to Transkei, but would engage with the Thoroughbred groups in 'white' South Africa more generally.

However, even for the settler community of Transkei, engaging with Thoroughbred racing in 'white' South Africa was a challenge. Dreyer said that it was difficult to register horses from the area: "You have to get transfer of ownership, and that entails satisfying the stringent rules of the Jockey Club. When they are satisfied that the sale is legal, they register the horse."[401] These "stringent rules" made for a very small world of Thoroughbred racing for coloured Thoroughbred owners within the Transkei: instead, the majority of races were in the realm of *umdyarho* for all but the settler community of the region.

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[400] It is notable that the descriptions provided in this chapter continue to reflect the position of indigenous Africans in the settler racing tradition today. Welcomed as punters, but within the industry almost entirely restricted to the position of groomsmen – the vast majority of whom, in Cape Town at least, are migrants from the areas of the former Transkei – and sometimes as jockeys.

[401] "Woman Looking for Winners," *Daily Dispatch:* February 18, 1983.

We will likely never know which “Coloured men” are being referred to by Hunter. The history of the coloured community in the Transkei is grossly neglected in the historiography of the region and in the archival record. A search of archival records finds only thirteen files which mention the Transkei coloured community across all the official South African archives.

Yet the role played by this community in *umdyarho* is long standing. Hunter, for example, was writing in the 1930s when she describes “Coloured men” organising races. It is even possible that the Bajodini Race is being referred to here. According to Brian Lottering, chairman of the ECAHRA, his father assisted with organising the Bajodini Race for several years. On Notiki’s retirement, the organising of the Bajodini Race was led by Basil Moore until the family left Transkei in the late-1960s. Lottering recalls that his father (as well as Bikitsha) was one of many organisers of the Race at different times during this period. This dates Lottering’s father’s involvement as an organiser to the 1960s,[402] but there is no record of who could have been organising races in the 1930s.

The group of Thoroughbred owners who have a particular attachment to the professional Thoroughbred industry are clustered in the eastern section of Transkei. A substantial minority of Thoroughbred owners were engaged with both the small Thoroughbred racing industry in Transkei at the same time as being engaged in *umdyarho*. Once the Thoroughbred racing industry in the region fell apart, *umdyarho* was the only place that remained for the Thoroughbred owners. These owners, including those more attached to the Thoroughbred industry model, were forced to gravitate towards *umdyarho* in order to race their horses. After the desegregation of the Thoroughbred industry, the aspirations of seeing their activities connected to that industry became a potential reality, but the prohibitively elite (i.e. expensive) world of professional Thoroughbred racing meant that such access was almost impossible in practice.

The spread of *umdyarho,* and the related growth in Thoroughbred purchasing in Transkei, is – I am told – a process which initially didn’t occur in the area known as Pondoland. Bikitsha, when he described how connections developed between different local racing groups, explicitly said that the Mpondo territory’s groups did not initially feature.[403] But this does not mean that

[402] Interview with Brian Lottering: 2 April 2014, Qumbu.
[403] There is some anomalous reporting here which likely springs from the definition of ‘Pondoland’. Some of the people that I met who mentioned being retrenched and returning to race were from western Pondoland, south of Nyandeni. So there certainly were races from the 1970s in Nyandeni, but the area of Pondoland adjacent to Qumbu is eastern Pondoland. Eastern and western Pondoland have a history of division, with contestations over royal authority and distinct patterns of social engagement with politics. During the Mpondoland Uprisings, for example, while eastern Mpondoland was in all-out rebellion, western Mpondoland did not join the uprising (see T. Kepe,

there was no horse racing in Mpondoland. Current participants who grew up in Mpondoland in the 1960s and 1970s recall that their earliest memories of horse races were at Christmas time. In some cases, this was at the Christmas Races described in Chapter 3.[404]

However, in the areas loosely defined by a triangle formed between Ntabankulu, Nyandeni and Port Edward (the coastal town on the border between KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape), the majority recalled a different kind of race occurring.[405] Rather than organising race days, in these areas, returning migrants would incorporate *umhambo* races into the Christmas period's celebrations in a more general fashion. As we saw in the past, where horses and *umhambo* racing were a form of entertainment at social gatherings, so they remained in this area. Many people I interviewed said that their first encounters with horse races were watching migrants racing *umhambo* down the road during or after parties that had been organised. It was during that time, of the mid-1970s, that people started to organise race days for *umhambo* and when people in Qumbu and Tsolo recall beginning to go to Mpondoland to race in organised *umhambo* race days. The race days consisted of only *umhambo* races and had two categories of horse – 'yearlings' and 'geldings' – with races carried out over varied distances. Despite the prevalence of *umhambo* horses in the areas beyond this, their position was still one of "floor-sweepers" in *umdyarho*, used as a means of showing off between races that were always *umphalo*. Those who wished to race their *umhambo* horses had to go to "Mpondo races" to do so. Returning to Tsolo and Qumbu "after these visits they brought new ideas for racing, which they copied from the Mpondo people."[406] The early *umhambo* racers of Tsolo and Qumbu began to move *umdyarho* in a direction that fundamentally changed its practice across Transkei and caused what seems to have been a scandal in the sport.

"The person responsible for this idea was Bra Mpangwa,"[407] Bikitsha told me with confidence. Mpangwa Msengana lived near Black Hill, where the Bajodini Race takes place. He was one of the people who enthusiastically embraced the *umhambo* racing style in Mpondoland and took his *umhambo* horses to race there. Msengana decided to start organising *umhambo* races

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and L. Ntsebeza, *Rural Resistance in South Africa: the Mpondo Revolts after Fifty Years* [BRILL, 2011]). Considering the position of Qumbu, I will refrain from saying with any confidence that the statement by Bikitsha refers to the whole of what is conventionally understood as the Mpondo territories. And certainly it does not apply to the most southerly and easterly sections of what is understood as Mpondoland. Malungeni, for example, is mentioned by Bikitsha and is also considered a part of western Mpondoland. It is worth reiterating that borders here were fluid, thus the defined 'Mpondo territories' does not equate to 'Mpondo people'.

[404] Lusindiso Tantsi, for example (Tantsi: 19 January, 2016).

[405] Sizwe Notununu is one example (Interview with Sizwe Notununu [Mthatha]: 3 April, 2013).

[406] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.

[407] Ibid.

himself. The trouble was that he decided to do this at *umdyarho* events, where *umphalo* had always been the norm. This made sense, of course, because the venue was replete with *umhambo* horses already. He would collect money from interested *umhambo* riders at the start of race days for winnings, and they began to race competitively.

Some were happy to allow the *umhambo* race's incorporation into the day's events, arguing that the people wishing to race *umhambo* weren't outsiders, they were already a part of the *umdyarho* community. Some people, however, tried to sideline these new races and insisted that the riders organise their own events. The groups who were based around Idutywa seem to have been particularly resistant to the change. Only recently had the groups from different areas been attending each other's races, and in Idutywa the participants had recently started investing in Thoroughbreds to compete in *umphalo* races.

Bikitsha describes the new *umhambo* racers as "resisting" the efforts of the faction trying to prevent them from racing. "They would have their own table separate to ours,"[408] he says, meaning that they would organise race registrations, fees and winnings separately from the *umphalo* group. Over the period of a few years their numbers grew, and "even the chiefs preferred to be on *umhambo*'s side and eventually we came together as racers"[409] (meaning they came to have 'the same table'). Yanga described his understanding of what was said to us about the spread of *umhambo*:

> When they got there, they found out people have already invested in Thoroughbred horses and they were not enjoying what they were seeing in terms of *umhambo*. They did not like them. That's how we ended up with three different types of race. *Umhambo*, *umphalo* and the Thoroughbred breed. Now we have three categories of race horses.[410]

Strictly speaking, at the time there were two categories of race horse in *umdyarho*: *umhambo* and *umphalo*. This is because at the time of *umhambo*'s introduction, Thoroughbreds were racing alongside the smaller indigenous horses in *umphalo* races. The resistance to *umhambo*'s introduction is frequently described as being associated with the drive for Thoroughbreds, with comments such as "they didn't want this, they wanted the tall horses"[411] and "people didn't like the walking horses[412] because they were more interested in Thoroughbreds."[413]

[408] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Yanga Qinga: 29 April, 2014.
[411] Thoroughbreds. Quote from Bajodini Race: 26 December 2015, Qumbu.
[412] *Umhambo*.
[413] Quote from Race near Idutywa: 14 February, 2015.

This resistance to *umhambo* was strongest in places that did not have any existing *umhambo* riding tradition: that is, in the western section of the research area described in Chapter 1. Initially many insisted that *umhambo* form its own organisation and races, and this included those who focused on Thoroughbreds, yet *umhambo* racing remained (and grew) and was incorporated into typical *umdyarho* events. Instead it was the Thoroughbreds who were turned on a decade later and forced out of the *umphalo* races, and it was the Thoroughbred owners who formed their own events and organisations outside of the popular *umdyarho* racing events. Put another way, it was the Thoroughbreds that were forced to 'have a separate table'.

It was during the 1980s that Thoroughbred involvement in *umdyarho* races started to incite more and more ire amongst participants, as the Thoroughbreds (perhaps predictably) came to dominate the *umphalo* field. By 1988 it was collectively decided – though by whom and through what processes remains unclear – that the Thoroughbreds should not race with indigenous horses. "They said we must have our own races,"[414] says Lottering.

Notwithstanding this decline in Thoroughbred involvement, the popularity of *umdyarho* continued to increase throughout the Transkei in the 1980s. Thoroughbreds remained popular (where they were available) in the western section, including Ciskei, where Thoroughbreds were found in a comparatively high concentration. *Umphalo* and Thoroughbred racers continued to travel from the eastern section to race in the west. In the eastern section, the characteristic alternating race structure, and the associated perceptions of *umphalo* and *umhambo,* respectively, became entrenched. And it was in this eastern section, and particularly within the *umhambo* style, that we see the largest growth in *umdyarho*'s popularity. These changes, which started in the 1970s and became solidified in the 1980s, gave *umdyarho* the appearance that it does today.

The increase in popularity of Thoroughbred horses in *umdyarho* was connected to the emergence of a class able to afford them, while migrants had experienced Thoroughbreds in urban centres and returned with better knowledge of the animals. But this leads us to a curious point: Thoroughbreds had always been present in Transkei, yet only became widespread at this time. Similarly, *umhambo* had been a popular form of riding throughout the area, but not of racing. Both Thoroughbred horses and *umhambo,* therefore, became popular *umdyarho* at around the same time – and it is not clear why this was the case. It is possible to partially account for the rise in the popularity of Thoroughbreds by arguing that it was simply a matter

[414] Interview with Brian Lottering: 4 April, 2013.

of people having enough money to buy them: that people were "growing up" and expressing their class position by purchasing a bigger, stronger and faster horse.[415] But while this can account for an increased presence of Thoroughbreds, it can't account for the prevalence of Thoroughbreds amongst the "displaced proletariat," nor for the widespread uptake of *umhambo* as a racing style. The changes were driven by something else.

As we saw in Chapter 2, the decision to engage with a particular style of *umdyarho* appears to be driven by the set of cultural symbols associated with horses. The decision to engage with Thoroughbreds is based on the same symbolism as the decision to engage in *umhambo*. In both cases, it is about expressing one's ideal or desired social position. Having the strongest horse, the biggest horse or the fastest horse, represents holding a higher social position; as does displaying better horsemanship – having more control over the horse (or, perhaps, owning the most well-trained horse). Within the areas where *umhambo* was not practiced, therefore, this elevation of social position was best achieved through purchasing and racing Thoroughbreds, and in places where *umhambo* was practiced, the best way was to compete in *umhambo* races.

In light of this, the concept of *ubudoda* (perceived 'manliness') can be useful in explaining the resistance to *umhambo* on the part of Thoroughbred owners. This new racing style began to threaten the dominance of Thoroughbreds as a display of *ubudoda* – a development that would have been especially intolerable when we consider that the cost of that display was already burdening Thoroughbred owners (who then became determined to protect their investments). Conversely, for those who embraced *umhambo* as a new and legitimate way of expressing *ubudoda,* the cost of buying and caring for a Thoroughbred horse could simply be avoided.

If we consider the changes of the 1970s in these terms, we can re-frame the fundamental question being asked as follows: *What was it about this time that drove the desire to express* ubudoda *through the practice(s) of* umdyarho*?*

Umdyarho was a space in which people could express how they saw themselves – "look at what I am" – and how they wished to be seen. Such a space was becoming rarer for black South Africans. The increasingly desperate measures taken to maintain the apartheid system from the 1960s onwards, and particularly from the mid-1970s, accentuated the lack of control indigenous Africans had over their own lives. By creating the "independent" bantustans, the government stripped indigenous Africans of South African citizenship and could 'deport' them

[415] See Chapter 2.

to economic backwaters where there was little chance of employment. Compounding the hardships of being 'deported', the bantustans they were corralled into were facing environmental conditions which made subsistence agriculture increasingly difficult. The general economic downturn of late-1970s South Africa also meant many were affected by these laws.

Each of these elements contributed to a situation where the embodiment of *ubudoda* became more and more challenging, as the men of the household's ability to build and manage their home and family-life was eroded by the apartheid system. This erosion is further seen in the social circumstances of the rural areas. It was around this time that stick-fighting is said to have started to drop in popularity, and – at times – been actively discouraged because of the tendency towards outright violence it seemed to provoke. What had been a source of masculine socialisation ceased to be so innocent, as "the inability of migrant fathers to keep watch over their younger boys… added yet another dimension to the widening gap between cultural ideals and practice."[416] Returning migrants had lost a degree of control, and hence of perceived respect, over members of their households. This didn't apply only to younger boys, but to women, too, who – in the intervening years in which the men were absent – had taken on many of the public roles and responsibilities previously overseen by men.

