



Examining the autonomy of Zulu Ingoma from the 1930s to present: Image or authentic experience?



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It is prudent to highlight that Ingoma has played an essential role in the transformation of amaZulu. The Ingoma's story is of dramatic socioeconomic changes in Zulu society after the final 'downfall' of the independent kingdom. It is the decade in which amaZulu entered the migrant labour system in greater proportions than ever before. As expected from any African society, the narrative for this decade could well be expressed in music, song, dance and some other forms of performances, which could be collectively called Ingoma. Sentiments arose around this period in the history of Zulu Ingoma, whereby some felt it as negative, while others saw it as positive. As such, this article set out to examine the story of Ingoma during the decade between 1929 and 1939. This article adopted an ethnomethodological approach within an interpretive paradigm to understand the impact of Ingoma musical and/or dance performance tradition. The results of this article reveal that Ingoma musical and/or dance performance traditions of the 1920s and 1930s represented the less continuity of precolonial musical and/or dance performance traditions of amaZulu expressions of power and warfare than the complex interaction of dance traditions, labour migration and missionisation. This article concludes by affirming that people continuously construct their cultures to reflect their identities. These results imply two things: firstly, amaZulu migrants were not just passive recipients of cultural changes at that time, and secondly, they were consciously responsible for the transformation of Ingoma dance songs as they reflected on the socioeconomic changes they found themselves in.

Contribution: This study contributes by establishing the factual impact of this transformative period on Ingoma musical and/or dance performance tradition and on the broader cultural expression of amaZulu as a society in developing South Africa.

Keywords: authenticity; amaZulu; autonomy; culture; Ingoma; domestication; transformation.

Introduction

It is essential to understand culture (webs of significance), which are formulated by religious beliefs and practices, cultural customs, social interactions, attitudes and behaviour. Max Weber (quoted in Geertz 1973) believed that:

... That man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretative one in search of meaning. (p. 5)

The 'webs of significance' as coined by Max Weber is echoed by Geertz (1973) while mentioning that it is important 'to "decode" the symbolic meanings of these certain events, practices, customs and interactions that take place within a specific culture'. Therefore, to understand the culture of amaZulu, this article focuses on the transformative period to Ingoma musical and/or dance performance tradition.

In this article the term Ingoma (literally, song) in isiZulu covers a broad range of male group dances such as *isikhuze*, *isicathulo*, *ukukhomikha*, *isiZulu*, *isibhaca*, *umzansi* and *isishayameni* (Coplan 1985:65; Erlmann 1991:95). However, there is controversy among both authors, as Erlmann includes the term 'isiZulu' (Zulu), while Coplan, includes 'Ingoma' [dance-song] in the list of dances by amaZulu migrant workers. It is unclear why they decided to include these terms because all the dance-songs mentioned are classified as isiZulu and Ingoma. However, for this article, the term Ingoma has been used. As mentioned earlier, it is a generic term for dance-songs by amaZulu or isiZulu dance-songs.

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Coplan (1985) and Erlmann (1991) focused on the development of Ingoma by amaZulu migrant workers in the early years of the 20th century, the 1920s to 1930s and beyond. Erlmann regards this period as domestication of Ingoma, while Coplan sees this period as a form of co-option of workers' dance competitions. Coplan (1985:65) further stated that dancing workers were provided with uniforms, colours, banners, transport and time off for rehearsals, to heighten the loyalty and morale of the workforce. Whatever way one wants to look at it, domestication can imply the taming of something wild. In addition, because of the co-option for loyalty, one can conclude that Ingoma was no longer a pure and unique form of cultural expression by amaZulu in the same way that Ingoma was before industrialisation. The question arising from this is whether this was a positive transformation of Ingoma or something that can be regarded as the beginning of the end of Ingoma as a cultural identity element of amaZulu? As such, this article intends to scrutinise this process between 1929 and 1939, a 10-year period that Erlmann (1991:96) regarded as a remarkable decade of transformation, domestication of Ingoma from a militant, oppositional and suppressed form of popular culture to a tourist attraction. In this context, the development of Ingoma was deemed a fundamental transformation of the cultural practices of amaZulu. In addition, *Ingoma* has become a vital image and form of expression for amaZulu. It is against this background upon which this study was embarked.

