



**Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: a case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini Community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown.**

**By**

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**Dr. Balungile Prudence Zondi**

## DECLARATION ON PLAGIARISM

I declare that this dissertation titled: *Death, religion and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: A case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini Community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown* is my work, constructed under the guidance of Dr. L.P. Zondi (Supervisor). All sources used and quoted in this work have been acknowledged and indicated using proper referencing.



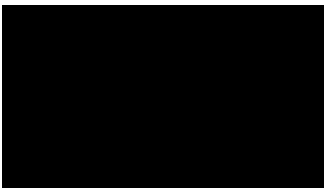
22 March 2023

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Student's Signature

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Date: 22.03.23



Supervisor's Signature

Date: 22.03.23

## **Dedication.**

*‘Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus’.*

- (Philippians 4:6-7)

These were the verses that my Grandmother Thokozile Eunice Vundla used to quote for me whenever I felt like losing it. With her Prayers, Fasting, encouragement and unending love and support, I am here where I am, it is all because of her. So, to her, I dedicate this work.

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”.*

- (Joshua 1:9)

Losing an only parent and a sister was and still is a traumatic event. This work is dedicated to my late mother Nomusa “*Ntombizonina*” Vundla, who passed away in April 2013 and my late sister Nombuso “*Tshwele*” Vundla who passed away in January 2016, both in the wrath of Cancer.

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”.*

- (Revelation 21:4)

From December 2019, till to date, COVID -19 has claimed thousands of lives around the globe consequently families have lost many loved ones. This dissertation is also dedicated to all the families and households who lost their loved ones due to the COVID -19 pandemic.

## AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God almighty, the Alpha and the Omega, the one who gives us strength and courage when we feel like giving up, I am deeply humbled for his favour upon my life.

*“I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High.”*

- (Psalm 7:17)

For the completion and the success of this work, I would like to appreciate and acknowledge the following people, for their, courage, motivation and unlimited support they have given to me throughout the entire duration of this study:

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*“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.”*

- (Corinthians 2:14)

Thank you.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis anthropologically and qualitatively explored death, religion, and cultural schemas of the eMacambini community during the COVID-19 alert level 5. A sample of 20 participants were recruited through the purposive snowballing technique. Through the Social Constructivism Theory and Cultural Relativism Theory, this study revealed that the eMacambini community was heavily threatened by COVID-19 which affected patterns of their burial rites, cultural schemas and rituals. This study recommends that government authorities together with advisory committees (the South African government and the World Health Organization) should in times of the pandemic be considerate of indigenous knowledge systems that guide the process of death, cultural schemas and rituals of indigenous communities. This study recognized the use of isiZulu language by research participants as a phenomenological expression of painful experiences. It further validates that it is possible to study indigenous communities in their own languages which falls within decolonial ethnography. This study recommended that the content of this research and all other related studies on pandemics versus Africa cultural schemas and rituals should be integrated into the content of the University of KwaZulu-Natal Anthropology (102) Culture and Societies and Anthropology 201- Culture, Health and Illness curriculum as a new section which will deal with the impact of pandemic outbreaks in African traditions, cultures and religion. This study concludes that cultural schemas, rituals and burial rites shape or socially construct one's identity and promote one's cultural relativism which is the sense of pride and belonging.

***Keywords: COVID-19, Death, Funeral services, Bereavement, Cultural Schemas, Burial rites, Religions, African Indigenous Societies, Families and Households, Macambini Community.***

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIC/AIR-	African Independent Churches/Religion
ATR-	African Traditional Religion
COVID-19-	'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for the virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as the '2019 novel Coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.
NICD-	National Institute of Communicable Diseases
UKZN-	University of Kwa Zulu Natal
SACA-	South African Cemeteries Association
WHO-	World Health Organisation

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# Chapter One

## Introduction and context of the study

### 1.1. Introduction

The novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19 also known as a global pandemic outbreak brought much devastation on humanity. Countries recorded devastating death tolls that increase daily. This <sup>1</sup>epidemiological pandemic threatened people of all ages, gender, racial, religious groups and from all socio-economic background but people in the rural areas because of their political economy mostly were affected. In addition to this, the pandemic has caused major disruptions in the overall functioning of many sectors i.e., including the economic, educational, socio-political, religious, and cultural sectors hence many advisors repeatedly said that the new-normal dawn has arrived because daily activities will no longer be the same. COVID-19 brought the world to a complete stand still. From an anthropological lens, I argue that the era of COVID-19 brought critical paradigm shifts in all sectors of human life and warranted people to do life differently. In the words of Moore et al. (2020) COVID-19 is one unique epidemiological experience that has no exclusion of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, political or socio-economic status, nationality, or global residence respect like other endemic experiences that have been experienced in some regions of the world or in Africa like malaria. COVID-19 has the potential to expeditiously threaten the health and life of everyone once exposed and transmitted (Moore et al., 2020). As part of saving or of mitigating the spread and the contamination, heads of governments all around the world created rules and regulations guided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to curb the spread of this deadly virus. South Africa was no exception, government had to act swiftly and as a result many major protocols were put in place. The first hard national lock-down was to flatten the curve. It was the first in the history of life where all sectors had to close, schools had to close, and the transportation industry could not operate. The attempt was to support what was suggested by WHO to deter the rapid spread of COVID-19. Omonisi (2020) and his peer scholars theorized that COVID-19 has been harsh on African cultures and further argued about the impact that COVID-19 has on Africa's burial rites, mourning, and grieving. He contends that different burial rites, which have been observed for decades in Africa and vary according to the deceased's place of origin,

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<sup>1</sup> In anthropology an epidemiological pandemic is defined as infectious disease that spreads rapidly which causes fatalities and threatens the survival and the life expectancy of people.

culture, religion, and position in the community, which were not observed because the pandemic's effects compelled people to choose alternatives that would limit its spread. In the words of Omonisi (2020), COVID-19 seemed to be mostly against cultural schemas that Africans followed when death has claimed a family member. For the first time in history, religion and rituals were not considered as deciding factors for how the deceased should be buried in Africa. Death during the alert level 5 was not inevitable, it became a daily expectation because the medical sector also struggled to keep up with the amount of people who need medical health care.

The first World Health Organisation (WHO) infection prevention and handling protocols of COVID-19 advised the local authorities to autonomously regulate how the bodies and funerals should be handled. This is because the pandemic virus was believed to be active even when the person has died. Harrisberg (2020) interviewing the South African Cemeteries Association chairperson, Mr. Pepe Dass, stated that as per National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), if cremation is not an option for those who pass away due to COVID-19, burials must adhere to tight guidelines, "the body must be placed in a leak-proof body bag and then be buried in a non-transparent coffin." - which is contrary to what most African Indigenous societies do when they perform their burial rites.

This chapter will firstly give a background to this study, as inspired by a great concern on the disruption that COVID -19 has brought to the lives and cultural experience of ordinary people of the Macambini community regarding burial rites and send off of their loved ones amid this pandemic. To this end, this chapter will serve to articulate the background to the study, motivation of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives, principal theories upon which this research is constructed, a brief outline of the methodology and methods, significance of the study, and lastly, the plan and structure of the dissertation.

## **1.2. Background of the study and Problem statement**

The COVID-19 pandemic presented practically unheard-of difficulties to indigenous societies' cultural schemas, rituals surrounding death, economic and educational sectors in South Africa (Moore, et al., 2020). This study is motivated by the introduction of restrictions by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) and governments around the world in their efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 and lessen its adverse ramifications or effect. Amongst other restrictions, the introduction of staged levels of national lockdowns which came with different control rules like the one which says only 50 people were allowed to attend funerals at the stage

5 level of South African national lockdown (Dlamini-Zuma, 2020). Burial rituals and other cultural schemas commonly performed in African native societies were also prohibited in fact their cultural significance was stripped of its ritual significance. This was a cultural shock that families in Africa were confronted with while preparing to bury their family members whose lives were claimed by COVID-19. Some of these cultural schemas, burial rituals include night vigils, cleansing of the corpse at the mortuary or at home in preparing the deceased to unite with their ancestral beings, and seeing the face of the dead person before he/she is laid to rest. It is also required that the coffin be wrapped-up in protective plastics. All these restrictions were enacted to mitigate or halt the rapid spread of COVID-19. While they were all in the interest of saving humanity, they tampered with how South African native societies culturally observe death, burial rites, mourning and grief. They further tampered with their religious beliefs and their cultural schemas, which are indigenous practices to them as well as their ancestral identity. Omonisi (2020) argued that COVID-19 is foreign to Africa as it originated in Wuhan in China, extended to Africa and the rest of the world. Most, if not all, African states responded to this pandemic by implementing the same lockdowns, movement restrictions, and social distance laws that are incompatible with African cultural norms and traditions. These measures were utilized by Western countries and governments to stop the virus from spreading. This study took notice of these destructions on South Africans and their cultural schemas and burial rituals because as discussed by De Haas (2011) who asserts that death in Africa has cultural epistemic meanings. This de-colonial understanding of death allows us to understand that when a person dies in Africa or in many South African countries, there are cultural schemas and burial rituals that must be performed to prepare the dead person to be received by ancestors also known as the great one. The argument of this study is that COVID-19 disrupted important cultural schemas, burial rituals hence experiences of people during this time are worth being anthropologically studied. The generated data will contribute to the cultural anthropology literature.

Restrictions enacted by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) induced this particular research interest. The argument that this study brings to the fore is that COVID-19 robbed people who believed in ritualized funerals the opportunity to perform their symbolic cultural schemas. COVID-19 disrupted the order of life and how cultural rituals are honoured even at the time when death has happened. I also argue that living in a society during the COVID-19 alert level 5 distorted cultural pattern of many cultural and ethnic groups. African people's bereavement processes were influenced by others who did not understand anything about how

a father “head of the family”, or any family member should be prepared to be buried. Interventions did not consider that many cultures and religious beliefs means that bereavements are memorable events that are observed and celebrated differently. Heads of states including the WHO interfered with cultural schemas which are culturally symbolic in many African countries which include how schemas, death rituals and beliefs are coordinated and celebrated. These "schemas, death, rituals, and beliefs" tend to differ greatly throughout cultures, societies, families and households, and even countries, hence this study is proposed to study the community of e-Macambini.

Lobar et al. (2006: 44-47) assert that schemas and rituals are performed for reasons even though they vary from culture to culture or from generation to generation. These diverse rites and ceremonies are conducted largely to elucidate and merge the existence of the deceased with spiritual beings. Rituals are usually performed in a room that has been purified and from which religious symbols are to be performed for closure. Animal sacrifices, scents, and burning of incense are frequently used in rituals and ceremonies that surround the dying person. Family members find closure when they are preparing the body while cleansing and while viewing the body (Boutyline & Soter, 2020). Cultures, societies, families, and households are important aspects of funeral or burial rites which are concerned with preserving the soul's anguishing journey from life to death. COVID-19 banned all these important schemas which are performed by the community of eMacambini hence this study was deemed relevant to anthropologically understand how they survived this cultural shock and what it meant to bury a family member during alert level 5.

Scholars such as (Harrisberg; 2020), Jaja, et al., 2020), and Omonisi, 2020) noted in their independent studies when they concluded that COVID-19 threatened people because of its high transmissibility rate or “rapid/accelerated spread” which led to fatalities hence restrictions imposed what was categorized as a “new normal”. This compelled the government and state to develop exceptional administrative measures for funeral services in addition to those of health emergencies and states of calamity. Traditional rites and rituals to honour the dead and console grieving families and friends had to be shortened or even discontinued because of the global life-threatening/humanistic/health crisis that epidemiologists characterized as the global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many aspects of death and its rituals to be redesigned in most part of the world by reducing or limiting social gatherings that hasten the spread of the virus (Omonisi, 2020). The problem behind the research is that families and households at e-Macambini community buried their loved ones at the time when restrictions

were imposed, and they could not perform rituals or any schemas that they would normally have performed. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are numerous factors that made it difficult for families and households to grieve. These include unexpected death, being completely alone in a hospital setting, experiencing death while in a state of extreme suffering and physical agony, having less time to give meaning to the loss, being subjected to stigma and social discrimination, constraints on rituals and schemas, a lack of social support, having family connections that are tense, and more. According to the World Health Organization report (2020:22), the absence of rituals when a physical body part is lost makes it difficult for people to psychologically accept the loss. The report's information also hinted at the multiple obstacles that families faced in the global context of the first wave of COVID-19 when observing the traditional period of mourning for the loss of loved ones, thus it is important to study diverse cultural experiences. Kagawa-Singer (1995) confirmed in his publication that recognizing ritual differences is important in a multi-ethnic society because cultures can learn from each other and that indigenous knowledge for future generations does not perish.

According to Omonisi (2020), several wealthy countries reported more fatalities and were more severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than African nations. Unfortunately, in many countries around the world, these people were not traditionally buried. Family members of the deceased were prohibited from preparing "befitting" funerals for their loved ones and from carrying out customary funeral rites.

### **1.3. The relevance of the problem statement in an Anthropological context.**

I am foregrounding that there is no context that is not an anthropological context. This is because anthropology is the study of humankind. Researchers in anthropology take interest in what is affecting people directly and it also takes interest in collecting people's experiences in relation to a particular phenomenon. This is how the social constructivism paradigm takes place as it recognizes that there is a cultural epistemic value on the experiences of people which is the ontology of relativism that guides how they perform or ritual their cultural schemas. The South African COVID-19 advisory team pleaded with South Africans, including the Association of traditional leadership and Churches in South Africa, to adhere to what has been declared by the World Health Organization as being the "new normal," which meant that communities, societies as well as families and households had to revise their bereavement processes and how they observe their death, religious and other schemas they would have performed in a normal era. This new norm was implemented without considering that the communities, families, households, and churches typically undertake death rituals and related



cultural schemas to appease ancestors who are the true proprietors of the indigenous knowledge that is valued, kept, and passed down from one generation to the next rather than to please the government or other external entities. From the viewpoint of culturally rooted households, families and churches, the call for restrictions from the WHO presented many challenges that have not been documented before, which, means they all must be integrated into the existing cultural text in anthropology.

#### **1.4. Rationale and the significance of the study in anthropology**

Kotak (2012) asserts that anthropologists have, for many years, taken an interest in studying cultures and religions. *Anthropologists* have continued to expand their knowledge on these thematic issues, which are anthropological in context. Anthropology has sought to categorize and explain religious practices and beliefs as an all-encompassing, comparative study of human cultures from their prehistoric beginnings to the present (Bowie, 2008). This research is within the ambit of cultural anthropology which allows anthropologists to analyse indigenous and culturally based societies. As a result, this study's focus is on the families and households of e-Macambini community, North of KwaZulu-Natal under the stewardship of Inkosi Ubaba Mathaba. This community is one of those South African native communities which is dominated by people who originate from the Zulu tribe. AmaZulu has been known to be one of the longest standing and culturally rooted tribes in the African continent. Their strong cultural belief and tradition withstood the times of the Industrial Revolution and changes brought by globalisation which impacted many communities or societies. Most of this community is still rooted in the cultural/indigenous schemas that were institutionalised and operationalised by the famous Zulu monarchy and shaped by the religious beliefs of each family's choices. Anthropological studies of death are currently recognised as a large field in which the literature on African societies occupies an important place. The anthropological scholarship of death, burial rites, rituals and attached cultural schemas have contributed a wide range of knowledge that translate funerary and mourning practices express and shape a wide range of social relations, including the maintenance of kinship ties. Lee and Vaughan, (2008) assert that such studies embrace de-coloniality and the sense of being an African in Africa. In my view, such studies continue to make cultural anthropology more relevant as they also collect epistemic narrative on a particular phenomenon. This preserves indigenous knowledge while acknowledging that people themselves are authors of knowledge.

The rationale for undertaking this study in anthropology is supported by Valerie (2018) who states that prominent theorists in anthropology such as Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown assert

that man also has emotional behaviour (He experiences love, hate, suffering, joy, fear, and other emotions) which is socially regulated and utilized. To increase the body of knowledge that could help future generations, it is important to understand all facets of the social system and every natural phenomenon that affects society's existence and organizational structure. Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2014:241) argue that the dominance of Euro-American worldviews and epistemological frameworks has prevented people from learning about one another's diverse cultures, which is why they encourage the continuance of such studies. These studies illustrate the significance of information sharing among people of different nationalities since it fosters a variety of viewpoints in several aspects of living. Additionally, indigenous epistemologies should be supported by the approaches used to study and comprehend other cultures. The move from a universalist understanding and application on human behaviour and concepts, to a culture appropriate and sensitive praxis is therefore imperative to address the colonial discourse. The acknowledgement and appreciation of the role of culture in human behaviour and in the workplace is likely to create positive working conditions, experience and enhance the quality of relationships through the congruent implementation of policies that support diversity. Diversity is not easy to implement, however, if properly applied diversity can also be a resource. In this study, the integration of African Independent Churches' cultural and religious viewpoints during the COVID-19 pandemic are critically examined. It seeks to understand how the rules and regulations created to curb the spread of COVID-19 have impacted the death, religion, and cultural schemas of indigenous societies by examining the funerals held and burial rites performed by culturally rooted families and households. Research findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge that seeks to find practical solutions from the aftermaths caused by COVID-19 in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

### **1.5. Research Objectives**

This new normal brought by COVID-19 was enacted, forgetting that death practices and related cultural schemas or rites performed by the members of the indigenous societies are not performed to please a government or international figures but are customarily performed to please ancestors who are owners of the indigenous knowledge that is treasured, preserved and passed from one generation to the next. From the viewpoint of the culturally rooted African native societies, the call for restrictions from the WHO, (2020) presented many challenges that have not been documented before, which will be integrated into the existing cultural text in anthropology.

This study has sought to achieve the following objectives:

### **Key Objectives**

The primary objectives of the study are:

- To comprehend the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on death, religion, and cultural schemas of indigenous societies in South Africa regarding burial rites and mourning performance.
- To learn how culturally rooted families and households have adjusted to the announced restriction “new normal.”
- To record conditions in which people were buried during level 5 and learn if families were made to consent to such conditions.
- To understand from the perspectives of families if burying their loved ones during COVID-19 level 5, also known as the “new normal,” tampered with their indigenous knowledge, triggered the anger of ancestor’s “gods” and further record if they have experienced the symbolic anger of ancestors (signs and tragic incident/events reported or foreseen).

### **Secondary objectives**

- To find out whether COVID-19 protocols by the World Health Organization (WHO) imply a hegemonic imposition over African Indigenous Societies from the views of families and households, including traditional leaders.
- To confirm from the views of sampled participants if culture is not static and learn new corrective ways to celebrate associated rituals (cultural schemas).

## **1.6. Research questions**

### **Key questions**

- What is the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the performance of burial rites and mourning by South African natives?
- How have native societies adjusted to the announced restriction “new normal” during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How, (if ever), did the “new normal” tamper with ancestor’s “gods” and the ancestors' symbolic anger?
- Were the South African traditional leaders or councils consulted before the imposition of COVID-19 curbing rules? If they were, what were their points of view?

## Secondary question

- Do COVID-19 protocols imply a hegemonic imposition over African societies based on the views of traditional leaders and adherents?
- How have the African “culturally rooted” societies culturally adjusted to the announced restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic?

### 1.7. Research site

This research was conducted at e-Macambini community under the stewardship of Inkosi Ubaba Mathaba, located in the North of KwaZulu- Natal. This community falls under Mandeni Municipality which previously has been known as eNdongakusuka Municipality. Mandeni Municipality is approximately 50 km north of eThekweni Metro and South of the UMhlatuze Municipality (Anon., 2018/19). This community’s origin is from the coast of the Indian Ocean and continues almost 38 km inland, stops by the R102 road, along the N2, and is close to the Mandeni Toll Plaza. and ends before reaching the Mthunzini toll plaza. EMacambini has only 4 out of 18 wards (1, 2, 8, and 9) which are under the Mandeni Municipality. According to the municipal report of 2018/19, eMacambini is one of the 4 communities that are under the rule of traditional authorities, which include eLangeni Traditional Authority, Mathonsi Traditional Authority and KwaNgcobo Tribal Authority. All these four Tribal Authorities are under the custody of Ingonyama Trust who control most of the rural land in KwaZulu- Natal, and report under the late King of amaZulu tribe, his Majesty King Zwelithini Zulu who left the late majesty, the Queen Regent Mantfombi Dlamini-Zulu sitting on the throne.

Fig 1.1 Map of Macambini community.



Source: <https://vymaps.com/ZA/Mandeni-eMacambini-269155936502418/>

According to the census 2011, Macambini community have 14 sub-places which make up a total of 32322 people from 5948 households or families in which they all occupy a space of

155.68 km<sup>2</sup> (Frith, 2021). In that 3233 population, 53% (17028) are females and 47% (15294) are males, while 95% are Zulu speaking people.

**Fig 1.2 Population according to sub-places.**

Name	Population	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Dokodweni SP1	3,334	14.26
Dokodweni SP2	1,051	6.34
Fort Crealock	1,855	6.30
Isulabashe	2,308	6.82
Lambothi	975	5.16
Mandige	1,278	13.28
Mangeza	4,556	22.23
Mbizimbelwe	1,682	3.86
Mhlubulweni	1,474	8.60
Ngulule	792	5.02
Nqutshini	3,151	12.54
Nyathini	6,213	19.62
Thuthuka	766	3.85
Wangu	2,887	27.79

*NB: these figures were last taken in 2012 where the profiling and census were done.*

### **Community leadership.**

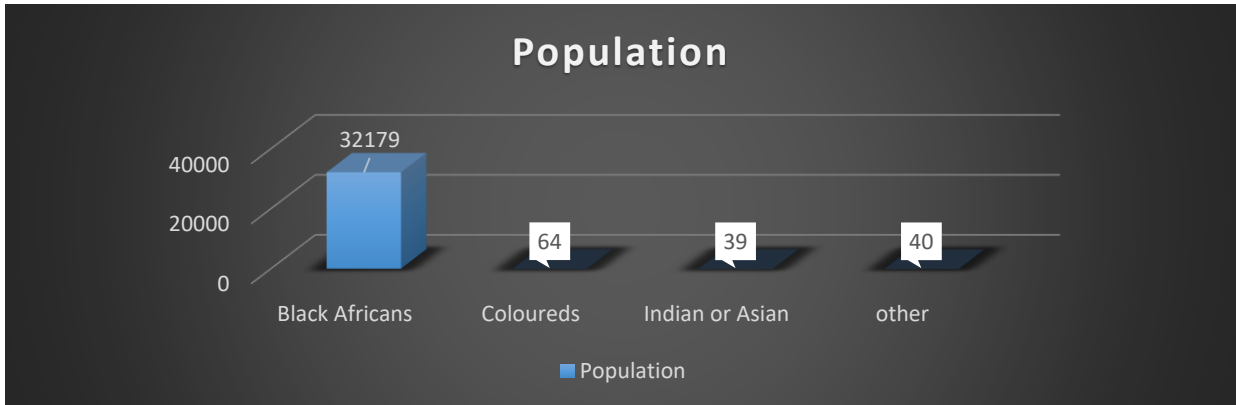
INkosi Ubaba Mthokozisi Mathaba, the son of the late iNkosi Khayelihle Mathaba is primary custodian and the leader of eMacambi community. With 14 sub places, he has 14 headsmen, who also form the part of eMacambini Tribal Council, who are not voted in like government officials, but are appointed by iNkosi yesizwe saMacambi. With 4 wards that fall under Mandeni Municipality, each ward has its own councillor which is voted through local government elections and the separation of powers between traditional leadership and ward councillors does exist.

