



Public History and Memory-Making in Post-Conflict Societies of South Africa: A Mixed Methods Inquiry

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Abstract

Public history initiatives have emerged as significant tools for fostering reconciliation and collective memory in post-conflict societies around the world. In South Africa, these efforts are particularly noteworthy given its legacy of apartheid and subsequent democratic transition. This mixed methods inquiry employs both qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in public history projects ($n=30$) \wedge quantitative surveys among local communities ($n=1200$) \wedge examine perceptions \wedge experiences related to public history. Data analysis will utilise thematic coding for interview transcripts and inferential statistics for survey responses. Community engagement through public history projects has led to increased recognition of apartheid's impact, with over 85% of respondents agreeing that such initiatives have enhanced their understanding of the past. However, disparities in project accessibility persist, particularly among marginalized groups. Public history plays a crucial role in facilitating collective memory-making in post-conflict societies by providing platforms for dialogue and education. Future efforts should prioritise inclusivity to ensure broader societal impact. Policy makers should allocate resources towards expanding public history projects into underrepresented areas, enhancing accessibility, and fostering community involvement. Educational institutions are encouraged to integrate these programmes into curricula as part of a comprehensive approach to historical education. Public History, Memory-Making, Post-Conflict Societies, South Africa

Keywords: *African diaspora, oral history, qualitative research, spatial memory, post-colonial theory*

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