Under these conditions, *umdyarho* could act as a way to find affirmation (or reaffirmation) of the participants' masculinity at a time when it was increasingly threatened. And, in this context, it is natural to assume that ways of accentuating the performance of *ubudoda* – in which a man could be publicly affirmed in his masculinity – would have been taken up quickly. The increased engagement with *umdyarho*, the desire for Thoroughbreds and the desire to bring *umhambo* into *umdyarho* can, therefore, all be (at least partly) attributed to this process of reclaiming a sense of power.[417]

A Note on the 1990s

Qumbu was at the centre of these changes to the sport. In the western section and in the Ciskei, *umphalo* races had been carried out from an early time. They grew in popularity in Tsolo and Qumbu in the years following the establishment of the Bajodini Race, and these became areas in which *umdyarho* was a vibrant and thriving sport. The areas of the eastern section known as

[416] Mager, "Youth Organisations" (1998), p. 665.
[417] This was posited to me as an explanation during a discussion I had with a group of young men in a bar in Port St. Johns.

Pondoland did not take to *umphalo*, but began to organise *umhambo* events. However, Qumbu's proximity and social connections to Pondoland, as well as the interest in *umhambo* riding – though not, initially, racing – made it an entry-point for the *umhambo* style to merge with the *umphalo* races. In the 1970s, Qumbu became a nexus of *umdyarho*'s development, in which alternating *umphalo* and *umhambo* races, organised as one sport, became the norm for events there – and, later, across the Eastern Cape. It is because of this, and not only because of the Bajodini Race, that so much focus has been placed on *umdyarho* in Qumbu. Qumbu and Tsolo are both in this eastern section, but the story of *umdyarho* in these areas is not linear from this time, as national and local politics collided around 1990 and tore the region apart.

The violence in the area killed hundreds over a nine-year period in Tsolo and Qumbu, and almost extinguished horse racing, with only the Bajodini Race continuing (under police guard). It is widely remembered as having two factions: the *iinkumpa* and *iinkqayi*.

Iinkumpa, meaning "the ones wearing balaclavas," were stock thieves. The *iinkumpa* are widely remembered as being comprised largely of returning migrants who had become accustomed to violence in the urban townships as a part of the devastating factional fighting that took place in these areas in the late-1980s.

The *iinkqayi* – meaning "the one's with shaven heads" – are widely remembered as farmers. The *iinkqayi* levelled allegations of stock theft against the *iinkumpa,* which – it seems – they seldom denied, but the *iinkumpa* countered the allegations with allegations of their own. They would say that they had stock when they left for the mines and returned to find fewer animals waiting for them back home, accusing the farmers of stealing their cattle while they were away. They were taking compensation. Another allegation made by *iinkumpa,* mentioned to me by a number of people, was that *iinkqayi* would have affairs with (or "steal") their wives while they were away. On more than one occasion I heard this attributed to 'witchcraft' performed by *iinkqayi*.

The reasons for the persistence of the violence were dealt with by Peires, writing in 1999:

> This violence is not faction-fighting in the normal sense of one ethnic group against another, or one locality against another locality. The extreme nature of the violence is precisely due to the fact that it takes place between different villages of the same locality, between members of the same clan, often between members of the same family. Whatever the origins of a specific outbreak, the vengeance factor soon takes over and people start to kill other people not for any other reason than to revenge the deaths of others. And unless some form of reconciliation takes place the violence will never end, because these are remote villages, far from roads, police or

> electricity. Isolated homesteads can never be secured against their neighbours except by genuine reconciliation, and if this does not take place they will fight until the end of time.[418]

That there is peace in Qumbu and Tsolo can be attributed to the reconciliation spoken of by Peires, and *umdyarho* was actively used to play a part in that process. There were concerted efforts from various groups, using a variety of means, to facilitate peace in the area. One approach was *umdyarho,* with people describing this to me as *umdyarho* being "used for peace talks."[419]

Umdyarho was widely affected, in both Transkei and Ciskei,[420] by the collapse of the bantustans. But during the 1990s in Tsolo and Qumbu, the heartland of the sport, *umdyarho* was made almost impossible.[421] People said to me that, at the time, everyone – including the warring groups – wanted to race horses. The loss of horse races was a loss for all sides of the conflict, so races were arranged in a way that could facilitate peace. At race days all sides of the conflict would arrive early, and try to discuss and negotiate a way towards peace before the races began. The races would start only after these discussions were finished. I was also told that once the races of the day started, it was considered wrong to bring up the conflict thereafter: if, for example, one person referred to another as *iinkumpa*, they would be reprimanded by other attendees. This was an active and conscious process to try and draw people together in Tsolo and Qumbu. I will refer one last time to Bikitsha for his description of these attempts at finding peace in the area:

> We tried to find a neutral ground, where all sides could come to neutral ground to discuss this problem. What really brought people together was *umdyarho*, so everyone would be invited to come to *umdyarho*, including *iinkumpa* and *iinkqayi*. Before the races started there would be debates and discussions around the clashes and how these can be resolved so that we all live in peace with one another again. The root cause of this would be identified as being influenced by people coming from Jo'burg. Soccer or rugby for the youth was also used for similar objectives of reaching peace. Sometimes they would bring in someone from Tsolo, Mthatha or Mount Frere and before the race can begin those individuals would be given a platform to speak for the purpose of bringing and encouraging us to fight for peace. Eventually, there was peace between *iinkqayi* and *iinkumpa* going forward. [422]

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[418] J. Peires, "Secrecy and Violence in Rural Tsolo," paper presented at *South African Historical Association Conference*, University of the Western Cape (14 July 1999), p. 1.

[419] Swart reports horse racing being used similarly in KwaZulu (Swart, "Race Politics" (2017), pp. 256-257).

[420] See Puzi in C. Clarke, "The 'fastest growing sport in the country'", *GroundUp,* 31 October 2016 (available online: www.groundup.org.za/article/fastest-growing-sport-country/).

[421] It is important to say that every person I spoke to made it clear that there was never any trouble at *umdyarho* meetings. The problem was that people could not travel to the meetings. They either cited the need to stay at home and protect their animals, or else the threat of being attacked on the way to the races. It is also telling that the Bajodini Race occurred every year as normal throughout this time, albeit with police protection required to ensure the event occurred.

[422] Bikitsha: 29 April, 2014.

Tsolo and Qumbu were particularly badly affected by the violence that followed the official dissolution of the bantustans, but – across these former "independent" areas – instability and factional fighting halted the wave of growth in *umdyarho* that had been building for 15 years.

From 2000 to the present

From around the year 2000, while Qumbu and Tsolo were rebuilding, *umdyarho* began to make a resurgence. This growth accelerated after 2008, and again around 2013. The major difference between the initial period of growth and the present one is the involvement of new influences from outside the sport – most notably, government and the private sector. Despite the 'lost decade' of the 1990s, the dynamics within *umdyarho* after its resurgence still show traces of the tensions and politics that developed while it was taking its shape in the 1970s.

Given *umdyarho*'s growth in popularity, it was only a matter of time before it became noticed by government. This first happened in KwaZulu-Natal in 2005, where some high-profile political families had apparently had long-term involvement in the sport (there known as *ukutelebhela*). The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government established an annual race in the town of Dundee and named it the 'Dundee July,' a play on the name of the major Thoroughbred annual in Durban (the Durban July). Politicians in the Eastern Cape took notice in 2008, with then-MEC for Economic Development in the Province, Mcebisi Jonas, making reference to *umdyarho* as a potential source of economic development. However, it was another five years before they acted on this speech.[423]

In the Eastern Cape, attention was first drawn to *umdyarho* as groups began to seek sponsorship for races through their local municipalities. It took some time for them to find success with this approach, as the municipalities needed to integrate the sponsorship money into their budgets at the beginning of each financial year. Eventually, some municipalities began to do so, offering ten or twenty thousand Rand (in sponsorships) for the eight annual races around the O.R. Tambo District. This was greatly enhanced after 2010 when the O.R. Tambo Horse Racing Association began to lobby in earnest,[424] but it was only later, in 2012 and 2013, that a provincial department took action. This was the Eastern Cape Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture (DSRAC). My initial work was not for this department, but rather for the Eastern Cape Gambling and Betting Board (ECGBB), who – also in 2013 – requested

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[423] I purposefully say "acted on this speech" because the speech was regularly and explicitly invoked as the reason for the Province's involvement.

[424] I have discussed these organisations and their structure in the Introduction and will not discuss them here to avoid repetition.

a report on the "status" of "Traditional Horse Racing" in the Eastern Cape. My first role was to uncover how people operated within *umdyarho*, and where they wished to see the sport in the future.[425]

Once *umdyarho* began to grow to the extent that government investment in the sport started to occur, what had previously been a link between the Thoroughbred industry and *umdyarho* became a source of tension. That tension often expresses itself as Thoroughbred owners, particularly in areas where *umhambo* predominates, feeling themselves a part of both *umdyarho* and Thoroughbred racing, while not fully accepted into either. This can be traced back to the 1970s and 80s, when *umhambo* began to enter into *umdyarho* and the demand for Thoroughbreds plateaued. By the end of that decade, those who wished to engage with the Thoroughbred industry model of racing had gravitated to *umdyarho* in the absence of another viable option. While the Thoroughbred racers do wish to be included in government support measures, there is a lack of consensus amongst participants about how to categorise their practices. Many Thoroughbred racers have openly said that, if given the opportunity, they would prefer to be more involved with the Thoroughbred racing industry and see themselves as more closely connected to it than they do to *umdyarho*.[426] Others see themselves as a part of *umdyarho* and do not wish to be more closely tied to the Thoroughbred industry. Complicating matters, these two views are simultaneously held by members of a group which sees itself as 'united'.

The lack of consensus this creates can be seen in the way these owners engage with both Thoroughbred racing and *umdyarho*. For example, there have been a handful of occasions when the ECAHRA has been invited to race in a special amateur race at Greyville Race Course in Durban. Some of the Thoroughbred owners spoke about these events as the highlights of their engagement with horse racing. These same participants, however, also speak about their sense of exclusion from the Dundee July, which allows *umhambo* entrants from around the country, including the Eastern Cape. They describe how in 2012 they "gatecrashed"[427] the event and insisted on having their own race, which they were eventually given. Another example is seen

[425] I had to be aware that I was coming in from a perceived position of power and would be leveraged by people to attempt to have their personal visions for the sport realised. This certainly was the case. Within five minutes of my first meeting I had been handed a business proposal by someone (who turned out to be a peripheral figure) to build a R10 million stadium at Tsolo Junction. But, overall, the requests were generally simple: water and shelter for race days, basic infrastructure for horses and stalls at venues, transport for horses to facilitate wider involvement at different venues on the circuit (Griffith, Paterson and Roberts, *Traditional Horse Racing* [2013].)

[426] Notes from Race near Mount Frere: 6 April, 2013; Notes from Race near Ngcobo: 4 May, 2013; Notes from Tsolo Junction Race: 3 May, 2014.

[427] Brian Lottering: 4 April, 2013.

in the appreciation of the way in which the Thoroughbred races start, with the swirling of the horses at the starting line, and an acknowledgement of the skill involved in achieving a 'good start'.[428] Yet many people will insist that one of their main goals as Thoroughbred racers is to acquire starting gates so that they can better replicate professional races.[429]

Among Thoroughbred racers I found, furthermore, that there was a sense of exclusion from the changes that were occurring. The focus of local government sponsorships is on *umhambo* to the neglect of Thoroughbreds. Attempts to gain local municipal support have been rebuffed with the reasoning that the Thoroughbreds already have money for their races. The Racing Trust provides funding for the ECAHRA circuit's winnings.[430]

The tension experienced between the Thoroughbred owners and others involved in *umdyarho* can be seen in other ways, too. Where the Thoroughbreds are racing at the same events as *umhambo* and *umphalo* horses, I have noted that the Thoroughbred and indigenous horse owners will set themselves apart from each other, usually on opposite sides of the track.[431] And the inevitable delays at these events are often blamed on the other group. For example, I have heard Thoroughbred owners complain that the delays are caused by the *amagwija* sung as the horse is slowly led to register, or else the 'display riding' that occurs between races. I have also heard indigenous horse owners complaining that the frequency of false-starts in Thoroughbred races[432] disrupts the schedule. In my experience, and in defence of both groups, I have never seen a race day start and end promptly whether the Thoroughbreds are there or not. But I have also seen some Thoroughbred races that took more than half an hour to occur. On one occasion I remember stopping my count at 13 false starts for a single race.[433]

The tension I describe here is particularly evident amongst Thoroughbred owners in the eastern section. It is less evident in the west. In the west, a perception is retained of horses and horse racing in line with the discussions detailed in Chapter 2. The drive for Thoroughbred ownership is a part of a drive to have a horse which better expresses one's social position. Thus, Thoroughbreds in this area are seen by most as simply horses of a different kind, rather than horses used in a different sport. The vast majority of Thoroughbred owners in this area were *umphalo* racers of indigenous horses before buying a Thoroughbred and, despite no longer

[428] Notes from Race near Mount Frere: 6 April, 2013.
[429] Race near Mount Frere: 6 April, 2013; Brian Lottering: 2 April, 2014.
[430] Brian Lottering: 2 April, 2014; Puzi: 11 April, 2016.
[431] Notes from Tsolo Junction: 3 May, 2014; Notes from Tsolo Junction: 25 May, 2014; Notes from Race near Idutywa: 14 February, 2015.
[432] Having a horse beyond the starting point when the starter drops their arm.
[433] Notes from Tsolo Junction: 25 May, 2014.

racing against the indigenous horses, they see themselves as a part of the same tradition. They do not wish to distinguish themselves from *umdyarho*, but rather express themselves through a different kind of horse within it. But even this difference makes tensions between east and west play out between Thoroughbred owners.