**Fig 1.3a Population Gender differentiation.**

	People	Percentage
Females	17028	52.68%

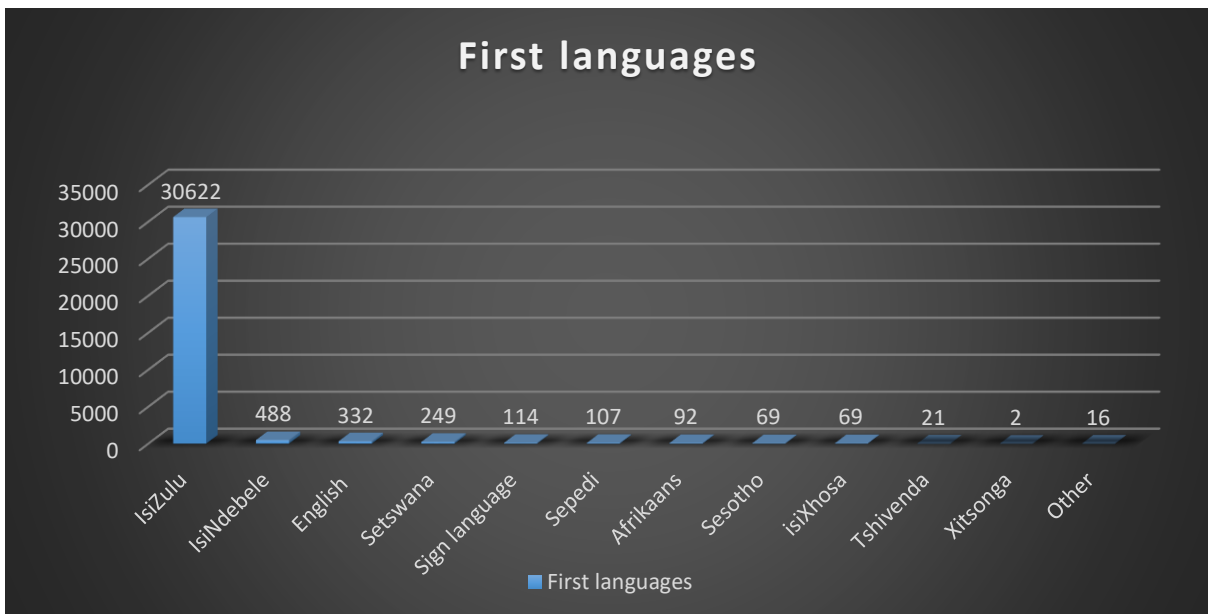
Males	15294	47.32%
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**Fig 1.4 Population Groups**



From the graph above, Macambini community is dominated by, about 99.56% of Black African people and the 0.44% is made up of Coloureds, Indians, Whites and others.

**Fig 1.5 First Languages**



In 99.56% of Black Africans within the community, about 95% speak isiZulu as their first language and the other 5% is made up of people who speak, IsiNdebele, English, Setswana, sign language, Sepedi, Afrikaans, and others (see fig 1.5).

### 1.8. Definition of keywords

- **Religion** - Beyers (2017) defined religion as a set of symbols that function to create strong, pervasive, and enduring moods and motivations in men by formulating a

conception of a general order of existence and cloaking the conception in such a veneer of veracity that the attitudes and motivations seem distinct and realistic.

- **Rituals-** Rituals are described by Makhathini (2022:22) with reference to Kyalo (2013:35) as the formulaic spatiality performed by a group of people who are aware of its necessary or obligatory nature and who may or may not further inform this spatiality with spoken words.
- **Death** – Mokhutso (2019) defines death as a final transition or stage of growth and is often surrounded by culturally specific rituals to assist the bereaved in the expression of grief, mourning, and caring for the dying.
- **Cultural Schema-** Boutyline & Soter (2020) define cultural schemas as the central cognitive mechanism through which culture affects each action. They further alluded by saying that cultural schemas are socially shared heuristic representation deployable in automatic cognition (Boutyline & Soter, 2020). Prameswari, Hibino & Koyama (2017) define cultural schemas as a culture to the cognitive level, which provides a reference to knowledge while also shaping perspectives (Prameswari et al., 2017).
- **COVID-19** - According to Cennimo (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic is an illness caused by a novel coronavirus now known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, formerly known as 2019-nCoV), which was first discovered during an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. On the 31st of December 2019, the WHO declared this outbreak a global health emergency, and then declared it as a global pandemic on the 11th of March 2020.

### **1.9. Brief introduction of the theoretical framework and the research methodology**

This study is embedded in two theoretical lenses or frameworks which complement each other: Social Construction Theory and Cultural Relativism. Both these theoretical frameworks are deemed to be suitable and relevant for this study as they blend with the perspective of cultural anthropology, supporting the qualitative gathering of participants' emic perspectives in the subject at hand.

#### **1.9.1. Social Construction Theory**

This study is guided by Social Constructivism Theory and Cultural Relativism Theory. Anthropologists have used the Social Constructivism Theory to gain insider perspectives/ make meaning of the subjects in relation to a phenomenon. The premise of this theory is that knowledge is constructed and that individuals learn from their culture or that the epistemology

of knowledge stems from their cultural socialization through which relativism is achieved as an identity trait. The theory was deemed relevant to this study in many ways. It will allow the sampled population to reflect or narrate how they have been socialized as members of families and households; how these families and households perform rituals of death, religion, and other schemas which imply indigenous knowledge systems and translates their symbolic identity. The theory will allow the sampled population to reflect on how they have been affected by COVID-19. New insights will be solicited through this theoretical framework and could shape the context of cultural anthropology and other related concepts. Abdal-Haqq (1998) and Duffy (2006), cited in Mogashoa (2014:51-52), assert that the Constructionist Theory is an epistemology (theory of knowledge) that anthropologists have employed to study other cultures without imposing any judgment on them. Social Construction Theory connects anthropologists in the natural in situ of the studied population. This theory has shaped the qualitative research design of the study and the wording of research objectives that allow reflexivity. Reflexivity implies that knowledge is culturally or religiously constructed. It also recognizes that a particular context is also the source of knowledge and experience. Martin (1994), cited in Mogasho (2014:53), argues that the philosophy of constructivism proceeds from the premise that knowledge does not exist in the bodies of cognizant beings, knowledge is the construction of reality and that people actively construct knowledge by connecting to their cultural teaching while working to solve practical problems.

### **1.9.2. Cultural relativism.**

In supplementing Social Construction Theory, Cultural Relativism has been used in this study. This theory has been used for years by anthropologists too, and it is said to be one of the theories introduced by Franz Boas, who is regarded as the “Founding father of American anthropology” in the early centuries as he criticized and discredited the belief that Western Civilisation is superior to those of other societies. This theoretical framework recognizes cultural epistemics and other scholars would also argue that he contributed in the decolonial construction of knowledge as he argued that cultures have unique experiences and meaning making in relation to their cultural experiences and rituals. Cultural relativism has taken cognizance of the significance of a comprehensive contextual grasp of the surrounding cultures in any attempt of understanding other human behaviours or modes of social organization (Chakraborty, 2018). Boas's contribution emphasized the importance of other cultures outside the scope of Western cultures. As Chakraborty (2018) argued, contribution asserted that elements of a culture are meaningful in that culture’s terms, even if they may be meaningless in another culture



(Chakraborty, 2018). The cultural relativism of Boas negated the German philosopher Lucien Levy-Bruhl's notion, which asserts that, “the primitive mind was “pre-logical” and failed to meet the requirement for scientific and rational thinking” (Eriksen, 2017). This theory employs an emic perspective of people of families and households of eMacambini community to narrate the cultural schemas and bereavements rituals into the broader context and allows participants to contribute emic perspective (without being judged) of their learned cultural schemas, as the Social Construction Theory asserts.

### **1.10. Research methodology And Design**

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Qualitative research has been deemed the befitting research design for the study as it allows the social construction of knowledge. Anthropologists have used it to collect deep insights/thick descriptions from sampled populations. Qualitative research accommodates explorative and descriptive research, which is the research that is undertaken to gain insight into the research problem or a particular context. Exploratory, descriptive qualitative research, as noted by Haswell (2010) and Hair et al. (2013), is pertinent for examining complex environments. According to Clow and James (2014), qualitative research is a type of research design whose main goal is to gain a qualitative knowledge of the underlying causes, motives, and experiences of research participants by looking at their attitudes, feelings, and emotions.

Primary data was collected by recording interactions and obtaining perspectives from different families or people who have lost and buried their family members, friends and loved ones during alert level 5 of national shutdown by using in-depth interviews, semi structured interviews, and some questionnaires (with both open and closed-ended questions). Secondary data came from examining the existing literature. The researcher identified a sample using random purposive sampling method whereby twenty (20) members of families and households who lost and buried their loved ones, friends and family members within the community were recruited to participate in this study.

#### **1.10.1. Research Paradigm**

This research is guided by interpretivism or phenomenological paradigm. In this study, both the primary investigator and participants are co-equals in the data gathering process. Interpretivism or phenomenology will allow the researcher to gain access to reality as it is socially constructed (through language, shared meanings, and conciseness). The narrative of Myers (2009) while citing Willis (1995), argued that interpretivists are anti-foundationalists,

who believe there is no single route or method to knowledge. The Social Constructivism Theory and Cultural Relativism will allow the participants to give an emic perspective (without being judged) of their learned cultural schemas as the Social Construction Theory asserts.

### **1.11. Study layout**

The structure of this thesis will consist of six chapters which are briefly outlined below:

- **Chapter one:** This chapter will provide the background of the study and outline the research objectives and the questions that the collected and analyzed data will seek to answer.
- **Chapter two:** This literature review chapter will focus on death, religion, and cultural schemas, mourning, burial rites, rituals, and COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Chapter three:** This chapter will discuss the theoretical contributions of the Social Constructionist Theory in the study.
- **Chapter Four:** This chapter delineates the research methodology, data collection methods, sampling techniques used to collect data, data collection limitations, ethical considerations, and how the data was analyzed.
- **Chapter Five:** This chapter will be about data presentation. It will present all information gathered following the primary questions as they are being asked from chapter 1. It will also offer the data analyses process with data analyzing tools (used theorem paradigms)
- **Chapter Six:** This chapter will offer research discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

### **1.12. Chapter Summary**

This research is a critical analysis of the experiences and integration of cultural and religious perspectives of families and households of Macambini community during the COVID-19 pandemic. It seeks to understand how the rules and regulations created to curb the spread of COVID-19 have impacted the death, religion, and cultural schemas of indigenous societies by examining the funerals held and burial rites performed by Macambini community's families and households. The next chapter will focus on death, religion, and cultural schemas, practices of African Indigenous Societies, and COVID-19 restrictions.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1. Introduction

Anthropology is the study of diverse cultures, and in the context of death, examines the diversity and commonalities in how families and households or human societies respond to the demise of their members. However, due to varying religious and cultural norms, the way people react to death is different. The COVID -19 pandemic has transformed communal society into an individualistic one where people must contend with social isolation and lockdowns (Adom, et al., 2021). Traditional ceremonies such as marriages, festivals, funerals, community gatherings, religious gatherings to name a few, have all been affected by the presence of this pandemic (Boaheng, 2021). All traditional rites and rituals are worth studying hence why the present study focuses on death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: a case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini community during the alert level 5 of national lockdown. As has been said in the previous chapter, Macambini community is dominated by 95% of Zulu speaking people who are from Ama-Zulu tribe which is regarded as one of the culturally rooted native tribes in Africa. The prevalence of this ethnic group in this society and its intricacy explains the character of their dying, death, and mourning customs and rituals.

This includes key concepts which are part of the thesis title such as examining culture, rituals and death cultural anthropology of death, Eurocentric and Afrocentric views/perspectives of death, the meaning or interpretation of death at the level of households, the hegemonic analysis of culture, religion and death related cultural schemas in Southern African and in South African indigenous societies, description of the symbolic anger of Gods “ancestors” when rituals are not performed, the impact of COVID-19 on people, lockdown restrictions, mortality cases the “New Normal” and infringed burial rights and processes and the impact it had on religious and cultural beliefs.

#### 2.2. Literature review data sources

For this chapter, all the information was gathered using secondary data collection sources. Secondary data, according to Haswell (2010), is information that has already been published for general or other uses, and the researcher re-uses, and re-analyses previously collected data. The primary researcher used more than 50 published articles from the university library, more than 40 online articles, more than 20 un-reviewed articles from un-academically websites, a vast number of other online resources e.g. (online newspapers, articles, encyclopedias etc.)

from different search engines (Research Gate, J-store, Google Scholar, UKZN (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) online library and many more. Words like COVID-19, Death, culture, African religion, burial rites, rituals, African Traditional Religion, Cultural Schemas, Afrocentric, Eurocentric, bereavements and funerals are the ones that gave the information that re-arranged the discussed literature themes.

### **2.3. Conceptualization of death in anthropology**

The study of death in anthropology is one that has a long and important pedigree because it has historically recognized that death is part of humanity and that cultures have unique interpretations (Simpson, 2018). As previously stated, anthropology of death, studies the differences and similarities in how human cultures react to the passing of its inhabitants (Abrahovitch, 2015). Engelke (2019) argued that the anthropology of death is frequently defined by two primary interests: How life continues and the gruesome nature of death. In the event of death, it has been said that many studies have shown the influence of cultural and religious background has on the expression and emotional processing. Since culture is generally viewed as the sum of a people's anomalies, a people's values can be perceived as part of their culture.

### **2.4. Conceptualization of Culture and religion in an anthropological context.**

Anthropologically, culture and religion inform one's relativism. The anthropological literature further foregrounds that culture and religion shape one's identity, influences one's rituals and other cultural customs. This socially constructed knowledge becomes the corridor of socialization which is inherently passed from one generation to the next. It is the same corridor of socialization that sets many cultures apart or presents traits that are possibly similar. Parkes et al., (1997) cited in Radzilani (2010), talks of religion as a beliefs system that can be regarded as the body of ideas which binds society together. This can be put more simply by noting that religion ties individuals together in society so they can interact with the reality that particular culture or belief system perceives to exist. According to Radzilani (2010), the diversity of cultures and cultural practices reflects the beliefs of specific groups of people. Gcabashe (1995), referenced in Radzilani (2010), supports this view by arguing that cultural or religious convictions play a crucial role in how people practice their faith by helping to establish the moral principles that guide faith, belief, and spirituality. These concepts also aid in identifying discourses that influence how people construct and perceive reality.

### **2.4.1. Culture**

According to Radzilani (2010), culture is defined as the socially transmitted behavioural patterns, philosophical convictions, and artistic creations of a specific population, community, or group of people. Culture is also defined by Parkes et al. (1997, p. 10) as the ways of thinking and acting that set one group of people apart from another which are typically passed down from generation to generation. Culture is a system of knowledge that consists of taught patterns of feeling, thinking, and relating to others as well as a body of meaningful beliefs and conceptions about various facets of reality (Barth, 2002). Culture is considered as integrating distinctive individuals (community members) within a specific institution (community or society). Culture is structured in such a way that it implies that there are individuals who have a common mindset and behaviour that designates them as individuals within a given culture. What makes it special may be that it is shared by a group of related people who are usually segmented by race, ethnicity, or nationality; externalized by rich symbols, artifacts, social constructions, and social institutions utilized to create the common ground for communication among members (Hong, 2009). However, culture is subject to ongoing change when portions of the knowledge tradition are falsified or considered inapplicable by a contemporary social order and reality (Hong, 2009).

### **2.4.2. Religion**

Religion is "a human connection with culturally conceived reality," according to (Van Beek and Blakely, 1994:2), while it is described as "that corpus of ideas which binds a society together" by Parkes et al. (1997:10). The way these authors discuss religion leads one to believe that it ties people to particular institutions (society) and affects how they engage with the reality that is accepted by that culture. According to Pang and Lam (2002), the variations in cultural practices and beliefs are reflected in the diversity of cultures. This may imply that individuals in each culture behave and communicate in ways that are consistent with their beliefs. Those cultural behaviours represent a significant element of people's faith practice because they establish the moral norms that underpin that faith, belief, or spirituality (Gcabashe, 1995).

Religion, according to Radzilani (2010), is the system of believing in and worship of a supernatural force or God. This definition seems to imply that religion is important to both people who believe in a God (like Christians) and people who believe in ancestral forces (traditional Africans). In this study context, the researcher only discussed religion as it applies to these two groups. South Africa as a country has three major religious groups present, namely: Christianity, African Traditional religion with a little bit of Muslim Society. In local

communities, there is an existing and ongoing battle amongst people regarding the choices to religion which leads in some having a dual religion system. In proving this Mbiti (1975) writes that, there are many Africans who are the followers of more than one religion. He [*Mbiti, (1975)*] said, even if they can be registered or counted as the adherent of only one religion in practice, they subscribe to two. In fact, based on the participants' responses, some of the families within the community do attend or take part in Christian celebratory events, be it death, Christmas, or Good Fridays, while also performing some traditional rituals which are based more on African Independent Religion or African Traditional Religion. Giving the rationale in this dualism, Adamo (2011), states that this is a result of the Apartheid period in South Africa where the practice of AIR was a secret since the emerged missionaries (Congregational, Methodists, Anglican and Lutherans or Catholics) were aggressively opposing the traditional African practices as they considered them barbaric and based on superstitions. Consequently, with that condemnation, people opted to practice them in secret.

The articulation above suggests that practicing a religion requires actors to carry out certain activities (people). These are the rituals performed during the worship of a divinity, God or supernatural power and there are some actors who take specific activities (worship). Worshiping God when discussing religion seems to indicate that there is a superior being in charge who deserves people's obedience and respect. It also means that those who practice worship recognize their state of infirmity and dependency on this supernatural authority. The practice of religion is how people interact with their inner spirituality (De Veber, 1995).

## **2.5. Anthropology, Culture and Death.**

Cultural anthropologists are said to be studying all aspects of culture, as one can define anthropology as the study of humanity or everything that that makes human species what they are- ranging from culture, languages, human evolution to material remains (Brown, et al., 2020). Most cultures, families, and households, according to Bernstein (2019), conceive death as a transition or rite of passage in which the fate of the corpse is connected to the ritualistic or cultural schemas of the mourners.

### **2.5.1. Death across all cultures**

Mokhutso (2019:19) argued that death is a common occurrence which is not cultural or religious in its prevalence as it does not only affect the human species but all living creatures. According to Biwul (1978:1), who was mentioned by Mokhutso (2019), death is a regular human occurrence and acts as the "implacable enemy of man," that is, of all human beings.

When attempting to understand the meaning of death, Radzilani (2010) argues that our culture and religion influence how we assign that meaning; as a result, anthropologists use the Social Constructivism Theory as well as the Relativity Theory to examine the distinctiveness of cultural expressions. According to this argument, cultures that believe in the influence of the deceased on the lives of the living will view death as a transition into another life, whereas cultures that do not believe in this influence or establish a connection between the dead and the living will view death in a different way. The latter may view death as the end of life rather than a process that includes ancestors and perhaps God. According to African religions, life does not cease with death; it continues in another dimension. It is emphasized by Anderson (2001) that there are no definitive boundaries between the concepts of "life" and "death," and that they are not mutually exclusive. Mehta (1999), referenced in Radzilani (2010), asserted that religion and culture play a role in how people of different religions and cultures observe and perceive death. Given the cues and clues about death and dying, Gee (2005) suggests recognising the situated meanings during analysis of death and its impacts, one can argue that one's religion and culture guide us to attach meaning to death.

Different Scholars perceive death and after life differently:

#### **2.5.1.1. Eurocentric perspective of death and dying**

According to Euro-American viewpoints, life is divided into several phases that begin with conception and culminate with death. The final stage of life is therefore marked by death. The dead individual fades after passing away. The Eurocentric view is death as a private process, where grief and mourning are only subjected to the close family members and their funeral as private ceremonies within families. Mokhutso (2019) states that there are no burial rituals attached to Eurocentric funerals except intimate and small ceremonies.

#### **2.5.1.2. Afrocentric perspective of death and dying**

Mokhutso (2019) states that in Africa, just like any other parts of the world, there are different ways in which death is understood and responded to. According to Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata (2013), an African epistemology views death as the passage from a visible to an invisible ontology, in which the deceased's spirit and essence are not destroyed but can instead be transferred to continue existing in a spiritual dimension. In an African context, death is regarded as the passage to an end goal ~ ancestral ship, as the living is understood to have a purpose of becoming a good ancestor at the end. Radzilani (2010) believes that to be recognised

as an African individual, you must support and believe in the notion of life after death and acknowledge the ancestors' existence.

- **Death, Dying, and the end goal.**

Radzilani's (2010) articulation is deemed consistent with what Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata (2014) refer to as an African cultural, historical epistemological and methodological conception of being-in the world. According to Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2014), African epistemology refers to the concepts and approaches used by Africans to conceptualize and comprehend the world as well as the distinctive ways in which Africans apply their knowledge systems to advance their development, including understanding of death. Ngubane (2012) adds that the forefathers' wisdom always emphasized a continual relationship between the living and the dead and that death is not the end. Gielen (1997), referenced in Radzilani (2010), claims that although the departed (after burial) cannot be seen or touched as before, they nonetheless continue to exist in a new and distinct form. In religion and culture that recognize life after death, death is viewed as the continuation of existence. In essence, Radzilani's (2010) conceptualization of death symbolizes the transition from the world of the "flesh" to the world of the ancestors. Bonsu and Beryy-Spence (2008) argue that there is nothing that can be more universal than death but what is interesting is the varieties of responses it evokes from different societies, religions and cultures.

Omonisi (2020) states that some if not most African communities believes that the end-goal to life is to become an ancestor. Ngubane (2012) argued that as African belief and philosophy, ancestors are always in existence, and death is not the end, but in fact life continues after death hence there are rituals that should be prepared to usher the deceased to the world of ancestors. This allows their spirits to be welcomed by ancestors. Ancestor worship is an old age belief, which is traced back to Egyptian history and believed by AmaZulu (Bogopa, 2010). Lindemans (1997) and Bogopa's (2010) thinking is that most ancient cultures throughout the world use this belief and it is relevant to believers.

