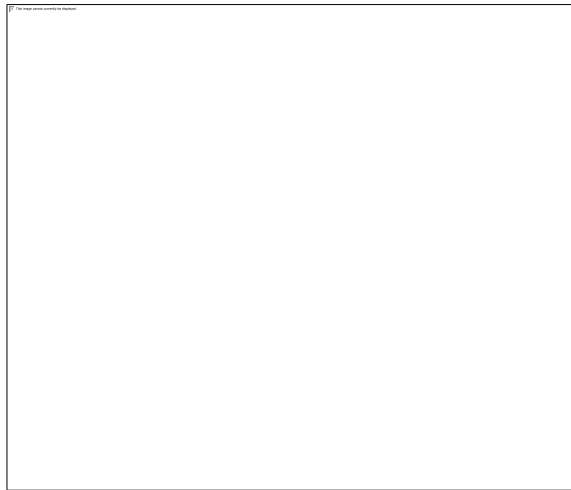


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



living museums as decolonized institutions. a case study of kambako living museum in chiredzi,
zimbabwe.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the concept of Living Museums as decolonized institutions, using Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi as a case study. Grounded in Africana Theory and its Afrocentric tenets, the study examines how Living Museums serve as sites of cultural retrieval, challenging dominant narratives and promoting community-led cultural preservation. Data is collected through extensive field research and semi-structured interviews with community members, museum staff, and stakeholders. The findings revealed that Kambako Living Museum embodies decolonization principles, prioritizing community-led approaches, indigenous knowledge systems, and inclusive representation. The museum showcases Shangaan cultural heritage with grassroots authenticity, challenging dominant narratives and Eurocentric approaches to cultural preservation. The study demonstrates the potential of Living Museums to empower marginalized communities, promote intergenerational knowledge transfer, and challenge Eurocentric approaches to cultural preservation. The research contributes to the scholarship decolonization, cultural preservation, and community-led initiatives, emphasizing the significance of Living Museums in revitalizing cultural heritage.

DECLARATION FORM

I, Japhinos Tatenda Mberikwazvo, hereby declare that the research study titled” Living Museums as Decolonized Institutions. A Case Study of Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe” is my original work. I affirm that this study has been conducted with integrity and in accordance with the ethical guidelines and standards of academic research. All data and information used in this study have been collected and analyzed accurately and transparently. I further declare that all references, sources, and materials used in this study have been duly acknowledged and cited. Any ideas or statements borrowed from other researchers or authors have been fully credited. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references. I further cede copyright of the dissertation to the Bindura University of Science Education

Signature.....

Date: June 2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family, whose unwavering support, encouragement, and love have been the driving force behind my academic achievement. I also dedicate this work to my advisor, whose guidance and expertise have been invaluable in the completion of this research.



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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	2
DECLARATION FORM	3
DEDICATION	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
List of Figures	9
List of Abbreviations	10
CHAPTER ONE	11
INTRODUCTION	11
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	12
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	13
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	13
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	14
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	14
1.7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY	14
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	14
1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	15
1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	15
1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY WORDS	15
1.12 DISSERTATION OUTLINE	16
1.13 CONCLUSION	16
CHAPTER TWO	17
2.0 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	17
2.1 INTRODUCTION	17
2.2 THE LIVING MUSEUM AS AN INSTITUTION OF DECOLONIZATION	17
2.3 THE SAFEGUARDING AND DOCUMENTATION OF INDEGENOUS KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LIVING MUSEUMS	21
2.4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	22
2.4.2 THE CRITICAL RACE THEORY	22
2.4.3 BLACK NATIONALISM	23
2.4.4 AFROFUTURISM	23
2.4.5 AFRICANA THEORY	23
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS	25
3.1 INTRODUCTION	25
3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH	26
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	26
3.4 SAMPLING APPROACH	27
3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	27

3.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	27
3.5.2 FIELD RESEARCH/SITE VISIT	27
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS	28
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	28
3.8 CONCLUSION	28
CHAPTER 4	29
4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	29
4.1 OVERSIGHT OF KAMBAKO LIVING MUSEUM	29
4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS	30
4.2. GRASSROOTS REPRESENTATION OF THE SHANGAAN CULTURAL HERITAGE	30
4.3. COMMUNITY OR MUSEUM? UNPACKING THEIR IDENTITY OF KAMBAKO	32
4.3.1 KAMBAKO AS A SITE OF RESISTANCE, DECOLONIZATION AND RETRIEVAL OF CULTURAL HERITAGE	34
4.4 DISCUSSION	35
CHAPTER FIVE	37
5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH	37
5.1 INTRODUCTION	37
5.2 SUMMARY	37
5.3 CONCLUSIONS	38
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	40
5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE	41
5.6 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH	41
REFERENCES	42
List of Appendices	46
Appendix 1: Interview Questions	47

List of Figures

Figure 1 Methods of food-making and sourcing.....31

Figure 2 Engagement of visitors with the community.....32

List of Abbreviations

NMMZ – National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The study seeks to examine and interrogate living museums as decolonized institutions through an exploratory case study of Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe's Lowveld region. The Kambako living museum is a relatively accessible space reproducing the cultural memory of a cultural-linguistic group of the Shangaan (also known as Tsonga) people. Kambako is a typical ethnographic cultural village that was established with the objective of preserving the historical narrative, cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge of the Shangaan. As a cultural institution, it is built upon a mission to revitalize traditional and intangible values of the Shangaan people, as well as assert their cultural identity and authenticity (Mataga and Chabata, 2015; Mataga and Thondlana, 2022). This reinforces the definition of Museums as, " a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment", (ICOM, 2022).

Museums are thus asserted to have a public service role and responsibility to preserve and communicate heritage for the benefit of society. In Africa and much of the former colonized world, the museum has however come to attention for the need to decolonize and achieve cultural justice. According to scholars such as Agulu (2015) Sub-Saharan Africa and other former colonized nations have been disproportionately affected by colonialism, and its effects are visible in the representation of their cultures histories in museums. The efforts by conventional or traditional museums to critically reflect on power structures that have shaped their collections and practices , and address the legacies of colonialism on cultural heritage , resulted in the establishment of the concept of the 'living museum'(McDonald,2006) . The crucial quest for the decolonized museum or institution that would allow for a more accurate and nuanced understanding of indigenous histories and culture has seen the creation of museum structures that attempt to authentically represent the complexity of the past and shift the historical narrative from Eurocentric or western perspective of indigenous histories. The living museum was thus created , 'a living museum' is a museum that serves as a special type of museum where history is interpreted through real-life depiction of a particular period of time or culture rather than serve as a repository of knowledge and culture (Macleod ,2004). However, some scholars have been pessimistic on the decolonization of the museum, some have opined that the 'asserted to be 'decolonized' institutions, such as the 'living museum', oversimplifies history, perpetuate stereotypes and can sanitize the past (Cannadine, 2001). It is against this background that this study seeks to examine Kambako living museum as decolonized cultural institution.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

History locates the conception of the museum idea among the Greek and the myth of the nine muses or goddesses, daughters of Zeus (Intel, 1998). The Greek word "museion" which meant temple of goddesses and was dedicated to the nine Muses who had skills and inspirations in the arts, astronomy, history and theatre. The word evolved to museum. Greeks collected objects of aesthetic, artistic value and also took artifacts from colonized lands (Yucel, 1999). The Great Museum of Alexandria was the first of museums in around 280 B.C.E after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander (ref). Works owned emperors and books were reproduced and museum consisted of artifacts collected from Mesopotamia and many other ancient civilizations (Artun, 2005). Museums have since branched into many distinct types, among them Natural History Museums that have a focus on a landscape's fauna and flora, specimens, species and natural resources. National or state Museums that are universally more present in Zimbabwe exhibit important historical figures of a country and war artifacts, whilst Archaeological museums tend to display to the public, archaeological artifacts that are collected, preserved and displayed, and Cultural History Museums take a focus on ethnic groups and cultural imprints (Mellentine, 2023). The emergence of the museum in Zimbabwe dates back to 1902, when the Zimbabwe Natural History Museum was established in Bulawayo on request from the Chamber of Mines at the Rhodesia Scientific Association of Cecil John Rhodes to lay foundation for a museum (Rodney, 1985; Ndoro, 2005). The establishment was catapulted by economic geology as the museum was to focus on the collection and exhibition of mineral specimens mined by early settler prospectors and miners (Wallis: 2011).