The (dissolving) divisions between the *umphalo* west and *umhambo* east were based on an unequal allocation of resources. Races in the west were hesitant to allocate prize money for *umhambo* races because *umhambo* was not popular in their area. As a result, many *umhambo* racers did not like travelling to races in the western section.[434] With the movement of people who openly prefer the professional Thoroughbred industry into *umdyarho* in the late-1980s, the experiences of Thoroughbred racers in the east and the west are often distinct. For those in the west, there was continuity of tradition, while for many in the east – including those who had to change from a focus on the industry model to *umdyarho* – the interruptions have been far greater, and the lack of certainty about where they stand in relation to *umdyarho* is also greater.

Figure 40: Examples of 'traditional attire' seen at Bajodini. (26 December 2016)

The changing relationship between *umdyarho* and the Thoroughbred industry – at least, as it is registered in the minds of its participants – can be seen in the evolution of the sport's dress code. For example, a large number of people have begun wearing patchwork trousers and matching waistcoats. The colours are usually either greens, yellows, reds and blues; or else blues, whites and reds. These outfits are described as the 'traditional' Mpondo and Bhaca dress codes. This attire, particularly the Mpondo version, has become a regular uniform at *umdyarho* events well beyond those who consider it "their own" 'traditional' attire.

[434] Discussed in Chapter 2.

At once considered authentically 'traditional' and easy to ride in, this dress has become a more general expression of the region's cultural heritage at what is explicitly considered a 'cultural event.' The areas from which this attire is said to be drawn are the same areas in which early *umhambo* races occurred, and the spread of *umhambo* has occurred alongside the spread of 'traditional' Mpondo attire at *umdyarho* races. One man, Mr Mukhango, a Qumbu magistrate, said to me that the new attire became particularly popular after the "trouble" of the 1990s. According to him, the attire was a way that Mpondomise people could look outside for a form of 'authentic' dress that would not inflame divisions. Essentially, by adopting Mpondo dress at races, an 'authentic' African attire was adopted from outside the area, instead of from within, in order to assist with dampening tensions that were already symbolised by a clear aesthetic division (i.e. sporting either a balaclava or a shaved head) in the Tsolo and Qumbu areas.[435]

At the same time, Thoroughbred jockeys are now almost universally dressing in racing silks, as would be done in the professional Thoroughbred racing industry. This reflects the affinity these owners feel to this industry – and increasingly, we see these silks being worn by *umphalo* jockeys on indigenous horses. This may reflect a change in perception amongst young jockeys about the relationship between Thoroughbred racing and *umdyarho,* and this shifting perception may be explained by competing visions of the sport's future and the role of (ongoing) government interventions within it.

Figure 41: Thoroughbred jockey's wearing "silks" at Mount Frere. (6 April 2013)

In 2013, at the beginning of this project, an estimated ten thousand people attended the Bajodini Race. In 2014 the estimate had tripled, to thirty thousand.[436] Relatively small races, such as at Idutywa, numbering in the hundreds of attendees at the beginning of this project, had come to number in the thousands by 2016. Races in hitherto minor venues have become annual fixtures because of municipal support. Ncembu, for example, hosted its first major race in 2015 and this was attended by participants from the length and breadth of the province in numbers similar to the larger races at Tsolo Junction. This was because the organisers at Ncembu could contact

[435] Mukhango, notes from Tsolo Junction: 3 May, 2014. It is worth mentioning that Madiba found this explanation far-fetched.
[436] These numbers are based on organiser estimates. Despite being at the races, I can't verify them.

the O.R. Tambo HRA to have the fixture scheduled and announced, and because the municipality was able to provide sponsorship and support for the event.

Such growth in the sport means that there is a near-universal sense amongst long-standing participants that *umdyarho* is on the verge of evolving from a past-time into a professional sports industry – and the sport is rapidly changing as a result of different groups trying to capitalise on that sense. As has already been mentioned, *umhambo* dominance has led to a reduction in the distinctions between the western and eastern sections, with the format of nearly all races following that of the east. Fewer people are buying Thoroughbreds while more people opt to train their horses in *umhambo* instead.[437] This is partly attributable to government interventions which emphasise *umhambo*.

From the beginning of democratic South Africa in 1994, and in order to counteract the systematic neglect and mismanagement of the preceding century, the former bantustans were made a priority for development by the new ANC government. Other programmes, broadly spoken of as programmes "addressing the legacies of apartheid," were implemented. Attempts were (and still are being) made to reinvigorate indigenous African cultures which were denigrated by both the colonial and apartheid states. Because of *umhambo*'s distinctiveness from settler Thoroughbred racing (which is seen as colonial or 'white' in origin),[438] the government has tended to support *umhambo* races, which it perceives as more 'authentically African' and thus more justifiably included in attempts to reinvigorate the previously denigrated cultural traditions of the region. With this new governmental interest – including increased funding – and the ever-growing popularity of the sport, it has been almost impossible for participants to avoid envisioning how the future of *umdyarho* might develop.

There are two very clear ways in which this development is envisioned. The requests for different kinds of development overlap substantially between people who hold the two views – they are, at present, largely compatible – and these two views were spread out across the group of participants, with no meaningful clusters around geographical location, preferred style of racing, or preferred type of horse. These views are:

[437] Thoroughbreds in *umdyarho* are by no means disappearing, in fact there are more Thoroughbreds than ever, but this is likely proportional to the growth in *umdyarho* rather than the popularity of Thoroughbreds in *umdyarho*.

[438] Particularly by those who have not previously been involved in *umdyarho*, like some of the government officials who direct sponsorships or drive policy development.

1) The development of *umdyarho* should be used to show that the participants can build a sport as big and prestigious as Thoroughbred racing, without the involvement of Thoroughbred industry; and
2) The development of *umdyarho* should deliberately and consciously avoid replications of the Thoroughbred industry, and focus on development internally.

The first view expresses itself in a variety of ways, but are all founded on the idea of marginalisation through colonialism and apartheid – and a restoration of dignity. For example, some people expressly said that it was about showing that "we can do what white people do but without white people."[439] Others would say "we must show that even though we are poor farmers, we can do this thing;"[440] and, "the people of Transkei must have something they can be proud of. The youth must see they can stay here and have these things."[441] The inclination here is to show off to those outside of *umdyarho*: it is an outward-looking position which tends to encourage changes that will attract people from outside to 'look at' *umdyarho*. There is also a tendency to see the sport in contrast to the Thoroughbred industry, while not necessarily seeing *umdyarho* as connected to that industry. This group encourages the kind of theatrics seen at popular Thoroughbred annuals like the J&B Met, in Cape Town, and the Durban July, such as extravagant formal dress and lavish pop-up restaurants, music concerts and VIP areas. It is the minority view, though vocal, and is predominantly found amongst race organisers, some businessmen and government officials (though I have also noted it, interestingly, amongst groups of more class-conscious younger men at races).

In the second view, the position is more inward-looking. For these people, the elements that make *umdyarho* events distinct should be emphasised – particularly those which enhance what it is sometimes referred to as the 'spirit of the sport'. The desire to restore dignity is present – as is the view of "giving the youth something to be proud of" – but doing so by showing it in contrast to Thoroughbred races in urban centres is discouraged. Supporters of this position refer to the uniqueness of *umdyarho*: in particular, they use the example of *umhambo,* and ask why *umdyarho* would take from the Thoroughbred industry now when it has never seen the need to do so before. Another example of how this group is distinct is the way that community is emphasised. When asked about developments like VIP tents and special areas, people on this side of the debate would respond by saying that "this is a sport of the people. How can we

[439] Notes from Berlin November: 28 November, 2015.
[440] Notes from Mount Ayliff Stakeholder Meeting: 21 November, 2013.
[441] Notes from Race near Idutywa: 14 February, 2015.

separate the people?" Related to this was the concern that if people saw *umdyarho* as an opportunity to make money, then outsiders would come in and usurp the sport for profit. This appears to be the majority view of the participants that I spoke to, particularly amongst older participants who were involved in *umdyarho* during the 1970s and 1980s.

The Modern State and Market Capitalism in Contemporary *Umdyarho*

A number of different segments of society have emerged as "stakeholders" as *umdyarho* has grown in popularity, with varying degrees of impact. The concerns about usurpation of the sport are well founded. I recall many cases of individuals, with very little to do with the sport, portraying themselves as veterans of it and attempting to leverage that position.

An incident that stands out was at the aforementioned race at Ncembu, during my third year of field research. At that race, a man who I had never seen before came up to me and tried to explain the sport to me, thinking that I was a journalist at my first race. He claimed to be a "high-ranking" organiser of the sport, insisted that I write down his name and phone number,[442] and explained that if there was anything I needed to know – or would "like to support this sport in any way" – I should simply call him. It was at that moment that Madiba approached me and we greeted each other as friends. The man's expression dropped and he moved away quickly. At other times, people have presented me with business proposals for large *umdyarho* developments, asking me to pass them on to "government." Approaches of this nature have not met with much success, however, as the *umdyarho* community is one where each person is usually well acquainted with every other participant. Furthermore, with the connections that have developed amongst people deeply involved in the sport, these so-called 'custodians of the sport' have been able to make themselves visible to potential benefactors quite easily – an effective guard against potential interlopers.

Another segment of society that has taken notice of, and sought to benefit from, the rise in popularity of *umdyarho* is the 'private sector'. This has mainly come from business owners, and particularly young business owners and entrepreneurs, who grew up attending *umdyarho* races. A good example of this – and, in fact, the first example I saw of it – is the Inkunzi'nyama Festival, which was first organised by a local entrepreneur at Tsolo Junction in May 2014. He sought sponsorship from the SABMiller company brand, Castle Milk Stout, Coca-Cola and the Mthatha branch of Meyer's car dealerships,[443] who set up a new Toyota Hilux at the finishing

[442] Which I do not appear to have done, as I have no record of it anywhere.
[443] Owned by Lusindiso Tantsi. It was at this event that I met Tantsi for the first time.

post to use as the announcements vehicle. The Coca-Cola sponsorship provided a branded marquee for shelter, while Castle Milk Stout provided a branded truck that included a built-in sound system with a microphone. It was at this truck that Madiba made his first foray into horse race commentary. At other races, private sponsors commonly include Cowdens Medicine Centre: an Mthatha store specialising in veterinary medicines and animal feeds.

There is little complaining about private business sponsorships or entrepreneurs organising race days because the relationship is mutually beneficial. The business provides funding and much-needed resources, and – in exchange – benefits from advertising or selling their product(s) at the event. In the case of entrepreneurs, it is only if they attempt to impose unfamiliar rules or regulations that they will meet with dissatisfaction. However, considering that most of these entrepreneurs, and there are only a few, come from within the *umdyarho* community, they tend to understand the parameters in which they have to work, and are naturally inclined to treat the conventions and traditions of the sport with the requisite amount of respect.

Figure 42: the Inkunzi'nyama Festival at Tsolo Junction. (3 May 2014)

One exception to this 'outsider rule' can be found in the form of Legends Gaming Promotions (LGP), whose activities are having a significant impact on *umdyarho*. Led by Luthando Bara,[444] LGP established its flagship race, the Berlin November in 2013.[445] In 2014 and 2015, Legends Gaming Promotions sought to expand their influence by attempting to exert greater control over a number of longer-standing horse races, including the so-called 'provincial championships' hosted at Tsolo Junction each year by the O.R. Tambo HRA (the winners of which are sponsored to race in the Dundee July); the Bajodini Race; and the large annual held at Nqadu Great Place, near Idutywa. This expanded network of races is called the Premier

[444] Chairman of the Vula Group (under which LGP falls).

[445] Predictably, it is held in November each year in the town of Berlin, near East London, a site at which *umdyarho* did not have a strong tradition of practice.

Horse Racing League.[446] Their success in this endeavour appears to have had mixed results – and this can be attributed to the sense of ownership held by organisers and the community over *umdyarho* events. Organisers generally continue to do as they have always done: taking what sponsorship they can, including from any 'potential usurpers'.

Bara is frank about his motivations for getting involved in *umdyarho,* saying: "Having visited a number of races, I realised there was an opportunity to monetise this sport and develop it into something that could attract more investment by way of tourists and sponsors and other people from other provinces coming to appreciate what we have here in the Eastern Cape."[447] But this does not help us answer the question of how or why – where other 'outsiders' have been unable to take advantage of the growing sport – Mr Bara and his company have, albeit to a limited extent. The answer lies in LGP being – for reasons that are entirely unclear – seen as the preferred developers of *umdyarho* by the ECGBB, and therefore also the preferred developers in the eyes of the government.