Ancestors are referred to as the living dead by Vilakazi (1965), as referenced in Ngubane (2012), since they are believed to be not dead but are in a particular world in another realm. Ngubane (2012:47) states that:

*“The deceased continue to participate in their families, societies, and communities and also communicate with their living kin...”*



Radzilani (2010) considers the concept of ancestors as the rebirth of the death in the spiritual world. In his articulation, Radzilani (2010:44) states that:

*“From a cultural and religious viewpoint, the idea of rebirth appears to influence how individuals view death because birth is linked to something new in our existence.”*

According to Ekore & Lanre Abass (2016), who also agreed with Omonisi et al. (2020), the traditional African belief system, often known as ancestor worship, is based on the knowledge that life courses are cyclical and not linear. According to this viewpoint, the deceased are still alive in another realm and still have an influence on people's daily lives. King (2013) cited in Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata (2014) states that:

*“When a person passes away, they transcend to the afterlife where they join the living dead or their ancestors. Ancestors are revered, highly regarded, and extremely vital to the community of the living because they protect and guide those in the material realm. As a result, communication and connection between the living and the dead are constant and unbreakable.”*

According to Bogopa (2010), ancestors' worship is based on the idea that the dead continue to exist and have the power to affect those who are still alive by either blessing or damning them. The cursing happens when rituals have not been honoured either before the burial date or after the burial which is commonly known as the celebration of the lived life and to introduce the new family member to ancestors. The celebration and the honour attached to these rituals imply respect (Bogopa, 2010).

### **2.5.1.3. Christian perspective of death and related ritualized cultural schemas**

Keating (2002:2) gives a theological perspective that draws on the Christian worldview and describes death as, "The moment the person's body is detached from their soul (the immaterial essence of humanity)". According to Keating (2002:5), death is not the end of life from a Christian perspective, rather:

*“A shift from one state of being to another occurs during death (Heb. 9:27). After being raised from the dead, every person will one day face judgment based on their deeds and their connection with God via Jesus Christ.” (Mokhutso, 2019: 20).*

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ form the foundation of Christian theology regarding death. Scripture verses like 1 John 3:2 that state, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be, has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall

be like him, because we shall see him as he is," are filled with this theology. This simply means that people who follow Christ throughout their lives will one day rise to life with him. Mokhutso (2019:20) asserted that Christian believers state:

*“Within Christian theology, Jesus' resurrection also fulfils another purpose. It grounds and supports the Christian hope. This has eschatological and soteriological ramifications... It provides the Christian prospect of eternal life with both foundation and substance on an eschatological level.”*

## **2.6.Social conceptualization of death and dying in an African context.**

Thus, this thesis contends, as substantiated by Ekore and Lanre-Abass (2016), that many African societies share fundamental characteristics. Idang (2015:100) and others concur that Africans do exhibit some defining characteristics in their ideologies and share values that set them apart from other nations. Every aspect of African life is infused with African beliefs, and Africans feel that anything may be given spiritual significance. Ekore and Lanre-Abass (2016) further aver that African societies hold their own meaning and interpretation which come through cultural schemas or through their relativism. In relation to death in Africa, each household observes or mourns death differently but there are symbolic commonalities, one being that death is respected and that conducting a specific ritual is believed to be a noble thing to do in honour of the dead person.

Thus, the prevalence of households shows that people are imbued with a notion of belonging and interconnectedness from an early age. People therefore feel a sense of obligation toward a bigger group of other people. Secondly, death is understood as the experience of all households. Africans find it difficult to accept the fact of death, and they frequently discourage people from thinking about their own or their loved ones' demise. However, in Africa, people frequently view death from both religious and cultural perspectives. Through or from the traditional African belief system and through cultural relativism, death is celebrated on the understanding that the life course is cyclical and not linear. Ancestors also celebrate receiving a new member in their spiritual realm even though the death of a young person is mostly regretted.

According to this belief system, those who have passed away are still alive in another world and can reincarnate (and take fresh rebirths). For those who pass away at a respectable (old) age, death is seen as a rite of passage. When someone passes away in Africa, the dead ancestors are consulted for divination as to the cause of death. Death causes are typically linked to

spiritual factors (witchcraft, insulting one's ancestors, or Gods), rather than to medical or physical causes. Others believe that it is an African cultural concept that having passed over into the afterlife grants one '*supernatural abilities*' over people who are still alive, including the capacity to bless or curse, grant or remove life, among other things. After passing away, persons continue to live in a spirit world where they are given a new body that is identical to their previous one but may move like an ancestor. Thus, becoming an ancestor after death is a goal that everyone aspires to, and it is believed that this cannot be accomplished if a person did not live a meaningful life or if their life was cut short, as in the case of an accident or an untimely death. Therefore, an African person would prefer a slow, lingering death that occurs naturally, as they would not only be able to settle many concerns, like making peace and saying goodbye to family, but they would also be welcomed into the afterlife. According to Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2014:232), death is a natural transition from the visible to the invisible spiritual ontology in which the spirit, or the essence of the person, is not destroyed but instead proceeds to dwell in the world of the spirit realm as an ancestor. It denotes an unbreakable spiritual link between the material world and the spiritual realm.

When people pass away, they transcend to the afterlife where they join the living dead or their ancestors. Ancestors are greatly revered, respected, and are vital to the living because they protect and guide those in the material realm (King, 2013 cited in Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata, 2014). As a result, communication and connection between the living and the dead are constant and unbroken. According to traditional Africans, the deceased is thought to be actively participating in an evolving condition of life in the world of animated beings, where they are living in the ontology of invisible, intangible creatures. Here, people believe that the dead—the living dead—really exist and have a real impact on the lives of the living. Here, a spiritual disposition is assumed or anticipated. According to traditional African thought, spirituality is a crucial component of the ontological unity of the cosmos. This cosmic unity contains the essence of the living dead. Therefore, the spirit is a component of the living forces that make up the entirety of the cosmic unity. All living and non-living things are a part of what it is to be entire. When seen from this angle, Africans do not see life and death as two distinct states, but rather as two forces that cohabit peacefully and interdependently.

According to Nobles (2006), who was quoted by Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2014), death is an extra developmental milestone for indigenous African people in addition to other life stages and developmental processes. For the native Africans, death is a shift to, or "growing"

into, a new stage of existence. The deceased transcend into a state of universal immortality and are present alongside the spirits. African culture holds that there is always something or someone to blame and that death is never a spontaneous occurrence. According to Sossou (2002), a person's death is always the result of something or someone. Radzilani (2010), advances that traditional Africans can execute various ceremonies as a means of recognizing the value of the deceased because they hold the conviction that death is not a natural occurrence. Death is categorised as either good and acceptable or awful and unacceptable (Mokhutso, 2019).

### **2.6.1. Good death**

Death can be regarded as painful and fearful regardless of the individual or societal cultural and religious position. Radzilani (2010) depicts good or acceptable death as the death that comes after a person has “attained a ripe old age”. This articulation concerns age as the factorial determinant of a good death. Mokhutso (2019:24) states that:

*“It was believed that people would survive to old age and enjoy a regular existence. Many African families hold the view that an early death was not a result of nature. Every illness or early death that disrupted the natural flow of life was said to be the result of magic or demonic spirits.”*

Death can be perceived good if the deceased is old. He asserts that:

*“Both the dying and those who remain, such as family members, fulfil particular roles when death is conceptualized as being good. In addition to offering support and care, family members also carry out the essential, culturally mandated rites for the dying individual. Such customs not only assist the dying person in passing peacefully into the eternity, but they also provide comfort to the grieving family members by letting them know that they have fulfilled the culturally prescribed task associated with the dying process.” ~ (Radzilani, 2010, 49)*

It is easier to deal with death if the death is good. But nowadays, people frequently pass away in hospitals (Backer et al., 1994), far from the loved ones who should be there to care for them in their final days. Even while it seems natural, the good death has altered, and frequently, families receive little support when a loved one is dying. While the family and community experience the typical pain that befalls all families and communities who have lost their loved ones, the death of an elderly person is good and acceptable. (Mokhutso , 2019)

### **2.6.2. Wild death**

Death is not the same, according to Radzilani (2010), who also contends that any death connected to a forest or a shrub, or to being walled off from familiar surroundings and unable to reach someone or something, is regarded as a wild death. This occurs when a person passes away far from their family and is linked to those who are unreachable by other family members and close friends. According to Mokhutso (2019), a "bad death" is one that is caused by a homicide, an accident, an infant's death, an unclear disease, etc. and these deaths are not understood in the same way. Radzilani (2010) citing O’Gorman (1998) argues that:

*“Contemporary death and dying usually take place in hospital, away from loved ones and surrounded by medical equipment and staff. Such fatalities prevent traditional African people from performing rituals for a dying family member and equate that demise to wild and unacceptable death.” ~ (O’Gorman, 1998:46).*

According to Opoku (1989), a wild death is a horrible death. He contends that individuals who are thought to have passed very tragically may return and carry out their previous deeds, such as suicide, through a member of the family (Opoku, 1989). In certain traditional societies, it is thought that someone is to blame for a wild or unfortunate death (Radzilani, 2010).

### **2.6.3. Causes of death**

Owino (2017) stated that people should expect to survive and enjoy a normal life till old age and that many Africans share the view that death at a very young age is/was not caused by a natural event. According to him (Owino, 2017), anything that disrupted the ontological path of life and brought about disease and early death is/was thought to be the result of sorcery or demonic spirits. According to Mbiti (1991), referenced by Radzilani (2010), death appeared in African mythology by accident, and ever since, it has been a burden that men must bear and live with. This error is attributed to people, animals, and occasionally spirits or monsters. Physical causes of death alone, according to both scholars (Mbiti and Owino), are insufficient; people or families want to know both physical and metaphysical causes of death (Mokhutso , 2019).

### **2.7. Bereavements, grief, mourning, burials, and rituals**

Respect, dignity, solidarity, compassion, and survival are the cornerstone of the African culture. These five elements are regarded as ties that bind and shape African society which is built on values and the basis of Ubuntu. Pelewe (2018) argues that in times of death and bereavement, all these values are of high importance to the family of the deceased and even to

the community at large. Death is regarded as a permanent loss of life as Pelewe (2018) referred to it as an elimination from the world of the living. He argues that once an individual dies, his/her closer people, family or friends, are left bereaved (Pelewe, 2018). It is a well-known fact that every household and family has had their share of experience regarding death and surviving family members are left bereaved. When death occurs, most cultures or religions have a prescribed traditional/ religious bereavement and mourning process which they believe which will simplify the adjustment of the bereaved family lives.

### **2.7.1. Bereavements**

Bereavements are described by Mokhutso (2019:25), while quoting Radzilani (2010), as, "The state of having experienced a loss. It entails denying us of someone we love against our will, withholding something from us unfairly and hurtfully, and taking something of value." Due to the loss of their loved ones, bereaved people are suffering and being victimized during this process. To bolster this, Radzilani (2010) claims that when people experience grief as a loss, their victimization and suffering indicate that they are not normal but rather ill or in pain. Radzilani urges that they must let it go or detach from the deceased and find a way to move on with their lives so that they can resume their normal behaviour once they have recovered from the depression brought on by the loss.

### **2.7.2. Coping with death to the bereaved- Death as a family and a community event**

Finding a way to cope with death implies finding a way to restore the psychological well-being of the bereaved individuals. Death is the painful and stressful dread event; it is viewed as heart-breaking and a threat to the wellness of the bereaved people. There are strategies to use in coping with death because it is designed to be a danger that upsets one's state of psychological well-being (Radzilani, 2010). Many African societies see death as a social or public event, which is a common occurrence. The practice of including the entire community in the grieving process in African societies allows for mutual support and sharing of the deceased person's immediate relatives. Itweni (2020) makes the case that this custom (in African communities) of viewing death as a social, or even community issue, offers support and shifts some of the burden of grieving from the family to the community, sharing it with them rather than letting them deal with it privately and alone. Death is portrayed as an adversary who separates people from their families and society, upsetting both. It has the potential to destabilize the neighbourhood where the dead lived. The family is the first place to look for support when coping with this loss. According to Itweni (2020), the family is the most important institution for everyone who is born into one. It is the first and most important pillar to support each

bereaved person after the death of a family member. It is believed that family members have an emotional bond and are sensitive to one another's needs, wants, worries, and distress. The larger, more interconnected, and more dependent the family, the more quickly and easily one can deal with the loss of a loved one.

## **2.8.Culture burials and rituals**

According to Engelke (2019), while related literatures on grief and mourning focus on the emotional work required to make a death good, either for a person or a community, most literature written on funerals and mortuary rituals explores various ways in which death can be conquered and asserts the continuity of life in general in the face of loss. The understanding of death or the anthropological approaches to death are more based on the relationship of death rituals, mortuary practices and culture in general (Grossmann, et al., 2012). According to Abrahovitch (2015), anthropologists have provided evidence of the vast cultural diversity in how corpses are disposed of what is expected of grieving people, and how the living and the dead continue to interact. Abrahovitch (2015) asserts that death rites are still an essential occurrence in most traditional cultures and are at the centre of social life. Ngubane (2019) posits that traditions, customs and rituals differ among cultures and religious groups within a community, and human burial customs are a physical reflection of people's innate desire to honour the deceased. In all societies, family, friends, and neighbours react to a death in a structured, predictable manner. Cohen's (2002) assertion stressed that the treatment and the disposal of the body together with the prescribed mourning period by close friends and relatives is determined by the cultural guidelines (Cohen, 2002). All these variations depend on how each [society] perceive death.

Appel (2011) posits that death rituals and ceremonies together with funerals are therapeutic and treasuries for the survivors and beavered when they have been meticulously observed. Even years after the death, these rituals and rites may still be performed. Ceremonies appear to help bonds be renewed and strengthened. Funerals are described by Rosenblatt et al. (1997) as, "A ritual of termination, a time to express respect, say farewell, and honour the departed." Funerals are seen to be therapeutic, emotional, and spiritually beneficial for those who have lost a loved one since they help people accept the death of that person. Funeral rituals also indicate the deceased's past and social connections:

*According to Appel (2011:145), funerals are rites of passage that act as occasions for reunification and inclusion. The duties and position of the survivors alter when the deceased*

*departs the world of the living and enters the symbolic world of the dead. It is thought that in order to transition into a new role, the surviving must let go of the crucial function they played and the status they shared with the deceased. For instance, a wife who loses her husband no longer has the title of wife; instead, she is now referred to as a widow and has a new identity as well as a new position.*

## **2.9.The meaning and impact of rituals from the African perspective**

Pang and Chang (2002) claim that distinct cultures have different funeral rites, and this variation reflects underlying differences in belief systems. When a family member dies in African cultures, the grieving family members and relatives are expected to follow certain culturally prescribed bereavement rites. The departed is neither entirely among the living nor entirely among the dead prior to these ceremonies being carried out. The dead cannot join the ancestors until such ceremonies have been enacted (Vold, 2000). Funeral rites, customs and practices of various religious groups, including Christians and traditional Africans, typically describe how individuals grieve, accept and observe death. Rituals are, "Particular behaviours or activities that provide symbolic expression to specific sentiments and thoughts of the actor or actors, individually or as a group," according to Rando (1985:184). According to this description, rituals are symbolic in character and involve actors carrying out a certain duty in a ritualistic manner. Through the execution of these rituals, bereaved people transform into performers and symbolise specific things through translation of thoughts and feelings into symbolic meaning. People who participate in grieving rituals symbolize the sense of loss that compels them to act in a certain way—participate in these rituals. Additionally, people could carry out the rituals to express their sorrow and suffering. They might also believe that partaking in grieving rituals will make their pain go away. Van der Hart (1983) asserts that rituals promote healing, while Pang and Lam (2002) argue that rituals humanize themselves by bringing solace to those who are grieving.

Rituals are believed to confirm cultural values through participants' words and deeds in each context (Taylor, 1980; Romanoff & Terenzio, 1998). According to Kollar (1989), rituals shape life and the life cycle from conception to death. As a result, rituals are carried out following birth, in puberty, throughout marriage, and both during and after death. These rites are carried out verbally and physically. According to Cook and Oltjenbruns (1989), rituals represent change, recovery, and continuities. According to Pang and Lam (2002), a ritual must have a specific meaning for its participants to be effective and to have the greatest value. It also needs to cater to the requirements of the bereaved family. People are unlikely to benefit from and



may even have a negative experience with a ritual when they do not understand why they are performing it, as would be the case, for instance, if the ritual is imposed purely as a cultural obligation. Many traditional African societies presumptively believe that individuals who were socially tied to the deceased person will continue to be so for a definite period.

Although there are many events prior to the funeral, funeral rituals are the most important actions to be taken related to a family member's death. These include notifying the public of the passing, visiting the body, choosing a coffin and gravestone, and holding a pre-funeral prayer service (Pang & Lam, 2002; Selepe & Edwards, 2008). Each of these actions serves the objective of enabling the family to acknowledge the death both privately and publicly. The chance to reach out or request assistance is presented by the public notification or announcement of the death and the pre-funeral prayer (Bolton & Camp, 1987; Selepe & Edwards, 2008). Therefore, it is possible to claim that the rites serve both the departed and the grieving, who must live without the deceased. For those who take part in them, rituals have significance and purpose.

## **2.10. Functions of rituals**

Radzilani (2010) states that when people undertake rituals, they anticipate some sort of reward. Furthermore, it is anticipated that through grieving rituals, the bereaved may come to cognitively accept the loss of a loved one. Certain roles connected to bereavement and mourning rituals have been recognized by Aiken (2001), Fulton (1987), Pang and Lang (2002), Taylor (1980), and others. These rituals are used in traditional African religious and cultural traditions to fulfil the needs of both individuals and the community. Additionally, carrying out the rites is said to be helpful for both one's personal healing as well as for aiding the deceased on their passage to the afterlife. According to Radzilani (2010), there are five primary purposes for burial ceremonies in general:

### **2.10.1. Public display of grief**

Funerals, prayers, and memorial ceremonies are just a few rituals that most societies use to publicly honour when someone has passed away (Cook & Itjenbruns, 1989; Selepe & Edwards, 2008). By engaging in the rituals, bereaved persons demonstrate to the general population that they are in mourning and demand that this be recognized. It can imply that rituals offer chances for a public expression of mourning. This is significant because, in groups of people, including those who speak Tshivenda, grieving experiences must be acknowledged and affirmed by the

group. That particular community's religious and cultural legacy appears to set forth behaviours and modes of interaction that inform expressions of grieving and approval thereof.

Rituals provide the bereaved with a way to express the predetermined and appropriate feelings that are thought to lessen their suffering (Myerhoff, 1982). The bereaved ask for the community's assistance and recognition of the mourning process in addition to conducting the rites. These customary mourning rituals give family, friends, and neighbours a chance to offer their condolences while also assisting the grieving in accepting the reality of their loss. Rituals therefore enable positive interpersonal connections to take place (Corr et al., 1997; Wilson & Kneis, 1983).

### **2.10.2. Assisting the deceased to the afterlife**

Many traditional African societies hold that for the soul of the deceased to reach its final resting place in the land of the dead, it must be helped or let to do so (Walter, 1997). As a result, people engage in grieving rituals to help or permit the deceased to enter the world of the ancestral. Funeral rites are carried out to ensure that the departed can join the ancestral spirits, according to Wiredu (1989, p. 21). Traditional African beliefs hold that the deceased's spirit cannot leave this world before the funeral rites have been performed properly (Wiredu, 1989). Religious and cultural discourses that respect ancestors call for the conduct of rituals that represent, among other things, the passage of the dead into the world of the ancestors. Helping the dead to join their ancestors suggests that without the rites being carried out, the ancestors will not be able to find their way to the ancestral world. The dead must enter the world of the ancestors and take on responsibilities seen as belonging to the ancestors by the living. These responsibilities include ones that are important for helping the living with daily tasks, like plowing. The Chinese for instance, think that if the ceremonies are carried out as prescribed, the bereaved will gain materially from the departed in the form of luck, money, and fertility (Lalande & Bonanno, 2006).

Some bereavement rituals are silent, impromptu, symbolic expressions of the griever's particular emotions. There are plenty of these, such as laying a single rose on the casket in Western culture or tucking sealed messages beneath the burial cushion (Conley, 1987). For traditional Africans, the casket may contain some of the deceased's personal items, such as clothing, plates, and utensils. This is carried out with the anticipation that the departed may require them when they pass into the afterlife. Traditional Africans may scatter maize seeds on the grave after a burial. The dead are supposed to appear in the fields that are being tilled and

help the seeds develop so that there would be abundant harvest. The metaphorical gesture is the resurrection of the body after burial, just as a plant does after its seed (Fulton, 1992). This metaphor also represents the notion that when the rites are carried out properly, the dead will resurrect in some other form to help the living survive.

Christians hold that when a person passes away, God calls them, and they enter the afterlife even before the funeral ceremony has been conducted. The ceremonies based on traditional African beliefs are therefore viewed as unneeded or even wicked and immoral (Canine, 1996). According to Christianity, there is no need to help the departed enter the afterlife because, once they are pronounced dead, their spirit enters the spiritual world and does not need any more help from the living. Christians believe that they will be reunited with the deceased in heaven, however members in the Tshivenda-speaking community who uphold traditional customs feel a need to help the deceased go to join the ancestors since they still have a role to play in their lives (Chan et al., 2005; Pang & Lam, 2002). This means that it is impossible to intervene in the deceased's life. While traditional Africans are thought to be weak and in need of favours or assistance from the ancestors, Christians are thought to rely only on themselves and God, without the help of the ancestors. According to Christian missionaries, participating in traditional African bereavement rites was/is against Christian doctrines and belief systems because it involved associating oneself with ancestors rather than God (Chavanduka 1999).

### **2.10.3. Assisting with the status to new roles**

Rites of passage, rituals offer "formal recognition of the shift from one stage in the life cycle to another and the transformed status that transition brings" (Littlewood, 1992). (Fulton & Metress, 1995, p. 462). Additionally, they assist the bereaved in reintegrating into society with a new social rank (Pang & Lam, 2002). Funeral customs that are observed in public signify a change in status, whether for the bereaved or the dead (Pine, 1989). For instance, becoming a widower or widow changes one's social position from being a husband or wife. When a family member dies, the bereaved are given a new status that represents their acceptance that the departed will no longer be given the status of the living but rather the "living dead" since it is thought that they are still alive but in a different state (Ngubane, 2004:174).

People who have experienced a death wear mourning attire for a set amount of time as a symbol of adjusting to their new social standing. Such attire demands social acceptance, comprehension, and support. Wearing mourning attire sends out a message of personal sorrow

and an underlying appeal for sympathy from others (Sanders, 1992). After her husband's passing, a Zulu widow is supposed to dress in mourning clothing for a full year (Carton, 2003). The bereaved appear to acknowledge their brokenness by donning mourning attire and to hope that society's acceptance will enable them to resume their normal lives. Such a request necessitates proper consideration on the part of those who offer consolation, and those who are comforted are required to return the favour. The bereaved family is given permission, time, and acceptance to experience what they are feeling through this type of assistance (Sanders, 1992). These socially constructed norms, traditions or ways of behaving are mediated by culture, which establishes what behaviour is acceptable in certain situations (such as the death of a family member). If there are no guidelines, bereaved people may act in a way that does not portray them as flawed or helpless individuals.

