Recognizing Traces of Colonialism and Coloniality in a South African Mining Region: Surfacing the Past in Regional, Ethnographic and Well-Being Research[1]

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From the late twentieth century to the present, South African history writing has remained an exposition of colonial history. The first two decades of the twenty-first century will be remembered for extensive debates on coloniality and colonialism and the realities of declining social and economic conditions in the country as a whole.[2] Most regions in South Africa bear testimony to the histories, often loud and insistent, of land occupation, struggles for cultural domination and occasional racial conflict.[3]

The seemingly unsuccessful efforts of the democratic Republic of South Africa since 1994 to create sustainable environments in existing community spaces must be recognized, and the colonial traces in sustainable development debates must be addressed more proactively. Present-day shortcomings, for example poor service delivery and other local and regional shortcomings such as the negligence of road maintenances, cannot be allowed to degenerate even further. Such problems may be simplistically dismissed as examples of governmental incompetence, but this categorization is too broad.[4] Typical instances highlighting the veracity of this point can be found in the Merafong City Local Municipality (with Carletonville as its seat) and in the Bekkersdal Township near Westonaria (part of Rand West City Municipality since 2016). Both share a rich history of goldmining in the Far West Rand and

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comprise part of a mining region detrimentally affected by decades of reckless environmental decision-making in colonial South Africa.[5] Equally, the Far West Rand serves as an example of a region where traces of colonial history are clearly evident and where colonial mindsets have developed as an inevitable result. Expressed in Braudelian terms: coloniality and the mining industry are predominant long-term structures in the Far West Rand.[6]

The outcome of the Far West Rand's history is linked partially to broader national, continental and transcontinental trends in the historiography of colonialism.[7] This article begins by explaining the concepts of colonialism and coloniality and then provides an introduction to the historiography of colonialism as it applies to this study. The study employs different research methods, executed in different historical time frames. These approaches uncover new sources and, when combined with fieldwork, help identify colonialism and coloniality in the space of the present study. Owing to space constraints, only one of the three research approaches, the ethnography-based elicitation approach, is discussed in more detail.

Coloniality, colonialism and South Africa

Research on the everyday life experiences of rural and urban communities in specific local or broader regions in South Africa has been a focus for many researchers for some time.[8] The extent to which these experiences can be recognized as hidden traces or 'carriers' of coloniality and colonialism is studied here by utilizing three research approaches or methods, though only the ethnography-based elicitation approach is explicitly discussed here.

From a conceptual standpoint, coloniality is viewed as a mentality that can be understood as a coloniality of power, of knowledge and of being.[9] Where and how such a (not so obvious) colonial mentality was nurtured in the past remains intangible, yet it is a historically rooted phenomenon.[10] Colonialism, in turn, is politically and historically a more familiar concept, associated with a policy or political practice of domination by one group or society over another. The domination can be complete or partial. The people or country choosing to occupy the space of the 'other' does so through various settlement practices and economic forms of domination. Economic domination often goes hand in hand with financial exploitation as well as class-based and racial oppression.[11]

The impact of colonialism on South Africa requires much more regional and local focus on the part of academics. Some work has been done by historians like Timothy Keegan, who has researched societies in colonial Cape Town, and Nigel Penn, who has studied the San people

in the Cape and its environs. Others, like Gerald Groenewald, and Robert Schell, have studied societal change in early Cape communities. In each case, scholars have studied the day-to-day experiences of inhabitants in an effort to understand colonial domination per se.[12] Recent regional border history, including works by Robert Ross on the Kat River settlement (Khoekhoen) in the nineteenth century and Clifton Crais on the Xhosa, as well as Martin Legassick's study *Hidden Histories of Gordonia* on Northern Cape land possession, in which the fate of the Basters and other indigenous groups in the region is interrogated.[13]

There is now a deepening focus on the history and long-term impact of past colonial systems on people living at that time, and comparative studies are being undertaken on the circumstances of those currently living in the same South African regions. This research will shed more light on the continuous nature of regional colonial dominance and existing race and land issues. Had decisions made in colonial times and the related activities been accurately recorded, such information might now guide current government debates on, for example, section 25 of the 1996 Constitution with regard to landownership.[14]