Figure 43: The track at the "Berlin November," near East London, with VIP tent alongside. (28 November 2015)

Legends Gaming Promotions was, in 2013, awarded a tender by the ECGBB to manage the province's responsible gambling campaign. Soon after, the terms of their tender were (legally)

[446] Interview with Bara: 14 February 2015, Idutywa.
[447] Bara, cited in C. Clarke, "The 'Fastest Growing Sport in the Country'", *GroundUp*, 31 October 2016 (available online: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/fastest-growing-sport-country/).

altered to include hosting events which promote responsible gambling.[448] At this point the ECGBB began to take an interest in “Traditional Horse Racing” and established a tender process for a report on the “status” of the sport in the province. With large amounts of money at their disposal and the support of a government agency, the door was opened for Legends Gaming Promotions to establish their Berlin November, which has been hosted under the auspices of the ECGBB Responsible Gambling Programme ever since, along with other events such as the Legends Marathon. These activities are reported in the ECGBB annual report under the heading “Consumer Protection and Public Education.”[449]

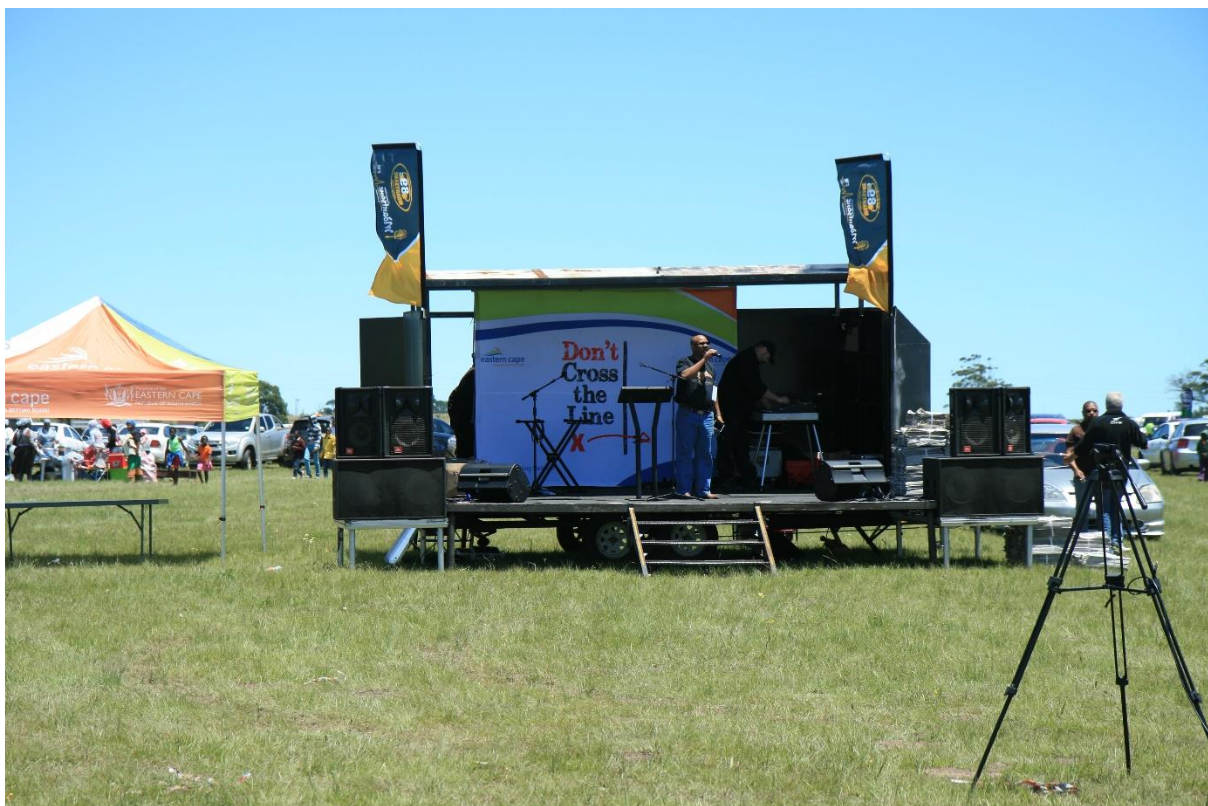

Figure 44: A stage promoting "responsible gambling" at the "Berlin November." (28 November 2015)

Through this portfolio, the ECGBB and LGP partnership asserted itself into *umdyarho*. In 2015 I was asked by the ECGBB to advise on aspects of *umdyarho* as they attempted to build a provincial policy addressing the sport. The policy was driven, not by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture (DSRAC), but by the ECGBB itself, who – according to Luvuyo Tshoko (of the ECGBB) – were best positioned for driving

[448] Notes from *DSRAC’s Internal Policy Colloquium and Conversation Regarding Traditional Horse Racing Policy*: 13 May 2015, Bhisho.
[449] For example, see *Eastern Cape Gambling and Betting Board Annual Report 2016*, p. 297. (available online: http://www.ecgbb.co.za/ecgb/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ECGBB-Annual-Report-2016.pdf)

an inter-departmental policy.[450] Much to my surprise, every meeting (barring one) that I attended was also attended by representatives from LGP. Even more to my surprise, LGP had been placed in charge of drawing a provincial rule book for the sport and had been given the authority to negotiate the establishment of a provincial league with the DSRAC and its stakeholders. The governmental group driving policy made a "fact-finding mission" to Dundee, where they met with the government representatives of the KwaZulu-Natal government. LGP, I am told, accompanied them on that trip as part of the government delegation.[451]

Unfortunately, important elements of the programme advanced by the ECGBB were contrary to the research report we compiled for them. In many cases, the ECGBB and LGP coalition also seemed to place its own agenda above that of the participants.

Figure 45: A stage for a music concert to follow the "Berlin November." (28 November 2015)

The most glaring example of this was our research finding that gambling was virtually non-existent in *umdyarho*. Our findings in the 2013 report were as follows: "No organised gambling or betting currently takes place at traditional horse racing events. Occasional private wagers

[450] Luvuyo Tshoko: 13 May, 2015, *DSRAC's Internal Policy Colloquium and Conversation Regarding Traditional Horse Racing Policy,* Bhisho.

[451] Something which members of the KwaZulu-Natal delegation apparently took exception to: "You can't bring a service provider like these guys here. This is highly irregular. A private company coming to decide on policy. Can you imagine?" (Government Official, anonymity requested.)

take place at some of the *umdyarho* events."[452] We reported that "the introduction of gambling and/or betting activities is not recommended as THR [Traditional Horse Racing] is currently practised as a traditional sport, promoting social cohesion and entertainment in the communities. The introduction of gambling is likely to change the dynamics of the sport and its importance as an element of social cohesion."[453]

And yet, as Tshoko put it to me: "Our own informal investigation has found that there is [gambling]."[454] Thus, a tote betting system was "piloted" at the Berlin November in order to draw people away from this "illegal gambling."[455] There was also a strong emphasis placed on aspects which could replicate the major Thoroughbred races, with long discussions about how to implement fashion shows and music concerts at *umdyarho* events. The fashion shows, in particular, seemed to sit high on the agenda for Tshoko and LGP.[456] Where participants asked for simple developments – like shelter, water and basic infrastructure – LGP has, with government support and funding, produced concerts, fashion shows, flashy marketing and an 'exclusive experience' for a handful of annual races to the wider neglect of the sport or its development.

Umdyarho was developed over more than a century and a half without direct or external intervention. And it was developed with little conscious effort until the early-21st Century. Now it is being actively changed. It is not the ethics of this process (or the absence thereof) that is of most concern in the long term – but the ideology of these new entrants, including LGP.

People are not looking to grow the sport as it is; they are looking to change it under the auspices that by doing so, greater social benefit can be derived from its practices. As Tantsi put it, they're looking to "market"[457] the sport, and therefore change it so that it becomes more marketable. In the process, *umdyarho* is being altered to be more appealing to investors outside the sport – and this represents what Bara calls the "monetisation" of *umdyarho*. Specifically, it is a market-orientated economic paradigm being implanted into the sport.

The justification for this intervention given by LGP and the ECGBB is that to "market" *umdyarho* is to draw investment and tourism into the sport. But, when this claim is broken

[452] Griffith, Paterson and Roberts, *Traditional Horse Racing* (2013), p. 34.
[453] Ibid., p.42.
[454] Notes from *Mthatha Stakeholder Meeting*: 20 November, 2013, Mthatha.
[455] I believe that this 'pilot project' has now been discontinued and that now no gambling is sanctioned.
[456] Some of the justifications which I heard for this were that it was a way to bring about "cultural development," and that it could encourage "women participation" thereby helping to bring about "gender equity" at *umdyarho* events.
[457] Tantsi: 19 January, 2016.

down into plain language, it means that these actors are taking a group of people and an activity, identifying what appeals to a big-business market and a wealthy audience, repackaging the experience for this market and selling it off.[458] Thus, when I say that there are fears that *umdyarho* is being "sold," I mean it literally. This is the conscious approach taken by the ECGBB, LGP and a few others acting from within *umdyarho* – though it is not commonly discussed as such, because of the connotations of betrayal that such phrasing would entail. However, the fact remains that these bodies are deliberating inserting *umdyarho* into a free market, and they are deliberately transforming *umdyarho* in order to suit the whims of the marketplace.

The imposition of a market-orientated model onto *umdyarho* by LGP and the ECGBB is not the only intervention by government agencies, though it is the most obviously threatening to the sport. Many have resigned themselves to the change, accepting the involvement of companies like LGP as something they'll just need to tolerate. This, of course, does not mean that there have been no positive developments arising from government interventions – just that there are some clear negative elements involved.

The work of the DSRAC in the field of *umdyarho* – led by Mr Mbonisa Feju – takes a different approach. Through painstaking negotiations led by this department, attempts are being made to establish a league (that LGP is hoping to control) which will draw clubs from each local municipality in the five administrative districts of the Eastern Cape into a 'district championship', and then each district into a 'provincial championship'.

In the course of this, a number of changes have been driven by the DSRAC, most notably the infamous 'standardised rulebook,' through which – it is hoped – consensus can be reached on the correct criteria for judging races. The Department are also working on the implementation of safety standards for horses and jockeys, such as helmets, shoes, track standards and tack standards. The latter is to be led by animal welfare organisations, including members of local SPCAs, the NSPCA, the Coastal and Eastern Cape Horse Care Units and state vets. At races, horses increasingly need to be inspected at registration to ensure that they are adequately cared for and healthy enough to race. Their tack is checked to make sure it is adequate for racing.

[458] Recall Bara's words where he openly seeks to "…develop [the sport] into something that could attract more investment by way of tourists and sponsors," Cited in C. Clarke, "The 'Fastest Growing Sport in the Country'", *GroundUp*, 31 October 2016 (available online: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/fastest-growing-sport-country/).

Figure 46: A farrier from the Coastal Horse Care Unit assists a horse owner in fixing his horse's shoes at the Dundee July. (19 July 2014)

Taken at face value, these are positive developments – and, indeed, many of them are. It is impossible to argue, for example, that an improvement in the standards of safety and care for animals and participants alike is a negative development. However, these attempts have largely been undertaken in order to transform the sport from a past-time into a professional activity, and this process has entailed a fundamental shift in *umdyarho*'s operations. The efforts of the DSRAC have been focused on codifying and bureaucratising the sport, deliberately in order to alter and "modernise" it. In the course of doing so, the customary nature of the sport is necessarily eradicated.

Until this moment in the sport, the different ways of practising *umdyarho* have been constantly negotiated and renegotiated by its participants. What is occurring now is turning this on its head. It takes the 'bottom-up' nature of *umdyarho* and attempts to enforce a 'top-down' approach. It invests power in certain institutions, such as racing association boards, and codifies how the rules might change, who might engage and how they might engage with the sport. In short, it takes *umdyarho* out of the hands of participants and places it in the hands of those who 'represent' the sport during official negotiations or policy discussions. This ignores the fact that the participants *are* the sport, and that the sport *is created by* the investment of its participants. With the codification and bureaucratisation of *umdyarho*, only two future paths for the sport seem feasible: one is that *umdyarho* will morph into a 'fixed, traditional' performance; the other is the aggressively capitalistic marketing approach we see employed by LGP and others. The odds are in favour of the latter.

I have heard the overall approach of government, the ECGBB and its 'public-private partnership' with LGP referred to as "maximum benefication." The quote written in my notebook from the time reads: *This policy will provide maximum benefication.* For those who

used it, the term seemed to encapsulate the grand objective that government was aiming towards: a please-all policy designed to include every single possible beneficiary, and – what's more – to extract 'maximum benefit' for each.

Each point of the draft policy pulled together economic development, social development and 'cultural development'. It sought to work for the benefit of horse and human; those who sought to show off the sport to the outside and, simultaneously, those who sought to develop it from within. The policy intended to draw all together for the sake of 'development' – but in this 'development' message was hidden a more sinister undertone, evidenced by the words "organise" and "monetise."

What was meant by "develop" was, in fact, to "modernise"; and what was meant by "modernise" was, under closer inspection, to "civilise." In many regards, the manner in which the state (and its private partner, LGP) has been approaching *umdyarho* bears striking resemblance to the 'civilising mission' of the colonial powers. The manner of engagement mimics that seen in the early-nineteenth century colonial project, and it is bound by the same logic of 'governor and governed' redolent of that earlier time. This is best illustrated by the way in which the state and LGP have constructed the participants of *umdyarho* as "backward," uneducated "country bumpkins," and in how it has presented the rural areas as somehow "different" to the cities (particularly in relation to the main regional centre of East London).

From this perspective, we can account for these officials and representatives from LGP speaking about their "difficulties" when working with participants and their "resistance" to the "help" which the state agents had offered. This was often presented as "selfish" or "foolish." "Selfish" because it denies the stakeholders (even if this is only a few people amongst many) who do want a specific 'development' action from realising the benefit of it. In this light, to disagree with government proposals – no matter how slight or even absurd – is seen as "selfish" because it stands in the way of "maximum benefication."[459]

The mentality of the state agents can be seen in contemporary governance as much as it can be seen in the processes through which modern statecraft 'came of age': that is, the same time as the conquest of the area. Take, for example, the tendency of missionaries to 'civilise' by

[459] And yet this clearly is a certain amount of truth in the claim that "things work differently in Transkei or Ciskei." If this was not the case, then it couldn't be that those state agents could fail to comprehend the actions of participants in relation to them.

conversion, not just to Christianity, but to a way of life (and even a certain aesthetic) preferred by the coloniser.