#### **2.10.4. Provision of healing or therapy**

According to Radzilani (2010), who cites Bento (1994), Lalande & Bonanno (2006), death rituals appear to have therapeutic and healing significance and aid the bereaved in recovering and moving on with their lives because the loss of a loved one is designed to be unpleasant and distressing for the survivors. According to Walsh and McGoldrick (1991), rituals are the best way to start the healing process. It indicates that participating in bereavement rituals justifies the aberrant state of health for those who do so. This is predicated on the idea that after carrying out the required rites, people will resume their regular states. According to Van der Hart (1983), rituals can bring about healing, continuity, and balance if the griever perceives them as having a significant meaning. This suggests that participating in bereavement rituals is a sign of illness, the cessation of normal functioning, or an imbalance in the actors' functioning. The terms used by Walsh and McGoldrick (1991) and Van der Hart (1983) seem to place ritual performers in the position of being ill and needing emergency treatment to remedy their illness. If the bereaved did not carry out the rituals after the death of a family member, the state of being unwell would appear different to them. This could represent their acceptance of an alternative viewpoint, such that they are normal and do not find the death to be unpleasant or traumatic.

#### **2.10.5. Purification of the mourners -**

The belief that mourners, especially women and children, are contaminated from being in touch with the dead is prevalent in most traditional African cultures. Funerals and grieving rituals are thought to aid in the purifying of those who are polluted (Carton, 2003; Goldberg, 1981). For instance, women who have lost their spouses through death in the Zulu-speaking society must undertake purification rites because it is considered that they are 'filthy' due to their affiliation

with the deceased. The same holds true for widows from any African tribe who are perceived as polluted following the passing of their husbands (Rosenblatt & Nkosi, 2007). The idea is that the bereaved becomes filthy after a family member passes away (this could be a spouse, a wife, or anyone in the family). Therefore, purification enables the survivor to become clean and resume living a regular life. A traditional healer is invited the day following the burial to come and purify the entire yard to complete these ceremonies. This is done to avoid any additional deaths or other unfortunate events brought about by disrespect for the deceased (Aborampar, 1999).

It is also thought that the bereaved's surroundings are tainted and need to be purified. The faith healer will visit and apply holy water to cleanse it. The holy water is sprinkled throughout the kraal to acknowledge how death affects both the environment in which the deceased functioned and the environment in which the survivors will continue to function (Sanders, 1992; Selepe & Edwards, 2008). This concept in contamination appeared to be based on a theological and cultural tradition that views death as something that dirties people and necessitates cleansing to restore them to the state they were in before the death (Radzilani 2010).

### **2.11. The history of pandemic outbreaks and their Impact in Africa and African Societies**

Throughout history, unexpected outbreaks of infectious diseases have had a tremendous and enduring impact on society. These pandemic events have altered human civilization's cultural, economic, political, and social aspects, with their consequences frequently lasting for centuries (Huremovic, 2019). Infection outbreaks, according to Huremovic (2019), are one of the few historical phenomena that have had as much influence on our society and culture. Despite this, social science research has paid them relatively little attention. According to Qui et al.,'s (2017) assertion, "pandemic," as the term comes from the Greek pan which means "all," and "demos," meaning "the people." Qui et al. (2017:26) and Honigsbaum (2019) both mention pandemics in their statements that:

*“The term is frequently used to describe a massive pandemic of an infectious disease that simultaneously affects the entire nation or one or more continent.”*

Beyond the crippling and occasionally deadly effects on people who are immediately afflicted, pandemics, according to Davies (2013), have several detrimental social, economic, and political effects. Consider SARS in 2003 and the Ebola pandemics in 2013 and 2015, which both caused illness and fatalities while upsetting the economies and social order in China and

West Africa. Qui et al. (2016) argued that Ebola and other pandemics have decreased the life quality of families and communities and that Ebola has disrupted essential services like education, transportation, and tourism, reduced the West African economies, and isolated populations, which had effects outside of Africa due to the global effort to contain the outbreak likewise, COVID-19. The patterns of how different cultures view death and dying have changed as a result of these pandemics. They progressively alter how people show their respect for the deceased, lament them, and even weep for them.

## **2.12. COVID-19 origin and outbreak, Impact of COVID on people and Societies**

Culturally, COVID-19 has had a big impact on how many people think and act. Numerous publications have claimed that this pandemic has claimed many lives, but one heartbreakingly remarkable reality is that, due to health protocols, the bereaved families of the dead COVID-19 patients did not observe their usual and customary ways of handling death and burial practices or ceremonies. According to Sarmiento (2020), this pandemic (COVID-19) has prohibited religious and cultural households and families from carrying out the funeral rites for their deceased loved ones. In most of these societies, death is viewed as a gateway to eternal life that should be accompanied by burial rites. Boaheng (2021:4) makes the following arguments regarding the emergence of pandemics:

*“The COVID 19 pandemic, like HIV/AIDS, heralds a crisis affecting society, families, the country, and even the entire world. As he emphasized, the pandemic has had a significant negative influence on people's life in many aspects, including the social, economic, political, religious, and cultural aspects... The pandemic's associated health measures have altered how all societies live their customary lives.”*

Supporting Boaheng's, (2021) sentiments, Sharpley & Bank, (2020: 9) writes that:

*“According to tradition and religious beliefs, families and religious leaders are typically given certain latitude to bury the dead in a dignified manner, but COVID 19 restrictions forbid this (Sharpley & Bank, 2020: 9).”*

Human rituals, such as burial and befitting ceremonies, are believed to be symbolic acts, repetitive, standardized, and highly valued behaviours that allow people in expressing emotion, sharing beliefs, and transmitting values (da Silva, et al., 2020). Mortuary and funeral rites are used to mark the last stage in the cycle of life, and they are the most significant, according to the findings of (Adom, et al., 2021). These funeral rites refer to several mourning and consoling occasions that mark the passing of a member of the family or the community (Adom, et al.,

2021). Arhin-Sam, (2014) referenced in Adom et al., (2021), using Ghanaian context, stated that mortuary or burial ceremonies or appropriate rites are the only culturally sanctioned method that assures that blessings are received from the spirits of the grieving family.

According to Adom, et al. (2021), correct burial procedures and rites are thought to prevent the spontaneous death of a family member or a member of the community by the deceased's spirit, which may be vengeful if the cultural protocols for the funeral or burial ceremonies were violated. The most important and fundamental prerequisites for ancestry are proper burial rites, or appropriate rites, which are also seen as the prerequisites for the deceased's safe passage to the ancestral world (Adom, et al., 2021). According to Da Silva et al. (2020), the absence of rituals could lead to the spirit of the deceased taking revenge on the living in addition to making it difficult for those who have lost a loved one to realize their loss mentally.

### **2.13. National Shutdown and lock downs restrictions**

The first lockdown in South Africa was declared on March 23, 2020, went into effect on March 26, 2020, and was scheduled to remain until April 16, 2020. Due to the fast-increasing number of infections, this lockdown was prolonged until the end of April. The national lockdown was often extended monthly following advice from the National Communicable Diseases Advising committee. These lockdown extensions were then staged according to levels, from high and strict lockdown termed on level 5 until it reached low and relaxed lockdown termed level 1 with almost everything back to normality.

It is vital to observe and identify the disruption caused by this pandemic on death, grieving, mourning, and all other burial rituals, particularly for Black South Africans, with COVID-19 restrictions notably at national lockdown level 5. A large amount of daily existential stress was brought on by the COVID-19 outbreak due to the loss of friends and loved ones as it threatens the wellbeing of those left behind to process it in various ways. One perceives death as a tragic and a difficult process to deal with and people who lose loved ones to death go through terrible emotional, psychological, and bodily upheaval (Kgadima & Leburu, 2022). Legal, behavioural, and social actions to contain or stop the outbreak have changed the societal practices around death and the disposal of dead bodies around the world since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. According to Kgadima & Leberu (2022), numerous countries adopted a variety of strategies and tactics to stop the spread of COVID-19, and as a result, many, if not all, of them have implemented lockdowns or complete shutdowns. To stop the COVID-19 pandemic from spreading, South Africa, like the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, and India, announced

several funeral-related regulations and restrictions. Those restrictions have changed how cultural and religious societies observe death and burial rites in South Africa. Funerals were allowed during this period, with a limit of 50 family members and mourners in attendance. Furthermore, the human remains had to be buried in less than a week after passing away. These rules presented a problem because certain African groups have ornate funeral and burial customs. These cultures consider the final farewell to be a rite of passage that offers families one more chance to express their love and gratitude for a loved one who has passed away.

The COVID-19 recommendations from the Department of Health were against such customs since families could not access the remains of their loved ones to carry out any rites. Additionally, it was prohibited for the human remains to enter the deceased's home's yard since it was thought that they might be contaminated. Because funeral directors and family members were unable to carry out conventional funeral and burial procedures, the mourning process was incomplete, and the family feared that the world of the living dead would be thrown into chaos. In this study, I want to find out if it is possible to avoid the dreaded wrath of the living dead by using IKS to modify funeral and burial customs such that they comply with Department of Health regulations while yet placating the living dead.

#### **2.14. Funerals, rituals under strict restrictions**

Funerals have been noted as high-risk COVID-19 infection locations, particularly in rural South Africa, where most funerals still take place. Due to restrictions on family members practicing customary burial rites and planning a highly appropriate funeral for their deceased family members from COVID-19, many deaths from the COVID-19 outbreak were tragically not traditionally buried in many nations of the world (Omonisi, 2020). South Africa reportedly went on hard lockdown (Level 5) relatively early in the pandemic, according to Kollamparambi & Oyenubi (2021). (March 2020). Residents were primarily confined to their homes during the strict lockdown, so there was not much need for individual decision-making. The disaster management statute was amended with a complex set of rules to restrict travel across provinces and avoid contact with remains at funerals that were coronavirus infected. The rationale for the rigorous lockdown was the notion that human behaviour was the only thing that could stop the pandemic and its spread. The government set tight regulations on regulating all funeral attendance due to the surge of COVID-19 transmission instances because of the attendance at funerals. About 200 cases in the Eastern Cape at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak were connected to two funerals that took place in Port Elizabeth and Port St. Johns. Most funerals that followed were cited as being major catalysts for the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa



(Magome, 2020). Jaja et al., (2020) states that according to the Department of Health in the Eastern Cape, 80% of all infections (dated 7 May 2020), in the province resulted from burial ceremonies in Port St. Johns and Port Elizabeth.

Omonisi (2020) asserted that, similar to the Irish government, the South African government urged and eventually mandated that coroners have closed coffin funerals instead of open casket burials and refrain from embalming the deceased. The government prohibited people from holding funerals with more than 50 attendees and required that social and physical distance be observed, following the pattern of cases that emerged from the funerals in the Eastern Cape. Police enforced sanitation and physical distance rules, limited participation, shortened rituals, and restricted the distribution of food and alcohol (Bank, et al., 2020).

According to Magome (2020), Mr. Khumbulani Moyo, who lost his daughter to illness, was devastated by the necessity of burying her within four days in the absence of any other family members outside his parents. He asserted that funerals in South Africa are generally elaborate affairs that frequently occur on Saturday and go through Sunday. Family members and other mourners frequently fly there to attend these funerals, and they regularly keep midnight vigils and wash the body (Magome, 2020). Even though COVID 19 claimed lives, Mr. Moyo asserted that it also claimed the customs of interring their loved ones:

*“In accordance with tradition, the body was delivered the day before the funeral so that mourners might gather at the family home. The body must now be transported directly from the mortuary to the cemetery or Crematory.” (Magome, 2020: 8).*

The washing of the body before burial was the custom that the imposed limits and regulations hindered the most. With COVID-19, the body is already packaged in three or four body bags when it leaves the hospital; these bags are not supposed to be opened. In accordance with African tradition, the family would visit the morgue and wash the body to identify the correct body before it was even placed in a coffin. According to Bank et al. (2020), in one of their case studies, the police and local officials refused to let the body, which had come from Cape Town, inside the main house or the funeral tent. The deceased person's body was left outside and buried as quickly as feasible. According to a different case study, the family's inability to observe and contact with the corpse had been a significant source of concern. According to the rules, even if they are in coffins, the bodies of those who have died from COVID-19 should not be seen during burial services, especially not within the home. They should also ideally be

encased in solid plastic and buried in that material (Bank, et al., 2020). In numerous instances, this resulted in families burying the wrong people.

### **2.15. Chapter Summary**

The outbreak of pandemics is not a new thing, and traces back in history. There have been numerous pandemic outbreaks throughout recorded history, and each has had an impact on basic tenets of society as well as human history. These outbreaks have changed the way societies observe culture, religion, death, mourning and grieving. The recent COVID-19 pandemic added and has changed the way people observe death and burial rituals. With the restrictions and protocols put in place by government on how to conduct funerals and burial, there has been a huge disturbance on how people bury and mourn or grieve for their loved ones. The existing literature shows that death is a universal experience which is perceived differently by societies. Major determinant on how death is observed is culture and religion in which they are regarded as social constructs. The literature proves that in African religion, death is regarded as a rite of passage into the ancestral world while Christians believe that all the dead will one day be resurrected and judged through the relationship they had with God and Christ.

# Chapter 3

## Theoretical frameworks

### 3.1.Introduction

Garbens (1996:278) cited in Khumalo (2010) states that, “All theoretically unbacked literatures, do not get much recognition or being taken seriously by other scholars as they lack a fundamental theoretical base.” According Mokhutso (2019), the theory may be seen as a system that organizes concepts in a way that produces an understanding of or insight into a certain subject to a researcher. Khumalo (2010) defines theory as combining other scholars’ ideas and views that explain how things are done in that aspect. Duffy et al., (2010) define a theory as a rigorous intentional attempt to explain a definite and verifiable event relating to a problem. One can then define theory as an analysis tool that helps the researcher guide his/her research to be of a high standard and quality aligned with truth in its findings. Culler's (1997) narrative argues that theory does assist researchers in their ideas and views that are more based on different fields or positions. He continues by saying that theories sometimes pose a challenge to other research that needs to be proved for their practicality. This study is guided by the combination of two postmodernism theories that complement each other: Social Construction Theory and Cultural Relativism. These two theories follow the postmodernist paradigm, which holds that reality is socially constructed. This chapter begins by outlining the general importance of a theoretical framework, elaborates more on two theories used to guide and support this study, gives the ontological, epistemological, and philosophical position of both theories and the relevance of both theories in this study.

### 3.2.The importance of a theoretical framework

Babbie (2013) and Khumalo (2010) opine that theory has three primary functions in research; they assist in developing an ideological pattern of the study and help a researcher avoid using unverifiable information and assists in connecting the collected information into the study objectives. As discussed by Mouton's (1996:198) in Khumalo (2010) theoretical framework(s) as the set of related minds, ideas, and frameworks designed to explain the relationship between objectives and practicality. Reeves (2008) cited in Nkosi (2014:23), states that the theoretical framework gives new eyes to the researcher about identifying current social ills that affect people in that time. Skidmore (1975) and Mokhutso (2019:12) further accentuate that:

*“Theorizing is essentially the only option available. If we eliminated it, we would be left with a disorganized mass of information and impressions that would clamor for ordering and*

*interpretation. ... The goal of theory is to explain something, or a range of somethings, to which it is relevant. Theory does this by introducing theoretical order into a situation.” ~ (Mokhutso, 2019).*

Mokhutso (2019) avows that a theory's purpose is to enable researchers to explain, predict, and control why and how variables relate to observable or measurably occurring events pertaining to a problem. As such, the researcher should use a theoretical framework that will direct, support, and shape their research.

### **3.3.Social Constructivism theory**

This is the principal theory that has been used by the principal investigator to guide this study. Social Constructivism is a viewpoint that holds that social and interpersonal forces account for a large portion of how human life is currently manifested. According to some publications, this theory aims at how people describe their experiences and how they think about specific phenomena to comprehend of their surroundings (Galbin, 2014). Social Construction Theory is defined as a knowledge theory of sociology and communication that investigates the genesis of a collectively constructed perception of the world. Goffman (1999: 76) rationalizes that giving the clear understanding of what the phrase “socially constructed” means:

*“When anything is described as socially created, it is meant to highlight how dependent it is on the conditional nature of the social self...”*

Anthropologists have long been using this theory to gain an insider perspective of the matter in relation to a phenomenon. Abdla-Haqq (1998), Duffy (2006), Magashoa (2014) asserted that this theory is an epistemology (theory of knowledge) that anthropologists have employed to study other cultures without imposing any judgments on them. This theory connects anthropologists in the natural “in situ”<sup>2</sup> of the studied population. This theoretical framework assumes that funerals and burial rites are social actions as well as the fact that social processes are influenced by culture and social history as people create meaning from their experiences.

#### **3.3.1. Historical background of the theory**

Literature traces the historical roots of social constructivism back as in mid 1920s, mostly in social science related fields. Radzilani (2010) argued that social constructivism development was fundamentally influenced by and in sociology as it currently regarded as the Theory of Sociology which has then expanded and used in different disciplines of social science like

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<sup>2</sup> “in situ” - means to research people in their natural settings.

social psychology, history and even in anthropology. In anthropology the ideas and views of Emile Durkheim emerged in the mid-1980s, following in the footsteps of the Sociologist Max Weber (1978) and many other scholars in different fields under social sciences. His (Emile Durkheim) aspirations were drawn in the work of Kant, Marx and even the father of anthropological ethnography, Bronislaw Malinowski. This theory emphasizes the idea that people form their identities, belief systems, conventions, traditions, norms, and inner voices through social interaction with others (Radzilani, 2010). Social constructionism can be traced in the work of Berger and Luckmann in the book titled *“The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge”*. In this book, Berger and Luckmann argue the point that humans create and perpetuate all social phenomena through social interaction and practices (Liebrucks, 2001). Radzilani (2010), citing Burr (1995), contends that when people externalize, they engage in certain activities and produce certain artifacts or practices. The viewpoint known as "social constructionism" holds that many aspects of human existence are the result of social and interpersonal interactions.

### **3.3.2. The relevancy of Social Constructivism Theory in this study**

This theory focuses on how people conceptualize and understand dying and death as a social occurrence that is influenced by a variety of factors, in this case, culture and religion. As discussed in chapter 2, this theory gives assistance in understanding how individuals, families and societies perceive death and celebrate rituals and related cultural schemas. According to Radzilani (2010), people perceive and observe death in various ways based on their religious and cultural affiliation. Razdilani (2010) further argued that the same applies to the family's people who may perceive death, its impact and meaning differently. I believe it is crucial to comprehend how people construct their understanding of death and dying because it has a significant impact on how bereavement rituals are performed. Despite the status of the deceased in those societies, death is not seen as an individual loss but rather as a loss for the entire community. The community has a significant impact on the bereaved's capacity for dealing with death and the grief it causes the family members. The examination of culture, cultural schemas, and religion above has provided a wide knowledge that leads one to the conclusion that people's religion and culture greatly influence how they view mortality and how they deal with it daily.

The Social Constructionism Theory proved significant in understanding how the participants' perspectives on death and dying had been socially constructed during the data analysis phase of this study. In short, this theory acknowledges that society has a crucial role to play in

formulating and establishing beliefs, perceptions and show the importance of some of the cultural practices and schemas that are constructed and accepted by certain societies which are deemed important to them and rejected by those who seem them to be unimportant, or even worse taken as alien tendencies or practices by other societies. With the assertion of Galbin (2014), in Social Construction Theory all social ideas and habits are socially constructed and then accepted as reality. What is most important is that certain constructs shape the Cultural Relativism theory. This theory was relevant to guide the researcher to understand how different societies construct their perceived death and dying and even bereavement rituals during COVID-19.

### **3.4. Cultural Relativism**

The Theory of Cultural Relativism served as the study's second theoretical cornerstone. Worthy et al., (2020) assert that Cultural Relativism can be defined as the principle of regarding and valuing the practices of a culture from the point of view of that culture to recognize cultural epistemologies and ontologies of other cultures. This idea acknowledges ethnocentrism by encouraging understanding of cultural traditions that are unique to other cultures. In this research, this theory allows the studied population to share their emic cultural perspectives without being compared to or judged through other cultures regarding burial practices, rituals, and cultural schemas. This viewpoint aims to cultivate knowledge of cultural traditions that are normally not a part of one's own culture (Schultz & Roberts H, 2009).

#### **3.4.1. Historical background of the theory**

This theory has been used for years by anthropologists too, and it is said to be one of the theories introduced by Franz Boas, who is regarded as the “Founding father of American anthropology” in the early centuries as he criticized and discredited the belief that Western civilization is superior to those of the other societies. Franz Boas believes that schemas behind the cultural evolution of non-West societies compared to Western societies were ethnocentric and racist, hence why he and his students rejected them (Davis, 2008). Brown (2008) states that anthropology owns the franchise on this theory, yet many of the anthropologists seem to approach the subject with a mixture of ambivalence and ennui. Cultural relativism has brought an understanding that any attempt to understand other human behaviour or forms of social organization must involve a deep contextual understanding of the surrounding culture (Chakraborty, 2018). Boas's contribution emphasized the importance of other cultures outside the scope of Western cultures. Chakraborty (2018) also argued that every element of a single culture is meaningful in that particular culture's terms, even if it may be seen meaningless in

another culture. The premise of this theory is that individuals from different cultures can interact in cross-cultural interactions in which they accept, respect, and start to comprehend each other's diverse lives. Due to the restrictions or cultural prescriptions provided by their own traditions, people from different origins can assist each other in seeing possibilities they themselves had never considered. Schultz & Roberts (2009), assert that this theory avows that each culture values its cultural foundations as corridors of socialization.

#### **3.4.2. The relevancy of Cultural Relativism theory in this study.**

In this research this theory allows the studied population to share their emic cultural perspectives without being compared to or judged through other cultures regarding burial practices, rituals, and cultural schemas. This theory seeks to strengthen understanding of cultural traditions that are normally not a part of one's own culture (Schultz & Roberts H, 2009). Traditional practices in certain cultures can be restricted and never afforded opportunities to be practiced because they seem “wrong” according to one specific culture. Becoming aware of these new possibilities will change the people that are exposed to the innovative ideas. This cross-cultural relationship provides hope that new opportunities will be discovered but at the same time it is threatening. The threat is that once the relationship occurs, one can no longer claim that any single culture is the absolute truth (Schultz & Roberts H, 2009). This theory in the study employs an emic perspective of people of families and households of eMacambini community to narrate the cultural schemas and bereavements rituals into the broader context and allows participants to contribute emic perspective (without being judged) of their learned cultural schemas, as the Social Construction Theory asserts.