Research question

For this study, the authors developed specific primary questions that sought answers that would clarify the ongoing crisis:

As mentioned, the research question is whether this decade of transformation and domestication of Ingoma, coupled with co-option by commercial employers, was a negative or positive thing in the existence of Ingoma. Therefore, it is the sole purpose of this article to analyse critically this decade to arrive at answers to this question. However, this pursuit should be guided by sub-questions such as: (1) can the past be relived in its genuineness? (2) If it can be relived, is Ingoma significant for the present times? (3) Would it be fair to say that the evolution of Ingoma through time has been a 'deception of staged experience'?

Methodology

In an attempt to answer the research question, an ethnomethodological approach is used within an interpretive paradigm. Various scholars have agreed that ethnomethodology gives a unique method to the study of social life, which critically studies normal approaches adopted by scholars of certain settings to produce social order (Garfinkel 1974; Handel 1982; Maynard & Kardash 2007). Have (2004) asserted that an ethnomethodology is an extraordinary method for social scientists to have an in-depth understanding about the qualitative social research. According to Clayman (2015:203) 'ethnomethodology is a

mode of inquiry devoted to studying the practical methods of common sense reasoning used by members of society in the conduct of everyday life'. Given the tentativeness of reality in this view, Garfinkel (1974) suggested that people are continuously trying to make sense of the life they experience. In a way, Garfinkel suggested that everyone is acting like a social scientist, hence the term *ethnomethodology* or 'the methodology of the people'. In this case, the focus is how amaZulu migrant workers continuously made sense of their life experiences during 1929–1939.

In this article, interviews were conducted with *amasotsha*, *amagoso*, *amaphini* and with existing dance troupes in and around the kingdom of amaZulu and beyond. The point shall be made from the outset that the focus of this article is confined to the dancing side of Ingoma, although the article also takes the singing into consideration, hence the 'dance-song' definition of Ingoma. As such, references to dance-songs such as *isicathamiya* sometimes referred to as Ingoma *busuku*, *isicathulo* [gumboot dance], *maskanda* and *umbholoho* [wedding songs].

Indeed, the migrant worker system in the period under investigation brought about a new social order, characterised by poor living conditions, gangsterism, beer halls and night-time recreational performances. As a result, all these aspects of life became features of amaZulu migrant workers, especially in Durban and Johannesburg. To migrants, these conditions were their concrete setting. In other words, their authentic experiences were determined by their daily activities in line with their working and living conditions. Although the authors earlier stated that this article examines the story of the evolution of Ingoma between 1929 and 1939, issues of historical background before this period are also considered. This article attempts to explain why things are what they currently seem to be.

Tree structure

The tree structure (Figure 1) is an attempt to illustrate the scope of the evolution of Ingoma, which this article presents.

On the one hand, the roots represent the historical background of the culture of competitive dancing of

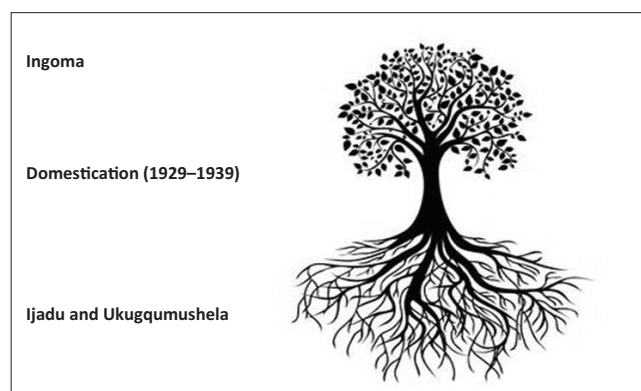


FIGURE 1: The evolution of Ingoma.

amaZulu during pre-industrialisation in Southern Africa. On the other hand, the stem represents the period under discussion: 1929–1939. The branches represent all that is presently known and seen regarding the culture of competitive dancing of amaZulu. In this section the authors focused on the existing materials by scholars such as Coplan (1985), Erlmann (1991), Krige (1950), Rycroft (1975), Tracey (1952) and Clegg (1982) and authors such as Thomas (1988), Bryant (1929) and Larlham (1981) to provide a clear understanding about the tree structure.