Three different approaches to studying colonial moments in the Far West Rand's past are discussed here. All have certain elements that help provide an understanding of present-day circumstances and people's living environments. The outcomes of this research complement Ross's findings in his micro-local history study of the Kat River Settlement, where he suggests that historians should be 'reflexive and open' and 'self-conscious about the rhetorical, generally narrative strategies they choose in the construction of their arguments'.[15] Following a similar narrative strategy, this article first introduces readers to the three primary research approaches to studying colonialism and coloniality in the Far West Rand region: (i) an approach structured around regional history, (ii) an approach that is best described as integrative multidisciplinary well-being research, and (iii) an ethnographic approach. Secondly, the article gives prominence to the ethnographic outcomes of the study, reporting on the regional consciousness of the people who live in the Far West Rand and call it home. Here, the colonial heritage of the region is striking; living conditions are poor, but complaints about the impact of colonialism tend to be less frequent in demonstrations about inadequate service delivery, among other issues. Direct views about the 'fate' of colonialism in demonstrations are rarely heard but seemingly mindfully noted.[16]

Applying the three research approaches: Structured regional research

A British research model for local history, developed by Victor Skipp in 1983, has been widely used to record human settlement patterns and the

history of gold-mining in the Far West Rand from 1986 to 1994.[17] It is often described as a 'structured' method.[18] Skipp's framework emphasizes such past developments as land settlement, economic growth, the establishment of local authorities, infrastructural transformations, and spaces occupied by educational and religious denominations, among others, interrogating their respective influences on a specific community. In addition, researchers can use it to assess the local government's (political) paradigm in a given period, meaning that broader legacy trends, such as colonialism, which the Far West Rand was exposed to for more than a century on all levels of society, barely feature as an influential factor. In terms of applying Skipp's model to record and interpret settlement history in the early twentieth century, it appears that those attracted to the area after South Africa became a self-governing dominion of the British Empire in 1910 demonstrated scant awareness of its colonial legacy, mindsets that forestalled any awareness of the deeper implications of colonial practices and histories.[19]

One shortcoming of Skipp's approach, though, is its rather static structuredness. It assumes that the research is being conducted in an environment that is monocultural, which immediately blurs the results. Few, if any, local or regional areas are monocultural, and thus the influence of national or broader ideologies or processes tends to remain disguised. The dominant spirit and paradigm of the time, in which all past events play out as lived experiences, is not explicitly or inclusively accounted for in this particular type of research framework. Yet Skipp's approach to constructing micro-histories on both a small and larger scale remains a valuable way of framing research and recording history. Some research done on the Far West Rand in accordance with Skipp's approach will be shared (especially the features of colonialism) later on in the discussion.

Integrative multidisciplinary well-being research

Since the early days of regional historical research on a global scale, researchers (also on Africa at large)[20] have acknowledged the relatedness of regional histories to research in multidisciplinary contexts. In 2013 researchers at the North-West University in South Africa (launched an integrative multidisciplinary (IMD) research project[21] with Elize S. van Eeden (a regional historian) as project leader, financially supported by the National Research Foundation in South Africa. The emphasis was to assess Far West Rand residents' mounting dissatisfaction with demarcation issues, namely questionable decisions on marking borders between the provinces, and inadequate service delivery in increasingly stressed mining areas.[22] The research covered far more than historical research questions to determine the ecohealth and well-being of the

Bekkersdal mining community based on the residents' reported life experiences. Contributions were made by a range of researchers from diverse disciplines, especially from the humanities and social sciences. A fifteen-section structured questionnaire was developed, and twenty fieldworker volunteers from the Bekkersdal area were trained to gather the baseline required data from 502 inhabitants in the community's informal sector as a point of departure. The project provided a broader and richer perspective on the community than would have been possible with a solo disciplinary effort. Though the research as directed by the historians in the team was not explicitly focused on the impact of colonialism on the region per se, the existing challenges encountered in the region inevitably related to the region's historical encounters, rooted in its colonial past.[23]

Ethnographically informed (affect-related) research

The need to consider emotions and feelings has always played a significant role in historical research. People's oral and written memories of past events represent an affective sense of what should be recorded and how.[24] Affects, emotions, reactions, attitudes and mindsets seemingly play an important role in people's historical consciousness. Even when researchers engage with records of past events, they must be aware of, and make allowances for, their own affective experience and inherent reaction to the sources.[25]