In 1903, Salisbury now (Harare) saw the opening of Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences yet again under the catalyst of colonial glorification, preservation of the colonial imprint when they penetrated into Zimbabwe and driven by exploitation interests especially in the mining and hunting sector. Many other museums were to be established during the colonial era. After Independence in 1980, as Ndoro (2005) asserts "there was a rechristening of museums" and attempt to decolonize the historically captured museum landscape. The new black government wanted museums to give narratives of African realities and assume African sensibilities (Mawere et al., 2015). Scholarship contends that African museums in generally still harbor collections, artifacts, specimens and displays that perpetuate western superiority and narratives of colonial preserve and penetration. They opine that the museum as a concept in Africa remains a by-product of colonialism and still curate history through displays that narrate history of European exploitation, colonial takeover of ancestral lands, exploitation of natural resources and gives consistency to the glorification of European colonization architects (Ucko, 1994; Abungu, 2006; Sagiya, 2013).

It is of interest to this study to find out the extent to which "new" types of museums such as the Kambako Living Museum are disconnected from the colonial philosophy and practice of museumification. The

Shangaan people have existed at the periphery of cultural and social identity within the Zimbabwean context and the Kambako living museum is an opportunity to explore their heritage, decolonize their historical narratives and challenge cultural and traditional marginalization through self-representation. It is a Shangaan people's attempt at restoring cultural values and dignity to reassert and reinforce the African cultural-social sphere that was affected by European imperialism and colonialism, sometimes even by measures liable to cause cultural annihilation (Jadesola Babatola et al, 2012). This resurgence of cultural authority and emergence of cultural affirmation is asserted to have unsettled the logic of coloniality and its orientations in museums and given local African communities an opportunity to cultural self-reconstruction, counter-attacking the legacies of coloniality in museums (Chikozho, 2015). It is against this background that this study seeks to critically study the Kambako living museum within the context of the decolonization of museum institutions. This will be achieved through the deployment of Afrocentric theory in reviewing literature, data collection, analysis and presentation

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to assess and examine the function of living museums as decolonial entities in Zimbabwe using the case study of Kambako Living Museum in the Lowveld area of Chiredzi.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Museums in Zimbabwe are by-products of colonialism. The very structure and what it embodies is perhaps the epitome and certainly one of the most readily observable symbolic remnants from the age of "active" colonialism (Maranda, 2021). There is problematic notion that the conventional museum landscape exhibits specimens of colonial exploitation, narratives of colonial profit and lacks an authentic historical narrative of indigenous people. The historical narratives and displays in most museums especially in Zimbabwe assume ground in the perpetuation of western superiority and dominance. With the problem and criticism of western oriented narratives within museums, this research is primarily concerned with interrogating whether Kambako Living Museum has traces of colonial narratives or rather is a decolonized institution. This study thus seeks to counter-argue, examining and exploring living museums as decolonized institutions, partaking cultural sustainability and preserving culture through an exploratory case study of Kambako in the Lowveld area of Chiredzi and interrogating its role in asserting identity and legitimacy of Shangaan traditional authorities.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To compare and contrast in general the structure and exhibition of conventional museums with living museums.
- To assess the functions and operations of Kambako living museum
- To examine the role of indigenous knowledge, skills and practices in the curation and management of Kambako living museums.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What characteristics distinguish Kambako Living Museum from other types of museums in Zimbabwe?
- Does Kambako Living Museum reflects attributes of a decolonial institution?
- How has the living museum retrieved indigenous knowledge systems and promoted Afrocentric narratives of the Shangaan people?

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study hypothetically assumes that the Shangaan people have decolonized their cultural heritage and are in control, asserting a cultural dominance and reclaim. The study assumes the direct benefit of the Shangaan community from their cultural imprints and their self-reconstruction of their identity narratives. This research thus seeks to examine the assumptions of the study's focus.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is of crucial importance to the body of museum scholarship in Zimbabwe and beyond. Currently, there has been limited research on the few living museums in the country. There is a scarcity of research within the Zimbabwean museum fraternity and academia on living museums and this study seeks to contribute to such literature. Hitherto, only one academic inquiry exists on Kambako, thus this study leverages a pioneering research (Mataga & Thondlana, 2022) that focused on the sustainability of intangible heritage and this study furthers academic research on the dynamics of Kambako Living Museum. Colonial conceptualizations and orientations have since time immemorial been subjects of authority in researches on African culture and identity and this study also seeks to provide lenses through which an understanding of the reaffirmation and reclaim of traditional authorities, identity and sustainable preservation of cultural heritage by a historically marginalized Shangaan people is achieved. The study significantly retrieves and contributes to limited research on a Shangaan culture that also has traditionally been threatened with a spiral of silence by the hegemonic dominance of the Ndebele and Shona cultures.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher is in proximity to the Kambako museum and has vast experience living within the Shangaan area of Chiredzi, thus have a slightly deeper understanding of the past experiences of the Shangaan community and their struggles in reclaiming their cultural imprint amidst traditional marginalization. The researcher has an advantage of a recent detailed predecessor research (Mataga & Thondlana, 2022) on Kambako although its focus of study diverted from the researcher's own focus of study.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study will not be able to ascertain whether Kambako living museum under a length study frame of its activities and dynamics can exhibit signs of a decolonized institution or rather whether it has within its institutional fiber characteristics of a decolonized institution but does not sustain it in the long run. Perhaps a length inquiry into the Kambako living museum would give a different insight. However this researcher will not be hindered by such circumstances and will administer the research questions to get an understanding of the decolonization nature of Kambako although not conclusively.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY WORDS

Decolonization- Decolonization refers to a global process that aimed to dismantle the structures and ideologies of imperial rule. In many cases, it sought to replace colonial forms of government with sovereign nation-states, and it entailed the repatriation of colonizers and their return to the metropole. Decolonization also entailed the critical interrogation of racialized forms of knowledge and the emergence of new social movements that critiqued, and sometimes transcended, the binary logics of imperial rule (Byrd and Clayton, 2021).

Decolonized institution - A decolonized institution is one that is "conscious of the ways in which histories , institutions and identities have been shaped by colonial projects , and committed to remaking and reimagining all three , evaluating colonial power structures and knowledge systems (Burton, 2012) .

Living museum- a museum that reproduces or present aspects of past or contemporary life as a series of live events involving people in role, painting in utmost respect the events and narrative authentically (McDonald, 2006).

1.12 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

This dissertation is made of five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter which focuses on giving an overview of the study. It outlines on how the study will be carried out. The statement problem of the study is discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 comprises of the theoretical framework and literature review, the chapter will explore literature concerning decolonization and living museum as institutions of it. It seeks to give detailed discussion and highlight critical arguments on the decoloniality of museums and the reclaiming of cultural independence and self-construction of cultural narratives by a cultural group - the aspects and dynamics of Afrocentric and local communities reconnecting and reinstating the traditional authority. Chapter 3 is made up of the research methodology and it highlights on how the study was carried out; it will also reveal the techniques used in carrying out the research as well as methods used in gathering the data from the field. Chapter 4 comprises of data analysis and presentation, this is the chapter where the data gathered during the field work is going to be analyzed and presented. Whilst chapter 5 is the **discussion** and is mostly concerned with discussing the aspects that arises from chapter four. This chapter is mainly the summary of the whole study. The researcher would then make recommendations on the identified problems.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This Chapter was the study's introductory chapter. It explored the research intentions, objectives, research questions and the background of study, thus presenting the study's focus. The study examines living museums as decolonized institutions through an exploratory case study of Kambako living museum. The next chapter explores the literature and theoretical concepts through which this study is guided.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the available literature and scholarship on living museums, their functions and operations as cultural heritage institutions, sustainable treatment of cultural heritage and the institutional decolonization within this type of traditional museums. Literature focusing on the decolonization nature of the living museum will be reviewed from a global perspective and narrowed down to the Zimbabwean context.

2.2 THE LIVING MUSEUM AS AN INSTITUTION OF DECOLONIZATION

The living museum has been a vital asset in the decolonization of culture and the independence of the colonized from the colonizer. The self-representation and self-construction of a people's historical and cultural narrative, as well as the commodification and commercialization of their culture has given a chance for the formerly colonized to benefit from their cultural produce. The local communities have seen capacity building through the independence of their own cultural villages and it has enhanced development (Giampiccoli & Jugmohan, 2018).

These independent cultural villages have given the formerly marginalized cultures of those once colonized or subjected to coloniality an effective platform for self-representation and taking their destinies in their own hands (Ndlovu, 2013). According to Jarret (2020) the concept of living museums undermines colonial

conceptualizations and has sought to see once colonially suppressed cultures embrace and reinterpret their own cultural history. Living museums, including those for indigenous peoples and the general public, can act as centers for racial healing and peace. They offer a forum for addressing historical injustices, admitting previous traumas, and promoting empathy and understanding. Living museums can aid in the process of healing and reconciliation by encouraging communication and mutual respect, so assisting in the creation of more inclusive and equal societies.