Roots of competitive Ingoma of amaZulu

The roots of modern competitive dancing among amaZulu can be traced to dance competitions such as Ijadu. Ijadu is one example of the earliest team-sport dances by amaZulu youths in the past. Ijadu has always used a dance for sporting competition as Dhlobo (1936:56) stated: *Kuthe ngelinye ilanga kwamenwa umkhosi weJadu, uzosinela eMgungundlovu, kuzoqhudlwana izinsizwa zaKwaZulu nezaseMaqadini* [On one specific day, a ceremonial invitation was set for a competitive Ijadu between young men of the Zulu and Qadi clan at uMgungundlovu royal palace].

Bryant (1949) also confirmed that the Ijadu are love dances to become better acquainted:

Zulus conceived the idea of inter-clan Love Dances (Ijadu) ... the young men and maidens of any clan would accordingly arrange to meet the young men and maidens of another clan on some spot convenient to both and generally on the veld near by a wood, nominally, for the purpose of competing at the dance, but really with the object of becoming mutually acquainted. (p. 225)

Ijadu could also be a match-making dance activity, as Krige (1936:340) explained that 'in former days, it was customary for love-dancing or dancing competitions to be held in the veld by the young people of the locality'. Over and above, Ijadu competitive dance–song activities were also part of wedding ceremonies, normally referred to as *udwendwe* in a form of *umgqumushelo*, *ikhetho* and *umthimba* in ancient times and are still presented by those who prefer the old ways, referring to the dance as *amabhinca*. However, *amabhinca* is known as *umshado* by *amakholwa* (Christianised) in a form of *umbholoho*. Dance–song competitions also manifested in what became known as *makwaya* or *isikapulana*, in the northern part of Natal or Kwangwanase, sometimes looking like a sister dance–song to *isicathamiya*. *Makwaya* are mainly performed by women in rural settings by wearing a cloth called *isikapulana*, while *isicathamiya* are mainly performed by men in industrialised settings.

It is interesting to note that *isicathamiya* have its roots in the words *khwaya* or *ikhwaya*. Coplan (1985:440) defined *isicathamiya* as a unique Zulu indigenous style of singing whereby the male chorus singing in an *acappella* style while dancing. This dance is believed to be largely influenced by Christian hymnody that can be traced in the early 20 century. Almost all the authors and scholars who have written and studied extensively about *isicathamiya* agree on the definition

of *isicathamiya* as a *cappella* male choral music developed around 1920 and 1930 in Natal and later also in Johannesburg (Biyela 2001; Erlmann 1996; Ndlovu 1996; Xulu 1992). The word *khwaya* is a direct Zulu translation of the word 'choir'.

Both Erlmann (1991) and Coplan (1985) agreed that Ingoma as it is known today is a product of the response by amaZulu migrants to the industrialisation between the first and the second world wars. The development of Ingoma was through the participation of amaZulu migrants in domestic, industrial and mine labour systems around Durban and Witwatersrand. Ingoma is a continuation of rural cultural expression and became a form of defiance, gangsterism and conformity to harsh working and living conditions in urban and industrialised settings after the destruction of the independent Zulu Kingdom. This was echoed by Xulu (1992) who highlighted that the destruction of the independent Zulu Kingdom had its effects on Zulu culture. This was also emphatically stated by Erlmann (1991:98) that 'Ingoma is a product of the dramatic socioeconomic changes in Zulu society after the final downfall of the independent kingdom'.