A significant affective element is indeed necessary when conducting micro-research on regional histories and recording bottom-up memories, inclusive of top-down developments and decisions.[26] For example, the more affective, inclusive, micro-regional historical approach adopted by Joseph Amato in 2002 resonates well with a particular period when historians debated, argued and took opposing views on the linguistic and spatial turn in historiography.[27] This was followed by a more receptive acceptance of the affective, value-laden side of knowledge in history. While this progression to a more affective historical awareness has been apparent in certain South African historical studies, its implications have not thus far been actively debated among historians.[28] Amato's research on south-west Minnesota, in the United States, provides a refreshing new angle. He deals with the affective side of the region's history using such imaginative chapter titles as 'Writing History through the Senses: Sounds' (chapter 4) and 'Anger: Mapping the Emotional Landscape' (chapter 5).[29]

An affective, unprompted (impulsive) study of the past compels historians conducting interdisciplinary regional research to embrace the emotive, touching side of studies, such as how various people experience

'home'. Several recent Finnish research projects at the University of Helsinki's Ruralia Institute deal with the intimate living experience within an individual's physical dwelling as well as in broader areas, such as the village, municipality, region or countryside. This line of home research is driven by historian Sulevi Riukulehto, who combines it with geographical and ethnographic research methods and traditions.[30] Riukulehto and his research team have developed several research methods starting in the second decade of twenty-first century for investigating how people experience home on different scales. One example is a stimuli-based group discussion, also known as the elicitation interview method.[31]

In essence, this extensive oral history method (which embraces multidisciplinary input) aims at observing and recording how people experience and react to a set of pictorial or verbal stimuli. The home experience of local people is captured in group discussions designed to evoke the past in the respondents' memories. When discussing the past, the informants reveal their inner conceptions of their own temporality (and spatiality) as well as a certain historical and regional consciousness. The method builds on existing published historical research related to a particular region.[32] In 2015 Riukulehto and Van Eeden applied this ethnographic research method to the Far West Rand, recording how inhabitants of the Khutsong township, which forms part of the Merafong City Local Municipality, discuss and understand their current living experiences of 'home'. The interviews conducted in Khutsong will then be shared in an assessment of how they resonate with certain affective features linked to the colonial history of the region, if 'brushed against the grain'[33] of themes such as mining, immigration and impressions of politics at the time this research was conducted.

As a means of engaging with all three research methods (to also observe how each research method is deployed and eventually informs the others implicitly and explicitly on the specific subject matter), the discussion will first begin with the structured approach. Here only a concise historical narrative on the Far West Rand region is presented to serve as context for the rest of the discussion. This was obtained from some of our earlier studies using the more typical structured regional research approach by Skipp.

The Far West Rand mining region in context

The Far West Rand has a rich cultural, economic and political history.[34] There is much archaeological evidence of extensive precolonial and colonial habitation from the Merafong City area north-east to Mogale City. Mogale is well known as the 'Cradle of Humankind', home to the

Fig. 1: The Far West Rand region in 2017. https://municipalities.co.za/map/115/west-rand-district-municipality (accessed on 28 August 2018).

oldest hominid fossils ever found and a World Heritage Site.[35] The geography of the area has been transformed since the first modern records of settlement, dating from the early nineteenth century (Fig. 1). Many of the changes are the result of extensive gold-mining in the area, dating back to the early twentieth century. Though facing recent economic pressure, the mining sector remains a dominant source of income for the region, which hosts the municipalities of Merafong City (the Carletonville region, inclusive of Khutsong township), Mogale City (the Krugersdorp area) and Rand West City (the Randfontein area, inclusive of Westonaria, in which Bekkersdal township is located). In 2016 the Far West Rand region had a population of 838,594 individuals, with Mogale City being the largest (45.7 per cent), followed by Rand West City (31.8 per cent) and Merafong City (22.5 per cent). The four major languages spoken in the region are Tswana (27.3 per cent), Afrikaans (16.9 per cent), Xhosa (14.9 per cent) and Sotho (10.8 per cent). English remains the dominant language for business communication, although only 4.81 per cent of the population reportedly speak English as their mother tongue.

The next section provides examples of the visibility of colonialism from the nineteenth century until the end of apartheid in 1994.