#### **3.5. The connection between theoretical framework and ontology and epistemology of the study.**

Creswell (2013) states that whether researchers are aware or not, they always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions into their research. Haswell (2010) states that a research philosophy defines the significant assumption made as to how the researcher perceives knowledge and its development, which underlines subsequent research paradigms, decisions, and approaches. Philosophies can be defined as the use of abstract ideas and beliefs that inform research (Creswell, 2013). Chilisa & Kawulich (2015) argued that the world view is informed by three major philosophies, philosophical assumption about the nature of social reality or ontology, the way of knowing or epistemology, methodology or the techniques used to collect data and the ethics and value system or axiology. Ndlovu (2022) states that when conducting

research, there are two major philosophical positions present: which are said to be ontological and epistemological positions.

### **3.5.1. Ontology**

Haswell (2010) in citing Easterby-Smith et al., (2002), Audi (1995) and Kim & Sosa (1995) posit that ontology is a philosophical specification of a conceptualization which is regarded as a theoretical branch of metaphysics<sup>3</sup> that conceptualizes social entities, categories and relationships between them in the context of a knowledge system. Ontology is defined as issues relating to the nature of reality and its characteristics (Creswell, 2013). Ontologically this research asserts that reality is internal to the knower and the researcher should be subjective all the time in the narratives of the participants' lived experiences and realities. According to Saunders et al. (2007), subjectivism is an ontological paradigm that considers social actors, their perceptions, and subsequent actions when addressing the reality of a social entity. Subjectivism acknowledges that people have the choice to select their course of action and associated moral obligations, which has an impact on how they perceive reality, and it treats varied beliefs held by people as the foundation for a shared reality.

### **3.5.2. Epistemology**

Epistemology is a philosophy intrinsic to research activities that translates research questions into issues of research methodologies (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). With interpretivism this study evaluates the nature of the research topic knowledge and its relationship to the researcher (Huberman and Miles, 2002). The right epistemological perspective affects the research paradigm chosen, which then defines the methods of data collection used in the study (Denscombe, 2003). According to Creswell (2014), the epistemological presumption when conducting a qualitative study requires that the researcher endeavours to get as near to the participants as possible to gather subjective data based on individual opinions. The knowledge will be known through people's varying subjective experiences.

### **3.6. The philosophical standpoint of these two theoretical frameworks**

Makobe-Rabothata (2014) avowed that studying African cultures, rituals and cultural schemas recognizes that Africans, have an epistemology and form of knowledge which is nuanced and carries valid meanings and interpretation. African philosophy is defined by Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata (2014) as the cognition, attitude, logic, and perception beneath how African people think, act, or speak in various life situations, including the ritualization of birth and death.

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<sup>3</sup>The term "metaphysics" refers to the study of the absolute nature of objects beyond their physical manifestation (Rawnsley, 1998; Tsagdis, 2002)



Anthropologists have immersed their ethnographic time to study the African culture from the viewpoint of Africans and the understanding of death, burial rites, rituals, and cultural schemas have been a niche interest for cultural and linguistic anthropologists. Anthropologists speak confidently about the African worldview.

Most publications define the African worldview as the way Africans experience their reality, which shapes their ways of knowing and doing. This thesis does not assume that all African societies share the same explanations for events, the same language, the same manner of wearing, or any other characteristics when addressing African culture and values. According to Radzilani (2010), African cultures view death as a change from a visible to an invisible ontology, where the genuine human essence is transferred from the world of the living to the realm of the dead rather than being destroyed. African worldview regards death as an integrated, iterative effort of life development that is inexorably connected to both the visible and invisible ontologies. After the death occurs physically, people continue to exist; instead, they transcend to the spiritual realm and become a part of the living dead. It does not imply primitiveness, but it is the African ontology, epistemology of many African ethnicity groups that believe in ancestors. In his work, Gire (2014:2) came to the conclusion that everyone eventually dies, regardless of how or where we are born. This is true for people from all cultures. However, there are differences among cultures in how they view death and what happens after someone passes away. Death is thought to include a variety of circumstances in several cultures, including sleep, disease, and reaching a specific age. In certain cultures, the term "death" refers to the complete termination of life. Similarly, some cultural traditions see death as a transition to other forms of existence, while others advocate a continuous dialogue between the living and the dead, while others envision a cycle of successive deaths and rebirths, and still others see death as the absolute end with nothing happening after it.

With this assertion one can assert that through these two frameworks (Social Constructivism and Cultural Relativism) the so-called reality – *What is conceived to be true and real*- death, dying, bereavement and burial rites can be understood. However, through epistemological position, the knowledge about death, dying, bereavement and burial rites together with cultural schemas can differ from person to person and society to society. Epistemology allows different methods of attaining knowledge and for this research, study knowledge about death, dying, bereavement, burial rites and cultural schemas was through the e-Macambini community lens.

### **3.7.Chapter Summary**

This chapter reflected of two scholarly theories which complemented each other, namely: Social Constructionism Theory and Cultural Relativism Theory. Both these theoretical frameworks were employed to critically understand how people construct and perceive death and dying as a social phenomenon that is embedded on cultural schemas. These theory gives allows cultural epistemic reasoning and the reflexivity that families and households of eMacambini community identify with either because of their religious beliefs or cultural affiliations. The studied population was then able to share their emic cultural perspectives without being compared to or judged through other cultures regarding burial practices, rituals, and cultural schemas. Contributions of these theoretical frameworks also influenced the methodology chapter and will be used in the data analysis chapter.

# Chapter 4

## Research Methodology

### 4.1. Introduction

According to Ndlela (2020), research is the process of posing queries in attempting to find solutions. Research involves asking questions about a certain phenomenon that the researcher is aspiring to understand. It is through research that unknown knowledge becomes public knowledge and accessible to many users. This process is facilitated through different methods that are used by a researcher in finding the answers to the research in question. This is an anthropological study (cultural anthropology), and it employed only anthropological research methods of collecting data. The researcher has chosen to use only the qualitative research approach to identify, analyze, and conceptualize all students' experiences and views concerning the topic, which says: Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: A case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini Community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown. This chapter explains the methodology utilized to gather data during the fieldwork phase and focuses on the strategies used to achieve the aims and objectives of this research. As part of this chapter the principal investigator focused on research methodologies, research designs, and ethical implications thereof.

### 4.2. Research type and method

This study used qualitative methods of inquiry and was an empirical descriptive study. According to Ndlovu (2020), descriptive research "attempts to systematically describe a scenario, problem, phenomena, or a program and provide information on the daily environment of the provided area or presents perspectives towards an issue or problem". Descriptive research helps researchers gather a qualitative depiction of the phenomenon. Through the voices of participants, qualitative research methodologies suggest a direct concern with experiences as they are "lived," "felt," or "undergone." Pholoana (2020: 41) defines qualitative research methodologies as:

*"[A] a study strategy that aims to investigate social phenomena and create an explanation for a certain behavior. It helps by examining the social perspectives on a given subject."*

Anthropologists has been using this research methodology for years as they believe it enables them to study and analyses complex systems, their compositions and many other connected phenomena. According to Makhathini (2022), qualitative research is utilized in anthropology

to record people's narratives in relation to life experiences. The hallmark of anthropology, according to Creswell (2014), is the exploration of the complexities and nuanced aspects of human interaction and culture, and anthropologists use this research method to examine both cultural and behavioral concerns. Ndlela (2021) states that qualitative research is the approach that is usually associated with interpretivism and social construction of knowledge which emphasizes the socially constructed realities through the subjective experiences.

Based on the research problem and this study's objectives, qualitative research was the most suitable research methodology with an ethnographic research design. This is the best research design that focuses and aimed at learning and documenting more about the impact of COVID-19 on death customs, cultural schemas, funerals and burial rites of South African indigenous societies by zooming in more on experiences of families and households of e-Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones in the midst of national lockdown level 5. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative research involves interaction between the researcher and participants and yields in-depth, thorough information.

Within the parameters of this study, qualitative data collection methods allowed the researcher to adequately document participant verbal and nonverbal cues. To understand phenomena in terms of the meanings that individuals assign to them, qualitative researchers at all levels take an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world as they examine things in their natural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2014). This research approach allowed the researcher to get closer to the people of e-Macambini community to study them in their natural arena and record the attitudes brought by feelings, and experiences in losing and burying their loved ones under strict restrictions imposed by country's government during the high alert level 5 COVID-19 lockdown as the means of curbing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research interest is supported by Mohajan's (2018) assertion that in qualitative research, the researcher is more interested in the beliefs of the people and their experiences with respect to the research's goals. This study strategy looks at how individuals understand various variables in the area.

### **4.3. Research design and Paradigms**

Research designs are blueprints, and the steps in a research project that direct decision-making range from generalizations to specific techniques for data gathering and analysis. According to Jason (2011), a research design's main function is to frame the research process and guarantee its effectiveness. This strategy entails making several judgments on how to organize the research to achieve its goals. The ultimate choice entails determining which design should be

employed to investigate an issue. This choice should be based on the researcher's presuppositions about the world, their techniques of inquiry (referred to as tactics), and their chosen strategies for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence. The choice of a research design is also influenced by the nature of the problem or topic being investigated, the researchers' subjective observations, and the study's target audiences.

Haswell (2010) further defines research design as a proper framework of fundamental processes and stages of conducting research and data collection process. As discussed by Ndlovu (2022), Kuluse (2022) and Makhathini (2022), research design outlines all methods to structure, formulate, and solve research problems. This is regarded as the specification of methods for collecting and analyzing the data required to assist in identifying or seizing an opportunity or a problem in a way that maximizes the difference between the cost of obtaining the information and the expected value of the information at each level of accuracy.

#### **4.3.1. Research Paradigm**

Khumalo (2010) argues that there are so many researchers and scholars who have written more about research paradigms, as he mentioned the likes of McKenna (2003), Crabtree & Miller (1992), Williams (2000), and Habermas (1972) and many more. Chilisa & Kawulich (2015) define paradigm as the shared world view representing the beliefs and values in a discipline and guides how problems are solved. Antwi & Hamza's (2015) citing Kuhn (1977), also define a paradigm as the research culture with the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that researchers' community has in ordinary natural conduct of research. McKenna (2003) and Khumalo (2010) defined paradigm as a method of thinking that assists by explaining or clarifying fundamental research concepts in the researcher. Khumalo (2010) states that paradigms are being developed from research questionnaires or how they view the entire world or society. He argued that many scholars have different knowledge of how many existing paradigms exist since some believe that there are four and others say there are only three which are positivism, interpretivism, realism and pragmatism. This research utilized and accepted an interpretivism and phenomenological qualitative research design to explore meanings, understandings and experiences associated with those families and households of e-Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones during level 5 of national shutdown due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### **4.3.1.1. Phenomenological qualitative research**

This is a phenomenological study. According to Wilson (2015), phenomenology is common research method aimed at understanding of the human experiences. According to Bliss (2016) cited in Ndlovu (2022), phenomenology research is an inductive qualitative research methodology that is typical of the philosophical approach that allows researchers to obtain crucial insights into the ways in which people construct their understanding of their lived realities. The phenomenological approach emerged from Edmond Husserl's philosophical view that one's personal experience of phenomena, such as conscious perceptions and feelings derived from lived experience, serves as the foundation for knowing. The contemporary phenomenological method of study, which aims to comprehend how people construct reality, was born out of this concept. When examining the core of the lived experience of certain occurrences, researchers who are interested in its meaning, composition, and core employ the phenomenological technique. The researcher investigates a person's conscious experiences to distill or capture the essence of these experiences.

#### **4.3.1.2. Interpretivism**

According to Haswell (2010), interpretivism is an epistemological framework that promotes the need to distinguish between the roles of social actors and humans. It focuses on how people interpret their surroundings. Interpretive researchers claim that only social construction—such as shared meanings, consciousness, language, and other tools—can provide access to reality, whether it is "given" or "socially built" (Myers, 2008). This epistemological paradigm denies the idea of a single reality, and according to Von Wright (1993), cited in Haswell (201) scholars must fully immerse themselves in a situation before they can grasp it.

These two paradigms aid the researcher in developing conceptual frameworks and interpreting qualitative data within a socially created environment to characterize the respondent's experience. This strategy is based on a naturalistic method of gathering data, like interviews and observation. Given the strong influence of individual opinions and attitudes on the data, it is impossible to generalize using this study paradigm. Since the data produced using this method is usually reliable and honest, it has a high level of validity.

#### **4.4. Data collection methods**

Data collection is the process of acquiring and analyzing information about a phenomenon of interest in a way that allows the researcher to address the problem statement and the stated research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2014). Selecting the most appropriate strategy to achieve

the study objectives and address the research questions is made easier by evaluating all alternative data collection methods (Ndlovu, 2022; Mthembu; 2022 & Kuluse, 2022) Primary and secondary data were both used in this study to acquire two independent sets of data. This study was qualitative in nature, so only comprehensive, semi-structured, and open-ended questions were used. This study engaged in extensive interaction with the research group in its own setting with the goal of studying the experiences, realities, and impact brought by the presence of COVID-19 in the death, burial rites, and cultural schemas of families and households of the e-Macambini community in their natural setting and from their emic perspective- *Ethnography*. This occurred in the informants' own homes, around all Sub-places of e-Macambini Community. As such data collection took six months (November 2021- April 2022). This period allowed me to probe until research participants confirmed data saturation.

#### **4.5. Primary data sources**

For this study purpose, the researcher opted for two set of data sources: primary and secondary data (*as discussed in chapter 2*). They both typically conducted in this study in order to gather all information required to meet this study's objectives. Haswell (2010) defined primary data as the specifically collected data or information by the researcher for a particular research phenomenon. Kotler and Armstrong (2004) posit that this research approach is employed with the goal of achieving a specific research objective and aims. The general principle of this research approach is that it allows researchers to gain more insight about the studied or observed phenomenon or the world at large (Driscoll, 2011). Haswell (2010) argued that the basic advantage of this research is its suitability to specifically aid the investigation into the relevant research area sufficiently, accurate and fit of the research in comparison to secondary research. In this study all primary data was collected through ethnography where in-depth one-on-one interviews were conducted.

##### **4.5.1. Ethnography**

There are many different methodological methods or methodologies that fall under the general heading of "qualitative research." One of the numerous methods is ethnography. According to Khuluse (2021), ethnography is the description and analysis of a community's culture that is derived from fieldwork. Since ethnography aims to accurately portray the lives of a group of individuals in a way that is consistent with how they see their own lives, it has played a special role in qualitative addiction research. The purpose of ethnography, according to Neale et al. (2005), is to comprehend the meanings of a culture, especially the covert laws, symbols, and rituals that govern group norms. They support this claim with reference to the works of Geertz

(1973) and Agar (1986, 1996). To fully comprehend the intricate nature of their environment and circumstances, this method calls for the researcher to spend weeks, months, or even years immersed in the subject matter. Ethnographers mostly rely on observation and, occasionally, full or partial incorporation into the society they are studying. The researcher did not undertake participation observations because of the COVID-19 constraint; instead, he conducted interviews with the participants in their own locations, where they were more at ease and linked to their familiar surroundings. In this research the researcher embarked on ethnography (through interviews) as he spent months at e-Macambini community, interacting by interviewing people during sessions while observing their facial expression displayed in their faces about their lived experiences and realities on how they observed death of their loved ones and performed their cultural and burial rituals during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of this was done when the National Lockdown was lifted. As from level three to level one of National Lockdown, some gatherings were allowed. The researcher observed all COVID-19 curbing protocols by ensuring the following: Kept social distancing, which was intended to curb the spread and contamination, masked up during interviews, sanitized regularly and ensured that all data collection instruments were administered by myself as a researcher.

#### **4.6. Data collection instrument**

The nature, explanation, and understanding of phenomena are the focus of qualitative research. In-depth interviews with community members are frequently conducted by qualitative researchers, who also look at objects or materials that are important to people's daily lives. In qualitative research, interviews are frequently employed as a data collection method. Ryan et al. (2009) believe that they are often employed as the research approach to obtain data on participants' experiences, perspectives, and beliefs regarding a certain research question, issue statement, or phenomenon of interest by citing Lambert & Loiselle's (2007) study. One approach of gathering data has been conducting in-depth one-on-one interviews. In this study the researcher conducted these interviews between the period of November to March 2022 with the targeted sample of 20 participants who lost and buried their loved ones during level 5 of national lockdown that came into effect as from the 26th of March to 30th of April 2020. Most in-depth one-on-one interviews take place face-to-face, giving the researcher the freedom to observe and interpret all non-verbal clues through body language, facial expression, and eye contact, which may be perceived as improving the interviewer's understanding of what is being said (Ryan, et al., 2009). One could argue that this enables the researcher to delve into and



examine hidden meanings while also learning from participant reactions. Because death is such a delicate subject, these responses are extremely significant because they revealed participants' sensitivity, emotional breakdown, and need for professional emotional assistance, for which the researcher made recommendations and preparations.

One-on-one interviews are a different type of social interaction, and the relationship between the interviewer and participants is crucial to making the process go smoothly and successfully at the end. Therefore, the interviewer should have a laid-back, assured, and attentive demeanor to foster a positive interview relationship. According to Ryan et al. (2009), it is the researcher's responsibility to make the interviewee feel comfortable and unthreatened; as a result, creating the ideal setting and removing any obstacles that can interfere with the process are of the utmost importance. According to the community profiling, e-Macambini community is dominated by 99,56% Black people in which 95% speak isiZulu as their first language hence the data collection tools have been prepared to be bi-versions (English and isiZulu). The use of both languages gave participants the freedom of expressing themselves with whatever language they were comfortable with in sharing their experiences on the topic at hand. This resulted in the researcher translating all the responses into the commonly acceptable, universal language without diverting from the original meaning of the responses from the interviewees.

#### **4.6.1. Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured or semi-standardized interviews offer a more flexible approach to the interview process, unlike unstructured interviews, these are scheduled sessions and questions for predetermined topics, but also, they allow for unanticipated responses and issues to emerge through the use of open-ended questioning. These interviews share a lot of commonalities with unstructured interviews. These interview questions allowed the flexibility of the interviewer or the researcher in pursuing a series of less structured questions and permits the exploration of spontaneous issues raised by the interviewee to be explored. According to Ryan, et al. (2009), flexible question wording allows the interviewer or researcher to use a variety of language levels and provide clarification. Semi-structured interviews involve open-ended questions and probes based on the idea of giving the interviewee authority over the interview process, in contrast to unstructured interviews, which are more tightly controlled by the researcher. Issues are examined from a personal standpoint since the emphasis is on letting the interviewee or participant tell his/her own experience rather than responding to a set of predetermined questions. Semi-structured interviews are based on the premise that participants understand the world in a variety of or different subjective ways (Ryan et al., 2009).

## **4.7. Sampling**

According to Omona (2013), considering sampling strategies and sample size is one of the most critical and important aspects of qualitative studies. Such factors go beyond the confines of a particular research paradigm and assist qualitative researchers in choosing sample size and sample designs that are most relevant and compatible with their research objectives. According to Pholoana (2020), sampling is the process of creating a list of potential interviews subjects to obtain data from the complete population. This list gives the researcher the demographic to focus on when conducting interviews. Tiwari (n.d.) defines sampling as the methods of drawing a representative or selection of a few individuals or objects of the population and using the collected data as research information. Omona (2013) states that there is a goal which says it is not good to generalize the findings beyond the sample to the population in qualitative research hence the research findings of this study will only be limited to the study population. To avoid findings' generalization to the entire population, Omona (2013) suggests that a representative sample must be carefully drawn from the entire population.

## **4.8. Sample design**

According to Khuluse (2021), sample design determines sample size and is a predetermined strategy made before any data is gathered and retrieved from samples of any particular population. Either probability or non-probability sampling can be used in sample designs. When using probability samples, each component in the sample has a known likelihood of being present, but this probability cannot be calculated when using a non-probability sample.

### **4.8.1. Non-probability Sampling**

When a balanced sample population is not important to the researcher, he/she will utilize this sampling method (Matheson, 2008). Non-probability sampling is described by Omona (2013) as a biased sampling by other researchers. Since participants in this sampling approach are chosen because they are accessible and generally match the required criteria of the targeted group, judgment is largely involved. This sampling's main purpose is to get information and insight from people regarding phenomena rather than to generalize about the population (Pholoana, 2020). Purposive-snowballing non-probability sampling techniques were used in this study by the researcher's choice. This is the result of combining the Snowballing and Purposive sampling techniques.

#### **4.8.1.1.Purposive-snowballing sampling**

The purpose of qualitative research is to deepen comprehension of an individual's experience; as a result, the study requires the selection of a rich and fertile exemplar of the experience (Mwandoba, 2015). The researcher decided to utilize a combination of both snowballing and purposeful sampling in this investigation. According to Khuluse (2021), selecting purposive sampling is a non-random technique to guarantee that particular categories are included in the final sample of any research. Choosing individuals or documents from whom the researcher can learn about the experience is known as the intentional selection of data sources (Mwandoba, 2015). The use of the non-probability sampling technique is known as "chain referral sampling," sometimes known as "snowball sampling." Beginning with one or more contacts who were typically familiar to the person collecting the data, the researcher then asked the respondent to provide the contact information for additional possible respondents at the conclusion of the data collection procedure (interview). This means that the recruitment of research participants was through the purposive snowballing sampling technique, where all participants were selected purposefully as the study was focused on people that had lost their loved ones during the harsh lockdown. The snowballing technique was then employed to reach the sampled population. In this study the researcher relied on the first participant to refer me to next participant that has experienced the same loss. These prospective respondents are approached, questioned, and then asked for more contact information. This procedure continues until the researcher's goal is accomplished. In this kind of sampling, the researcher makes his/her own judgments about the participants while keeping the study's goal in mind. Field research or exploratory research both use this kind of sampling. Purposive snowballing sampling makes it difficult for the researcher to determine whether the instances chosen accurately to reflect the population or not. Most sampling techniques may be regarded as purposeful in nature because sampling issues are typically approached with a specific plan in mind. Snowballing sampling for purposes picks only those people who are pertinent to the research design and is less expensive, more accessible, and more convenient. In the case of this study, the sampling techniques relied heavily on the volunteers who were purposefully chosen, as they pointed the researcher in the direction of others who had similar experiences. Every household and family that held a funeral at level 5 of the national shutdown was aware of other families who had also lost loved ones. This non-probability sampling strategy was used because the researcher purposefully chose to speak with all the families and households from the e-Macambini community who had lost and buried loved ones due to the Covid-19 pandemic

during level 5 of the national shutdown. This allowed for the chain of referrals to other potential participants who had similar experiences to them.