Before and during the domestic, industrial and mine labour systems, the territorial, inter-clan and inter-family conflicts were channelled and defused through *umgangela*, an interdistrict competition of *ukudlala ngenduku* [playful stick fighting] (Erlmann 1991:99). In another attempt to control such conflicts, Ingoma dance competitions arose in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands (Clegg 1982:9). According to Erlmann (1991:99), farm workers who went to Johannesburg as young migrants include Dubazane, Jubele 'Lumbu' who expressed dances such as *umqonqo*, *indlamu*, *ingadla* and *umbholoho* [weddings dances] that redefined the dances in ways more agreeable with the harsh realities of rural dispossession and proletarianisation.

Decade of the transformation of Ingoma, 1929–1939

The story about the transformation of the Ingoma musical and/or dance performance tradition of amaZulu settles around the idea of an image versus that of an experience. Firstly, the image pertains to what could be seen as an attempt to conserve and protect the immemorial form, content and structure of these musical and/or dance performance traditions of amaZulu. Secondly, the experience as a dance could be seen as a transformation and promotion of Ingoma to meet the demands of modern society. In other words, if Ingoma is perceived as an image, it is reduced into an object fixed in time and space. Alternatively, if it is an experience, it becomes a subject constructed by people based on their worldviews.

Between 1929 and 1939, Ingoma had become formally recognised as an authentic and appropriate form of black urban recreation. This did not gratify all sectors of the black elite in a similar way. Ngoma dancing was still viewed by many as a vestige of the 'uncivilised', 'heathen' past that stood in the way of a full integration into modern South African society.

Ingoma dancing continued to be observed by many missionaries as a vestige of the 'uncivilised' and 'heathen' past that stood in the way of full combination into new South African society (Erlmann 1991:106). The authors view this duality as Hegelian theory's thesis and antithesis, resulting in a synthesis. This synthesis simply means that the transformation of Ingoma was not a one-way process. Instead, the transformation was a product of actions and reactions embedded within the broader amaZulu migrants' society. Therefore, the transformation story of Ingoma should be seen within the following catalytic occurrences:

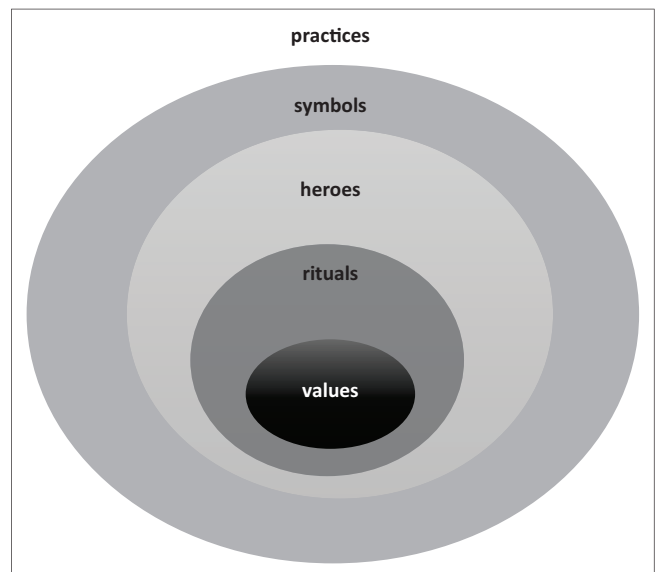
1. Migrant labour system that occurred because of the destruction and impoverishment of a once-independent kingdom. As a result, Ingoma became a way to express the echoes of the distant memories of the past while at the same time resisting the unjust living conditions brought by the new socioeconomic dispensation. As such, new songs that articulated deep-felt emotions were composed.