Kambako living museum has played a role in the ethnic branding of the Shangaan people and rejection of the paternalistic view of their indigenous culture. The establishment of Kambako living museum and certain cultural villages across Zimbabwe is in a way a response to the criticism of Eurocentric perception and a celebration and embrace of indigenous heritage. According to a research by Motsamayi (2020) in South Africa, the Malapa Northern Sotho Open-Air Museum in the Limpopo Province as a living museum has taken into its structures, operations and management societal consideration and is an institution serving the local Sotho communities. Kambako can be put in comparison with Malapa Museum as it also serves the Shangaan community and regenerates as well as preserve its cultures. Across the African continent, museums of this type matter, have giving high decolonial possibilities to society and are a platform through which communities have reasserted and validated various cultural claims and identities (Mataga,2021). Objectively, this study thrives to mirror Kambako as a living museum institutionalizing coloniality and as a catalyst of it. The decolonization of the "museum" in general and the emergence of "living museum" is in its entirety a microcosm of political encounter. The independence of a people to control their cultural imprints, heritage and their control of cultural villages or living museums in the periphery of their communities, positions the museums as agents of socio-political change (Wintle, 2016).

In a research on the BaTonga people museum Jarret (2020) contends that "cultural museum showcase the traditions, beliefs and ingenuity of the BaTonga people doing away with the Eurocentric perception that has over romanticized non -European objects as primitive". This line of thought reinforces the role that Kambako living museum has played in the ethnic branding of the Shangaan people and rejection of the paternalistic view of their indigenous culture. The establishment of Kambako living museum and certain cultural villages across Zimbabwe is in a way a response to the criticism of Eurocentric perception and a celebration and embrace of indigenous heritage. Living museums endeavor to precisely speak to and protect the social legacy and conventions of innate people groups and marginalized communities. They give a stage for these communities to share their stories, viewpoints, and information in their possess voices. By doing so, they challenge prevailing accounts and generalizations forced by colonial powers, permitting guests to pick up a more nuanced and exact understanding of distinctive societies.

In his 2019 thesis entitled, "Museums: Geopolitics, Decolonization, Globalization and Migration" George Okello Abungu opines that a people influence museums and museums are about a people, thus a people such as the Shangaan through Kambako reclaim what is theirs and take hold of their cultural destiny in a decolonizing move that leaves their cultural imprints and narratives in their hands. Objectively this study thrives to mirror Kambako as a living museum institutionalizing decoloniality and as a catalyst of it. The decolonization of the "museum" in general and the emergence of "living museum" is in its entirety a microcosm of political encounter. The independence of a people to control their cultural imprints, heritage and their control of cultural villages or living museums in the periphery of their communities positions the museums as agents of socio-political change (Wintle, 2016). Living museums frequently act as monetary drivers for marginalized communities. They set out open doors for local area individuals to procure pay through business, distinctive artworks, and tourism visits. This added to the independence of communities that have generally been financially burdened because of colonial heritages. This is clear on account of Kambako and the Maasai Clan living gallery in Kenya, as their cultural initiatives have begun monetarily helping the local communities.

Living museums can be part of the process of decolonization, as anticolonial institutions that can be used to denounce the persistence of coloniality and to critically address colonial heritage (Soares, 2023). As asserted by Hakiwai (2023) the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) museum saw a local culture reasserting its roots through the decoloniality empowerment of the museum and according to Borys (2023) a new model for the museum in the South Qaumajaq in Canada empowered the Inuit community and has led to the creation of community hubs for cultural advancement, educational and economic development.

An important argument has however been raised by the scholarship (Gaze, 1990; Semali & Asino, 2013; Bonzaaier, 2018; Ndlovu, 2019) whether the decolonization of museums can avoid the pitfalls of reproducing that which they seek to undo? A critique by Akuupa (2009) asserts that living museums create danger of freezing Africans in a timeless past for the financial interests of the few. But isn't the past cultural heritage worth resurgence in initiatives such as living museums for the sensitization of future generations on past culture? According to some critics, by reducing cultures and people to static exhibits for the benefit of visitors, living museums may unintentionally support colonial power dynamics and undermine authenticated representation of culture. Oversimplification and essentializing of cultures run the risk of producing a superficial understanding. It is essential to make sure that living museums give accurate and nuanced depictions of the cultures they represent rather than tokenizing or commercializing them.

According to Ndlovu (2013) the concept of a living museum perpetuate a "colonial power matrix" and there is reinforcement of unequal relationships based on aspects such as race, as for example capital controlling white tourists come to Africa to patronized cultural villages. This is because living museums

are created and run by external institutions or groups, which can exacerbate power disparities between the communities they intend to represent and the dominant society, living museums are characterized by power imbalances. The ability of the involved communities to make decisions, interpret narratives, and exercise overall control may still be constrained by external players. Prioritizing community leadership, participation, and ownership in all facets of the living museum is crucial. Other Scholarship also opine (Clifford, 2013; Grydehoj, 2016), that the establishment of living museums has an effect on particular communities. However, the influx of tourists and visitors to living museums may have unforeseen effects on the communities in question. Increased tourism may result in social dynamics changes, cultural commodification, and disruption of customary traditions.

There is an argument of appropriation and exploitation. The concept of living museums run the risk of cultural appropriation when the cultural practices, artifacts, and knowledge of marginalized communities are commodified without their consent or benefit. There is a fine line between respectful representation and exploitation, and it is crucial to ensure that the communities have control over how their cultural heritage is presented and that the benefits are shared equitably. Living museums frequently concentrate on particular facets of a community's history, which can lead to selective narratives that either promote stereotypes or ignore significant historical and modern facts. Living museums must avoid the possibility of providing a romanticized or static picture by offering a thorough and impartial representation of the community's history, culture, and contemporary struggles.

According to (Clifford, 2013; Grydehoj, 2016), the establishment of living museums has an effect on particular communities. However, the influx of tourists and visitors to living museums may have unforeseen effects on the communities in question. Increased tourism may result in social dynamics changes, cultural commodification, and disruption of customary traditions.

The decolonial perspective has been promoted through the concept of living museums however scholarship has argued that the living museums concept could maintain the perpetual logic of coloniality on communities. This study however seeks to argue that the concept of living communities especially with regards to the economic power matrix, is not directed affected since for example at Kambako the commodification of ethnicity puts the tourists who bring money at balance with the locals who showcase their culture and achieve commercial returns. This researcher argues that there is an exchange of cultural commodity and the monetary aspect. To critique Ndlovu (2013,2018,2019) who opines that cultural villages perpetuate colonial relations, satisfying tourist's stereotypical western fantasies and Semali & Asino (2016) who contends that in living museums representations of the locals especially the Maasai people of Kenya show them under stereotypical orientations such as being half naked, this researcher argues that the authentic cultural settings of the pre-colonial era were characterized with such dress and it

was not primitive but the way of the life of the then era that is being depicted in living museums.

2.3 THE SAFEGUARDING AND DOCUMENTATION OF INDEGENOUS KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LIVING MUSEUMS

A crucial component of the decolonization process and the elimination of the stereotypes frequently perpetuated in colonial narratives and perspectives are the preservation and production of decolonized knowledge through living museums. Historically marginalized and colonized communities' voices, experiences, and contributions are prioritized in living museums' alternative learning, representational, and engagement spaces. Decolonization entails acknowledging and eliminating colonialism's continuing effects, which are evident in many facets of contemporary life, including museums. By challenging prevailing narratives, power structures, and representations that support colonial ideologies and biases, knowledge can be decolonized. At Kambako and in the Maasai clan living museums historical narratives are given authentication in the cultural memory of a cultural-linguistic people.

The safeguarding and production of decolonized knowledge is also facilitated deeply in the very concept of living museums, as they are vibrant, interactive places that frequently involve locals in the development and presentation of exhibits (Stefano, 2012). To share historical and cultural knowledge, these museums may use oral histories, storytelling, performances, workshops, and other forms of interaction. According to Blake (2018) museums prioritize the active participation and input of the communities they represent. Local communities often have direct input into the design, curation, and interpretation of exhibits. This collaborative approach helps ensure that the knowledge shared is accurate, respectful, and representative of the community's perspectives.

There is also the provision of a platform for sharing multiple perspectives and alternative narratives that challenge Eurocentric viewpoints and colonial biases as contended by Bakka (2017). They highlight the complexities and nuances of history, acknowledging the contributions and experiences of indigenous peoples, communities of color, and other marginalized groups. As in the case of the Shangaan community and its historical marginalization, the Kambako living museum is contributing to the revival of traditional practices, languages, and knowledge systems that were marginalized by colonial forces. Living museums are also essential for celebrating cultural heritage that may have been suppressed or misrepresented during colonial rule.