The aesthetic is often the most important aspect. One must 'wear the mark' of civilisation: the external trappings being viewed as an indicator of internal transformation or 'progress' made towards being 'civilised'. In the context of *umdyarho*, this can be constructed as the need for the former "native" to aesthetically transform (or 'progress') towards a 'modern' conception of what the state (and the market) considers to be a 'sport.' Only when it matches this ideal can "maximum benefication" occur – and so *umdyarho* is, in many instances, being forcibly aligned with the state's conception of a 'modern sport', complete with records, registers and leagues. It is being bent and warped and made to fit within the ideological framework of 'modernity' (as defined by the market economy), and transformed aesthetically to pander to that market economy so that it can be 'developed'. A clear analogue here is the way in which the state (through LGP) have taken control of the *umdyarho* 'rulebook' out of the hands of the sport's participants, recalling how the magistrate system took on all 'crimes of violence' and removed the right to appeal from the customary courts. In both cases, the people of the rural Eastern Cape are excluded from social practices they themselves developed.

The major transgression here is the false distinction made (or assumed) between *umdyarho* 'as sport' and *umdyarho* 'as heritage'. To treat *umdyarho* as one would treat any other sport, even while describing it as a 'traditional sport', side-lines the meaning it holds for its participants. It makes the development of the sport only forward-looking, but when people – like the members of the Laphum'ilanga Club – tell us that *umdyarho* is a "traditional activity," they are saying that this is an activity which has been invested in based on the belief that they are performing an activity that their forebears performed: and through this performance, they are celebrating the connection between themselves and their forebears. In light of the discussions contained in Chapter 2, to say "look at who I am" isn't only about the present, nor is it only an expression of who one sees themselves becoming in the future. It is also about the past, as who you are is a direct result of where you come from. What a club like Laphum'ilanga achieves, then, is a 'fixed' version of what *umdyarho* does: it is a celebration of the past through an enactment of the way that life was lived in that past.

To live, episodically and fractionally, as your ancestors did, is to connect with them – and, in doing so, is an acknowledgement that what you are now, and what you are proud of now, is a direct result of what your ancestors did. To 'modernise' is to destroy that connection. So Bara

is missing the point when he says, "How does having Vodacom or MTN or whoever sponsor an event take anything away? It doesn't…unless we decide that the sport should never develop."[460] He misses the point firstly by implying that *umdyarho* has not developed until now without his 'help', but – more importantly – he elides the fact that the heritage aspects of *umdyarho* (i.e. precisely the reasons why it is seen as a "cultural activity") rely on a performance that has continuity with how it was carried out in the past by the forebears of its current practitioners. Hence the grave importance of Puzi's words: "This is not what our forebears intended for the sport."[461]

If the performance is disconnected from that of the participants' forebears, then *umdyarho* is nothing more than racing horses. The spirit in which *umdyarho* is carried out is invested with this connection to the past. If the connection with the past is severed – as it seems destined to be by deliberate 'modernisation' from the outside, whether through the wholesale repackaging and 'selling off' of *umdyarho* or its strict institutionalisation – the racing of horses will continue, but the sport called *umdyarho* written about here will be destroyed.

Bara's incredulity indicates another vital point: he understands his approach to be self-evidently superior. "How does [marketisation] take anything away?" he rhetorically asks. The colonisers saw the same self-evident superiority in imposing their way of life on the people of the now-Eastern Cape. It was taken as a given that, once the "natives" were introduced to Christianity and European civilisation, they would be won over – and yet by the mid-nineteenth century rebellions of colonised subjects caused a crisis in the justification of the colonial project and forced a reappraisal of its fundamental tenets. The result was the formulation of "indirect rule" as an approach to colonial governance.[462]

There is a caveat to the thoughts expressed here about state interventions in *umdyarho*, and that is to mention that their 'product' doesn't exist without the participants. Thus, a limiting factor on their ability to alter the sport (i.e. to make it 'ready for market') is the extent to which participants will still engage with *umdyarho* when any proposed changes are introduced. So

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[460] Bara, cited in C. Clarke, "They're Stealing the Sport," *GroundUp*, 2 November 2016 (available online: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/theyre-stealing-sport/).
[461] Puzi, cited in Clarke, "They're Stealing the Sport," 2 November 2016.
[462] M. Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Harvard, 2012).

far, the feedback from participants on the interventions of LGP and the ECGBB has been as scathing as my own.[463]

Some people, particularly organisers, continue to work with these two organisations in the hope of developing the sport, but the majority I have spoken to are angered by what is occurring. I noted the words used by Madiba during the announcements of a race at Tsolo Junction. Addressing me through the loudhailer, he said: "Tell them that the races must not go to Berlin. These are our races! They must stay here!"[464] I had, at that stage, never heard of Berlin, but his meaning became clear two years down the line. As Puzi explains it: "These new events are not here to drive the sport, but rather to make it commercial, to make a quick buck. That's not going to benefit the horse or the owner."[465] He says that: "The people currently talking to government are not the rightful custodians of the sport… but rather they are people who are looking for quick financial benefits. The methods are not the right ones, and the government is not talking to the right people at the moment…This is not what our forebears intended for the sport."[466]

However, probably the most startling words on the matter came from a phone call I received one Sunday evening in 2016, when an irate participant I knew well phoned me after attending a meeting about the Premier Horse Racing League. He said: "Who are these fucks?"[467] before complaining that "some guys [they'd] never seen before"[468] had "come in with all these ideas."[469] He told me that "these guys are just like the rest of this fucking government. They'll come and line their pockets and what will we have? Vokol!"[470]

I asked him how the rest of the participants were feeling about the meeting. He said:

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[463] I recognise that there are those who are pleased with the developments, and that I would be more likely to hear from those dissatisfied than those satisfied by the changes, but the dissatisfaction remains widespread, nonetheless.

[464] Notes from Race at Tsolo Junction: 24 September, 2013. I should mention that Madiba does regularly attend the Berlin November event.

[465] Puzi, cited in C. Clarke, "They're Stealing the Sport," *GroundUp*, 2 November 2016 (available online: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/theyre-stealing-sport/).

[466] Ibid.

[467] I did not record this conversation. It came unexpectedly. The words here were written immediately after the call ended and may therefore not reflect the exact words used, though I did attempt to be as accurate as possible.

[468] Notes: 4 September, 2016.

[469] Ibid.

[470] Ibid.

> They say "it's development," and that any development is good. But they don't see it. I said "look at these guys, all the other things – this boxing thing[471] where those guys were promised money and now they're suing the government. Just look at that." I don't trust these guys.[472]

Almost a year prior to this phone call, I met another man from near King William's Town who said to me: "My grandfather was a founder of the club here. Now this one Legends guy says to people he's from this club and I've never seen this guy before. But I keep quiet. I just keep quiet. Because the truth always comes out."[473]

In meeting after meeting I heard politicians heap praise on LGP. The words that struck me most came from the Deputy Director-General for Rural Development in the Eastern Cape, Ms N Manzi, who said:

> Why if we as a province have the most horses are we so far behind? Why, when we as a province have this big beautiful sport, is it the case that KZN is the first to showcase it? Why? Because in the Eastern Cape we have good ideas but we are not fast enough and other provinces steal our ideas and implement them and benefit. This is why we are so underdeveloped! It is not because we are stupid – we are not – it is because we are not quick enough. So, Mr Bara, I congratulate you on this project and I ask you – Please! Please! Please! – do this league. And do it fast, before somebody else does.[474]

Umdyarho will be fundamentally changed by the intrusion of organisations such as LGP. Tantsi, whose business sponsors races, seemed to accidentally[475] describe the situation well:

> I mean, just look at the levels of even the private companies that get involved, they're interested in the crowd. They're interested in the crowd, the marketing. But now, if it gets high-jacked by the government, we've seen certain activities that are government related: pensions… And when you look at the figures that come out of that, the allocation of the tender was given to someone who's linked politically… Now, you can already see where that [money] is going to go. [Tantsi gestures: putting his hand in his back pocket.]… The people that are likely to get the tender, are likely to be closer to the people that are actually making that tender. And now, guess what happens? It's going to be something that has to be aligned… so-and-so must win, but it's not going to be the community…
>
> Unfortunately most of the African, authentic activities are very difficult… It is very difficult to get it to be fancier… because it means that you're taking it away from them. They're not going to relate to what you ask them to be. Because you're going to somehow have to lay down rules and how they either should dress or they should be, because the standard or the perception of what is highly organised, highly professional… it has to meet certain standards that will somehow seem attractive [to the outside]. If it's got to go to television [for example], or any of those things. Because television requires ratings, all of those things, all of those things. So now you start going into that line, you've already lost so much…

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[471] He is referencing the Premier Boxing League, another event funded under the responsible gambling programs of the ECGBB. The ECGBB funded the league to the tune of 3.5 million Rand, but in 2015 the league failed to pay a number of boxers because of "funding discrepancies for our project." (https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Where-is-champs-R1m-payment-20150429)

[472] Notes: 4 September, 2016.

[473] I did not ask whether I could use this man's name, though considering his views (expressed here) I felt it best to preserve his anonymity.

[474] Ms N Manzi, 4 May 2015, *Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform's Internal Policy Colloquium and Conversation Regarding Traditional Horse Racing Policy*, Bhisho. (Note: This was written by hand while she was speaking. I attempted to write verbatim, but it is best taken as a close paraphrase.)

[475] He was not familiar with the details of the government interventions.

> Because, look at the young kids that run after those horses, that whistling, all of that. Now, when you make it fancier, it simply means that there will be political attendance – now what's going to happen, the rural people that normally go watch those things, they're going to be pushed to the back, because there will be VIP sections, all of that. That's what's going to happen. So what happens now, those kids, they're not going to go watch horses, their focus is going to shift, they're going to be now fascinated by the big Mercs, they're going to see these suits. They're going to watch the bling. You're going to see all of these beautiful women that are there, accompanying the politicians and all these things. Because these are poor areas, they're going to start seeing stilettos, and seeing big shoes, they're going to think, "Ooh, I'd like to be that, I'd like to be that." But the event is not about that.[476]

The concerns of Tantsi speak to the ways in which government and private business may enter into a (in this case) legal but exploitative relationship with cultural practices, but they also go to the heart of government interventions in general, the very ideas of 'development' that they tend to promulgate. His focus is on what *umdyarho* means, and how that meaning changes when such 'development' occurs.

The man who phoned me on that Sunday evening in 2016 told me he was through with *umdyarho*. He said he loved the racing, but the way that it was being "stolen" was something he couldn't stomach. A while later I was back at a race in Transkei and he came up to me with a big grin on his face. I said, "I thought you were done with horse racing?" He said, "Ja, but what can you do? This is my life. I can't stay away for long." And we both laughed.[477] In the words of Puzi: "When the demerits of the business side of things emerge and become prevalent in the eyes of the society and everyone who cares, people will see as to why it should not be done in this way and they will turn to us again. In the meantime, we will continue what we've been doing for so many years."[478]

To my knowledge, there is still no official policy that has been passed by the provincial government dealing with "Traditional Horse Racing in the Eastern Cape." For now, the participants continue to race as they want to race.

[476] Tantsi: 19 January, 2016.
[477] His horse won that day, incidentally.
[478] Puzi, cited in C. Clarke, "They're Stealing the Sport," *GroundUp*, 2 November 2016 (available online: https://www.groundup.org.za/article/theyre-stealing-sport/).

-Conclusion-

“It was not what it is now”

The way of life remembered at the Laphum’ilanga meetings, for example, is one in which homes were dispersed and self-sufficient (at least to the extent that the environment allowed). This meant that each home, on a day-to-day basis, had a relatively high degree of autonomy. Homesteads didn’t exist in isolation from their neighbours, but – because of the relative autonomy of each home and the absence of centralised villages or towns – we find a strong emphasis on socialising and social gatherings. In the absence of a practical ‘reason to socialise’ on an everyday basis, the activity of socialising becomes even more important, as the unity and interconnectedness it creates is what ultimately binds the society together.

People need places to meet, to develop relationships and learn the mutually-intelligible codes which provide the basis for living and working together. Without these codes, and therefore without this socialisation, social support structures are removed and social cohesion (including inter-generational continuity) becomes impossible. The bonds of the society are produced and reproduced through socialising. Fun and enjoyment form a vital part of this, but even the most frivolous activities can fulfil serious functions. This can be seen in some of the sports that were practised in the Eastern Cape. Stick-fighting, for example, was both an entertaining art-form and a source of masculine socialisation. Hunts were social events, but also economic activities, and the manner in which they were practised – such as how people worked together, and how they shared the spoils of the hunt afterwards – reinforced a code of cooperation. Cattle-racing, meanwhile, was an entertaining spectacle that also provided a platform to show off one’s cattle, the main source (and symbol) of wealth in that society. In other words, cattle racing allowed people to perform a position in society.

Cattle-racing was eventually made impossible by the epizootics, droughts and colonial policies of the second half of the nineteenth century. And yet the spirit of cattle-racing survived by switching the racing species from cattle to animals introduced by the colonists themselves: horses. Such a move demonstrates the adaptability of social practices, but it also highlights the importance of being able to have fun and socialise in even the most trying circumstances. It raises an important point which I introduced in Chapter 1: people will use the circumstances they are surrounded by at any given point in time to continue to live as they want to live. In this case, people wished to continue experiencing the kind of entertainment they were

accustomed to when they gathered together, and sought a way to do so by bringing in horses to replace cattle.

Racing could be kept alive in these changing circumstances, but in many other spheres of life the degree of autonomy which these homesteads had previously enjoyed was eroded. The colonial project – and, later, the apartheid project – catastrophically undermined the capacity people had to control their own lives. Numerous examples of this have been discussed throughout this thesis.