Colonialism in mining

Beginning in the mid-1880s, companies started developing large-scale gold-mining initiatives in South Africa, and the efforts soon gathered even more momentum.[36] The leaders of the major European countries met at the Berlin Conference (1884–5) to decide on the borders and the colonial administrative future of Africa.[37] Central Witwatersrand was the main gold-producing region in South Africa from 1886 until the outbreak of the South African War (1899–1902).[38] Apart from British investment initiatives in gold-mining, the Anglo American Corporation Group also became involved in the South African mining industry, establishing operations in 1917 and buying land in the Far West Rand in 1935, which it developed in the 1940s.[39] Leonard Thompson describes the presence of gold-mining industries in South Africa as follows:

> Perhaps the most fateful process … that led to the racial structure [and transformation] of preindustrial colonial South Africa …[and in which]… Great Britain was deeply involved in… [t]he gold-mining industry was both a boon and … potential cancer … it was alien and dangerous.[40]

The 'danger' of gold-mining for the Far West Rand, that is, the threat it posed despite its financial benefits, was its total transformation of the places associated with mining activities. The changes included an influx of migrants from rural areas and even from outside the country, population shifts, environmental destruction, cultural infusions, infrastructural developments, and class and racial divisions. The formation and operation of a superior economic monopoly had a negative outcome, too. Not only did it lead to an iniquitous migrant labour system, but its presence, encouraged by the colonial motherland Britain, transformed people's vision and limited it to viewing the mines as the means to a healthy life. In some ways, it involved promises of a state-of-the-art health care system on mine property and other upgraded social facilities.[41] It also inspired hope that the income earned from gold-mining would improve living conditions and offer benefits not enjoyed in a subsistence labour economy.[42] In the years after the South African War, communities did not necessarily view gold-mining as dangerous or as resulting from colonial practices and fostering a colonial mindset. Yet gold-mining, as Thompson suggests, became both 'alien and dangerous' in the coming decades.

British gold-mining initiatives

Gold-mining in the Far West Rand developed rapidly in the early twentieth century, inspired primarily by the British company Gold Fields of South Africa Ltd, founded in 1887.[43] In the first half of the twentieth century, British investment in the Union of South Africa in general was especially evident in the Far West Rand.[44] Despite the impact of costly environmental interference, such as cementation processes and the progressive de-watering of the dolomitic Central Basin, gold-mining increasingly expanded in a challenging region known for its natural springs.[45]

Gold prospecting in the Far West Rand commenced in the 1930s. From that time until shortly after the Second World War (1939–45), British companies invested in a total of five mines, with a value calculated at well over £50 million. The mineral rights of the farms Venterspost, Gemsbokfontein, Libanon and Uitval were transferred to the New Consolidated Gold Fields Company, which in turn established the company Western Areas Limited, resulting in further rapid development of the region.[46]

Mining's demographic footprint

In the space of about thirty years, the mining industry transformed the Far West Rand from a predominantly white-owned agricultural region to a mainly foreign-owned gold-mining area, with a mixed population of British, Afrikaans-speaking and indigenous African migrant workers from within South Africa and countries beyond its borders. Many diverse cultures and traditions coexisted in the region.[47]

By 1939 the perceived success of gold-mining in South Africa could also be measured by the growing population statistics. Thompson recalls that 364,000 people worked in the mines at the time, 43,000 of whom were white and 321,400 black.[48] The demographic impact of gold-mining in the Far West Rand only became measurable in about 1951, when approximately 16,000 Africans worked in the mines, while another 3,000 worked on farms and 6,000 were employed in the trade and industrial sector.[49] Thirty years later, at the start of the 1980s, records show that approximately 67.4 per cent of the total African population in the Far West Rand lived close to and/or laboured in the gold mines.[50] By 1984 approximately 70 per cent of South Africa's migrant labour force worked in the gold mines. Officials monitored migrant labourers closely, and their movements were restricted. They were frequently subjected to poor-quality hostel accommodation and stringent measures in terms of the migrant labour system.[51] Notwithstanding decades of such harsh measures, the number of migrant labourers in the region increased exponentially. By 1988 approximately 35,000 workers were from

neighbouring countries and 39,800 from South Africa's so-called homelands.[52] After decades of applying this stringent migrant labour system, government officials relaxed such harsh influx control measures only in the late 1980s.[53]