Visitors to Kambako critically engage with history and culture rather than merely passively consuming information as part of the production of decolonized knowledge. The complexities of colonial history and

its long-lasting effects are better understood through interactive exhibits, conversations, and workshops. Ethical concerns are crucial when creating decolonized knowledge through living museums. In order to prevent perpetuating harm or traumatizing communities, respect for cultural protocols, informed consent, and ongoing collaboration with communities are essential (Bakka, 2017). This is the case with the reproduction of knowledge at living museums.

According to the literature, living museums are crucial because they act as educational resources that help people understand the long-lasting effects of colonialism and encourage a more equitable and inclusive view of the past. They can be effective spaces for eradicating colonial prejudices and promoting solidarity and empathy. As many societies have been shaped by colonial histories, the idea of decolonized knowledge through living museums can be applied in a variety of global contexts. These ideas can be modified by various communities to suit their unique requirements and difficulties. Living museums support the preservation and creation of decolonized knowledge by placing a high priority on community collaboration, alternative narratives, and critical engagement. They present a chance to contest prevailing historical narratives, strengthen marginalized communities, and advance a more inclusive and equitable understanding of a people such as in the case of Kambako and the Shangaan people.

2.4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is guided through the theoretical propositions of the Africana theory. The theory is appropriate for the effective analysis, examination and thorough interrogation of the decolonization nature of Kambako and assesses how the living museum has taken form as an institution promoting an Afrocentric notion through decolonization of Shangaan culture. The researcher considered this theory as the theoretical knowledge of this study; however, there are other theories that share a focus on empowerment and affirmation of black history and culture but fall short of effectively engaging with the concept of Living museums and decoloniality. African-centered theory (and its variations as Africa-centered, Afrocentric, Afrocentric, Afrocentricity, Afrocentricity, and African-worldview) theory and methodology within the discipline of Africana studies is at a crossroads. These theoretical perspectives include Black Nationalism, Critical race theory, Pan-Africanism and the far stretched concept of Afrofuturism.

2.4.2 THE CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Bell (1973) argues that racism and discrimination are embedded in society and institutions. The concept examines how racism and other forms of discrimination are present in society and institutions. CRT is based on the idea that racism is not simply a matter of individual prejudice, but rather is embedded in the laws, policies, and practices of society. CRT scholars (Bell, 1973; Crenshaw, 1998) argue that white supremacy

has shaped society in a way that perpetuates systemic racism and inequality. They also highlight the need for change at both the individual and institutional level to address these issues. It argues on race neutrality and the effects of racism that is often invisible and can be difficult to measure, but that have a profound impact especially on black people's lives. The theory although is into black people and institutional capture by white supremacists, is more focused on the concept of systematic racism and de-marginalizing the intersection of race.

2.4.3 BLACK NATIONALISM

This is also known as Black separatism, is the idea that black people should form their own separate state or nation, free from white oppression and control, (Malcolm X, 1963; 64; 65). The main argument for Black Nationalism is that it offers a solution to racism and discrimination by creating a separate space where black people can control their own destiny and be free from white oppression. The theory is not instrumental in relation to this study, as it also focuses on the empowerment of black people and reclaiming their identity along racial lines. Pan-Africanism is also another concept related, but distinct, concept from Black Nationalism. While Black Nationalism focuses on self-determination for black people along racial lines, another theoretical perspective Pan-Africanism, is a concept that asserts and allows for a shared sense of identity and solidarity among people of African descent, regardless of their location or nationality (Du Bois, 1903; Nkrumah, 1963). It also aims to address the legacies of colonialism and slavery, and to build economic and political power for people of African descent. Pan-Africanism is however, too broad and vague, and that it does not take into account the diversity of experiences and histories of people of African descent and their culture and weakens it, on being considered with relation to this research.

2.4.4 AFROFUTURISM

Another theory that focuses on decoloniality of African culture and histories is the concept of **Afrofuturism**, it challenges the dominant narratives of colonialism and racism, and re-imagines a future in which African people and cultures are centered and celebrated. However, Afrofuturism is unrealistic and is an aesthetic, cultural, and literary movement that takes inspiration from the history and heritage of Africa and the African diaspora. It often uses elements of science fiction and fantasy to imagine and create alternate futures that reclaim and celebrate African culture and history. The criticism of Afrofuturism is that it is a form of escapism, rather than addressing the real-world issues facing African people and communities (Dery, 1993; Womack 2013). These are some of the theoretical knowledge frameworks that were considered for the study but fell short of effectively leveraging the study.

2.4.5 AFRICANA THEORY

The Africana theory or the Afrocentricity theory, is the most effective concept, put up for consideration in this research on Living Museums and decoloniality, it emphasizes the centrality of the African experience and perspective. Afrocentricity is a cultural and intellectual movement that emerged in the late 20th century,

primarily in response to the marginalization and misrepresentation of African history and cultures within mainstream Western narratives. It seeks to reposition Africa and its diaspora at the center of historical, cultural, and intellectual discourse, challenging Eurocentric perspectives and reclaiming agency and pride in African heritage. This theoretical perspective can be effectively navigated to understand the inter-textuality of living museums and decolonization, as its main focus is on the nature of living museums as institutions of decolonization.

It is often seen as a response to Eurocentric theories that have marginalized or ignored the African experience (Karenga, 1993). Among the main arguments of Afrocentricity, opined by Ani (1994) is that it is necessary to decolonize the study of Africa and its diaspora by re-centering the African experience and emphasizing African agency. Another key argument is that Afrocentricity is a tool for empowerment and liberation, particularly for people of African descent who have been oppressed by colonialism and racism.

Afrocentricity focuses on placing Africa and Africans at the center of history and culture. The recovery and reclamation of African knowledge systems, heritage, and writings is a key component of Afrocentricity. It challenges Eurocentric claims of intellectual superiority by demonstrating that African cultures have rich and complex systems of knowledge, including oral literature, philosophy, and science. Scholars (Asante, 1987; Rodney, 1986), assert there have been debates to recover and preserve African cultural heritage, including art, music, and traditional practices. Additionally, Afrocentricity has been instrumental in reclaiming and celebrating African knowledge systems and culture (Conyers, 1997; Yancy, 1998).

The key tenets of the Afrocentrism theory include an agency for the emergence of African people. Afrocentrism emphasizes the agency and contributions of African peoples throughout history and the reclaiming of cultural identity (Asante, 1991). It is vital to reconstruct and reaffirm cultural heritage through decolonization. The theory is also concerned with cultural reclamation. Afrocentrism promotes the reclamation and celebration of African cultural heritage. It emphasizes the importance of valuing and preserving African languages, traditions, art, spirituality, and knowledge systems.

The theory is appropriate for the effective analysis, examination and thorough interrogation of the decolonization nature of Kambako Living Museum.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology and research methods employed in this exploratory case study, which investigated Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, as a decolonization institution. The study adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing a case study approach and an interpretive epistemological stance. Field research and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data, which was subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The goal of data collection and analysis was to understand

the role of living museums in the decolonization process. Ethical considerations were also taken into account. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used in the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study employed a qualitative research approach, which facilitated flexibility in the research process. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and its tenets that leveraged systematic inquiry into social phenomena in their natural settings, the researcher utilized site visits or field research at Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi as one of the data collection methods. This allowed for observation and analysis of the museum and its exhibitions in a natural setting. The research approach was characterized by the use of grounded theory, and the study deployed Afrocentrism theory (Kearney, 2006). Ethnography and phenomenology also characterized this research, as the researcher employed ethnographic tools to collect data and navigated the phenomenology of decolonization and living museums (MacDonald, 2013). An analysis of the behavioral aspects of a group of people also characterized the qualitative research approach, and the researcher analyzed across the cultural fiber of the Shangaan people.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A case study approach was employed in the research. The researcher chose to conduct an exploratory case study of Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi, in order to grasp and interrogate the notion of living museums as decolonized institutions. An exploratory case study was appropriate for this study as it was deployed to gain an in-depth understanding of a complex issue, and to gain insight into a problem that had not been well-researched. In this case, the Kambako Living Museum was a unique and complex site, and there was very little existing research on living museums as decolonized institutions within Zimbabwean scholarship. According to Yin (2009), "case studies are often used when there is a desire to understand complex social phenomena. Case studies are particularly useful for studying a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in-depth understanding is the goal of the inquiry." This research navigated and explored the fabric structures of Kambako, its activities, objectives, and explored it in its entirety as a cultural institution. The case study approach offered several strengths for this research. First, it allowed for the exploration of a complex phenomenon in depth, taking into account the context in which it occurred. Second, it provided an opportunity to explore the phenomenon from multiple perspectives, including those of the participants themselves. Third, it led to rich and nuanced findings that may not have been possible with other approaches. On the other hand, a case study was limited in its ability to make generalizations about the phenomenon being studied.