This song is an example of an Ingoma, translated for Margery Perham (1974) by Allison Wessels George Champion:

Who has taken our country from us?
 Who has taken it?
 Come out! Let us fight!
 The land was ours. Now it is taken.
 We have no more freedom left in it.
 Come out and fight!
 The land is ours, now it is taken.
 Fight! Fight!
 Shame on the man who is burnt in his hut!
 Come and fight! (p. 196)

2. Criminal gangs resulted from rivalry between domestic workers, who were once associated with *amalaitha* [all wiser]. As a disguise, they formed themselves into *Ingoma* groups, assuming the cultural stability among 'rural forms of socialisation and among youths and expressions of ethnic group rivalry in the countryside and within the evolving urban workforce' (Erlmann 1991:103).
3. Co-option by commercial employers whereby a new aesthetic that incorporated forms of expression borrowed from mission stations, church songs, sponsored new costumes and regalia, and restrictions placed upon traditional expressive idioms by employers.

To some, the performance of Ingoma in its historical and rural idioms was seen as a way of resisting acculturation brought by modernisation. On the other hand, some viewed Ingoma as a new way of telling a story of a new Zulu in modernised socioeconomic circumstances. Therefore, as part of cultural expressions, Ingoma is defined in many ways by many people. All the definitions reflect the individual's or group's understanding of their reality. Every definition points to one thing: the way of life of the people, their behaviours, beliefs, values and symbols help define and justify their existence. Culture manifests at different levels of depth, as indicated in Figure 2.



Source: Li, J. & Karakowsky, L., 2001, 'Do we see eye-to-eye? Implications of cultural differences for cross-cultural management research and practice', *The Journal of Psychology* 135(5), 501-517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980109603715>

FIGURE 2: Depth levels of culture.

Within these layers cited in Figure 2, several other aspects of life, such as norms, habits and languages, also express and determine the nature of individuals or groups. Culture is learned. Therefore, culture is relatively subject to various individuals or groups' feelings, thoughts and actions. Although culture seems to be a creation of the people, it is also the creator of the character of the people. All the aspects of culture cited here are responsible for shaping the behavioural patterns of individuals and societies. In other words, there is no passive party between humans and culture. Instead, a constant dialectic process occurs, underpinned by dynamism in the means and needs for survival.

It should also be added that culture is more than just a way of life. Culture is also the meaning people attach or derive from their lives. This derivation means that, no matter how significant an aspect of life might be, if it does not have a significant meaning to the existence of the people, it becomes useless. As established earlier, Ingoma is a form of cultural expression. Furthermore, Geertz (1973) postulates that cultural groups are formed from individuals and associations who interpret culture according to the meanings associated with different cultural layers within themselves. The differential interpretations are the result of each individual's inner mental programming. Generally, layers of culture and cultural interpretation are guided by levels embedded in societies, such as national, regional and educational, gender, age, social status and location. For example, a national identity binds all amaZulu together and is interpreted and expressed differently alongside the regional understanding of the people in that particular region, location, age, gender and education, among others. Mental programming of culture is either positive or negative and allocated in the minds and hearts of people (Geertz 1973). Geertz (1973) indicated that culture is composed of psychological structures. Individuals or groups guide their behaviour by

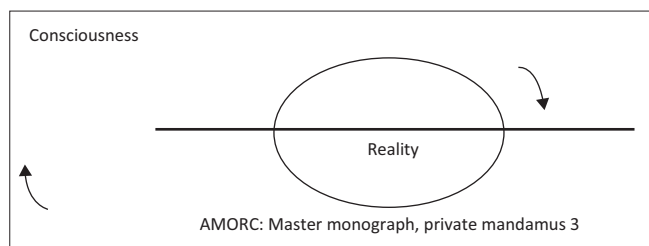


FIGURE 3: Master monograph, private mandamus.

these structures. The structures are a reaction to a theoretical muddling in contemporary anthropology created by some confusion rooted in a view that culture could be either a self-contained super-organic reality with forces and purposes of its own or is a brute pattern of observable behavioural events (Geertz 1973). Geertz (1973) is neither concerned with the nature of culture and its location in the human body nor interested in what culture causes individuals to do. Instead, he is interested in the question of the importance of culture. To him, a view that culture consists of whatever one has to know or believe to operate in a manner acceptable to one's society does not answer the question of what culture implies, indicates, signifies or expresses. His stance against the 'behaviourist' and 'idealist' views on culture stems from semiotic discussions about the culture and meaning of signs and symbols that reveal that meaning is not fixed.