#### **4.8.2. Sample size**

Qualitative researchers frequently use a small number of participants in their studies as they need to get deep information from each participant which consumes a lot of time. As has been mentioned in chapter one, e-Macambini community has a total of 32322 people from 5948 households from 14 sub-places. Having one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with an entire population of e-Macambini community was going to be a futile exercise that could have lasted more than a decade for a researcher (census 2011). Compared to quantitative methods, the sample size for research using a qualitative approach is frequently smaller. The sample of 20 (who were affected and willing to share their experiences) participants was drawn from the entire population and it was manageable as the researcher was collecting primary and qualitative information for this study through one-on-one interviews. The 20 participants from the whole of e-Macambini community were manageable as part of the qualitative study which factor promotes interest in an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Dwoekin, 2012). It concentrates on the implications of a specific issue, summary, or even circumstance. Generalizations to a larger population of interest are not the purpose of the in-depth interview (Dwoekin, 2012). To analyse the relationships between categories, it classifies the data and pays attention to how participants' actual experiences might be understood (Dwoekin, 2012).

#### **4.8.3. Inclusion and exclusion**

Who is eligible to participate in the current study and who is not are determined by inclusion and exclusion criteria. This criterion establishes the parameters for the potential participant pool and directly affects the viability of the study. It is stated that if this criterion is too restrictive, it could result in a sample size that only yields a little amount of data, while a criterion that is too broad could result in data that is influenced by outside variables (Hornberger & Rangu, 2020). As the researcher for this study, I only included a sample of participants from the e-Macambini community who had lost and buried loved ones during COVID-19's nationwide lockdown level 5 to hear from them and learn from their experiences.

#### **4.9. Validity and reliability**

According to Golafshani (2003), to comprehend the meaning of reliability and validity, it is required to provide the multiple meanings of these terms that have been offered by numerous qualitative researchers from a variety of views. Golafshani (2003) defined dependability as the

principle utilized for testing or evaluating quantitative research, although the term has since been used in many different types and styles of research. According to Golafshani (2003), the goal of the qualitative study's quality notion is to produce understanding. Data validity and reliability go hand in hand; they do not exist in isolation. Golafshani (2003) argues that validity is described by a wide range of terms in qualitative research because he chose to explain by citing what Winter (2000) has used and defined it as a concept that is not a single, fixed, or universal but rather a somewhat contingent construct that is inextricably rooted in the process and intentions of specific research methodologies and projects.

According to Golafshani (2003), many researchers have created or adopted what they believe to be more appropriate terms, such as quality, rigor, and trustworthiness, and have developed their concepts of validity in qualitative research. To ensure data validity of the findings by avoiding the false presentation of analysed data, the researcher conducted a participant data checking and confirmation of thematised data to all the participants. It helped in confirming that presented data responded exactly to what is known as their experiences. The process of verifying data enables the researcher and the researched to properly analyse and verify the data collected to see whether it reflected their contribution to the study.

The sample was small enough for this study's purposes, yet big enough to produce depth rather than breadth of information. By confirming whether the study at hand explored the topic it set out to explore—in this case, gathering experiences and lived realities on how COVID-19 affected people's burial cultural and religious schemas, particularly at level 5 of the national shutdown—determining validity in research establishes the endeavour's credibility. According to O'Reilly (2012), the iterative-inductive nature of ethnographic research and ongoing interaction with people on the ground enable the researcher to continuously seek clarification of any potential ambiguities in the data. According to Mazibuko (2014) and Dlamini (2016), establishing the accuracy of study findings from the perspectives of the researcher, participants, and readers constitutes qualitative validity. To verify that the conclusions drawn about the patterns and themes were correct and typical of the field, all the papers and data were checked.

#### **4.10. Ethical considerations in the study**

Gwala (2021) holds that the code of conduct or ethical consideration has been derived and linked to two fundamental concepts: ethical concepts: Research ethics and Professional ethics. Mack et al. (2005) argues that research ethics deals with the researcher's interaction and the people they study. Professional ethics deals with additional issues such as collaborative

relationships among researchers, mentoring relationships, intellectual property, data fabrication, and plagiarism. In this study's code of conduct, the researcher based his morals, ethics, and principles based on provisions of research ethics, professional ethics that are mostly accepted and recognized in the field of anthropology. One of the fundamental ethics that has been observed and taken as the code of the code is the one that is derived in the work of Mack et al. (2005), which argues that whenever the research is being conducted on people, the well-being of the participants must be of a top priority and the research questions must follow in the order of importance.

#### **4.10.1. Discussion of Ethical considerations and gatekeeper clearance**

In both the data gathering and analysis processes, ethical considerations were given thoughtful consideration. Ethics, according to Khuluse (2021), are frameworks or rules that regulate how a profession is practiced. It outlines the relationship that should be maintained between the information and the respondents. If you are required to apply these regulations to better serve your clients, respondents, or other parties, ethical considerations arise (Becker, 1996). To be consistent with what has been said, research must take ethical concerns into account, according to Creswell (2009). An ethical and professional conduct code must be followed by the researcher. Research involves not just knowledge and diligence, but also honesty and ethics (Bell, 2014). These were followed to safeguard the rights of study participants. The rights to informed permission, self-determination, anonymity, and confidentiality were upheld to make the study ethical.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal approved this study with the research ethical number (**HSSREC/00003486/2021**) and the conditions outlined in the ethical clearance (attached at the end in appendixes). The interviews started by building affinity between the researcher and the participants as it was intended to establish that element of trust between the primary investigators or researcher and research participants. The researcher complied with all applicable institutional and governmental policies as well as customary laws. Additionally, the researcher respected copyrights and other types of intellectual property. Death is an extremely sensitive concept; it involves much emotional disturbance and discomfort to those who lost their loved one. In relation to the idea of emotional breakdown, the primary investigator advised the participants to leave the meetings if they felt uncomfortable being questioned in any way. However, I tried to avoid asking questions that would make me feel strongly about something by just asking those that were necessary for gathering data and avoiding those that

would be of personal interest to me. If there was any clarity needed, the probing questions were asked further when necessary for clarity, and the study of the body expressions of the respondents was applied to avoid probing too much. Gatekeeper clearance was obtained from eMacambini Traditional Council with the permission of Ubaba Inkosi M. Mathaba with the assistance of Ubaba iNduna N. Vilakazi of eMlublweni sub-ward under eMacambini tribal authority.

#### **4.10.1.1. Informed consent**

The prospective subject's decision to willingly engage in a study is known as informed consent (Burns et al., 1995). Self-determination was upheld as an ethical concept. There were distinct consent forms to be signed for each data gathering session. Everyone who took part in the study was made aware that it was completely optional. The right to participate voluntarily, to decline to participate, and to discontinue participation at any moment without consequence were explained to the participants. Most importantly, the study's goal, the methods utilized to collect data, and assurances that there would be no expenses or hazards involved were all explained to the participants.

#### **4.10.1.2. Confidentiality**

According to Burns et al. (1993), anonymity is the state in which a subject cannot be associated—not even by the researcher—with any particular responses. Contrarily, confidentiality indicates that the information provided will not be disclosed in a way that can be used to identify it (Polit et al., 1995). By keeping participant identities' secret when reporting or publishing the study, confidentiality was maintained in this study. Participants would be subjected to an extensive interview in a schedule that would not require original identities but rather fictitious ones to distinguish storylines, according to a section in the consent form. Before conversations began, the researcher also sought permission to record for participants to participate knowing that their voices would be captured on tape.

#### **4.11. Data collection experience**

Ethnography exposes a researcher of different experiences, lifestyles, new culture, norms and traditions. At times it is an entering and very hard process where the researcher must adjust to a new lifestyle, food, and environment and even in dangerous situations. Conducting research, collecting data especially for this paper, presented a huge opportunity for the researcher to grow and develop as an anthropologist. The whole ethnographic experience starting from pre-planning, gaining entry, recruiting of participants, creating relations with the headmasters,

families and households, developing that element of trust within the researcher and participants enhanced the researcher's critical thinking and development of researcher's research skills. Death is a very sensitive concept, the emotional breakdown from both researcher and research participants when narrating their experiences painted an emotional picture of how other people were affected by these restrictions. It is evident that one can say, undertaking any research study can both be an intriguing and humbling journey, especially when interacting with research participants who trust you with their daily experiences.

#### **4.12. Data processing and analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is a simple process of making sense of the collected data. With this research, the use of thematic analysis was employed to analyze all responses or the collected data from the purposefully selected sample of 20 participants and others through referrals or snowballing within the community. They shared their experiences and their feelings on how the so-announced restrictions impacted the death of their loved ones, funerals, burial rites and their cultural schemas together with religion during level 5 of national lockdown when they lost, buried and mourned their loved ones at that time. Butina (2015) states, when one seeks to use thematic analysis, one must consolidate the data into segments that can give or provide insight into research questions. Since the study participants are put at the center of the data analysis process, the data is presented thematically, which is pertinent in qualitative research. A fundamental technique for qualitative analysis is thematic data analysis, which is regarded as a prerequisite for carrying out other types of qualitative analysis. It locates, examines, summarizes, arranges, and reports themes within a data collection, enabling qualitative researchers to construct narratives that show the condition of the research subjects in relation to the investigation (Nowell et al., 2017).

The researcher compares elements looking for patterns/ themes (Butina, 2015). Following this articulation, the researcher developed seven themes with numerous sub-themes from the narratives of the people he had gathered. These themes are addressed in more detail in chapter 5 of this research. These themes were interpreted regarding the theories (Chapter Three) and the reviewed literature (Chapter Two) that served as the foundation for this study. According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis is intended to be a recursive process as opposed to a linear one. Subsequent steps may lead the researcher to return to prior steps concerning new information or newly emerging themes that require further exploration (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). In this study, six steps were followed in formulating themes through a data analysis process:



#### **4.12.1. Familiarization with data - Listening and registering all collected data from one-on-one in-depth interviews.**

This is the first in thematic analysis's process where I familiarize myself as the researcher with the entire data set, which entails that I repeated and had active reading of the data. Based on this study context and research design, all the data set was from one-on-one interviews since there was no participative observations and focus groups interview because of COVID-19 restrictions which posed some limitations in data collection process. As for audio recordings, comparing transcripts and original recordings were done more frequently for accuracy checkups.

#### **4.12.2. Generational of initial codes- Code all data arranged into different categories as per main interview questions.**

This step assisted in fine-grained, detailed data organization. After completing the familiarization task or step, the researcher started making notes on potential data items of interest, queries, connections between data items, and other early concepts. Codes, not themes, were produced at this stage or phase. The construction of all 7 themes was influenced by the researcher's definition and demarcation of each code to prevent overlap when applied to the complete data set.

#### **4.12.3. Searching for themes**

I then examined all the coded and compiled data extracts to identify any prospective themes that might be of greater significance. Themes were generated by the researcher through analysing, combining, comparing, and even visually mapping how codes connect to one another. Since this analysis was inductive, researchers specifically drew themes from the coded data. All themes discovered as a result were more closely related to the original data and representative of the complete data set. Regardless of the volume, quantity, or amount of data under a topic, the researcher made note of all themes of relevance, whether or not they were relevant to the study question. The ones that offered the substantial links between the data items and addressed the focal point of the study questions and problem statement are those themes that were designated as important or core themes.

#### **4.12.4. Reviewing themes and linking them to existing literature reviews.**

As the researcher, I examined all the coded data extracts for each theme to see whether they formed any meaningful patterns. To assess whether the themes accurately captured the meanings included in the data set as a whole, each theme's validity was examined. At this point,

the researcher found that numerous themes lacked sufficient evidence from either the body of prior literature or the data that had been gathered to support them. According to the data set, the majority of those themes collapsed, while some were divided into various sub-themes, and some were developed into themes that are both wide and detailed enough to encompass a group of concepts seen in numerous text segments.

#### **4.12.5. Defining and naming themes**

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), during this stage the researcher decides what characteristics of the data each topic captures and decides what interests them and why. The researcher prepared an in-depth analysis for each topic during this stage, noting the tale that each theme told while also taking the overall story of the complete data set taking the study questions into consideration. The researcher organized and restructured all the themes until he was confident that all the data had been presented and exhibited in a relevant way. To make sure that participants' phrases were employed flawlessly without disclosing their identities, the researcher returned and reviewed all the topic names in the analysis' final phases.

#### **4.12.6. Producing the report or Manuscripts**

The researcher started this stage of thematic analysis after all the themes had been properly identified and he was prepared to start the final analysis and write the report. Nowel et al. (2017) made the case that the write-up of a thematic analysis should give a brief, clear, logical, non-repetitive, and engaging presentation of the data within and across themes. To make statements relating to the data set credible and convincing, Thorne (2006) recommended researchers clearly express the logical processes by which discoveries were created in a form that is understandable to a critical reader. King (2004) indicated that direct quotes from participants should be included in the final report, and the researcher made sure to do so. Short quotes were used to clarify certain interpretations and show how prevalent certain topics were, while lengthy paragraph citations were used to capture the sense of the original manuscript.

The study's final discussion portion covered all the issues, including the inconsistent data. The theoretical literature that served as the basis for the investigation was referenced in this analytical discussion. These research results were compared to the larger body of literature to determine how they supported, contradicted, or added to the existing body of knowledge directly related to the subject at hand.

### **4.13. Chapter summary**

This methodology chapter emersed the study in anthropology and translated objectives and questions discussed in chapter one as well as the contributions of the theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter three. This chapter will influence the plotting of themes and the interpretation of data in chapter five.

## Chapter 5

### DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION/ANALYSIS

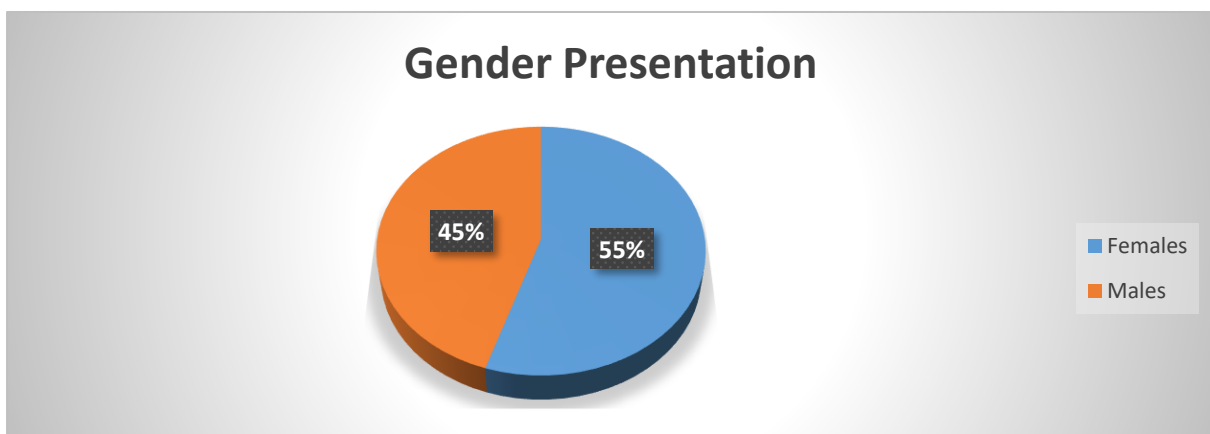
#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents all the data collected from the families and households of e-Macambini community who have lost and buried their loved ones during and the advent of COVID- 19 at high alert level 5 of national shutdown in South Africa. It includes the analysis and discussion of the collected data as its success depended mostly on the guidance of theoretical frameworks used (Social Constructivism and Cultural Relativism) for study. These results were steered by the main research questions (both primary and secondary research questions) to achieve this study's objectives as they are outlined in chapter one. This chapter begins by allotting the outlining characteristics and attributes of the sampled community members and then presents all themes generated from thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews.

#### 5.1.Demographical background and profile of the sampled participants

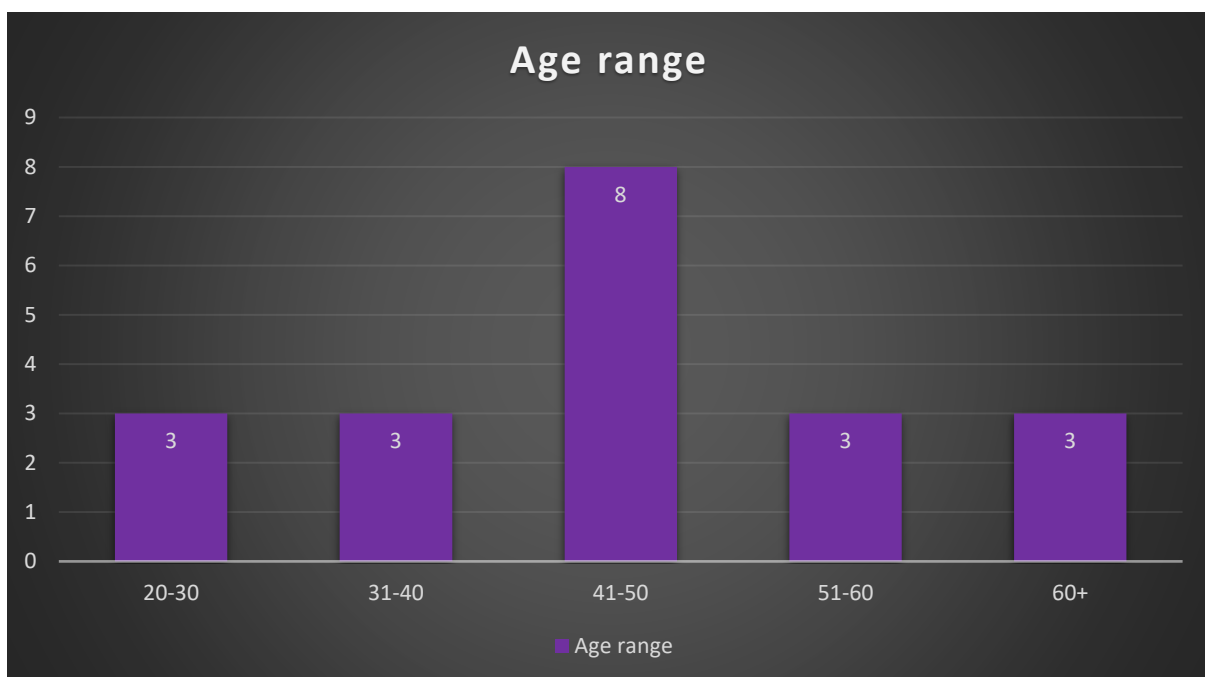
This data aided the researcher in compiling vital information on the study's participants. As it has been stated in this study research methodology chapter, this study comprised the sample of 20 participants purposively selected and interviewed, coming from all families and households who lost and buried their loved ones during high alert level 5 of national lockdown within the community of e-Macambini who shared their experiences and narratives about the problem at hand as is stipulated in chapter 1. These participants were allocated letters of the alphabet (*AA to TT*) as pseudonyms instead of using their original names, to protect and safeguard their identity, anonymity and confidentiality as stipulated in the ethical clearance letter attached as appendix. The attached graphs and table below give the background of the participants:

**Fig 5.1 Gender Participation**



The above diagram shows the gender of the sampled and interviewed participants. In the sample of 20 participants: 55% (which equated to 11) were females and 45% (9) were males. This graph shows the willingness of women in talking and sharing their experiences and realities they face when death and dying take place in their families and households compared to the willingness or shyness of men when the death and dying subject has emerged. In relation to the gender participation, this chart reveals that many families and household of e-Macambini community were left headed by women compared to men as a result to COVID-19 related mortalities.

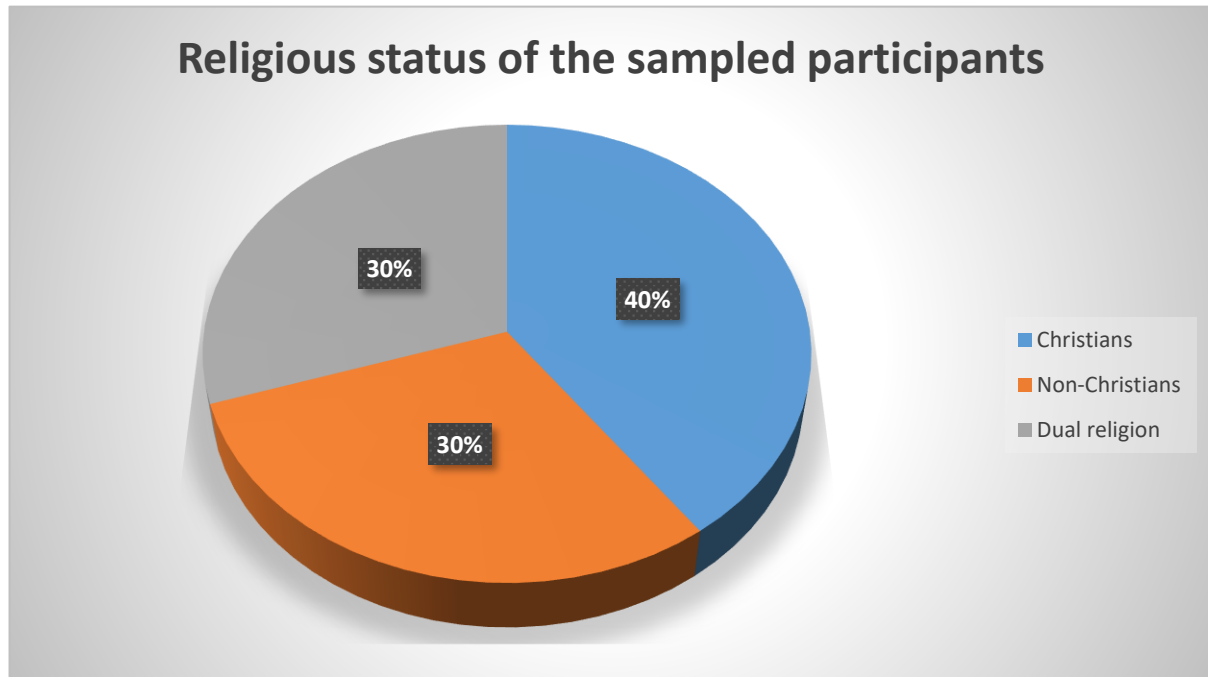
**Fig 5.2.a) Age range of the sampled Participants – Bar- Graph**



The age of the study's participants is depicted in the graph above. Only those over the age of 18 were interviewed. Children were not permitted to take part in this study as informants. The graph also demonstrates the large proportion of middle-aged people living in this community. All the participants were residents of e-Macambini community but from different sub-communities as it has been stipulated in the research site in chapter one of this study. Participants spanned the age spectrum from 20 to 60 plus years, with six under 40, eight between 41 and 50, and six over 50. The researcher was fortunate to have families represented by people who were family heads or breadwinners, whether they were elderly or close relatives of the deceased. This shows that everyone who was approached by the researcher to take part in this study had appropriate skills, experiences, and knowledge of various belief systems (as per their families), which contributed much to the information this study aimed to acquire.

Even though in some of the households, families are left headed by children who are between 20 -30 years of age since parents are no more which has created a huge gap in the flow of Indigenous Knowledge more especially regarding their cultural schemas and burial rites.