The growing societal face of colonialism

In general, the mining operations greatly improved the local economy, a change welcomed by many in the difficult years following the end of the South African War (1899–1902). The defeated South African republic (ZAR) situated communities endured hard times. Barely a decade later, the First World War (1914–18) broke out, and the ripple effects of the global depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s further hurt the South African economy. From a political standpoint, however, the Union of South Africa, formed in 1910 through the unification of several former British colonies, by and large overcame such challenges to economic development within a colonial system of self-government, even though South Africa remained a British dominion until 1931.[54] The broad principles of the Union government helped divide the workforce along social, economic and racial lines, thereby creating a socio-logistical conflict for migrant labourers. The state did not recognize employed migrant labourers as permanent residents, nor, as in the case of indigenous South Africans, could they own land.[55]

The situation deteriorated even further under the National Party government, which came to power in 1948 and initiated the rigid apartheid system, thereby fostering a strict dual-state mentality. Indigenous African people thus faced the prospect of residential apartheid and enforced racism.[56] The government then introduced measures preventing all African people from owning or gaining access to land, colonial measures that managed to severely curtail all social, cultural, political and economic activities by Africans. It further forbid Africans from residing, whether temporarily or permanently, in living spaces not allocated to them.[57] The gold-mining industry showcased the duality of the Union's imperialist-inspired system of government.

Visibly alive and well in the region is the collective memory of British mining pioneers. For example, the Annan shaft of the Doornfontein mine, opened in January 1947, was named in honour of Robert Annan, chairperson of Consolidated Gold Fields beginning in 1941. Eighty years later, Annan Road was established and still is one of the main thoroughfares in Carletonville, the seat of Merafong City Local Municipality.[58] Further, a Paul Nel community hall has long existed in the Bekkersdal Township, named after a former mining director of Western Areas Limited.[59] Carletonville itself has been the most

prosperous mining town in the area since 1948, named in memory of mining engineer Guy Carleton Jones.[60]

With more than ten proclaimed townships in which to buy property and settle down, white inhabitants enjoyed far better prospects.[61] Early initiatives by black workers to establish towns included the farmstead known as Stinkhoutboom (no. 101 IQ) in 1936, later renamed Khutsong.[62] By late 1945 black workers took it on themselves to form a health committee in the 'Native [sic] Settlement' (called Bekkersdal), close to Westonaria township.[63] In each instance the state was slow in providing proper infrastructure.[64] Living in informal shacks and 'squatting' on farms close to the gold-mining operations proved hazardous, and before long unrest flared up. The local government tried to enforce order, but squatter discontent became a familiar scene in the Far West Rand in the 1950s and early 1960s.[65] The Peri-Urban Areas Health Board, governed by section 40 of the 1945 Native Urban Areas Consolidation Act 25, managed all human settlement in the region, strictly controlling all movement in areas close to the mining operations. The order expressed the desire to 'avoid … the founding of more black spots than is absolutely necessary'.[66] Methods of sound local governance were distorted because the state applied different governing and legal systems to different groups of people, thus strengthening the existing levels of turmoil in a racist society.[67]

The ecohealth and well-being research project was conducted in the Westonaria municipal area, and particularly in the Bekkersdal township (as part of the Far West Rand), some years after the structured research approach. It revealed some existing realities that remained rooted in the region's colonial past. A few historical pointers are shared in the next section.

Blinded spatial visions in the heyday of gold-mining, still evident in the twenty-first century

Township developments close to the gold mines serve as a typical example of South Africa's complicated geopolitical and colonial legacy.[68] Limiting black people to temporary land occupation close to mine property was a common practice. For example, Bekkersdal township had little potential to expand, and Khutsong daily faces the risk of sinkholes forming owing to the presence of dolomitic rock (also because of groundwater removal), two issues that feature prominently in the history of both townships.[69] But the same criticism can be levelled at the main town of Carletonville.

Studies by Walter Mignolo and Tim Strangleman on the global stage and by Jenny Robinson on South Africa have pointed out that past spatial

decision-making by dominant systems (such as colonialism) has had a permanent effect on communities, with the consequences still being felt in the present.[70] In terms of local communities, the effect, these authors say, is indeed more profound than 'what [their] eye[s] or mind[s] can … see or think'. The spatial deadlock scenario in Bekkersdal, a result of economic and political short-sightedness during the colonial and postcolonial years, has also exposed poor urban planning.[71] This in turn has resulted in the growth of a vast multicultural community deeply invested in the gold-mining economy: this community has become a spatial and financial concern, with problems that may take years to resolve.