3.4 SAMPLING APPROACH

The research used the purposive sampling method and selectively chose to interview people associated with Kambako and its resident family. The researcher's judgment determined the interviewees, and purposively, those attached to the facets of the study were subjected to interviews. Purposive sampling had been defined as the selection of participants based on the researcher's judgment that they would best provide the desired data for answering the research question(s) (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). The researcher chose purposive sampling for this study because it allowed for the selection of participants who were directly connected to the phenomenon being studied. In this case, interviewing people associated with the Kambako Living Museum and its resident family provided the researcher with rich and detailed information that would not have been possible with other sampling methods. Additionally, purposive sampling was an efficient way to obtain the information needed to answer the research questions. It allowed for a focus on key individuals who could provide valuable insights and perspectives, rather than wasting time and resources on individuals who were not directly connected to the research.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were employed as a data collection method, leveraging the advantages of in-depth insights, personal perspectives, and contextual understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Face-to-face oral interviews were conducted with key informants from the Kambako Living Museum personnel and members of the Kambako community, using a structured set of questions to guide the conversations. The interviews were recorded using a smartphone voice recorder application with the interviewees' consent, ensuring accurate data capture and allowing for later review (Fisher et al., 2013; Gaddis & Finley, 2014). Leveraging the strengths of interviews, such as flexibility, high response rates, and the ability to clarify and probe participants' responses (Patton, 2002), the study gathered rich, qualitative data that provided valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of the Kambako Living Museum personnel and community. This contributed to a richer understanding of the research topic, as scholars such as Spradley (1979) and Weiss (1994) have noted, highlighting the importance of interviews in exploring individuals' experiences, meanings, and practices.

3.5.2 FIELD RESEARCH/SITE VISIT

This research was greatly enhanced by field research conducted at Kambako Living Museum. The researcher spent several days at the museum, engaging in participant observation, interviews, and visual data collection to gather rich and nuanced data. During this time, the researcher interacted with Julius Matshuve,

the village owner, and occupants to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives. Photographs were taken to capture the physical environment, infrastructure, and cultural practices, and the researcher observed and participated in daily activities and cultural practices to gain a deeper understanding of the museum's dynamics and exhibitions. The site visit yielded a wealth of data, including field notes, visual data, and observational data, which provided a richer understanding of the Kambako Living Museum and its community.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher employed a thematic analysis to the collected data. The method of analysis was appropriate as a method that is flexible, accessible, and versatile, which made it suitable for a wide range of research studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was also used because it is a robust and comprehensive method that allows for in-depth analysis of qualitative data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Additionally, thematic analysis is also effective in exploring a variety of research questions and producing meaningful and useful findings (Smith & Firth, 2011). The data gathered was subjected to a thematic analysis. This collected data was analyzed using an inductive coding process. This involved reading through the data and identifying codes that represented recurring patterns or themes. The codes were then organized into themes, which were used to interpret the data and generate findings. The themes that emerged from the data were used to answer the research question and draw conclusions about the role of living museums as institutions of decolonization.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to confidentiality and anonymity where need be and foremost subjected interviewees and key informants to consent. The research also adhered to ethical academic principles, to provide truthful data and non-plagiarize, while acknowledging scholarship. The researcher also considered issues of informed consent, data privacy, and the potential risks and benefits of the research. The researcher also was transparent about the study's goals and how the data would be used, and participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter delves into the research design, unit of analysis, and data collection methods employed during the site visit at Kambako Living Museum, providing an in-depth examination of the methodological approaches used to gather data.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study on museums as decolonized institutions, a case study of Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi. The study examined if Kambako was an institution that embodies decolonization, through a multi-method approach, including semi-structured interviews with 5 key participants involved with Kambako Living Museum, ethnographic fieldwork, participant-observation, and archival research. The findings are presented thematically and analyze through visual and thematic analysis offer an in-depth and nuanced understanding of Kambako Living Museum.

4.1 OVERSIGHT OF KAMBAKO LIVING MUSEUM.

Kambako Living Museum is situated 5 kilometers outside the Malilangwe Reserve in Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, surrounded by the Shangaan community whose cultural heritage it showcases. Founded in 2011 by Julius Matshuve, a renowned cultural enthusiast and community leader, the museum aims to preserve, promote, and share the Shangaan culture. The museum operates under a constitution that outlines its mission,

objectives, and management structure. A leadership group, including Julius Matshuve and community leaders, makes decisions on museum operations, ensuring the preservation and sharing of Shangaan culture. The Malilangwe Trust, a Zimbabwean non-profit organization, supports the museum through guidance and resources. The Trust focuses on environmental conservation and community development in the Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve and surrounding villages. The museum has a small team for day-to-day management and a dedicated office managed by Julius Matshuve, who oversees village administration and educational programs. Currently, the museum does not have a collections management policy, and the community showcases their cultural artifacts and heritage items through everyday activities and instruments on display.

4.2.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.2. GRASSROOTS REPRESENTATION OF THE SHANGAAN CULTURAL HERITAGE.

The findings revealed that Kambako Living Museum showcases Shangaan cultural heritage with grassroots authenticity. Visitors experience the vibrant Shangaan dances, which are an integral part of the community's celebrations and storytelling. At the museum, traditional ways of hunting, food making, and sourcing, are showcased. Stories are told through these cultural displays. The museum curator and founder Julius Matshuve provides cultural tours to visitors, asserting the Shangaan community's harmonious relationship with the natural environment. Through a series of exhibits and demonstrations, visitors are able to observe and engage with traditional practices and customs, including food preparation, pottery, and weaving. The guided cultural tour provides a unique opportunity for visitors to gain insight into the daily lives and cultural traditions of the Shangaan community, and to appreciate the historical and contemporary significance of their cultural heritage, presenting their cultural heritage in this way, the Shangaan people assert their cultural agency and challenge dominant narratives, promoting a more nuanced understanding of cultural diversity and the importance of community-led cultural preservation.

