Chapter 9

A Comparison Study of Oral History Programs at National Archives of Botswana and Zimbabwe:
Postmodernism Approach to Oral History

Sindiso Bhebhe
University of South Africa, South Africa

Tshepho Mosweu
University of Botswana, Botswana

ABSTRACT

The influence of the postmodernist school of thought has touched archival science. This chapter looks into how one of the notions of postmodernism in archival science which advocates for the challenging of the dominant narrative discourse by equally including into the archives the voices of the minority, the marginalized, the ordinary, and the underrepresented people is faring both at National Archives of Zimbabwe and Botswana National Archives and Records Service.

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe and Botswana are nations born from colonial emancipation. During the colonial era, the history of the black population was neglected in favour of the colonial masters' history. Even though Botswana became a colonial protectorate, it was not spared cultural genocide. Westernisation was the norm during the colonial and protectorate periods. African philosophies in terms of knowledge production were being looked down at. Heritage institutions such as archives, galleries and museums became centres where the stories of European settlers were celebrated. This changed when Zimbabwe and Botswana became fully 'free' from the yokes of colonisation as there was a paradigm shift from Westernisation to Pan Africanism. This shift was also witnessed in national archival institutions of Botswana and Zimbabwe when oral history programmes were introduced which aimed to 'correct' the historical gap for the Black populations which was left by colonisation. It is therefore the thrust of this paper to perpend, discuss and inquire about the impact of oral history programmes to the documentation of once marginalised society and the minority groups being conducted by National Archives of Zimbabwe and Botswana. This will be a comparative study where notes will be shared and evaluated between the two countries.

BACKGROUND

Botswana, which was known as the British protectorate of Bechuanaland during the colonial era gained independence in 1966 and according to the 2016 population census has a population of around 2 million. Though Batibo & Smieja (2000) posits that it is difficult to determine the exact number of minority languages spoken in Botswana as a result of language clusters, the number of languages spoken in the country is estimated to be at least 25 whereby Setswana is the most dominant language in the country, spoken by at least 80% of a population. Setswana has been declared by the government as the national language while English is the official language in the country.

Minority rights group international [MRGI] (2015) has outlined that:

Botswana is home to eight Tswana tribes and around 37 non-Tswana tribes. Since independence in 1966, the government of Botswana has sought to emphasise the homogeneity of Botswana and pursued what it calls a policy of racial neutrality, downplaying the importance of ethnicity as reflected, for example, in the fact that information on ethnicity is not collected in the national census.

18 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-comparison-study-of-oral-history-programs-at-national-archives-of-botswana-and-zimbabwe/212501

Related Content

Research Data Analysis Using EViews: An Empirical Example of Modeling Volatility
Erginbay Uurlu (2019). *Research Data Access and Management in Modern Libraries (pp. 292-324).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/research-data-analysis-using-eviews/232435

Innovative Practice and Development Thinking of Space Re-design in the Liaoning Provincial Library
Xiaowen Wangand Tianni Wang (2020). *International Journal of Library and Information Services (pp. 66-76).*
www.irma-international.org/article/innovative-practice-and-development-thinking-of-space-re-design-in-the-liaoning-provincial-library/240799

Role of Social Networking for Information Seeking in a Digital Library Environment
Ganiyu Ojo Adigun, Oluwole Akanmu Odunolaand Adewale Joel Sobalaje (2018). *Library Science and Administration: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 596-614).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/role-of-social-networking-for-information-seeking-in-a-digital-library-environment/191531

Expanding the Awareness and Use of Library Collections Through Social Media: A Case Study of the Library of Congress International Collections Social Media Program
Anchi Hoh (2021). *Research Anthology on Collaboration, Digital Services, and Resource Management for the Sustainability of Libraries (pp. 386-410).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/expanding-the-awareness-and-use-of-library-collections-through-social-media/274764

Library Service Innovation Based on New Information Technology: Taking the Interactive Experience Space "Tsinghua Impression" as an Example

Congming Liu, Tianfang Dou, Hong Zhou, Bei Zhangand Chengyu Zhang (2021).

International Journal of Library and Information Services (pp. 71-81).