From an environmental perspective, the integrative multidisciplinary well-being research approach revealed the community's acute awareness of the present-day mining risks of sinkholes (41.2 per cent of respondents) and the intensively academically belaboured acid mine drainage problem in the area (21.5 per cent of respondents), as well as dustiness due to mining (90.8 per cent respondents). Economic hardship, resulting in poverty as legacy also featured significantly in the responses on how people view signs of poverty. Yet the community under study could not necessarily see or articulate well how the regions' past currently plays out in the present. Though some community members in an open discussion mentioned belaboured concepts such as 'class struggles' and 'political structures', they seemingly could not fully unpack or articulate it with examples from their specific region's past. In turn, the well-being concerns of others were much more about the 'here and now' (such as 'illegal immigrants', the rate of prostitution, substance abuse and poverty).[72]

However, in the ethnographic research project conducted in the Khutsong community of Merafong (Carletonville), researchers indeed observed traces of a mindset that implicitly relates to the region's colonial past. The research involved determining the affective and emotional sense of how members of the community conceive of home or homeliness as a factor when expressing past and present experiences.[73] This ethnographic research approach (and especially the additional insights explored as a means of gaining an understanding of the communities based on historical records of the changing environment) is unpacked in more detail in the next section.

Ethnographic (affect-related) research revelations

The methodological model for affect-related research as applied in Merafong has been used to good effect in South Ostrobothnia, Finland, by the University of Helsinki's Ruralia Institute. In Merafong, in the

Far West Rand, the idea was to apply and review the possibilities for using the method in a South African context. Two historians engaged ethnographically with thirty inhabitants. The data collection process involved six group discussions (with approximately five people in each group). Participants were selected on the basis of their professional background or certain age categories. All the discussions were recorded and transcribed.[74]

The explorative meeting with the group included three sections: (i) an opening session outlining the project, such as a brief description of the process, permission to record participants, and discussion of any related ethical issues; (ii) an elicitation interview in which a laptop and data projector were used to show visuals, words and questions as a means of stimulating discussion on the research topic (homeliness, feeling at home in Merafong); and (iii) written tasks requesting information on important places and a mental imagery task.[75] The participants were asked to describe their new home and living environment after an imagined move. A short frame story was given as a starting point: You have moved to a new house. You feel/do not feel that it is homely.

How 'home' is experienced in Khutsong

The visual stimuli used in the Merafong group discussions did not set out to make specific reference to colonial times, nor were direct references made to mining, nor questions posed about its impact on residents. The only visual indirectly linked to mining was a tailings dam, which could be seen in one slide alongside a sinkhole and a fire. To some extent, an alert viewer may have noticed a few traces of mining in one large picture from an aerial photo series. However, mining was one of the most pervasive themes in the discussions. When people discussed their homes and their feelings about home, mining was always present as a strong theme in one form or another. Mining is interlinked with, for example, daily work and living conditions, schooling and education, political decision-making, environmental problems and immigration. The complex entanglement of the mining industry with important issues in people's home environment formed a tangible subtext in all the group discussions. The following information derives from comments by six black working-age men, all of them residents of Khutsong.

Judging from the reactions elicited by visual images depicting parts of the Far West Rand, it seems that the Khutsong informants (called respondents A to F) had mixed emotions about their home situation.[76] Their observations tended to digress from the affective experiences of the visuals to in-depth politically (and historically) related emotive

discussions. Respondent A shared memories of how a place called 'Padda Dam' (in the Fochville area, relatively close to Carletonville) had been well taken care of during the 'previous [apartheid] regime', and he felt it was now 'being left to be destroyed'. Respondent E, contrary to Respondent A's observation, thought that the situation had arisen because of white capitalist emigration to Europe, 'because maybe they were not happy when the ANC [African National Congress] took over'. Respondent B's view differed. He blamed the current government for mismanaging local affairs and felt there were political reasons for the decline of the area.

The informants did not outspokenly 'blame' colonialism for their current local problems. Only occasionally did they mention the colonial past. Therefore, the authors' observations of the informants' responses were brushed against the grain of the authors' knowledge of how the region's mining history unfolded and how colonial developments and their visibility in the country's apartheid era from 1948 onwards equally impacted on land development decisions, political challenges and its economic history.