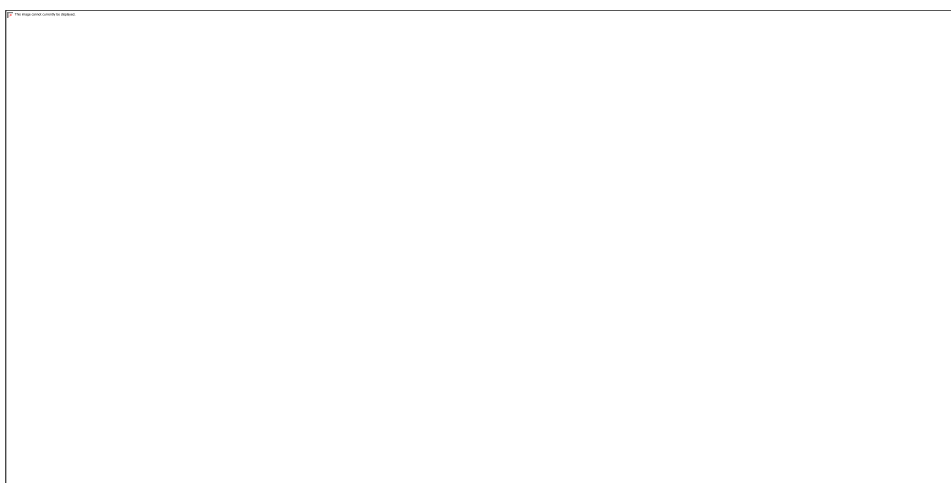


Fig 4.2.1

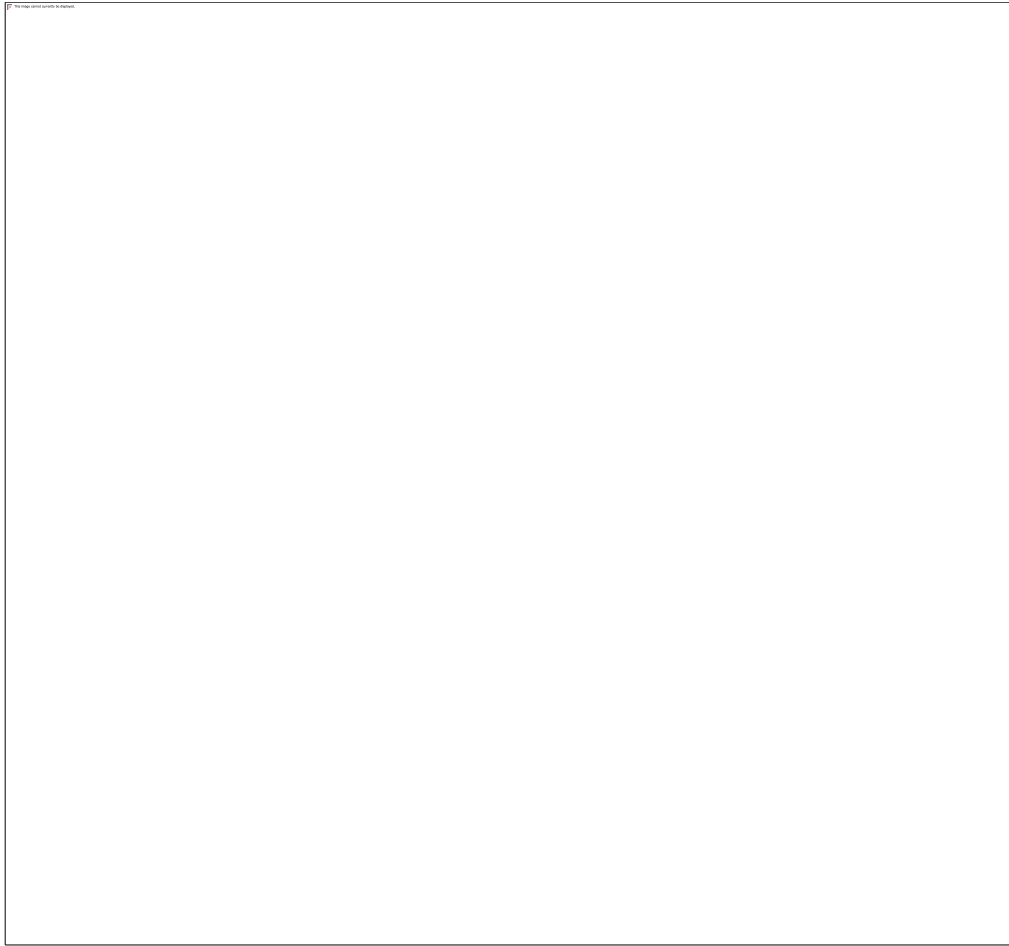


Figure 1 Methods of food-making and sourcing

Fig 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 show how at Kambako Living Museum traditional methods of food-making and sourcing are showcased to visitors.

Visitors learn about fire making skills, pottery techniques, and traditional methods of extracting salt from the soil, all of which are essential skills passed down through generations of Shangaan people. By showcasing these authentic cultural practices, Kambako Living Museum prioritizes community-led representation and preservation of Shangaan cultural heritage, challenging dominant narratives and promoting a nuanced understanding of African cultural diversity.

Kambako Living Museum's approach to showcasing Shangaan cultural heritage reveals a commitment to decolonization, community empowerment, and cultural revitalization. By prioritizing grassroots authenticity and community-led representation, the institution values the preservation of traditional skills and practices, and promotes a nuanced understanding of African cultural diversity. This approach challenges dominant narratives and Eurocentric approaches to cultural preservation, and empowers the Shangaan community to take ownership of their cultural heritage. Additionally, the museum provides a platform for intergenerational knowledge transfer and skill sharing, fostering a sense of community and cultural pride among the Shangaan people. Overall, Kambako Living Museum serves as an exemplary model for institutions seeking to prioritize marginalized communities' cultural heritage.

4.3. COMMUNITY OR MUSEUM? UNPACKING THE IDENTITY OF KAMBAKO

The study found that Kambako Living Museum blurs the boundaries between cultural preservation, tourism, and community ownership, raising questions about its identity as a "community" versus a "living museum." On one hand, Kambako is a living community with its own cultural practices and traditions. On the other hand, it is also a museum that showcases Shangaan cultural heritage to *visitors*. This tension is evident in the words of Julius Matshuve, who stated that;

Kambako is our home, our community. We do not see it as just a museum; it's a living, breathing space where our culture comes alive. (Interview with Julius Matshuve, 20 April 2024).

The researcher observed that visitors are encouraged to participate in cultural activities and engage with community members, further blurring the lines between museum and community.

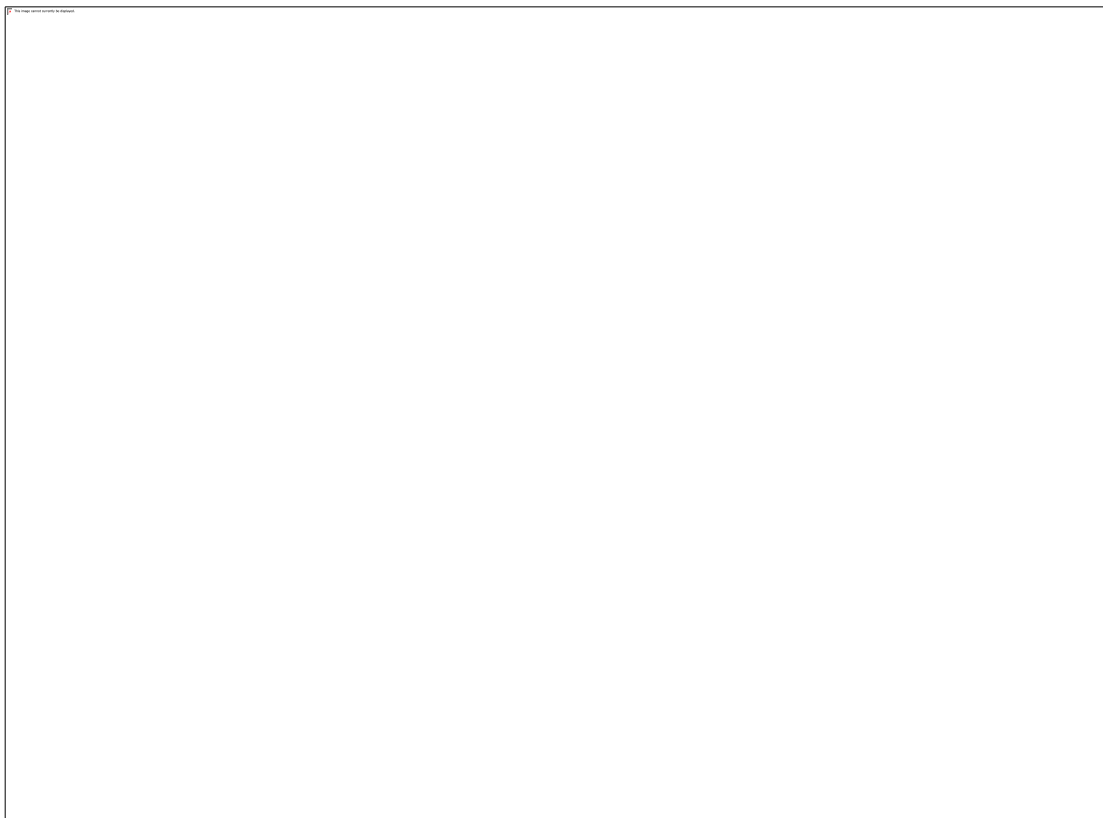


Figure 2 Engagement of visitors with the community.

Fig 4.3.1. Kambako Living Museum

Fig 4.3.1 shows how at Kambako Living Museum, visitors engage with community members, as experienced by the researcher.

During the permission-granting process to conduct research at Kambako, the Malilangwe Trust personnel consistently referred to Kambako as a "community" rather than a "living museum." This subtle yet significant distinction reveals a nuanced understanding of Kambako's identity and highlights the

complexities of cultural preservation in a decolonized institution. By acknowledging Kambako as a community, the Trust personnel emphasized the living, breathing nature of the space, where cultural heritage is not merely displayed but actively practiced and passed down through generations. This perspective challenges the traditional notion of a museum as a static, Eurocentric institution, and instead, positions Kambako as a vibrant, community-led space that embodies the principles of decolonization. As a researcher, this observation underscores the importance of centering community voices and perspectives in the study of Kambako, and recognizing the agency and ownership of the Shangaan people in the preservation and representation of their cultural heritage. The researcher observed that most people involved in the re-enactment of Shangaan culture at Kambako Living Museum are from the Shangaan community on the periphery of Malilangwe Reserve Park. This was also affirmed by 4 of the interviewed participants, who are not only from the local community but also possess extensive knowledge of Shangaan intangible traditions and heritage, thus their services are needed at museum site. Notably, some of these community members are women who showcased their expertise in Shangaan pottery, weaving, and dances, providing visitors with an authentic and immersive cultural experience. Two interviewed women, a potter and a dancer, stated,

"The museum has given us a platform to showcase our skills and knowledge, which were at risk of being forgotten. We're proud to share our heritage with visitors and inspire the younger generation to embrace our culture." - (Interview with Putani Macheke, Shangaan potter and weaver, 20 April, 2024).