Figure 3 demonstrates that human consciousness and reality interact and their relationship change constantly. Human consciousness evolves around an ever-changing world of things. Therefore, the human understanding of the world of things is never permanent. As such, the meaning attached to Ingoma as a form of musical and dance performance tradition for migrants is subject to time, space and mind biases. No matter how people try to keep their reality unchanged, the evolving consciousness will alter the look of that reality.

Meaning varies over time, by context and by the intent of the conveyor or maker. For instance, a natural movement or the wink of an eye can be used by a person to signal conspiracy, and as such, the recipient's knowledge and familiarity with the sign or symbol plays a vital role in the interpretation of the sign. With regard to the performance of Ingoma, it is not surprising to hear people today still referring to *indlamu* as a war dance because, to them, carrying shields, regalia and performing military drills suggest war. However, knowing what happened during the 10 years under discussion, one realises that nothing presented during modern *indlamu* performances is a sign of war. A completely new type of traditional dance regalia emerged during the restructuring of Ingoma (Erlmann 1991:108). The white organisers of the spectacle suggested that more traditional-looking regalia be worn to enhance the visual impact of the dancing for tourists and most teams readily adopted a completely different outfit of animal skins, sticks and shields that now forms the standard Ingoma 'uniform' (Thomas 1988:198). Differentiating between *ihawu* and *isihlangu* is essential. Both can be loosely classified as a Zulu shield but they differ in size and use.

Isihlangu is a bigger shield than *ihawu*. *Isihlangu* was used for war purposes because it was almost of the size of a person. A combatant could cover himself against a barrage of assegais thrown at him. By contrast, the smaller *ihawu* was used for ceremonial purposes, such as weddings, and *ukweshwama*, among others. For the domesticated Ingoma, the Afrikaans *knobkerries* [stick with a round head] were replaced by sticks covered in sheepskin to remove the stick from war connotations. Therefore, Ingoma differs from a fictional story or event fixed in the book by a writer or society that creates or acts it out. Ingoma happens in time, and its significance is relevant and real. What cultural expressions such as Ingoma represent at that time can also be contested by various individuals and groups who have different views on its significance. During the transformation of Ingoma between 1929 and 1939, some saw the transformation as a setback to integrating into the new South African society. This sentiment is sometimes still upheld today.

This article's emphasis is on Ingoma and its elements. The article looks at dance-songs such as *isicathulo* [gumboot dance], *isicathamiya* and *makwaya*. Almost all these dances cited here used a step movement instead of stamping. In *isicathamiya*, *makwaya* and *isicathulo*, there is very little emphasis on the classical, traditional performance idioms of amaZulu. Instead, urban, religious, Western choral and military expressions are used. For instance, besides the aspects of singing and dancing, the attire for performances is highly Westernised, for example, Wellington boots for *isicathulo* and suits for *isicathamiya* and *makwaya*. Coplan (1985:72) claimed that *makwaya* concerts helped build middle-class pride and a national African culture. In Natal, African nationalism contained a strong admixture of Zulu ethnic pride. Coplan (1985:65) painted a clear picture of the events during the period under discussion, stating that the majority of creativity and innovations in the competitive dance-songs were neither from the more traditional Zulu migrants nor were the dance-songs from the more Christianised migrants. Instead, the dance songs were from *amagxagxa* [vagrants], which in isiXhosa are called *abaphakathi* [middle ones].

Amagxagxa brought dance steps and songs from other ethnic groups and from the urban locations and integrated the steps and songs into Zulu male dancing and singing in the hostels. The *amagxagxa* blended Zulu classical music and dance performance traditions with *izangoma zomshado* [wedding dance-songs] and Zulu Wesleyan Methodist hymns to create interesting syncretic dance team songs. Erlmann (1991:99) also asserted that migrant workers first became interested in the dances and songs developed in and around the mission stations during the search for aesthetic models and expressions of self-conscious urban status.