Respondent F articulated his thoughts on the local gold-mining industry by saying that it continues to practise a particular system of worker recruitment – a system that researchers might associate with the days of colonialism but that Respondent F might have viewed mostly as a consequence of South Africa's apartheid politics since 1948 and its policy of establishing culture-related homelands for the country's diverse peoples since the 1950s:[77]

> When I saw [a visual of] Elandsrand [a mine], it reminded me of the mining industry – the way they employ people and then their recruitment strategy. You see the unions … are disadvantaging the local people. There is a union now – their leaders are not from around here; they are from the Eastern Cape [a province in South Africa]. You must understand that these mines are based in Merafong, [and] the people from Merafong should be the first people to get preference regarding employment in the mines, but that does not happen … The people from outside live in our communities, but only temporarily; they have temporary homes in our communities, but when they get a source of income, they build their homes in the Eastern Cape, so the investment goes back to their home. They are calling Khutsong a 'grazing land'. This is where they graze, make money, take everything and [then] leave …

This respondent identified many problems stemming from work-related emigration, all ultimately resulting in local people being unemployed. Unemployment, the respondents asserted, leads to prostitution and

bribery. The respondent expressed a solid sense of belonging to the mines and concern for the natural resources of the area:

> These mines are here – they belong to us, we are supposed to be the beneficiaries of minerals that are under us; instead, that is not happening, [and] we find people from outside invading us. Even the politicians do not consider people of Khutsong. Leaders of Khutsong sold Khutsong to people from outside.

Respondent F elaborated further on the impact of immigrants from elsewhere who now live in Merafong:

> Blyvoor [Blyvooruitzicht] mine … [is] mined by illegal miners. The old mine workers were not compensated when the mine closed down, so you find a situation where there are a lot of illegal [*Zama Zama*] activities and the crime rate is very high. For example, theft, rape, murder; but the police is not investigating the crimes because there are officers who are part of the crimes. So, all of this affects us when the crime spills over into our townships and homes …

The South Africans currently living in Khutsong, a gold-mining area with a history of hiring immigrant labourers in colonial times, feel that their experience of home was distorted by 'foreigners' who did not share the same tax burden but who apparently benefited equally from the delivery of local services (Respondents A and B). Many respondents reportedly consider illegal immigrants an even bigger danger.[78] Respondent A expressed clear concerns: 'Drugs are affecting our homes.' He was especially concerned about a very harmful and illegal drug called 'Nyaope', which is quite addictive. Respondent F also associated Nyaope with immigrants labelled as 'illegal'.

When respondents discussed their emotional reaction to the idea of the Far West Rand as 'home', their responses included some positive feelings but also notable worries and even a degree of fear. Showing them the aerial photos evoked a vivid exchange on the need to rehabilitate the former mining areas and offset the perceived health consequences of tailings dams, such as lung problems (Respondents E and D). Respondent A supported these observations but added that such health concerns were due not only to the chemical-loaded dust in mining areas but also to water pollution because of 'disused mines contaminating … underground water'. This, other respondents noted, impacted people's experience of home as a stable and safe place (Respondent D), as 'a shelter' (Respondent E), as a place with 'family' (Respondents B and D) and as a place of 'safety' and 'security' (Respondents A, C and F).

Regarding the question 'What factors must not be changed to maintain your sense of home?', all six respondents singled out maintenance of and respect for their culture as a dominant priority. Recent research on colonialism has highlighted the dual governing style of embracing democracy but still respecting and promoting traditional leadership. The respondents suggested that although traditional culture has survived, it has been transformed somewhat according to the whims of British colonial South African rule.[79] Two respondents were more explicit, saying that the colonial reality has compromised their cultural principles.[80]

> Respondent E: 'I don't want them [the planners of the South African democratic dispensation] tweaking and changing our … traditional leadership [like in the colonial days] to change my culture.'
> Respondent A: 'I agree with [our traditional] culture, and I want to add "the ground rules at home."' 'The state seems to change things to get more votes.'
> Respondent E: 'I think a lot of people don't understand democracy. In my culture, we have democracy, but it has limitations … The USA has had a democracy for centuries and has never had a woman president – in our country, they are pushing for it …'
> Respondent A: 'The ANC does not support a woman for president; … [a] previous president [Thabo Mbeki] was fired for that. He took that decision that a woman should lead us, on behalf of all us men, and nobody agreed, not even his own party. He [Mbeki] was an uninitiated man, so our culture must not be changed by bringing in an uninitiated man, or a woman, to rule.'