The environmental regulations introduced during this period further subverted the self-sufficiency of homes by reducing grazing lands, preventing the movement of cattle and prohibiting hunting. The ban on hunting took away an additional food source, and it increased the number of attacks on homes by allowing animal numbers in the surrounding forests to increase. Other regulations, which led to the widespread killing of dogs, further exacerbated this problem.

Local political powers were removed through colonisation and the implementation of the magistrate system. This meant a curtailing of the ability to administer social life *as it was understood* by that society. The ability to seek justice was diminished by giving authority over all crimes of violence and the right to appeal to 'officials' unacquainted with the legal and political conventions of the area, while the removal of political rights through colonial and apartheid policies further diminished people's ability to engage meaningfully with their social conditions.

Over the late-19th and early-20th Centuries, incorporation into the colonial economy – through trade, traders and monied currency – led to widespread indebtedness and entry into the migrant labour system. The effect was a partial breakdown of the social systems and social support structures in rural areas. It often meant employment in dehumanising conditions in urban areas (including racial prohibitions placed on kinds of work available), and – following the economic crisis of the 1970s – high unemployment levels further limited the ability to work with dignity. Forced relocations under colonial policy (such as through the Vacant Lands Commission), grand apartheid social planning (such as the bantustan policies) and "betterment planning" proscribed the ability to move freely.

In each of these cases, we see the same principle applied as we saw to keep racing alive – people resisted, in whatever way was available to them. Sometimes this was overt, like the Mass Democratic Movements, the anti-dipping campaigns, the Mpondo Revolt. At other times

it was more subtle – for example, the exchange of livestock to circumvent regulations during dry seasons, poaching in the forests, entering 'white' areas without the requisite papers. And this resistance is seen even by not responding directly at all – by simply having fun in the face of oppression. In circumstances where individual agency is constantly under attack, just trying to live one's life as one pleases counts as a vital act of resistance.

So while life was being dramatically affected by colonialism, and responding to many of the immediate changes would have been at the forefront of people's minds, it is important to remember that their responses weren't necessarily a response *to the colonial state*. Neither were the changes they implemented driven *only* by the desire to alter their new conditions. In these cases, people are not necessarily trying to 'keep things the same' (or revert to 'how things used to be') – rather, they are trying to live well. This point is so obvious that often one forgets to make it explicit. In the face of colonial impositions, the colonised were not resisting change (what today we might call "development"), they were trying to retain the ability to have control over their own lives.

This is an important point to make, no matter how obvious, because it is the fundamental error that characterises current government intervention policy. The view held by many in government and LGP – that the people of Transkei are resistant to "change" or "development" – is premised on the assumption that the "change" being resisted is a self-evidently positive development. Thus, the idea that it is change itself that is being "resisted" says more about the people holding that view and their self-perceived position of superiority, than it does about the people who have developed and understood the sport for more than a hundred years. The resistance is not over change in general, but specific changes which give people the sense that they are losing control over the sport – control which has been hard-won, in trying conditions. From the beginning of the colonial intrusion into the Eastern Cape until the present, change has been enthusiastically embraced when it has been found to be advantageous to all elements of life, including *umdyarho*. The transition to horses from cattle racing is one example of such an adaptation, as was the widespread adoption of the horse into social life.

The Acquisition and Incorporation of Horses

Where improvements were offered by the colonial powers, they were rapidly taken up by the people of Transkei. Ploughs are one example. Another is the horse. Because horses were used as part of the colonial war machine, at first, acquiring the new species became important in order to better repel the invaders. In this sense, the initial acquisition of horses was likely a

response to the colonial state. However, the continued demand for and incorporation of horses was because they provided their owners with an overall enhancement of the homestead.

Peter Mitchell, in *Horse Nations* (2015), poses the question: "Did horses truly transform the societies to which they came, or did they only allow those societies to do the same things as before, albeit on a faster and larger scale?"[479] The answer to this question in the Eastern Cape is the latter.

Horses changed very little about the fundamental dynamics of social life in the Eastern Cape. This can be seen in their ubiquitous but peripheral roles in the home. They were, and remain, advantageous in many aspects of home management – but not vital to any aspect in particular. However, when we consider the way in which manhood was understood in the society of the Eastern Cape, we can see how the horse – in spite of its generally auxiliary role – became a potent symbol of *ubudoda* ('manliness'). The conception of personhood in this region is one in which personhood is socially bestowed. The same applies to other categories of personhood, like manhood or womanhood.

Thus, manhood is achieved by embodying a socially-constructed idea of what it means to be 'a man'. Because horses improved the overall effectiveness of carrying out the social expectations of 'being a man' – such as managing a family and home – a horse could be utilised as a symbol. A man with a horse is more of a man than a man without a horse, because a horse allows him to better fulfil the social expectations of what a man 'should be'.

The deployment of this symbol is best seen in its incorporation into the practices associated with the stages of life where the expression of manhood is most important. In, for example, the return of young men from *ulwaluko* – where the adult men will chase the 'new' men on horseback into a river to wash and complete their transition into adulthood. By incorporating horses in this way, the more experienced men can reinforce their seniority. Similarly, young men and boys who wish to express their eligibility begin to collect their girlfriends on horseback – rather than on foot – because it emphasises their 'manhood,' and therefore their ability to manage a home and family.

However, as in the home, the horse's symbolic deployment was auxiliary and epiphenomenal. To use Mitchell's words in another context, they allowed for a 'more efficient' expression of manhood. Manhood could, and would, be expressed in other ways – and *would have* been, even

[479] Mitchell, *Horse Nations* (2015), p. 7.

if there had been no horses around – but the animals were there, were deemed applicable, and so they were symbolically deployed. In the course of time, this deployment became customary.

Horses became a symbol of growth as a person – of becoming 'more of a man' – but the concept of "growing up" is itself a complex one. It doesn't only refer to rising in age. It is not just about becoming a man or a woman in a biological sense, but about all manner of increases in wisdom, power and stature. One who is accumulating wealth is "growing up," just as someone who is accumulating seniority and stature through experience would be. Hence we find that horses are incorporated into other practices, such as coronations or royal funerals.[480] Just as horses were incorporated into the society at large, so they were incorporated into its different rites. Their role is never central, nor vital to proceedings, but the animals are ever-present.

When we reflect on the transition from cattle racing to horse racing in light of the points above, we can see that the transition was not merely a change of racing species. Cattle represented wealth, but horses were more personal – and therefore, they functioned as a more potent and more versatile means of expressing one's social standing. A horse and rider act as one being – a person's horse is an extension of them in a way that cannot be ascribed to cattle. It is true that cattle were prized by their owners, but this was largely because they were valuable currency: the relationship between a man and his horse, meanwhile, is qualitatively different. Racing cattle might show others that you are wealthy, but racing a horse is about showing *who you are.* The way you handle your horse, in effect, becomes an indicator of how much of a man you have become.

This needn't be done by winning a race. Horses provided a symbol-set which allowed for various way of expressing the society's masculine ideals. Someone might have the fastest horse, but someone else might have the biggest and yet another the most beautiful. Someone might have a horse that is well-trained, or they might be celebrated for being an excellent horseman. These examples show the nuance of the symbol-set: in some instances, the owner is *identified with* the large, powerful or attractive animal, and so 'takes on' these aspects of the horse himself. In other cases, the rider *controls* the animal, essentially dominating it, and exerting power over the horse in this way is seen as the embodiment of 'manliness.' As I have discussed, this is why one can produce a similar social effect by choosing to engage with Thoroughbreds or by choosing to race *umhambo*.

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[480] D. Webster, "Burial Unfit for a Chief," *New Frame*, 17 September 2018 (available online: www.newframe.com/burial-unfit-chief).

The Racing of Horses

The symbol-set that developed around horses because of the way that they fitted into society meant that, as the society moved from cattle racing to horse racing, horse racing provided a space in which masculinity could be expressed, and where one's manhood could be contested against the manhood of others. We find a good example of this in the form of races at 'Christmas time.'

As indigenous Africans were drawn into the colonial economy, new options for expression emerged – expressions of upward mobility made possible by having a wage, or else new fashions, ideas and ideologies developed in the urban centres – and Christmas horse races provided a site for these expressions. They were a space were one's masculinity could be expressed and contested in numerous ways through horses, and – because it did so on an 'open field' which allowed for varied expressions – this could be achieved in a way that was not an affront to the manhood of any one individual. This kind of varied expression is found throughout racing of all kinds today, including the 'floor sweepers' that occur between races; the 'display races'; and the 'jesters,' with their extravagant dress and playful, insouciant behaviour.

The versatility of the horse's symbolism in the specific context of horse racing meant that during times when a man's masculinity felt threatened in another realm of life – such as when a man was unable to have control over their own life or their ability to manage their home and family – engaging with horse racing could allow them to reclaim a sense of control and power. A sense of power and control could be restored, albeit temporarily, by controlling a horse – "becoming centaur" – and boldly contesting your masculinity in a horse race.

This process was facilitated by these historical Christmas races, which I have used as my primary example, but also elsewhere and into the present day. At these events, if – for example – a man couldn't afford the fancy horse or fancy saddle of his neighbour, he could still train his horse better than anyone else, or give the best display of horsemanship. Further to this, because the event was a social one, women entered into the performance, dressing the men and horses on the day – another way one could show one's social position. Through practices like this, the highly-gendered symbol of a horse is diffused into a more inclusive social space. It is also coupled more clearly to social standing by drawing others in, including (at Christmas time)

women and (elsewhere) others,[481] and providing an avenue for them to express their support for a horse and its owner or rider.[482]

At Bajodini, discussed in Chapter 4, we see these same expressions play out, albeit in different ways. The emergence of the Bajodini Race as a sort of Mpondomise "national gathering" is itself a kind of reclamation through horse racing. The Mpondomise, in the wake of marginalisation and removal from their land, saw their ability to subsist and manage their own homes eroded. The race at Bajodini may have been one way for them to reclaim that sense of autonomy. Moreover, horse racing is a masculine performance, but because it is also an important social event, some rites of passage related to 'womanhood' were transferred onto the race at Bajodini. The *izipotwana* parade, for example, is one in which 'girls' show their eligibility to engage in romantic relationships. The expression of 'manhood' by men on that race day thus becomes doubly-serious, because of its explicit incorporation of the notions of inter-generational continuity and one's eligibility as 'a man' in front of the *izipotwana*'s display. So while, at times, we see masculinity expressed in order to reclaim power, we also see it in simple contestation to show oneself as 'more of a man' than other participants.

In all these cases, like a migrant who spends more money than he is able to afford when he returns at Christmas, a horse rider is acting out a social position they want to have and want to be seen to have. They may not actually have the position that their horse (or its performance) seems to indicate, but they perform as their most powerful and in control – as an 'idealised self' – and so *umdyarho* is, in this sense, aspirational and future-directed. In the act of racing a horse, you are showing others who *you would like* to be.

If we consider the socio-culturally constructed worldview of individuals within Transkei and Ciskei society – including the conception of personhood and the related understanding of what it means to "grow up" – then we can understand how the horse took on the symbolic meaning that it did – in that society and in that historical moment. If, hypothetically, horses had been introduced in the present, they would not have taken on that symbol-set. With new telecommunications technologies, roads and cars, and other products of the twentieth century, a horse would now provide little. But, because of the time and the circumstances in which

[481] Such as someone from the same village of a horse or owner, or a friend thereof, who shows support at the race and sings *amagwija* around the horse during events. The size of the crowd singing around a horse is an indicator of the horse's, and thus the owner's, social position.
[482] Recall the idea of "becoming centaur." This means that the horse and the person are often taken as inseparable. To support the horse is to support the owner or rider, and vice versa. Furthermore, there is an interesting sense in which supporting a particular rider/horse becomes an expression of identity *for the supporter* (much like is witnessed in mainstream sports, and particularly the phenomenon of British football 'firms').

horses were introduced, they became a customary part of several rites and practices – and this has resulted in the animals retaining that symbolic position in spite of modern developments.

The Transformation of *Umdyarho* Into a Cultural Heritage Practice

At Laphum'ilanga, I saw an invented tradition created from the 'bottom-up.' In that case, a group of people ritualised the way that their predecessors gathered and performed that gathering each week. This included racing horses, as was the case at such events in the past. In a Hobsbawmian sense, the 'custom' of racing horses at these events has been transformed into 'tradition' at the Laphum'ilanga meetings.

Horse racing remained customary until recently in many places across the former-bantustans of the Eastern Cape, such as at Christmas races (discussed in Chapter 3) and other social gatherings (see Chapter 5 regarding Mpondoland). In these practices, we still see remnants of the cattle racing tradition. However, the cattle racing tradition was only one of two racing traditions during the colonial period: the other was imported by the colonists and became the Thoroughbred industry we know today. A thriving settler horse culture, including horse races, followed the settlers as they expanded across the countryside. Horses, after all, provided the major means of transportation for settlers, and – considering that they were only in the early stages of building settlements and towns – the options that they had to entertain themselves were few.

The expansion of settlements was followed quickly by the development of turf clubs and turf meets. For indigenous Africans who were trying to acquire horses, the only way of making use of the creatures was through learning from the colonists. A horse, after all, needs to be ridden if it's going to be of use, and this requires learning the skills of horsemanship. Fortunately – for prospective horsemen, not for the indigenous societies – contact with Europeans was increasing as the colony expanded. This provided ample opportunity for indigenous Africans to observe the use of horses and acquire the cultural knowledge required to make efficient use of the animals. It also provided ample opportunity to observe settler horse racing.

