



Oral Traditions as Historical Sources in Southern African Communities: A Theoretical Framework

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Abstract

{ "background": "Oral traditions have long been recognised as significant sources of historical information in Southern African communities, offering insights into cultural practices and social structures that are often absent from written records. However, their role as reliable historical sources remains underexplored, particularly when comparing them to other types of evidence such as archaeological findings or formal documentation.", "purposeandobjectives": "This theoretical framework article aims to elucidate the potential and limitations of oral traditions in Southern African communities by examining how they can be used as historical sources. We will explore their reliability, accuracy, and utility for understanding precolonial and colonial history within these societies.", "methodology": "Theoretical analysis will be employed, drawing on existing literature on oral traditions and historiography to develop a theoretical framework that assesses the validity of oral accounts in Southern African contexts. This includes examining how oral traditions are transmitted, what factors influence their accuracy, and how they can complement or contradict other historical evidence.", "keyinsights": "Oral traditions play a crucial role in preserving cultural narratives but are subject to biases and errors over time. For instance, the transmission of oral accounts often involves multiple speakers who may alter content slightly with each retelling, leading to variations that must be considered when interpreting these sources.", "conclusion": "This theoretical framework lays the groundwork for future research into the use of oral traditions as historical sources in Southern African communities. It identifies key areas where further investigation is needed and highlights the importance of methodological rigor in evaluating these sources.", "recommendations": "Researchers should adopt a nuanced approach when using oral traditions, acknowledging both their strengths and limitations. Future studies should employ triangulation methods to validate findings from oral accounts with other historical evidence whenever possible.", "keywords": "Oral Traditions, Historical Sources, Southern Africa, Cultural Narratives", "contribution_statement": "This theoretical framework provides a novel methodological approach for assessing the reliability of oral traditions as historical sources in Southern African communities, offering insights that can inform both academic research and community preservation efforts." }

Keywords: *Southern Africa, Oral Traditions, Ethnography, Cultural Heritage, Historiography, Narratology, Anthropology*

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