**Fig 5.3 Religious status of the sampled participants**



The chart above shows the religious statistics of the participants interviewed. Out of 20 participants sampled in the entire population, 40% are said to be pure Christians (attending Christian based churches), 30% non-Christians and 30% are said to be attending both (Dual religions). This individual attribute tends to be of a huge significance in this study as religion plays a huge role in determining how individuals observe and respond to death and dying, burial rites and the whole of societal cultural and religious schemas.

## **5.2. EMERGED THEMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS**

These themes fall under the purview of this study's title: Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: a case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini Community during the alert level 5 of national lockdown. These themes show that participants' narratives about their experiences in meeting all study objectives were outlined in Chapter one.

**5.2.1. THEME ONE:  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPOSED  
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND PROTOCOLS**

The first question asked in this research dealt with the way this study's participants felt and constructed their perceptions about the imposed COVID-19 protocols regulating how societies should observe death and dying, funeral services and rituals during the COVID-19 pandemic as the strategy to curb the spread of it and reduce fatalities in the whole country. The way participants responded to the imposed rules and restrictions depended on each person's religion and culture as these two play a huge role in how to deal with death and dying with their socially constructed schemas attached. This study's participants had different responses and views regarding the accepting and rejecting of these restrictions. Others easily accepted them and commended all state governmental authorities together with the World Health Organization as an international advisor on pandemics in relation to imposed restrictions. Other participants rejected these restrictions and felt that the government disregarded their existence as the societies and the importance of cultures, cultural schemas and religion as African people and abide with what is deemed correct for the Western cultures and religion. Supported by Omonisi (2020), he concurred that most African states responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting the same strategies used by the Western countries to stop the virus' spread, such as "imposition" of movement restrictions, strict lockdowns, and the introduction of social distancing laws that are not in line with an African way of living. Participants expressed that the COVID -19 pandemic silenced their voices as the society, deemed their cultural and religious schemas as unimportant and useless as they were not formally consulted yet forced to abide and obey whatever imposed decisions on them by the 'so-called' authorities.

- **Acceptance and rejection of Lockdown regulations**

As discussed in Chapter two of this thesis, much literature posits that the high and rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic forced successive authorities and state governments to take decisions to increase the safety and security of their citizens. These decisions include closing of borders, switching traditional methods working in remote or virtual methods of working and imposition of restrictions on the use of any basic public services. These acts were imposed on people without considering their willingness to abide or not and they regulated and restricted all their social life in an overt and harsh manner. This has limited people's freedom of movement/ gatherings and any form of other human social activities including burials and funeral services to the necessary minimum numbers of attendees. In support of this, Omonisi

(2020) stated that these imposed restrictions and strategies had put much pressure on the weak mortuary services in Africa and altered the traditional methods of observing burial rites, mourning and grieving. This study's participants' different attitudes emerged after the introductions of these restrictions ranging from submissions, through conditional compliance, to denial of the need to observe them all with the lot of conspiracy theories especially questioning the severity of danger posed by COVID-19 on humans. But most noticeable from participants' responses were the attitudes that are accompanied by different emotions, frustrations, anger and powerlessness.

Responses posited that the COVID-19 restrictions shook people's lives, traditions, customs and norms not limited to that only but even economically (loss of jobs, reductions of salaries), social relations (lack of family and friends support, forced isolation and mental imbalances). Based on participants' responses, the researcher noticed that accepting COVID-19 restrictions were more based on individual cultural and religious beliefs. These beliefs were said to be related to values and needs of that individual which contributed a lot into the direction of whether to accept and abide with the imposed restrictions.

○ **Participants' Acceptance of the imposed COVID-19 restrictions.**

From the participants' interviews, the researcher found that the majority of born-again Christians (not in dual religion) sampled in this study had no issues with accepting these interviews. Their narratives were based on the unimportance of rituals attached to death and negated the importance of African spirituality and all other constructed African cultural schemas attached to death and dying. Their constructed narratives deemed all those rituals as irrelevant and superstitious with no meaning to the living and the dead. The only meaning attached to death and afterlife is a resurrection through Christ and the only ritual needed for that is repenting and accepting Christ. Mokhutso (2019) also asserted that Christians do believe in life after death, but there are no burial rituals attached to their religion as they believe in resurrection through Christ and all other things are deemed to be barbaric and superstitious:

*"...Thina asisiboni isidingo sokulwisana nohulumeni ekuzameni ukuhlenga izimpilo zabantu, yebo silahlekelwe izihlobo zethu njengabo bonke abanye, kodwa kuhle ngoba zife zimazi umsindisi wazo and ngthemba ziyovukela kuyena ngoba bezihmaba ngenqubo yakhe njengoba eshilo ezwini lakhe... vele akekho oyoya kuye engadlulanga ekufeni ngakhoke akukho masiko*



*angcono kunempilo futhi lemigomo ifanele ukubekwa ukuze kuhlengeke inqwaba yezimpilo zabantu...” (We as Christians do not see the need of fighting our authorities for imposing all rules and restrictions aimed in curbing COVID-19 spread. Yes, we have lost our loved ones but that doesn't mean that we have to stop in protecting others since we lost our family members and friends. Our loved ones died in the Lord, and we hope that they will rise in him too since they repented before death and received Christ as their Lord and saviour as he asserted in his word. There is no one who will go to heaven without dying...so it is better to save lives and stop this mass fatalities in the hands of this pandemic...) ↯*

EE said:

*“...asikho nesincane nje isidingo sokulokhu siya le, sibonile ukuthi imngcwabo yenzeni e Eastern Cape, inqwaba yabantu isuleleke ngalolubhubhane kwagcina kushone ingqwaba yabantu ngenxa yalokhu, vele bekufanele ukuthi uhulumeni abeke lemigomo futhi athumele namaphoyisa ukuthi ababophe labo abangafuni futhi ukuyilandela ngoba zibalulekile izimpilo zalabo abasele besaphila...” (There is really no need of make a fuss out of nothing. Why rejecting these rules? We have seen and witnessed what this mass attending of funerals did in Eastern Cape, a lot of people got infected and end up dying because of this (pandemic)... let us allow our government authorities to impose these rules and restrictions and for those who will refuse to abide with them... let them get arrested...*

While OO responded:

*“Acceptance of these restrictions appeared to be of high importance for the achievement for general society to comply without even being forced to. In reality it was hard and costly to frequently control people; to the pronounced restrictions, so their acceptance was necessary to protect the weak and vulnerable and assist in stopping the spread of this pandemic hence why we accepted them with both hands without questioning a single one of them” ~ FF.*

- **Participants' Rejection of the imposed COVID-19 restrictions.**

According to Jaja et al. (2020), even though the COVID-19 protocols have proven to be successful in reducing the spread of this disease, particularly through social isolation, they have not been incorporated in many areas of South Africa, which has resulted in a significant increase in infection rates in other provinces. Some participants believed that these regulations

were imposed to show power over African societies, and they consider them as disruption to traditional religion and as another form of colonisation as they took away the African way of observing death and dying. From this study participants who are non-Christians and those who subscribes to dual religions (Traditionally rooted religions and Christianity) are the ones who mostly rejected these restrictions. They asserted that these restrictions disregarded their cultural schemas and important culturally constructed rituals attached to death and dying.

EE argued that:

*“... these restrictions were imposed prematurely without addressing many issues that can be affected by them. For example, putting societal economic implications and the loss of jobs from local people, we as culturally based people felt like these restrictions violated our right and freedom of carrying our loved ones’ funeral services and practices accompanied by culturally and religiously constructed rituals. At home siwuShembe and we do not use coffins when burying our loved ones as we believe that siyamtshala lowo muntu ukuze abe idlozi elihle emndenini (we believe that we are planting the good seed that will become a good ancestor into the whole family), but with COVID-19 we were compelled to use coffins and disregard all other needed rituals that has been practised for decades by our family...”*

Other participants rejected these restrictions based on the belief that COVID-19 is one of the depopulation processes where certain individuals are using it to decrease the entire population: *“I feel like an idiot even on believing in the severe danger posed by COVID-19 into the whole society. These people had their population decrease target and it wasn’t just coincident. So, there was no need for imposing these restrictions upon us. This has undermined our cultures and religions. Our family member died alone with no one in support because of these people cruelty” ~ DD*

Other participants argued that these restrictions saw the protocols as madness and not real in South African soil, based on socio-economic conditions and in relation to practised cultural schemas and rituals. Comparing the living conditions between White dominated communities with that of Black dominated communities, they claimed that government was not real with its “cloned” strategies:

*“Many South African places are not designed for these restrictions, how one can have a hard lockdown and these insane restrictions while staying in the skwata camp, one room made of a conjugated iron, separated his/her house with of a neighbour? How can people of Khayelitsha,*

*Alexander and even Masukwana or Kwa-Mashu or Emlazi kwezincane can have a proper social distancing living in those places under those conditions? It is not possible... so you cannot control how funerals to be conducted while failing to control the spread of COVID-19 in informal settlements” –MM*

Participants rejected these restrictions based on “their” fact that it infringed their rights and freedom of practising all necessary rituals when sending off their loved ones. Recalling from chapter three under the philosophical alignment of this study with theoretical framework, it is said that African ontology posits that African religion relies more on African spirituality which is being controlled and guided by the needed rituals (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata, 2014). These responses show that cultural relativism was disregarded as the state authorities failed to embrace cultural diversity when imposing these restrictions without consulting relevant cultural and religious custodians or societies including the one of e-Macambini. Those who rejected these restrictions saw them as violating their rights as the beavered and even to the deceased of being given a proper send-off coupled with associated funeral rites practices.

#### **5.2.2. THEME TWO:**

#### **THE CONSTRUCTED EXPERIENCES AND THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DEATH, DYING, RELIGION AND COMMUNITY CULTURAL SCHEMAS.**

Based on this study background, Omonisi (2020) claimed that COVID-19 has altered African perceptions of death, dying, burial, burial traditions, practices, lamenting, and mourning to prevent the pandemic's destructive menace. Several African states' governments introduced national shutdowns within their countries with many restrictions and laws which prohibited mass gatherings, burning of burials and funeral ceremonies and other more elaborate ceremonies including weddings and religious gatherings. This resulted in imposed restrictions on movement, gatherings, and introduction of social distancing, wearing of masks and constant sanitizing of hands and surfaces. This has led to a huge disturbance of the way people used to do things regarding disposing of the remains of the dead in African native societies. With no exception this affected people and households of e Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones in the alert level 5 of national lockdown in South Africa. Responding to the question like: What impact do these restrictions have on cultural and religious aspect of human lives? Participants constructed their responses that led to the following sub-themes:

- **Taken by storm.**

This study's participants had similar sentiments with what is written by many scholars in different literature about COVID-19. They all posited that this pandemic has taken the whole universe by storm, and it affected every aspect of humans. As much as it was first detected in China, its rapid spread reached many countries globally and its rapid growing cases forced many counties and people to stay in fear since it had a high mortality rate in a short space of time. This caught all humans off-guard as no one was ever prepared for it. From the participants' point of view, most of their responses claimed that fear and unpreparedness caused the high rate of mortality in societies:

*"... This thing came where no one was expecting it, the hype and fear that was imposed on us cause everyone to have anxiety. Most of elderly people were not killed by COVID-19 per se but it was fear of death and loneliness that killed them...." AA*

While the participant argued that:

*"Lento ivele nje yaba impicabadala, into engakaze yenzeke ngisho nasendulo. Ivele yavumbuka njengomlilo wequbula lapho kungekho muntu olindele futhi nonolwazi lwayo" ("... This pandemic took us as a rapid storm, where we as the country we never had enough resources and a proper chance to sit and plan around it. All the responses on curbing and stopping them were taken prematurely and what we can say, we can't blame our leaders as they also had no clue on what was going on and how to fight this thing with no resources and knowledge on it...") – CC*

This study revealed that families and household from e-Macambini community were not prepared for this pandemic, and they expressed that COVID-19 related interventions were applied prematurely because they caused disruptions on their burial rites and cultural schemas.

### 5.2.3. THEME 3:

#### IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON DEATH AND DYING.

Mbiti (1976), Mokhutso (2019), Radzilani (2010), and Ngubane (2020) all regard death as the universal phenomenon that is there for every human being in every society, tribe, of any spiritual belief and value systems. In normal circumstance death brings no nice experience, no joy but sorrow and pain to the dying together with the beavered family members and friends. In Africa death and dying is not treated as a private family matter but it is a communal affair where the whole community or the society mourn and grieve for that death. From the time of illness, local communities usually come to check on the healing progress, to give strength and hope to the sick so that he/she will get better. Before the advent of COVID- 19, death and dying was a very comforting process even for those patients, who were admitted into hospitals and ICUs, as they had a chance of dying close to their loved ones:

*“...Mntanami (My child), in an African context, when one is sick, the local women usual come by to offer their prayers, praying for healing and also to give the spiritual hope to the sick and the whole family as they all need that emotional strength and hope. You can’t die alone...”* – GG

During the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic all that has been changed, people died in isolation, alone with no proper goodbyes, cultural practices attached to death were semi abolished and no church to support and give strength to the beavered. All customs, traditions and rituals that are attached to death and dying were totally disregarded.

- **Dying alone – No proper goodbyes**

Death is regarded as the people’s last enemy in African societies that needs to be defeated (Omonisi, 2020). With the COVID -19 pandemic present, the concept of death and dying have been hampered and disrupted, whether for those who are dying at home, in hospices, or in hospitals. Participants’ responses avow that all COVID-19 patients have endured a very painful and disturbing experiences of dying alone. During their last days, they died in isolation (dying alone) without the companionship of those they love, their families or friends. Dying alone refers to approaching death while living alone or passing away in a location where loved ones are unable to be with or close to the dying. Some participants claimed that their family members did not get a chance of holding end-of-life discussions with them as family members since they died in isolation or in quarantine. What transpired from participants is that families and friends

are still grieving not only for loss of their loved ones but also for not being there for them in their last living days:

*“Ingane kababa yadlula emhlaeni iyodwa sengathi ilahliwe noma kufainja nje, singekho ukumqinisa isandla Kanye nokumnika ithemba nothando lokuthi la aya khona kunomdeni omlindile Kanye noababa’ mkhulu bethu” (My lovely sister had her final moments alone, more like a dog with no one to show her love and care. We were not there to give her hope and bid farewell as she was ascending to the world of our ancestors to meet all the great was that has also ascended in the past” - TT*

While the other participant asserted that:

*Lemgomo isincishe elikhulu ithuba lokuxoxa siphinde sizwe izingxoxo zokugcina nabathandiweyo bethu, sizwe nezifiso zabo ngokufanele kwenzeke emndenini yethu uma bengasekho, abanye kuba zinhlambuluko ezizodala ukuthi umndeni usale ubumbane futhi uthandane” ... (these restrictions denied us an opportunity of holding the last breath conversations with our relatives hearing their last wishes and confessions that are usually necessary for those who are left behind” – EE*

Participants claim that pronounced COVID-19 regulations especially at level 5 of national lockdown prohibited visiting of those who were sick and in isolation which prevented them as families and friends to give hope and comfort to the sick. Culturally, most dying persons (mostly elders) are believed to have last wishes as they are believed to have started their communications with others *abangasekho* (the dead living in the other realm) and those conversations are valued and taken seriously as they pre-empt some rituals to be done before and after the burial. COVID-19 took those last wishes and messages away from families and their dying ones.

- **Impact of COVID -19 on religion and cultural schemas**

The central motivation to all people who subscribe to any religion (can be a traditional religion, Christianity or Islamic religion) is the pursuit of life and the security therein especially after death. The idea of life as a continuum, with a dynamic rhythm and cycles that follow the process of birth, death, and rebirth, is prevalent among the world's religions. According to Radzilani (2010), religion and culture play a significant and vital role in how individuals construct their world, and it is impossible to discuss religion without also discussing culture

and its activities. Culture and religion have a responsibility to influence people's interactions with others in different situations. From such point on, there are expectations for proper behaviour that are influenced by culture and religion. People are required to celebrate when they believe an event is beneficial and to mourn when a member of the family dies. With each celebration's occurrence, there are some rituals and schemas attached to it. With the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic many people remained confused and perplexed by the announced restrictions, regulations since they prevented them from observing all the required and appropriate cultural rituals:

*“Ngokwenkolo yethu, ukufa kuhambisana namasiko ayimkhuba ehambisana nenqwaba yemicikilisho okufanele ilandelwekahle ukuze singaxabanai nedlozi silethe umkhokha endlini. Lohulumeni nalemigomo yakhe uthena asiyeke yonke lemicikilisho ehambisana nokutshalwa komuntu omngasekho emhlabeni... uthi bazobamukela kanjani abadala abangasekho lomuntu ofika ehamba engagqokile? uzohlupha abe idlozi elibi lomuntu”*

*(In our culture and religion, death is associated with rituals, not just rituals but essential ones that are truly needed so that there will be no quarrel with the ancestors and invites all negative omen into the entire family and mending ghosts. This government with his restrictions disregarded our cultures and religious and compromised our cultural schemas and rituals attached to death and dying)*

Participants claimed that the pronounced guidelines and restrictions compromised their societal constructed cultural and religious schemas with a total shutdown of churches and abolishment of other cultural rituals. Participants claim that churches are no longer rendering physical services where people should attend and have spiritual reform. In the world of the COVID-19 pandemic many things have moved into digital platforms, funeral ceremonies, church services and even in education sectors.

- **The normalization of abnormalities - Adjustment on the announced new normal brought by announced restrictions.**

COVID-19 has changed the burial, burial rites, mourning and grieving in Africa with the introduced national shutdowns accompanied by various laws instituted to forbid mass gatherings, burning of incense, burial and funeral ceremonies and other more elaborate ceremonies including weddings, religious gatherings, imposed restriction of movement and introduction of social distancing and wearing of masks. This resulted in a huge disturbance in

the way people used to do their normal things regarding disposing of the remains of the dead in African native societies. This affected people and households of the Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones in the alert level 5 of national lockdown in South Africa. Before the COVID-19 outbreak people of the Macambini community had their culturally constructed ways of observing death and dying, cultural schemas, burial rites together with funeral ceremonies.

Where there is death, usually there is a funeral service. When death strikes, the most crucial role in any religion is to ensure that the body of the deceased is sent to a comfortable place in the afterlife through the appropriate family and societal tradition. Funeral services or burial services serve different functions depending on the perspective of the observer. The core function of funeral services in societies is to maintain social order, provide emotional and physical support to the bereaved families, assist in the grief process by providing the opportunity to express personal emotions, connections, and love for the deceased by the bereaved family and help support beliefs in spirit and the afterlife and show a huge respect for the deceased. These services are perceived as an integral part of each culture's mourning system and each culture has its own constructed patterned ways in which these ceremonies are conducted and performed. This cultural pattern determines the rituals to be performed prior, during and after the services, customs to be followed, the length of the funeral service, the kind of burial, the number of attendees etc. From participants' views, it is important that families perform proper send-off ceremonies to accompany their deceased loved ones into the spirit world following the traditional manner. With the advent of COVID-19, Sharpley (2020) argued that funerals have been identified as high-risk sites of the COVID-19 infection, especially in rural areas. The Disaster Management Act provides an elaborate set of regulations for funerals, burning of incense, travel between provinces, preventing interaction with COVID-19 infected bodies, enforcing social and physical distancing and sanitising (Dlamini-Zuma, 2020). Restricted attendance and shortened rituals have totally changed the families and societies' observance of burial and burial rites. This has confused and angered many traditional and religious people since they were forced to lay their dead to rest without observing their cultural and religious "deemed" appropriated rituals.



- **Funerals as “no more” a community event**

Literature claims that in African societies, death and funerals are societal events. The whole society regards itself as the family. Understanding the concept of family is a prerequisite to understanding the rationale behind the African cultural practice of mourning the dead and engaging in burial rituals. In the context of Africa, the term "family" refers to anyone—including the entire society and community—rather than just those related by blood or by direct or extended family. At the time of the funeral, the neighbourhood church, the burial society, or even a random onlooker who learned of the death and came to comfort the family are all regarded as members of the family.

African burial ceremonies are elaborate<sup>4</sup> events, where societies act as one big family coming to mourn and bid farewell to their loved ones. These ceremonies are accompanied by a series of rituals, from pre-burial rituals and pro-burial rituals. With the presence of COVID-19 and its curbing restrictions, these ceremonies turned out to be less elaborate events with many families and households including the e-Macambini community being denied an opportunity to bury their loved ones in “their” normal socially constructed way which is influenced by IK (*ulwazi lobabamkhulu*). Starting with funeral attendances participants raised their concerns about how the authorities and police would not allow whole families to attend the funerals. In villages families are joined by *uzalo* (matrilineal and patrilineal), which results in them being huge families which makes it difficult to minimize and control the community members to a specific attendance of 50 people as a COVID-19 regulation as approved during level 5 to 4:

*“thina sigcwele isigodi sonke futhi sihlobene siyazalana, siyidla siyiqede inkomo sisodwa. Asidingi ngisho umphakathi ukuze sibe baningi, sibanengi sisosodwa, lo 50 oshiwoyo mncane ngisho ukunomnden uwodwa. Ngakhoke safihla umama ngisho amalunga omndeni awafikanga... lokho okwaba buhlungu kakhulu...basalila namanje ngoba ababphelezela abantu bakubo” (Our family alone is so many and forms much of a community here and we alone constitute of far more than 50 members who happens to be the maximum number of funeral attendances. So, during our mothers’ funeral some of family members did not attend due to maximum limit and that was too painful for us...as they are still mourning and grieving since they missed the chance of paying their last respect to their loved ones)-DD*

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<sup>4</sup> Elaborate – denoting the presence of several precisely placed components or minute details, intricate and complex in both design and planning.

The presence of COVID 19 regulations has given an upper hand to local authorities and police allowing them to attempt and shorten funeral ceremonies (to prevent people from lingering) to a maximum capacity of 50 people allowed to attend. Fearing prosecution, many families abide and shortened their funerals to at least under two hours, with few people to speak and share their last words and thoughts of the deceased. They cut their funerals because of fear that they would go to jail if they do not abide by the imposed laws and regulations.