Soon after the acquisition of horses from settlers, indigenous African horsemen started to race their own steeds. People living in what was the area known as Ciskei describe the origin of their horse racing tradition as starting when their forebears would race against British soldiers in the early-nineteenth century. Records of race days in King William's Town also show that at least some so-called "native races" were organised at settler turf meets in the 1850s. It's not clear when indigenous Africans in this area started to organise race days specifically – that is,

days on which people would gather specifically to race horses. But the oral history of Masibambane Horse Racing Club, founded in Pirie Mission near King William's Town, sets the founding of the club in the late-1800s.

The example of indigenous African participation in the settler horse racing tradition most fully discussed in this thesis is the race at Bajodini in Qumbu, with L.P. Moore – Notiki – acting as patron. Despite the settler origins of this racing tradition, horse racing soon came to be understood as an indigenous cultural heritage practice – which is to say, the customs of horse racing became indigenised by its participants. In the case of Bajodini, we can see this happening around the 1930s, as the peculiarities of colonialism in Qumbu and Tsolo gave rise to conditions in which the Bajodini Race could be understood as an Mpondomise "national gathering." After this point, we see certain practices around the stages of life being transferred onto the Bajodini Race, as well as practices expressing deference to one's cultural heritage (such as the practice of "chasing out" boys who were wearing trousers). While this is the clearest example of *umdyarho* becoming endowed with cultural significance, it is not the only case. In the former Ciskei, we hear Puzi speaking about how the horse races were taken from settlers and "made their own." In other places in Transkei, the horse races at the *unhlunkulu* of local 'chiefs' became expressions of cultural heritage partly because this idea was foregrounded by the very social position of the chiefs.

Much of the connection between cultural heritage and horse racing can be attributed to what Ngwane calls the "ideologically intense" period of Christmas as a result of the migrant labour system. Considering the cultural climate of the Christmas period, several activities took on an ideological significance they otherwise may not have, and the horse racing at Christmas is one such example.

The rituals dealing with migrant labour, in particular (where they occurred), emphasised the rural home and a way of life that these migrants 'should not neglect' despite their relocation to urban areas. This gave the cultural discourse around Christmas time a special intensity. The use of Christmas as a time to gather and race horses – essentially, to gather as they had done for generations in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape – was to create a space in which the community, family and where that family came from could be celebrated. In short, the combination between the "ideological intensity" of Christmas time and the performance of a practice carried out in celebration of a specific cultural heritage, endowed horse racing with a

special significance as a cultural heritage practice. It became an activity which exemplified the way of life at the historical ('traditional') family home.

As with the expression of manhood in horse races, the way-of-life being celebrated here needn't be understood as it actually occurred. Just as individuals may express an 'ideal self' through racing, so the society may recreate an 'ideal past' through performing the event of *umdyarho*. Here the distinction between the 'invented tradition' practised by the Laphum'ilanga Club and the 'invented custom' practised at *umdyarho* becomes important. In both cases, what is being said is "this is who we are." The difference between *umdyarho* and Laphum'ilanga, though, is that *umdyarho* is variable: the understanding of who you are now forces a reinterpretation of the past, which becomes reflected in the practices of the present without breaking that line of continuity drawn from the past. In other words, the 'invented custom' allows for the understanding of the past to change according to the needs of the present.

Consider the case of the Bajodini Race. There was a distinct sense of marginalisation amongst Mpondomise people, due to a particular set of circumstances (including a loss of leadership and forced relocations). This put the Bajodini Race in an ideal position to take on the role of a 'celebration of cultural heritage': to function as the "Mpondomise national gathering." It turned to the recent past – an independent past, constructed as one in which Mpondomise had their land and freedom (encapsulated in the image of Mhlontlo). This idea of the past came to encapsulate 'Mpondomise-ness', which was expressed at Bajodini. It included a cultural conservatism, which played out in the sanctioned rites of passage of the *izipotwana* parade and the "chasing out" of those who didn't "defer" to "their culture." Sometimes, this chasing out was explicitly done because the person was not Mpondomise (as in the reports of the shouting of "Hlubi, Hlubi…" and "Bhaca, Bhaca…" accompanying the chaser's whips). More often, though, these boys wearing trousers were chased out because they were perceived as acting "against their culture," by either not diligently performing their social position within the group, or else acting as if they were not a part of the group.

In each case, it is the customary nature of *umdyarho* which allowed for these changes to occur, as people observed the conditions around them, (re)interpreted their significance and then acted accordingly. As the conditions changed, so did the interpretation of 'correct' current practice change. At times, this meant that some aspects of *umdyarho* fell away – the *izipotwana* parade is no longer a feature, nor is the "chasing out" – but at other times, they remained with a new (and perhaps deeper) understanding augmented by different generations, as illustrated by the

discussion of the "chasing out" in Chapter 4. Sometimes, the changing conditions even allowed for new threads to emerge and become incorporated into *umdyarho*.

Some of these 'new additions' to *umdyarho* can be traced back to the boom within sport of the 1970s and 1980s, where changing social conditions gave people increased impetus to engage with horse racing, and – within *umdyarho* – to engage with *umhambo* and Thoroughbreds, specifically. As discussed, this period was characterised by general economic decline and high levels of unemployment – intensifying, at once, both the erosion of individual autonomy and the consequent need for *umdyarho* as a means of regaining a sense of power and control.

As adumbrated in Chapter 5, much jostling for power occurred during this period of growth in the sport – and this was seen both in the tensions between the eastern and western sections of the research area, as well as between *umhambo* riders and Thoroughbred owners. It was the *umhambo* racers who won out in the end – their form of racing was ultimately more accessible than Thoroughbreds – and *umhambo* was drawn into *umdyarho* while the Thoroughbreds were forced to organise their races independently. Similarly, it is the *umhambo* areas of the eastern section which continue to gain in popularity today (and which continue, indeed, to dissolve the distinctions formerly found between east and west).

What was occurring during this historical moment was a contestation over how the participants would express themselves through their horses at races. While all forms of expression were 'valid', some were more easily understood and more accessible than others. For example, when people initially bought Thoroughbreds and raced them in *umdyarho,* they raced them against the 'small horses'. If, hypothetically, they had started out racing against only other Thoroughbreds from the beginning, it is likely that this breed would not have become so popular. This is because, as I have argued, the sport is about contestation against others. Therefore, if only a handful of people had Thoroughbreds – and these Thoroughbreds were raced separately – it would have limited this space of competition, with participants only being able to 'prove' themselves within the smallest of groups.

In light of the above, the jostling for power within *umdyarho* that took place during the 1980s can be better understood. It was a contestation over preferred styles, but the stakes were high for participants as the outcome would determine whether their preferred style would be considered the most prestigious mode of expression in *umdyarho* – and this, in turn, would have a direct bearing on the number of people any participant could 'prove' themselves against on race days. This is one possible explanation for the fact, for example, that people who have

already invested in Thoroughbreds are known to also purchase *umhambo* horses, but not the other way around. As *umhambo* is more popular, some Thoroughbred owners are looking to express themselves through horses as widely as possible – and they can measure themselves better if they are racing *umhambo,* because there are more people to 'prove' themselves against.

***Umdyarho* Revisited: New Stakeholders, New Threats**

The collapse of the apartheid government, and the social and political turmoil caused by the reincorporation of the bantustans into South Africa from 1990, meant a halt on much of the *umdyarho* activity in the Eastern Cape. Rather than being extinguished, however, it returned with vigour after the year 2000 and is seeing greater growth than ever before. New associations of *umdyarho* clubs meant new stakeholders, and these bodies began to lobby on behalf of the sport and coordinate race days to drive the sport's development.

While some positive developments have emerged from these engagements with government, there are also some very questionable practices occurring within *umdyarho*. The alliance of Legends Gaming Promotions and the Eastern Cape Gambling and Betting Board, for example, has resulted in a situation where a company with very little to do with *umdyarho* has been given immense power over the sport, including government funding to host races aimed at "repackaging" *umdyarho* to attract investment into the Eastern Cape, and even control over the sport's rulebook.

As I discussed in Chapter 5, the approach taken by LGP and the ECGBB neglects the participants' understanding of the sport, and conceives of the culturally significant practice of *umdyarho* only as a product to be sold, as a 'fresh market' for big business and wealthy investors. It is a callous, profit-driven approach, and it disrupts the connection that *umdyarho* forges between past practice and the present.

Furthermore, this approach is complemented by the attitude towards development evinced by the provincial Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture, who are currently working to bureaucratise and codify the sport. While these efforts have seen some gains in, for example, rider and animal safety and welfare, the effect is similar (though not as callous) as that taken by LGP. Both parties are working to "modernise" *umdyarho*, based on a narrow perception of what a modern horse racing sport 'should' look like – and, in doing so, they neglect the cultural heritage aspects of the sport.

Where both of these approaches fundamentally err is that they are underpinned by a prejudicial dynamic of governor versus governed. They identify "development" with "modernisation" – and "modernisation" with "civilisation" (see Chapter 5) – thereby effectively reducing the position of participants to that of bystanders in the development of *umdyarho*. The involvement of the participants is only required insofar as there would be no sport without them, but the efforts of government and private agents – as outsiders to *umdyarho* – are largely bent towards producing their own idea of what a 'developed', 'modern' sport should look like.

What Happens At a Horse Race

As I have tried to elucidate in this thesis, when racing a horse in *umdyarho*, the rider places themselves at once in the past – by doing as their forebears did – while simultaneously projecting into the future (their ideal selves). The rider shows both where they have come from and where they are going: legacy *and* potential. This experience comprises two distinct temporalities, but a third 'time' – that of the present – is also occupied by the rider. They must be attentive, focused on the race and – if they are to maximise their horsemanship – they must act "as centaur:" as one, in a state of flow, with the instrument of expression that is their horse.

I have said throughout this study that *umdyarho* is predominantly about fun. The events are fun, racing is fun. *Umdyarho* is playful in its expression, and yet it is also serious. And the reason that something which remains mainly about fun is, upon closer examination, so serious, is precisely this collision of past and future in a present moment.

At the horse races, themselves extraordinary and yet everyday events, you can be yourself in the present – epitomised by the state of flow experienced in the moment of the race – while ideas of where you have come from and where you are going are also implicit in the activity. However, like the horse itself, these serious elements – though ever-present – are never central in *umdyarho*. It is fun precisely *because* it contains so much symbolism of past and future, of desire and identity, but in a way that enacts these concepts without addressing them directly. *Umdyarho* is one of those rare social spaces where you can show yourself, be yourself and celebrate yourself without having to account for anything at all. I believe this is the elusive 'spirit of *umdyarho*'.

To practice *umdyarho* is not simply to race horses. All the changes that have given rise to the sport that I have witnessed in the Eastern Cape have been driven by people constantly negotiating and contesting who they are, where they come from and where they want to go through the means of racing horses.

I don't know what will happen next in *umdyarho*. I can't tell whether the spirit of the sport that people hold so dear will be destroyed or not. *Umdyarho* is, after all, tenacious. It survived a change in species, the entire colonial project and, at times, even war. It typifies the drive for people to have control over their own lives. The 'past' it envisages is one in which its participants possessed a kind of freedom they are missing now. In the act of racing a horse in the present moment, it is the flow, the sense of freedom that makes the sport fun. And while it is ultimately control over their own lives that the participants seek, at present, they are battling to maintain control over their own sport.

Tantsi, in my extensive interview with him, said something that I didn't understand at the time. He told me:

> This horse-racing that you're covering is the last of its kind. Anyone who's going to report about it at any point after you, will not get what you're getting now. They will get a version that will be telling a story about what they've done now. Because the story that you're telling now is the story about how it was before. But now you telling the story at a stage where it's being put together as a… as an interesting cultural phenomenon, of some sort. So it basically… because back then it was not what it is now. It's a competition now. But back then it was a competition that was based on a lifestyle. They were living it, you know? These kids have taken it up, at a point where they don't understand, even though they are just doing it as a tale of what it was, they are not necessarily living that lifestyle. I mean, when I was growing up as a kid it was a lifestyle, it was there, it was the way of life, it was who we were.[483]

I can see now what he meant. Even during the time that I have been involved in *umdyarho,* the sport is changing into something fundamentally different to what it was. In fact, my involvement in *umdyarho* is an indicator of that very change. The reason *umdyarho* was able to retain its 'spirit' for so long was because it was allowed to continue without government interventions and private developments driving their conception of what a 'sport' or a 'cultural practice' is – with only people from the inside constantly negotiating and renegotiating it so that it remained relevant to them: an invented, and reinvented, custom.

With the limelight now falling on *umdyarho*, participants can only attempt to resist efforts to usurp the sport. Some participants are confident they can, others are not, but this much is clear: "what it was is not what it is now," to quote Tantsi, and – I fear – what it is now is not what it will soon be. Regardless of whether the sport is "sold" or not, whether participants can keep *umdyarho* in their own hands or not, the changes which are occurring now will leave a lasting trace on this increasingly popular sport.

[483] Tantsi: 19 January, 2016.

Figure 47: A boy and his friend pose with his horse at Bajodini. (26 December 2014)

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- Appendix -

Note on the Perceptions of the Welfare of Horses

In the course of researching *umdyarho*, I spoke to a variety of people. This included people involved in the professional Thoroughbred industry, animal welfare organisations, farmers and farm owners (looking particularly at farmers with investments in horses), and tour operators who hosted 'horse tours' in the Transkei. I did so because it was important to test any potential links between *umdyarho* and these different groups.