"I'm grateful to be part of this museum, where I can teach visitors about our traditional dances and songs. It's empowering to see our culture valued and respected, and I'm proud to be a part of preserving our heritage for future generations." - (Interview with Nkhumeleni Chauke, Shangaan dancer and singer, 20 April, 2024).

This interview excerpts further cements that the museum is led by community members, including women like Putani and Nkhumeleni. These community members share their skills and knowledge with visitors, preserving their cultural heritage, they are provided with a platform for the community to celebrate their traditions, and thus community involvement is at the heart of Kambako's mission. Kambako Living Museum embodies the principles of decolonization, community ownership, and cultural revitalization.

Kambako Living Museum is not only a cultural exhibition space but also the home of Julius Matshuve and his family, who reside on the premises. This unique aspect blurs the boundaries between cultural preservation and daily life, as much of the exhibition is comprised of the family's daily Shangaan cultural experiences. The museum's exhibits are, in fact, an extension of the family's everyday practices, traditions, and rituals, making the cultural experience offered to visitors even more authentic and immersive. By integrating their daily lives into the museum's exhibits, Julius and his family demonstrate a commitment to preserving and sharing their cultural heritage, further solidifying Kambako's status as a decolonized institution that prioritizes community ownership and agency.

4.3.1 KAMBAKO AS A SITE OF RESISTANCE, DECOLONIZATION AND RETRIEVAL OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The research findings reveal that Kambako Living Museum challenges traditional Eurocentric museum exhibitions by presenting authentic African narratives and cultural heritage from an Afrocentric perspective. The museum's approach to cultural preservation and representation can be seen as a form of resistance against the dominant Western cultural narrative, which has historically marginalized and excluded African voices.

Notably, the site is run by an African and Shangaan individual, Julius Matshuve with the Malilangwe Trust playing a supportive role as a key stakeholder. This inversion of power dynamics allows for an authentic African cultural experience curated and exhibited by the Shangaan people themselves. Through taking ownership of their cultural heritage, the Shangaan community at Kambako subverts the traditional colonial model of cultural preservation, where African cultures were often appropriated and misrepresented. Instead, Kambako presents a decolonized space where Shangaan cultural heritage is celebrated and shared on the community's own terms, offering a unique opportunity for visitors to engage with Afrocentric narratives and perspectives.

This provides a platform for the Shangaan community to reclaim and reassert their cultural identities.

As Julius Matshuve, the curator and founder of the museum, noted,

"We wanted to create a space where our stories are told from our perspective, without the filter of Western interpretation. We are not just showcasing artifacts; we are sharing our lives, our traditions, and our history."(Interview with Julius Matshuve, 20 April, 2024)

This commitment to Afrocentricity is evident in the museum's layout and exhibits, which are designed to resemble a traditional Shangaan village, creating an immersive experience for visitors. The cultural activities and narratives at Kambako are coordinated by the local Shangaan community and the family that operates the living museum.

Kambako Living Museum serves as a site of cultural retrieval, where the Shangaan community can reclaim and revive their linguistic-cultural heritage, which has been historically marginalized and underrepresented. Through this cultural institution, the Shangaan people are able to reassert their cultural position and authority, challenging the dominant narratives that have erased or diminished their cultural identity. Through reviving and showcasing their traditional practices, language, and customs, Kambako provides a platform for the Shangaan community to reassert their cultural autonomy and pride, and to reclaim their rightful place within the diverse cultural landscape of Zimbabwe. In this sense, Kambako embodies a decolonizing approach to cultural preservation, one that prioritizes community-led cultural revival and challenges the historical marginalization of indigenous cultures.

4.4 DISCUSSION

This research's findings reveal an alignment to the literature that guides the study. Kambako Living Museum's approach to cultural heritage preservation commitment to decolonization and community-led preservation resonates deeply with the scholarly contributions of Kassim (2017), who astutely observes that the legacies of European colonialism are immeasurably deep and far-reaching. Kambako's efforts to dismantle the dominant Eurocentric narratives of African culture and share control over interpretation and narration with the Shangaan community aligns with Kassim's call for diverse and evolving forms of decolonial work. The museum's emphasis on grassroots authenticity and community involvement in its operations and identity speaks to the importance of inclusive and diverse representation of cultural heritage. This finding is particularly significant in the context of museums, which have historically been victims of colonialism and cultural appropriation. Through centering the voices and experiences of the Shangaan community, Kambako Living Museum initiates a counter-narrative to dominant cultural discourses.

A living museum, as conceptualized by Adotevi (1992), is a community-driven institution that prioritizes the needs and perspectives of local inhabitants, free from external standardization. This approach is echoed in Soares' (2024) vision of an anticolonial museum that challenges its own centrality and colonality, becoming an "antibody" against colonialism and neocolonialism, this speaks to Kambako Living Museum's efforts to decolonize cultural heritage. While its approach may not completely escape the colonial legacy of museums, it demonstrates a commitment to community-led preservation and grassroots authenticity, which aligns with Soares' call for museums to critically address colonial heritage.

Communities are taking ownership of their history and creating their own museums, inventing new museologies based on community action and social experimentation. This challenges the traditional notion of museums as repositories of dominant culture, instead becoming open spaces for disputes and self-affirmation (Karp, 1992). This study's findings relate to this debate, Kambako's efforts aim to reclaim and revision the dominant cultural discourse, rather than seeking inclusion within existing regimes. The living museum has challenged the exclusionary and marginalizing regimes that have historically silenced Indigenous voices. The argument that communities are no longer a property of museums or museologists also resonates with Kambako's approach, where the Shangaan community takes ownership of their cultural heritage and narrative.

A question is posed by Soares (2023), "how can these museums fight the very colonality that historically and philosophically constitutes them?" this is a crucial question and Kambako's approach offers a potential response. Through its prioritizing of community involvement and grassroots authenticity, Kambako Living Museum begins to challenge the dominant cultural discourses and colonial legacies that have shaped museums.

The goal of community museums like Kambako Living Museum is to retell their own history and experiences according to their subjective understanding of time, which is shaped by their collective endurance and resilience. This subjective experience of duration needs to be narrated in the first person,

allowing the community to reclaim and retell their own story. As Prinz (2024) notes, what is known is not just a collection of facts, but a complex web of experiences, memories, and perspectives that are deeply personal and collective. By prioritizing first-person narration, community museums like Kambako Living Museum can challenge dominant narratives and offer a more authentic and inclusive representation of cultural heritage.

The establishment of independent cultural villages and living museums has provided a significant platform for self-representation and empowerment for marginalized cultures that were previously colonized or subjected to colonialism (Ndlovu, 2013). These initiatives challenge colonial narratives and allow communities to reclaim and reinterpret their own cultural history (Jarret, 2020). Moreover, living museums can serve as centers for racial healing and peace, promoting understanding and reconciliation between indigenous peoples.

This aligns with the findings of this study, which highlight the impact of Kambako Living Museum in promoting cultural heritage preservation, community empowerment, and reconciliation. The living museum provides a platform for the Shangaan community to reclaim their cultural identity and agency. George Okello Abungu's thesis (2019) emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between museums and the people they represent. He argues that museums are shaped by the people they serve, and in turn, museums have a profound impact on the people's cultural identity and narrative. In the context of Kambako Living Museum, this means that the Shangaan community, through their active involvement and ownership, are reclaiming their cultural heritage and taking control of their cultural destiny. This decolonizing move allows them to leave their own cultural imprints and narratives, rather than being defined by external forces. They are empowering themselves to shape their own cultural identity and story, free from colonial and dominant cultural influences.

Scholarship has also raised important questions about the decolonization of museums, including whether living museums can avoid reproducing the very colonial power dynamics they seek to challenge, (Gaze, 1990; Semali & Asino, 2013; Bonzaaier, 2018; Ndlovu, 2019). Critics like Akuupa (2009) argue that living museums risk freezing African cultures in a timeless past, prioritizing financial interests over authentic representation. At Kambako Living Museum, grassroots authenticity is prioritized; however the motive of financial interests is problematic to discern, as the Living Museum exists in the periphery of high tourist zone, Malilangwe Reserve. However, others argue that living museums can play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, particularly for future generations. This asserted by Soares (2023) requires careful curation and community involvement to prevent tokenization and commercialization; Kambako Living Museum has made efforts towards this.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of the study on museums as decolonized institutions, a case study of Kambako Living Museum. The unveiled data was explored and examined against the scholarly arguments

and literature that this study builds upon. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the research study. The chapter presents the conclusions drawn from this study on Living Museums as decolonized institutions, a case of Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi. The chapter also provides recommendations and insights for future research.