This 'middleness' could be an epitome of the pull-push situation migrants found themselves in during the period of domestication, industrialisation and urbanisation around Natal (Durban) and Johannesburg between 1929 and 1939. On the pull side, the black migrants were expected to adapt

to new urbanised and Christianised lifestyles. On the push side, black migrants were not allowed to adopt a Westernised lifestyle fully because of laws associated with the colour bar, which prevented integration between white and black people. For instance, gumboot dancing draws on a variety of influences, such as the *Bhaca* tradition (dances by sailors who visited Durban, a Russian folk dance); the heritages of the various Christian missionaries; social dances that accompanied jazz (e.g. the jitterbug) in the 1930s and 1940s and tap dance, which South Africans witnessed in the performances of travelling minstrel groups and the films of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelley (Muller & Topp-Fargion 1999:88–109). Musical accompaniment typically consists of a guitarist and a concertina player playing a cyclical riff moving between tonic, subdominant and dominant chords. Coplan (1985:78) contended that when schools picked up new urban-influenced rural dances, even though missionaries forbade them, one such dance tradition that emerged was *isicathulo* [shoe] adopted by students in Durban and from there it spread to dock workers who produced spectacular rhythmic effects by slapping and pounding their rubber Wellington boots in performance.

From gumboot dancing, two styles emerged regarding gumboot dancing and singing: the *igumboots* dance connected to the heavy stamping of traditional Zulu men's dance and *isicathulo* dance, which is a lighter style of stepping or tapping connected to the civilising project of the mission station. There is emic evidence that gumboot dancing emerged in areas where missionaries had banned traditional Nguni dancing, suggesting missionary influences. Some of the dance patterns resemble step and folk dances that missionaries offered as a substitute for Nguni dancing. There is also a series of dance patterns commanded by the shouts of a leader similar to the musical drills missionaries used to instil discipline in children (Muller 2004:139).

Other forms of amaZulu dance-song traditions were also part of this evolution in black migrants around Durban and Johannesburg in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, the *isicathamiya* genre was influenced by Western-based wedding hymns, as the genre is closely related to Ingoma. With the increase of missions occurring in the rural areas, these classical wedding songs likely became part of the original repertoire of Ingoma performers. However, *isicathamiya* performers stressed the importance of a four-part harmony instead of the more discordant style of the Ingoma performers that was popular with wedding songs. This technique is Western. Overall, the style has not had only one name. Instead the name seems to reflect a perspective on the music that changes with time more than it depends on the music. Over time, the style has been called *isikhunzi* (after 'coons' or minstrel music), *mbube* (after the 'Linda song' came out), *bombing* (during World War II), *isikhwela Jo* and *isicathamiya* (a stealthy movement). Joseph Shabalala (the leader of Ladysmith Black Mambazo) prefers using the name *isicathamiya* to describe its whole history.

Almost every text on *maskanda* usually opens with a mention of this scene: a seemingly lonely figure walking the streets of Durban, decorated guitar in hand, strumming away and singing to himself. The ambulating musician and the cyclical, repetitive structure of the music almost suggest a journey or even a kind of nomadic life. For *maskanda*, the nomadic life was not unusual, many moving in rural areas from village to village. Also, the life of the migrant worker in the larger context of South Africa required leaving home for long periods – moving to Durban or Johannesburg away from rural areas – and bringing the music was a way to culturally reconnect back home.

Maskanda is often described as a neo-classical style of music of amaZulu and is most famously linked to the guitar, although not exclusively. The long syncretic tradition has incorporated a number of Western and global instruments including the concertina, accordion, violin, whistle (as in referee whistle) as well as a number of classical African indigenous musical instruments. In many respects the term itself – *maskanda* – is an amalgam derived from the Afrikaans *musikant* meaning musician. Carol Muller in her book *Music of South Africa* suggests that the term itself implies an association with music made by Afrikaans-speakers such as white farmers, for example, *vastrap* performed with concertina, guitar etc. Most other forms of amaZulu performance traditions such as singing, dancing and drumming were referred to as *ingoma*. The guitar and the concertina became commonplace as accompanying music instrument during the 1930s after cheap locally made versions were produced.

