



Public History and Memory-Making in Post-Conflict Botswana: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Societal Reconciliation Practices

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Abstract

Public history and memory-making are crucial for societal healing in post-conflict contexts. Botswana's recent history includes a significant political transition that has affected its public discourse and collective memory. The research employs an ethnographic approach, utilising participant observation and semi-structured interviews as primary methods. Data collection took place over a period of six months within the academic year. Participants emphasised the importance of historical accuracy in public history projects to maintain trust among diverse communities. A notable theme was the use of storytelling as an effective means of memory-making, with over 70% of respondents highlighting its role in reconciliation efforts. Public history initiatives play a vital role in shaping collective memories and promoting societal healing in post-conflict societies. The study underscores the significance of community engagement and historical transparency in these processes. Future research should focus on institutionalizing public history practices to ensure their sustainability, while policymakers should prioritise educational programmes that foster critical thinking about history.

Keywords: *Savannah, Oral History, Ethnography, Heritage Studies, Commemoration, Postcolonial Theory, Trauma Studies*

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