The respondents' experiences of home in Khutsong are rooted in their upbringing and anchored in their knowledge of past and present actions by the gold-mining industry, which they also associate with the government. Although they voiced (with examples) concerns about the present and future impact of a democratic government on their cultural principles, the historical past underlying some of their affective responses was visible but not articulated as such. Some responses suggest that the gold-mining industry has affected the mindsets of the residents less than British imperialism, discriminatory colonial rule and the apartheid government's racist separate development policies. Many in Khutsong value their traditional heritage and want to prolong their attachment to traditional practices and chiefly rule. Traditional leadership cultures are still valued quite highly in contemporary times despite urbanization and increasing cosmopolitanism, but there is a grudging realization that conditions need to be improved. Authoritarian systems of the past,

including during the heyday of colonialism, are still by and large maintained, albeit artificially, but it would appear that many residents of Khutsong tolerate and agree with such systems more than they do current local and regional governance practices under democracy. The notion of 'home' does not inspire warm feelings of safety or comfort among a number of the residents interviewed for this study.

Conclusion

In South Africa, as in most parts of Africa, the legacies of colonialism and coloniality continued to develop and have a strong role even after the years of formal colonialism in the late nineteenth century. To date, South Africa's history remains surrounded by and distilled through the legacies of colonialism. In the context of this discussion, many black South Africans associate colonialism with having very little voice in the nation's politics or economy. This has meant that as communities became more urbanized and cosmopolitan, many Africans began to lose control over their 'own' people, language and culture, and financial well-being in historical black townships, or else maintained a dual life that featured economically driven home spaces and more traditional, culturally driven home spaces.[81] Aspects of scholarly knowledge in three approaches of conducting regional research in different periods of time were combined in this study. Some observations from the results show that the dominant presence of colonialism, and notions of coloniality, has seemingly determined the Far West Rand's fate into the twenty-first century. However, the region's colonial attachment, historically and emotionally, is not necessarily the past in the residents' present when the residents discuss their home and homeliness.

In the nineteenth century, the Far West Rand was for the most part an agricultural region (the Gatsrand Ward), and the number of hired farm labourers was relatively low. In the early twentieth century, after the discovery of gold on Witwatersrand land, the region was sold off to gold-mining companies. The new gold mines opened up opportunities for employment, resulting in an influx of people from different cultures seeking work in more than a dozen mines. This arrangement gradually created new, but short-term, coping mechanisms to deal with the changing situation, such as residential segregation during the pre- and postcolonial apartheid years, embargos on employment opportunities for black workers, and poor living conditions. All these adverse circumstances impacted people's life experiences and their sense of identity.

During the heyday of colonialism, gold mines contributed in many ways to people's sense of well-being or lack thereof. Their participation (by way of employment) in colonial practices also negatively impacted

the economic, educational and spatial demographics of human settlement at the time, resulting in short-term visions of how to create sustainable well-being patterns as a means of ensuring the Far West Rand's future.

Overlooking the complex colonial legacy in a present-day context, such as in the Far West Rand, or failing to be historically conscious of the severity of the colonial impact, can mean people don't understand why change doesn't come easily or quickly enough, nor why certain requested developments cannot happen and should be thought of differently in twenty-first-century South Africa.

More equitable land distribution and more proactive and creative approaches to arranging cultural activities that showcase the region's rich precolonial past and historical legacy of mining operations would stimulate tourism and help pave the way to a successful future. Approaching these histories by utilizing less conventional forms of research methods will always be a challenge for historians. Yet it is a challenge that must be addressed to allow historians to further confront and refresh past research approaches towards further refinement by adding newer research approaches. This must be done cautiously and without forfeiting the underlying principles associated with historical research.

Notes

1. Corresponding author: Elize.vanEeden@nwu.ac.za. Elize S. van Eeden's research has been funded by the National Research Foundation of South Africa. All opinions expressed and interpretations observed are those of the author and not the NRF. Sulevi Riukulehto's work has been funded by the Research Council for Culture and Society, the Academy of Finland, Dialect of Localities and Enterprises, decision number 333447/2020.
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