These exploratory missions produced little, however. Almost nobody from these segments of society had seen *umdyarho* before and they knew little about it. Even in the professional Thoroughbred stables that I visited, the owners and managers seemed to have negligible knowledge of the sport. Yet at these stables I was able to speak to the employees – "groomsmen" – as they went about their work. I found that in spite of the lack of knowledge of the sport on the part of the owners and managers, almost every groomsman that I spoke to was involved in *umdyarho*. I would show them pictures I had taken at races and they would say, "That's so-and-so's horse!" or, "That's the horse from near such-and-such a place." The groomsmen were almost entirely drawn from former-Transkei and, as far as I could tell, without exception they were involved in *umdyarho*.

Figure 48: A horse wearing a blanket from the J&B Met annual. (Ncembu, 21 March 2015)

This could be seen in the blankets used at some races. It is, I am told, a custom that should a Thoroughbred win an event, the winning blanket which covers the horse is given to the groomsman who cares for the victorious horse. So at some *umdyarho* races you could see a blanket saying "J&B Met" and the like, indicating that the horse's owner was a groomsman for the horse that won the J&B Met in Cape Town. The owners and managers seemed to know little of this. They did not know about the sport, though of course they knew their staff kept "ponies" at home. It was a similar story with other groups from the 'white' horse community. There was a general understanding that racing happened, but there was also almost no knowledge of it, such as where or how it happened.

This lack of knowledge didn't mean that the 'white' horse community felt they shouldn't express their views. They wished to discuss these races with me extensively. In particular, this demographic constantly and stringently pressed me to shift the focus of my work to address "cruelty." The prevalence and persistence of these requests has led to me include this short appendix, in which I will very briefly address these aspects of *umdyarho*. The reasons for not including them elsewhere in this thesis are that they did not form a part of the story of *umdyarho*. Understanding animal welfare practices would not contribute to understanding the horse races. This should not be taken as neglect or disregard for the welfare of horses: perhaps, rather, it could be read as an indictment of some of the many people who insisted that I shift my focus away from *umdyarho* and onto the treatment of horses, specifically.

Since the sport began to appear on their respective radars, animal welfare organisations have acted within their mandate to begin to engage with *umdyarho*. There are, however, many ways in which to engage – and I have noted a variety of responses, though largely positive.

My first encounter with an animal welfare organisation in the context of *umdyarho* was at my third race, held near Mount Frere. There I found a representative of the Eastern Cape Horse Care Unit[484] named Stanley Adam. It was not his first race, though he had only been to a few. Stanley, astonishingly, single-handedly covers the entire area of Transkei and provides education, training and pro bono horse care for horse owners. It was at that race in Mount Frere that I was approached very soon after my arrival by one participant. He said to me that it was fine that I was there and that I could take photographs, but asked that I please avoid taking photographs of their transport vehicles. His reasoning was that they are embarrassed by some

[484] Based in Port Elizabeth, the Eastern Cape Horse Care Unit is established under the non-profit company Highveld Horse Care Unit and acts as a branch thereof, though with a large degree of autonomy. The Coastal Horse Care Unit was also established as such, but is now, I believe, independent of the Highveld Horse Care Unit.

of their transportation solutions and that it may cause an uproar should it be seen by "rich people" who "can afford fancy boxes." He said that they "work with what [they've] got."[485] Later in the day, there was a discussion about my presence amongst some other participants. Some argued that I should not take photos because their use of poor bits and other tack would present them in a bad light; there were others who argued that this was exactly why I *should* take photos. In my defence, they said that I was there to tell people what it is like and to improve matters. "And you want to help horse racing but then you won't tell people the problems?" someone asked. Another turned to me and simply said: "Tell even the ugly truth." "So far I think it's quite beautiful," I replied, smiling, trying to diffuse the tension.[486]

Stanley was talking to horse owners and helping them sort out small ailments while I continued talking to people and trying to dig into how *umdyarho* worked. At one point I was standing talking to a group and Stanley came to join us. There was a change in the atmosphere of the group when he arrived. I watched the exchanges during the conversation between Stanley and the people in the group. At one point I asked one man talking to Stanley, "Are you not happy about him being here?" "No, not really," he said. I asked why. He said, "Because one day he's going to fuck us!"[487]

Speaking to Stanley afterwards, he said it was a fairly common response. "When people see this shirt they think you're coming to steal their animals," he said, before continuing:

> It's an old thing, you see, back in the old days all that people out here saw of people like SPCA was when they would come in and take their animals away. They wouldn't try to educate, they would just scream and shout and then charge you for cruelty. So that's the reputation of us here. It was always just some white person coming in and taking away your animal. That's how that guy sees me. But I won't stop coming.[488]

This view of animal welfare organisations is only slowly shifting, the welfare organisations have, however, recently seen a rapid change in approach. Until 2015 the view held by the NSPCA was that *umdyarho* should be, in effect, prohibited – and, as a consequence, the view of the NSPCA as an organisation which focuses on prosecution, rather than assistance and education, persists amongst many participants.[489] Animal welfare organisations have also been

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[485] Notes from Race near Mount Frere: 6 April, 2013.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Ibid. To Stanley's credit, he hasn't stopped going. His persistent focus on education, rather than punitive measures, was so effective that he was at the majority of races I went to over the time of my research and at some he was given the responsibility of inspecting the horses to ensure they were fit to race before registration. He seems to have developed a strong respect from participants, who see him and his work as valuable and eccentric in equal measure.
[489] The NSPCA does now attend races and provide support at the events.

widely perceived as racist, willing to work with 'white' people, but not wanting to let black people have animals. It doesn't help that the vast majority of animal welfare workers I

Figure 49: Stanley Adam of the Eastern Cape Horse Care Unit addresses the crowd at Tsolo Junction. (25 May 2013)

encountered were 'white'.

Racism amongst people involved with animal work finds fruitful ground to express itself in *umdyarho*, in some cases by welfare workers themselves, though thankfully this seems to be very rare. There is a growing recognition amongst animal welfare workers that, while there are instances of malicious cruelty, the major sources of perceived cruelty are not motivated by malice.[490]

It is instead about access to resources, like suitable tack, for example, or simply not knowing how to address certain elements of horse care. I have found that people generally care deeply for their horses' well-being. They take immense pride in their horses, hence the embarrassment when I arrived and started taking photos at races. Furthermore, as Stanley demonstrated, if a horse owner is shown how to better care for their horse, they will apply what they learn and

[490] In every one of the handful of instance where I have seen someone whip a horse, or on two occasions seen someone attempt to race a horse that was in obviously poor condition, participants have stepped in and forcefully stopped the person involved, severely reprimanding them. On one occasion I recall a man whipping his horse very hard as he lagged behind in a race at Tsolo Junction. The crowd jeered loudly at him and pulled him off his horse afterwards, removing it from him, as they shouted at the rider and pushed him around.

the welfare of the horse will improve. That people should do so should be obvious considering that, even if seen purely as an investment, they will see greater returns on a healthy horse. It looks better and runs better and makes a better show.

Sadly, a perception still exists about *umdyarho* that has become more common as the sport has become more popular. This perception is centred on the myth of "bush racing," which must be addressed in this appendix.

"Bush racing" was constantly referenced by the 'white' horse community in the course of my work. Regularly when I would tell people what I was looking at they would respond with, "Oh! You mean bush racing?" Similarly, when I mentioned above that people would know that races occurred, yet know very little about those races, it was almost always with reference to the existence of "bush racing."

On April 19th 2017, an article appeared on News24 under the headline "Retired Racehorse stolen for suspected bush racing."[491] As evidence for the bush racing part of the story we see the line: "Both horses were exhausted and showed signs of being pushed hard. This led to speculation that they were used in the shadowy world of 'bush racing'."[492] Later, we see the following:

> "He said the SPCA has found it particularly difficult to crack bush racing due to the secrecy surrounding it.
>
> 'We have never been able to catch people in the act,' he said."[493]

The reason for their lack of success is simple. Bush racing does not exist.

I looked intently for "bush racing." And yet after more than five years of looking, I could find no solid evidence that it exists. But talking to people about "bush racing," a number of characteristics of this elusive sport began to emerge. This is what I noted:

1) The only people who mention "bush racing" at all are 'white' and usually involved in the equestrian community, though some commercial farmers have also mentioned it to me.

2) There are certain characteristics of bush racing that these people mention:

   a) The participants are black;

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[491] J. Evans, "Retired Racehorse stolen for suspected bush racing," *News24.com* (19 April 2017) (available online: https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/retired-racehorses-stolen-for-suspected-bush-racing-20170419)
[492] Ibid.
[493] Ibid.

b) The participants are poor;

c) The participants are criminals (the horses are frequently referred to as "stolen horses," not simply "horses");

d) The participants take drugs;

e) The participants abuse the horses, and often ride them until death; and

f) These races happen at night.

3) None of the people who mention bush racing have ever seen bush racing, but somebody always 'knows somebody who knows somebody' whose horse was stolen for this "shadowy world."

The only rational conclusion is – like the construction of the 'swart gevaar,' or the 'skollie,' or any other moral panic around a kind of individual or activity – that bush racing is a boogieman. It is, in some ways, an admixture of all of conservative 'white' South Africa's greatest fears rolled into one. It is not real, and the quest to find it simply reinforces racist tropes and distracts from the real welfare work which needs to be done for horses across South Africa.

It was on the 8th of October that same year the investigative journalism TV show, *Carte Blanche*, produced a segment on "bush racing."[494] In that segment, they portrayed "bush racing" as a large, gang-related activity in Cape Town. That segment showed abused horses. It showed people racing horses. It interviewed people whose horses had been stolen. What it did not show is any evidence of an organised activity. It did not show the existence of "bush racing." As one, more sensible, professional Thoroughbred owner said to me:

> I know this industry. I know the gambling side. You don't just have a racket with large scale gambling and horse races without any paper trail. It's impossible. How can there be no evidence? How can it be that there is this huge money-making thing happening in secret and nobody has found evidence? It just sounds impossible to me.[495]

Though I reach the same conclusion as this owner, the trouble with this situation is that the various components which make up the phantasm of bush racing *are* real. People do race horses. People always have. Some people don't know how to adequately care for their horses. Some people steal horses. Some people treat horses badly. From this point, it is easy to reinforce already-held prejudicial beliefs and create a compelling case for the existence of something like bush racing. The *Carte Blanche* segment is a fine example of how confirmation

[494] Available via pay-service Showmax, trailer available through Twitter: https://twitter.com/carteblanchetv/status/915637706335629312?lang=en
[495] Notes from Cape Town: April, 2017.

bias functions, as unconnected evidence is combined to form a picture that is wholly untrue, but is taken as a given because it *seems to* tally with what one *already believes* to be true.

All of the perceptions I had noted about bush racing I had noted prior to the April 2017 article. I mention this because it demonstrates, for me, that the widely-held belief that bush racing is a real "shadowy world" already existed long before this media report. It was not as if bush racing was invented recently. In fact, it is so widely believed in by the 'white' horse community that members of that community struggle to dismiss it: often, all that is needed is for one of the aforementioned elements to be present – reports of a stolen horse, for example – and bush racing will be invoked.

Like so many other aspects of *umdyarho*, the welfare of horses is not helped by heavy-handed impositions on the sport. Such an approach simply causes animosity. The conditions of horses are not perfect, but they are directly correlated to the owners' resources and their ability to care for those horses. They are also strongly correlated to the conditions in which the owners live. To cry "cruelty" at a lack of ideal conditions for the horse is a great indignity to the owner, who faces a lack of ideal conditions himself, particularly when that owner has already invested well beyond their means into caring for the animal in question.

In the eyes of the 'white' people crying "cruelty," the implication to this line of argument often appears to be that poor, black people should not have horses. It is difficult to avoid the belief, at times, that the wealthier 'white' person is willing to 'rescue' the horse but not its owner, and that the 'white' person therefore holds the belief that the life of a horse is of greater worth than that of a poor, black human.

While the approach to animal welfare, including equine welfare, is rapidly shifting away from that which gave rise to the perceptions that Stanley encountered,[496] this ideological shift is happening more slowly in the comparatively wealthy and elite world of the 'white' horse community in South Africa. This is, in turn, delaying solutions to the very problems that the 'white' horse community members in South Africa constantly complain about. A vicious cycle is created, in which the wealthy horse community opposes *umdyarho* because of the conditions faced by horses, and yet their opposition hampers improving the conditions of those horses

[496] Such as focusing on horse care education and 'tack drives.' I think of the good work done by the Coastal Horse Care Unit and the Eastern Cape Horse Care Unit in this respect, who have established "rural teams" that specifically work with *umdyarho* in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. These groups encourage their sponsors to donate suitable tack to improve the tack available to *umdyarho* participants, while simultaneously assisting with horse education and inspections at races.

(and, of course, their owners). Until the 'white' horse community more widely acknowledges *umdyarho* as a legitimate activity, the conditions they complain about will persist.

To reiterate: the treatment of horses is not always ideal in *umdyarho* or the rural areas of South Africa, more generally. However, the treatment of horses is commensurate to the ability of owners to care for them, whether by means of financial resources or effective knowledge of horse care.

Umdyarho participants invest in their horses. They do not wish to mistreat them and individuals will care for their animals to the best of their ability. Furthermore, participants often love their horses very dearly: they have a strong emotional investment in their horses. Animal welfare organisations have come to recognise this and are diligently working with the resources they have available to assist horse owners. This support is often not reflected in the 'white' horse community, who have tended to dismiss *umdyarho* as "bush racing."

I have spoken here in general terms, but that should not be taken to mean that I am indicting the whole of the 'white' horse community. Several organisations, not just welfare organisations, and including organisations within the Thoroughbred industry, work with and support *umdyarho*, through funding, 'tack drives' and other support. Their efforts must continue and effect change in the 'white' horse community. The welfare of horses is vital to the sport of *umdyarho*, but it cannot come at the expense of the humans involved. If the welfare of horses is to be improved, then the welfare of the humans who care for those horses must also be ameliorated.