Analysis and conclusion

Thus far, the study revealed that the Ingoma as known today has become (1) an identity of amaZulu working class for mines, industries and farms, (2) a narrative for the socioeconomic transformation of the broader amaZulu cultural landscape, (3) a creative and innovative platform for both local and international artists, including crafters in dance-song performances and (4) an interaction between amaZulu cultural expressions and other cultures of the world. This variety confirms the view that culture is not static. Greenwood's (1982) argument embraced the opinion that 'all viable cultures are in the process of making themselves up all the time'. Greenwood's point alluded into Garfinkel's (1967) idea of people continuously constructing their cultures to reflect their identity.

In search of a meaningful cultural identity, Boissevain (1979) argued that modern people 'have neither the time nor the interest to preserve their traditions and cultural heritages as their culture no longer reflects their identity'. As such, Boissevain's belief would be that what is generally alleged as deception of Ingoma by domestication was a genuine and honest construction of cultural identity by amaZulu migrants between 1929 and 1939. Constructed culture is subjectively perceived and is subjected to constant changes and modifications. This idea of cultural construction is supported

by Geertz's (1973) theory, which implies that culture exists in moments of occurrence. Fuller (2016) is adamantly radical, regarding the portrayal of the past as mere 'guesswork'. Several historic progresses are controversial and there is no distinct indication of the precise manifestation of various things from the ancient (Fuller 2016). In the study, two constructivists' theories emerged. Firstly, some constructivists would regard what was seen at Ingoma performances by amaZulu migrants from 1929 to 1939 as a constructed 'ideal' image of the past. Secondly, other constructivists would see Ingoma performances by amaZulu migrants in 1929–1939 as 'ideal' and 'real' meaningful experiences of migrants at that time.

Although the backdrop to this study can be placed on both anthropologists and sociologist theories, the attention is on the existentialist that is based on individuals' or groups' 'sense of being', whereby people strive to find meaning within their existence among others or in established cultures. This meaning-making is similar to a 'sense of being autonomous'. To existentialists, being 'autonomous' is an ultimate goal for every individual or group.

Park (1983) listed three essential points towards autonomy, which are conformity to autonomy, centring and integrating and authentic projects-of-being. Park's points apply to the story of Ingoma from 1929 to 1939 as the migrants first conformed (through learning the rules and regulations of the Ingoma performance), and then developed meaning and purpose for their experience to re-centre and re-integrate their purposes, values and meanings, into their performances. Park (1983) further postulated that one is what one pursues. One devises one's own reasons for living, which might go beyond what anyone has ever tried before. *Amagxagxa* became an embodiment of 'real' and 'ideal' life amaZulu migrants found themselves in 1929–1939. Ingoma became a new and unique way to give meaning and purpose to migrants' lives and develop an authentic project-of-being.

Existentialists, behaviourists and anthropologists agree that human beings can choose the way of life they prefer. Through actions, people project themselves beyond themselves. People leave the 'themselves' of yesterday behind the 'themselves' of today and the 'themselves' of today behind the 'themselves' of tomorrow (Breisach 1962). This constant surge to surpass oneself is called transcendence, and in it lies the meaning of true existence (Sartre 2021). People remain in a state of change, making ever-new decisions concerning their standing with 'being'. Unique people do not appear by natural means, as their 'real' existence is a re-creation beyond what they were before (Breisach 1962). People live in a world of ever-changing reality or becoming. The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said that all matter is becoming. In conclusion, this article reveals that Ingoma musical and/or dance performance traditions of the 1920s and 1930s represented the less continuity of precolonial

musical and/or dance performance traditions of amaZulu expressions of power and warfare than the complex interaction of dance traditions, labour migration and missionisation. In essence, Ingoma continues to reveal the past in its genuineness through its musical and/or dance performance traditions.

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Authors' contributions

Both authors contributed equally to this work.

Ethical considerations

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