5.2 SUMMARY

This study examined the concept of Living Museums as decolonized institutions, utilizing Kambako Living Museum in Chiredzi as a case study. The research investigated how Living Museums could serve as sites of cultural retrieval, challenging dominant narratives and promoting community-led cultural preservation. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews and ethnographic field research to collect data. The findings indicated that Kambako Living Museum embodied decolonization principles, prioritizing community-led approaches, indigenous knowledge systems, and inclusive representation. The museum showcased Shangaan cultural heritage with grassroots authenticity, challenging dominant narratives and Eurocentric approaches to cultural preservation. This research contributed to the scholarship on decolonization, cultural preservation, and community-led initiatives, highlighting the significance of Living Museums as sites of cultural retrieval and revitalization. The study demonstrated how Living Museums could empower marginalized communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage, promoting intergenerational knowledge transfer and skill sharing.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study's findings contribute significantly to the existing scholarship on decolonization, cultural preservation, and community-led initiatives. The results align with the arguments of scholars such as Clifford (2013), who emphasizes the importance of community-led approaches in cultural preservation. The study's findings also support the ideas of Bakka (2017), who highlights the need for inclusive and participatory governance structures in cultural institutions. The study's conclusions also resonate with the work of Grydehoj (2016), who argues that Living Museums can serve as sites of cultural retrieval and revitalization. The findings of this study demonstrate how Kambako Living Museum, as a decolonized institution, challenges dominant narratives and promotes cultural diversity, echoing the sentiments of Blake (2018) and Prott (2016). The study's emphasis on community-led approaches and inclusive representation also aligns with the scholarship of Kreps (2003) and Cuno (2020), who stress the importance of community involvement and participation in cultural preservation initiatives.

This study's findings support the Africana Theory, which emphasizes the centrality of the African experience and perspective. The results indicate that Living Museums, like Kambako, embody decolonization principles, prioritizing community-led initiatives and inclusive representation. This supports the theory's argument that community-led approaches are essential for cultural preservation and revitalization. The findings also align with the Afrocentricity movement's emphasis on repositioning Africa and its diaspora at the center of historical, cultural, and intellectual discourse. The results highlight the importance of decolonizing cultural institutions and reclaiming African agency and pride in cultural heritage. The study's findings suggest that Living Museums are effective sites of cultural retrieval and revitalization, challenging dominant narratives and promoting cultural diversity. This is likely due to their community-led approach, which empowers marginalized communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage.

The results may have turned out this way because Living Museums like Kambako are embedded in the community they serve, allowing for a more authentic and inclusive representation of cultural heritage. Additionally, the community-led approach ensures that the museum is responsive to the needs and concerns of the community, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. The emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems and skills also ensures that cultural preservation is rooted in traditional practices and customs. The study's findings support the importance of indigenous knowledge, skills, and practices in the making and operations of Living Museums, highlighting the need for cultural institutions to prioritize community-led approaches and inclusive representation. The results suggest that Living Museums offer a decolonized approach to cultural preservation, challenging dominant narratives and promoting cultural diversity. The study's conclusions support the need for cultural institutions to adopt decolonized approaches, prioritizing inclusive representation and community empowerment.

During the research, an examination of literature identified several challenges that have inhibited the effectiveness of Living Museums that included:

- Dominant narratives and Eurocentric approaches marginalizing African heritage
- Limited community involvement and representation
- Lack of diverse perspectives and inclusive representation
- Limited access to cultural knowledge and skills
- Funding constraints
- Resistance to decolonization and community-led approaches
- Limited awareness of indigenous knowledge systems
- Power imbalances and structural barriers

However, this study's findings led to the conclusion that Kambako offers a decolonized approach to cultural preservation, challenging dominant narratives and promoting cultural diversity. The research achieves its objectives by comparing and contrasting traditional museums with Living Museums, assessing the operations of Living Museums, and examining the role of indigenous knowledge, skills, and practices in the making and operations of Kambako Living Museums. The study reveals that Living Museums prioritize community-led initiatives, inclusive representation, and indigenous knowledge systems, making them effective sites of cultural retrieval and revitalization. Moreover, the research highlights the importance of decolonizing cultural institutions, reclaiming African agency and pride in cultural heritage, and promoting community empowerment through cultural preservation initiatives.

This study's findings however, are subject to critique, as there are somewhat elements of cultural commodification at Kambako Living Museum. Through showcasing Shangaan culture exclusively to tourists who visit Malilangwe Reserve, the museum may be perpetuating a form of cultural exploitation. The fact that Malilangwe is not easily accessible to the general public, and that Kambako is located within this exclusive reserve, raises concerns about the museum's role in catering to the gaze of affluent tourists. This setup reinforces the notion that Shangaan culture is a product to be consumed by those who have the means to access it, rather than a living heritage that belongs to the community itself. The museum's reliance on tourist revenue can be argued to be an opening that could lead to the commercialization of cultural practices, potentially watering down their significance and cultural value. In this regard, the museum's presentation of Shangaan culture could be sanitized or watered down to appeal to tourist expectations, rather than showcasing the complexity and diversity of the culture. Furthermore, this dynamic can be argued to perpetuate the power imbalance between the tourists (predominantly wealthy Westerners and Asians, as observed by the researcher) and the Shangaan community, reinforcing the notion that cultural exchange is a one-way transaction. The community's cultural heritage is being showcased for the benefit of outsiders, without necessarily empowering the community itself. In this regard it might be argued that there is a problematic ground on Kambako Living Museum's inclusivity and community-centric model.

Overall, the study demonstrated the potential of Living Museums to challenge dominant narratives and promote cultural diversity, making them a vital component of decolonization efforts in cultural preservation.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

For Kambako

- Increase community involvement in decision-making processes, revenue generation, and cultural presentation.
- Improve accessibility and explore ways to make the museum more accessible to the general public, not just affluent tourists.
- Ensure that cultural practices and heritage are presented in a authentic and nuanced manner, avoiding homogenization and sanitization.
- Prioritize cultural preservation over commercial gain, ensuring that the museum serves as a platform for community empowerment and cultural education.

For Malilangwe:

- Improve accessibility and open up Kambako to a broader audience, including local communities and students, to promote cultural and environmental education.
- Foster stronger relationships with neighbouring Shangaan communities, involving them in decision-making and benefit-sharing processes.
- Encourage responsible and sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that tourism revenue benefits both the reserve and the local Shangaan community

For NMMZ:

- The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) should establish living museums and strive to showcase cultural heritage with grassroots authenticity, challenging dominant narratives and promoting inclusive representation.

For Cultural Institutions and Initiatives:

- Cultural preservation initiatives should prioritize intergenerational knowledge transfer and skill sharing, ensuring the continuation of traditional practices and customs.
- Cultural institutions should adopt decolonized approaches, prioritizing inclusive representation and community empowerment, and valuing and preserving African languages, traditions, art, spirituality, and knowledge systems.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Cultural policies should prioritize community-led approaches and indigenous knowledge systems in cultural preservation.
- Cultural institutions should adopt decolonized approaches, prioritizing inclusive representation and community empowerment.
- Community-led initiatives should be supported and funded to ensure the continuation of traditional practices and customs, and to reclaim and celebrate African cultural heritage.

5.6 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research might be guided by this study and explore the impact of Living Museums on community empowerment and cultural revitalization, examining the ways in which these institutions can foster a sense of ownership and pride among community members. Additionally, research could investigate the role of technology in promoting cultural preservation and community engagement in Living Museums, considering how digital platforms and tools can enhance the visitor experience and facilitate participation. Comparing the operations and impact of Living Museums in different cultural contexts could also provide valuable insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of this model. Furthermore, research could investigate the potential of Living Museums to challenge dominant narratives and promote cultural diversity in other cultural contexts, exploring how these institutions can serve as sites of resistance and empowerment. Finally, exploring the role of Living Museums in promoting cultural exchange and understanding between different communities could reveal new opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning. Through considering these avenues of inquiry, future research can continue to illuminate the possibilities and challenges of Living Museums as sites of cultural preservation and engagement of communities with their heritage.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR KAMBAKO LIVING MUSEUM CURATOR

1. Could you tell me about the history of the museum and how it came to be? (Probe for further information)
2. What is the mission of the museum, and how does it aim to achieve that mission?
3. What role does the museum play in preserving and promoting the local Shangaan culture?
4. How does the museum work to decolonize its collections and exhibits?
5. How does the museum engage with this local community?
6. How does the museum approach the representation of the Shangaan culture and its groups?
7. What steps has Kambako taken to ensure that its collections and exhibits are culturally sensitive and inclusive?
8. What is the museum doing to address historical biases and inaccuracies in its exhibits?
9. What activities are done at Kambako that promote African storytelling and narratives?
10. What challenges does the museum face in achieving its goals as an authentic culturally institution and how the curator see the future (will this change) or will some challenges remain.