- **Funeral arrangements**

The COVID-19 rules and guidelines also had a significant impact on the e-Macambini community's families and households in terms of funeral preparations and arrangements. The interviews revealed that the traditional funeral arrangements were changed since the rules and regulations needed to be adhered to. This is what the study participants said:

*“Since there were just a few people required by the government to attend gatherings, there was actually no planning at all. We simply laid our father to rest and waited till after the lockdown to hold the proper funeral services as the memorial. it was so distressing that we weren't even able to properly bury our father due to the pandemic....” ~ CC*

Likewise, this participant also shared a similar experience, she said:

*“...We as a family had to bury my father in this manner since we did not know how long the level 5 national shutdown lockdown would persist, and we did not want my father's body to remain at the mortuary for an extended period of time. Close family members carried out the majority of the preparation with little interaction, much of it taking place over the phone. Furthermore, there was not much to prepare for other than to bury him right away because the funeral service had been postponed indefinitely....” ~ TT*

Another participant similarly stated the following:

*...In our culture, when a person passes away, especially an elderly person, the family's elders will gather, sit down, and hold numerous sessions to come up with modalities for how the deceased will be buried. However, due to the local social circumstances at the time, this could not be done...*

Another study participant, however, expressed his bewilderment at how the COVID-19 pandemic rules and protocols upset and affected his family as they were getting ready for the funeral. The man said:

*“...The pandemic had a negative impact on burial preparation in that we eventually had to pay twice as much in expenses as we had before the lockdown as a result. “isihlangu sikababa” and the customs of removing the coffin since our culture doesn’t permit the use of them as a corrective measure. My dad died around April when the country was in the middle of the hard and server lockdown, and we had nothing to do just bury him like dog...” ~GG*

Other participants expressed that:

*“.. Everyday became a funeral day. Death because our daily experience and there was not time to fully prepare or mourn for the death of your loved ones. This was a new normal because before the pandemic. Funerals were either taking place on Thursday if it concerns a baby. The weekend was mostly for elderly people, and this includes the youth. COVID-19 changed everything. We saw our loved ones dying like fumigate ants...Lafa elihle kakhulu “meaning cry the beloved country.... engabe babethule bethini obabomkhu “what were our ancestors saying about this painful era of our times”. ~ GG*

#### 5.2.4. THEME 4:

##### QUELLED CULTURAL SCHEMAS AND BURIAL RITES

- **No – ukubonwa (body viewing) and ukugezwa kwesidumbu (body washing)**

Besides no proper funeral planning or arrangements, shortening of funerals, participants argued that all traditional burial rituals that necessitate direct contact with bodies were all abandoned. There was no body washing (*Ukugezwa kwesidumbu*), body viewing (*Ukubonwa kwesidumbu*), body dressing (*ukugqokiswa komzimba*) and so on and some families’ claim that they nearly buried the wrong person as the person who was sent to the morgue appointed a wrong body:

***“We nearly buried the wrong body”***

*“ngenxa yalemgomo le kwavumeleka u Aunty ukuthi kube uye oya emakhazeni ukuze alande isidumbu, wafike wakhomba omunye umzimba ayi okamama .... Nakhona waze walungiswa ibona abasemakhazeni ngoba sebona ukuthi amaphepha abhale okunye.... Sacishe*

*sangcwaba umuntu okungasiyena” – ““With these regulations, it was only my aunt that was sent into the morgue for body viewing in which she accidentally made a mistake and pointed the wrong body.... Fortunately, enough the morgue staff through documentation early pointed that error.... Just imagine we nearly buried a wrong person....” - JJ*

- **Naked or stripped funerals (Funerals with no rituals”)**

From participants’ responses, the researcher’s findings suggested that COVID-19 guidelines, protocols and restrictions affected the way the families and households conducted their funeral services when they were burying their loved ones. Many participants claimed that these guidelines prevented them observing their usually constructed burial rites which they are accustomed to (from announcement of death, moving of the dead from one place to another, body washing and viewing, funeral ceremony and event ceremony feasting). With no choice, all participants conducted their loved one’s funerals adhering to these guidelines, sanitizing of their hands, social distancing and limited number of attendances including close or immediate family members and close friends.

Culturally and religious participants claimed that these guidelines had also affected how Christians and non-Christian societies hold their funerals especially their usual burial rites. According to participant replies, having limited access to the deceased person's body had caused much concern for them. The national shutdown regulations required that COVID-19 victims' bodies and corpses be completely wrapped with plastic, buried, and placed in coffins so that they could not be accessed at funerals, especially inside the home.

***“We were forced to use a coffin while our tradition is against that...”***

Ama-Nazaretha complained a lot about this as their religious customs and traditions do not use a coffin, but make use of *uhlaka* (the stretcher/frame) instead of a coffin, but with COVID-19 present they were forced to bury their loved ones out of their burial customs and traditions:

*“Thina maNazaretha, kuwusiko lwethu ukungangcwabi ngebhokisi, ngoba sikholelwa ekutheni umuntu siyamtshala, sifuna akhululeke, amile ande aqhakaze abe idlozi elihle elinezibusiso ekhaya.... Kodwa ngokuba khona koKhuvethe sonke saphoqeleka ukuthi umfowethu simumpintshe ebhokisini, nalapho sazama ukumkhipha kodwa amaphoyisa ala athi umthetho awuvumi”* (“As Ama-Nazaretha, our religious norms and customs forbids the use of coffins since we believe that when we lay our loved ones into death, we are planting them and they

*will blossom good blessings into our families as ancestors... but with the presence of COVID-19, we forced to bury my brother with the coffin and even when we tried, local authorities and police refused us to do as they claimed to be against the new regulation”)- TT*

Many of the responses claimed that large funerals and rituals were performed in absentia of the corpse as the body was taken directly from the morgue into the graveyard. There were no *ukubuyiswa komuntu* (spirit fetching) done, no body viewing, no body washing and dressing and even those rituals performed to appease the ancestors in an event of bad dead (since pandemic outbreaks are considered to be unacceptable sickness that leads to wild and unacceptable-death). Another simple example of the rituals that were compromised according to the participants’ responses was Amahlabo. Amahlambo “cleansing” of the family and amahalavu “spades and forks” as a cultural schema/ritual performed by many families were affected. Families were forced to do it on the day of the funeral instead of giving it time e.g., a month or three months. This was because the gathering of families was limited hence it was part of the funeral day. We saw our indigenous knowledge systems being skewed by the pandemic and indigenous communities felt that their rituals and cultural schemas were undermined. Due to the suspension of international flights and other restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most immigrants' remains were not buried in their countries of origin. Most of the nations and cities where COVID-19 caused death, interred the dead bodies. The level 5 national lockdown intended to stop this pandemic made it difficult to carry out some cultures' custom of burying their loved ones where they were born. All these, regardless of religious belief or culture, have resulted in several modifications to how Africans express their mourning and perform funeral customs.

#### **5.2.5. THEME 5:**

#### **MOURNING AND GRIEVING**

Itweni (2021) defined grief as the response to loss including the physical sensation, feeling, thoughts and social difficulties but continue to search for spiritual sense of that being. Mourning is a cultural or religious process of expression grief and bereavement. It was clear from the interviews that the COVID-19 regulations' implementation caused the remaining family members to repress their feelings and experience a lack of closure. All these rituals prepare the family members psychologically and emotionally to endure the uncomfortable emotions that their loved one will no longer be physically there with them. These rites must be

carried out for the family to remain at peace and for the Zulu people to uphold their deeply held religious beliefs. Religious views are seen as a sensitive topic that should be handled as such by people who have lost loved ones due to the pandemic. Respecting religious and cultural traditions helps grieving family members find comfort because funeral preparations and associated rituals bring closure. Interviews with study participants revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic rules and protocols had an impact on how well the participants were able to mourn the loss of their loved ones. One of the participants, who lost her mother during the COVID-19 pandemic-related lockdown, had the following to say:

*...I wasn't even able to cry or weep for my mother as much as I would have liked to. You are aware that in the Zulu custom, many people gather around when someone passes away, some sobbing while others console the grieving. There was nothing like that since we all had a great fear of the disease and couldn't have too many people join us in our grief....*

Similarly, another study participant who visited the bereaved spouse as soon as his brother-in-law passed was reported, said:

*...The AmaZulu method of mourning and grief is significantly dissimilar to this. People started to gather, but because they were observing social distance, they were too far apart. Only a very small number of people wearing face masks were able to approach the widow of the deceased when she was grieving alone at various points, which had a significant impact on us....*

In the advent of COVID-19, bereaved families had their mourning and grieving interrupted, which resulted in their healing and coping being hindered. The respondents made it apparent that they believe and feel that healing and solace only happen once the rituals are performed successfully.

- **Coping with death**

Every culture has its rituals and services regarding mourning. These rituals provide solace and, most importantly, closure. The inability to mourn normally and experience the customary rituals that gradually help bring acceptance of death is one of the main difficulties faced by those who are grieving the loss of a loved one who has passed away. A need for expert counselling to assist people find closure in other ways may arise because of this new normal.

Inability to give your loved ones a suitable send-off could lead to delayed or complicated grief in the future. Guilt and self-blame may also develop because of being unable to properly honour the deceased owing to the constraints.

#### **5.2.6. THEME 6:**

#### **RE-ADJUSTMENT TO NEW NORM - TAMPERING WITH ANCESTORS OR GODS AND GOD**

Participants concluded that families, local leaders, and community members must continue to fulfill their communal and social responsibilities while adhering to COVID-19 procedures regarding the constraints and related difficulties placed by COVID-19 on funerals and burial customs in African communities. Funeral homes and other institutions like churches were expected to use their platforms to raise awareness of the effects of COVID-19 on people's health. Prior to the funeral itself, religious and traditional leaders or the local government were to request a list of attendees. Community members and well-wishers were urged to take part in the funeral rites online using the platforms that were available as that was aimed in assisting family members and friends able to follow government regulations in the effort to stop the virus' spread:

*“mntanami asikwenzenga konke, yebo walwandwa, kodwa umzimba wakhe awungeniswanga ekhaya, akenzelwanga isihlangu sakhe, akekho egcekeni njengabanye futhi akuvalwangwa ukufa, ngenxa yalemthetho lena, futhi kunezingane eziningi ezingaphumelelanga ukuza emfihlweni .... sikhuluma nje azithelelwe amanzi”.* (“My child, we failed to perform all required rituals due to these rules and regulations. Yes, we fetched his spirit and body, but we never completed the rest of the rituals as required, and we failed to bring him inside our home, and we never performed the appeasing rituals just to prevent the omen’s occurrences... besides that a lot of family members missed the funeral and never included in some of other rituals.”)-  
TT

Participants’ views and responses posited that the state funeral regulations had collided with the local cultural and religious sensibilities and historically constructed norms and traditions of carrying funeral, burials, rituals, and even mourning or grieving in the entire community. COVID-19 regulations, which forbid families from conducting the burial rites as required by custom, have genuinely worried the surviving family members. Some families have performed

only a fraction of the required rites in the hope that they would be able to complete the remaining ceremonies once the coronavirus has passed.

#### 5.2.7. THEME 7:

#### THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF TAMPERING NAMADLOZI OR ZINYANYA OR AMATHONGO

The interruption of death is acknowledged and rejected by Africans. Even after dying, a person keeps on living but in a different realm of life. The deceased's surviving family members cling to him and keep him in mind (Mbiti, 1969). The significance of funeral ceremonies in Zulu traditional society cannot be overstated or minimized, but they still exist and are practiced as part of their way of life. These traditions were severely disturbed by the coronavirus pandemic. Because the necessary rites associated with death and dying were not performed, family members were concerned about the deceased becoming an enraged ancestor and wandering ghost. Participants stated that failing to transition the deceased into the world of the ancestors in a peaceful and courteous way can have serious consequences for the living, including bad luck and spiritual injury as well as harm to their established cultural beliefs. In these situations, their families must perform pricey rituals to placate the ancestors:

*“Thina nje layikhaya kusafanele sihlabe izinkomo ezinkomo ezimbili, okuyisahlangu sikababa okwakufanele ahambe naso, siphinde sihlabe nezimbuzi ezintatu ukuthi simkhiphe ibhokisini sishweleze nasolakeni lwabadala ngalomhlola owenzakalayo... asingcwabi ngebhokisi layikhaya, siyamutshala umuntu thina. Sisotakwini olukhulu nje futhi sisele sodwa makunjena.”- (in this family we still need to slaughter two cows and three goats and do an ancestral appeasing ceremony together with isihlangu sikababa. In those three goats, one is for removing and cleansing the use of coffin since in our tradition it is customary forbidden to use coffin hence why we use uhlaka (stretcher) instead... we believe in planting a good ancestor... so we are in big trouble)-TT*

Funeral rites being suppressed causes anguish and worry in family members who are determined to please the living-dead and maintain their rightful place. The participants hypothesized that if people disobey religious or other prescriptions that are appropriate in each circumstance, it is construed as disdain for each culture.



### **5.3.CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed how funerals were handled in the e-Macambini community varied culturally and socially, depending on local cultural views, family traditions, and religious affiliation, according to experiences of families and households. The chapter further reveals a clear distinction between funerals held in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, people are typically laid to rest at cemeteries and most memorial services are held in churches. In the rural areas of eMacambini the process is different. It includes cultural schemas and rituals which include ukuphuma kwegama by the family and the community headman, followed by ukulila, ukubekwa kamageja (ukuzila kwesizwe not only the family), ukulandwa nokugezwa komzimba and the burial date which is followed by the ritual of ukugezwa kwama Halavu namageja and the family cleansing. This chapter concludes by revealing that COVID-19 restrictions altered cultural schemas, religious beliefs and rituals of eMacambini community.

## **Chapter Six.**

# **DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The goal of this chapter is to summarize and put into context the presented and analysed data in chapter five to establish findings of this study. Therefore, the summary and the discussions of results together with the limitations and recommendations for future research are made based on the empirical results of this study. This research aimed at uncovering different dimensions of the experiences faced by families and households of e-Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones during high level 5 of national lockdown in South Africa in relation to their religious and cultural schemas. This chapter discusses the data that was presented in chapter five with the goal to interpret and put into contest the data presented so that the principal investigator of this can establish the objected findings of the study.

### **6.2. Discussions and Summary of the findings**

A qualitative research approach was administered for the sake of acquiring the perceptiveness data in the study and e-Macambini community was used as the research site. The targeted populations of the study were all family and households who lost and buried their loved ones because of COVID-19 during level 5 of national lockdown in South Africa with a sample size of 20 participants selected using purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. One-on-one interviews were used to collect all the gathered data which was aligned with research questions and data was gathered in a period of 6 months (November 2021 to April 2022). All gathered data was thematically analysed and some of the original narrations were used during constructions of themes, data analysis process as asserted in chapter five of this study. These study findings include the emotions, feelings and challenges together with experiences that were faced by all families who lost and buried their loved ones in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings for this study were aligned with two frameworks that guided this study as alluded to in chapter three: Social Constructivism and Cultural Relative frameworks. The narratives of each participant were constructed according to the cultural and religious traits of everyone without being compared and reduced into the researcher's cultural beliefs. This study discovered that most of the participants are Africans who either subscribe to Africa Christianity, African Traditional Religion or Dual religion systems and they share either

common value, beliefs, or norms which they constructed as a society. Mogashoa (2014) referring to Social Construction Theory as a theory of knowledge that has been used by many anthropologists in studying other cultures and religions without imposing any judgement on them. This theory helped in shaping this study objective and allowed reflexivity (the belief that knowledge is culturally and religiously constructed). With a researcher's understanding of the cultural uniqueness through Cultural Relativism, this laid a conducive environment of being subjective into participants' narratives in understanding their experiences based on the research objectives. The researcher's ability to comprehend and articulate the participants' perceptions and points of view is based on the theoretical frameworks used in this study.

Findings revealed that, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact in all crucial cultural practices including funerals and burials in all indigenous societies in e-Macambini community. It was revealed that in an African tradition or culture and customs when a person dies, a series of traditional rituals and protocols must be observed by the bereaved family, starting from the day the death is announced which were distorted by COVID-19. These distorted rituals include the visits by neighbors and distant family members to stay or remain with the immediate family till after the burial as usual. With COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing protocols all that and other African rituals related to death and dying have been disrupted and compromised.

Bereaved families constructed their anger towards the country's government together with authorities who imposed and forced these restrictions on them without any consent. They objected that the South African government had the temerity to impose restrictions that tampered with their cultures, traditions, customary practices and religions while failed ensuring that hospitals and local clinics were fully functioning including all COVID-19 testing sites. This study found that people from e-Macambini felt excluded from all the means of responding to COVID-19. They expressed that, the government never consulted them, nor their leaders (traditional and religious) and were also never informed properly about all the taken approaches by the authorities in fighting this pandemic.

*This study finalized its findings by comparing how burials and funeral were held during COVID-19 and PRE-COVID-19:*

COVID-19 BURIALS	PRE-COVID-19 BURIALS
Only one or two family members were indeed permitted to examine the deceased's remains during a body viewing	All members of the family, as well as friends and neighbours, view the body to pay their respects.

Body of the deceased was taken from the mortuary straight to the graveyard without being brought home to all African and religious burial rites to be observed	For all cultural and religious ceremonies to be thoroughly fulfilled, the body of the deceased arrives at the family house the day before, and it remains there for the night vigil and the funeral.
Bodies were/are not removed from the hearse and taken straight to the graveyard.	The body is/was typically left with the family by the hearse until the funeral the following day.
All the remains of the deceased were forced into coffins and wrapped/ sealed with three body bags	Family has a 100% access to the body of their loved one, perform all required rituals including the dressing rituals. For churches like ama-Nazaretha they do not use coffins for their funerals.

### 6.3. Contributions

- This study contributes a qualitative anthropological affirmation that most pandemic outbreaks including COVID-19 present unprecedented challenges mostly in African culture and religions as they disturb how death and dying including funerals are observed.
- The two theoretical frameworks that informed this study's design confirmed that qualitative anthropological research is the best method for eliciting an in-depth comprehension of the phenomenological experiences of the persons under study in the given environment. These theories helped the study's investigator better comprehend the constructed experiences, which included narratives, emotions, and feelings. They also gave the sampled population a chance to reflect on how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected them.
- Both frameworks provided new insight in both the researcher, participants and even in the body of anthropological knowledge on how the pandemic can contribute in shaping the whole context of cultural anthropology and other related concepts.
- The study recognized the use of isiZulu language by research participants as a phenomenological expression of painful experiences. This study further validates that it is possible to study indigenous communities in their own languages which falls within decolonial ethnography.
- This new normal brought by COVID-19 was enacted, forgetting that death practices and related cultural schemas or rites performed by the members of the indigenous societies

were/are not performed to please a government or international figures but were/are customarily performed to please ancestors who are owners of the indigenous/Native knowledge that is treasured, preserved and be inherited by the following generation.

- This study using the viewpoint of the culturally rooted African native societies, questions the call for restrictions from the WHO, (2020) presented many challenges that have not been documented before, which will be integrated into the existing cultural text in anthropology.

#### **6.4. Recommendations**

- This study should be integrated into the content of the University of KwaZulu-Natal Anthropology (102) - Culture and Anthropology 201- Culture, Health and Illness curriculum as a new section which will deal with the impact of pandemic outbreaks in African traditions, cultures and religion. The diseases outbreaks are not a new thing in Africa, and they will not be the last, hence decolonial interventions should be explored to allow indigenous communities to follow their cultural schemas and rituals especially when their family members and friends have died. Those constructed cultural schemas and rituals have a significant impact in African families and households in the period of grief and mourning. These disturbances and compromising of African cultures and religions due to the pandemic's outbreak have the potential of reshaping social constructed norms, customs and traditions yet there is little literature written on them. This study shared the current lived experiences of rural based people, and has a huge contribution under the Human Health and Illness in evolutionary perspectives as it looks to the anthropological perspectives on how COVID-19 has re-shaped African societies, cultures, religion and traditions. Again, there are existing literature gaps that need to be filled through African Scholarship especially in the following two areas:
  - *Impact of transmittable diseases in the squatter-camp communities: taking the COVID- 19 pandemic as the major issue.*
  - *Lack of fighting Outbreaks resources: The Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks exposed African countries.*
- This study also needs to be regarded as the knowledge bridge between three study fields, anthropology, theology and sociology. It provides a clear understanding on how cultures and religions interact and shape societies. It embraces differences and tolerances between societal cultures and religions through the guidance of the Cultural Relativism framework. This study significantly noted that individual cultures within the same society must be

valued and respected as they are not just an activity but their way of life as they provide security in the afterlife.

- Based on this study's findings, it is recommended that the government officials and authorities, consult with the member of the public including traditional leadership before passing and imposing legislation that will undermine socially constructed culturally and religiously schemas and traditions. This must be done with the mentality which says: "to find solutions to African problems, African people must be consulted to provide efficient and effective African methods of providing solutions". This includes the African Scholarship and IKS system.

### **6.5. Limitations**

This study met numerous restrictions due to the presence of COVID-19, particularly during the data collection phase. As one will remember that present COVID-19 curbing rules and restriction presented at level 1 of national local were still in place. In the early phases of the investigation, this took much time trying to find alternatives for the researcher to establish links and relationships with community leaders from ubaba iNkosi Mathaba and to izinduna of all 14 sub-places under the community of e-Macambini so that the referral to the targeted samples were made. This made it even harder to get access to uBaba Inkosi uMathaba for interviews as the study objectives aimed at getting on whether or not did the state authorities together with medical experts consulted with traditional leaders before imposing COVID-19 curbing rules and restrictions. That resulted in the other gap that needs to be covered for future research.

With the presence of COVID -19 during the data collection process, limited the researcher to conduct only one-on-one interviews to conduct data with no focus groups nor was there even participative observation done due to strict national lockdown restrictions. From recruitment to interviews and validation of data with participants, all were mostly done electronically except only the actual interviews that took place in the natural setting of the participants. This study was only meant for those families and households of e-Macambini community who lost and buried their loved ones under level 5 of national lockdown to participate with no other person, families or community who fall outside of this narration.

### **6.6. Chapter summary**

This study concludes that cultural schemas, rituals and burial rites shape or socially construct one's identity and promote one's cultural relativism which is a sense of pride and belonging. All frameworks employed in this study guided all the interviews' questions asked of the participants which greatly assisted the researcher in analysing the participants' narratives (from

their emotions, facial expressions and even voice tones to detect their emotions throughout the interviews process) to achieve this study's objectives and the main study aim. This study revealed that most participants are still angry and grieving as they were robbed of their chance of bidding a good farewell to their loved ones by the imposed COVID-19 restrictions. They were also scared because their loved ones did not get a good transitional journey into the ancestral land (the land of the dead living) as they missed all the necessary rituals due to COVID -19. Other families are currently in the healing period performing pleading rituals to try and tone down the anger of the dead. This chapter concluded with the study summary, discussions of the limitations and recommendations to guide the future studies and research more in the field of cultural and medical anthropology together with theology.

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# APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



14 November 2021

**Ntokozo Howard Vundla (207525479)**  
School Of Social Sciences  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear NH Vundla,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00003486/2021

**Project title:** Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African Indigenous societies: A Case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of Macambini community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown.

**Degree:** MSc

### Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 09 November 2021 to our letter of 02 November 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

**This approval is valid for one year until 14 November 2022**

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully



.....  
**Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)**

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587  
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**



## APPENDIX B: GATE KEEPER'S CLEARANCE



"EYOMBUSO WASEMACAMBINI"  
MACAMBINI TRADITIONAL COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 350  
NYONI  
3802  
ILEMBE DISTRICT

Mr. Ntokozo Howard Vundla -207525479

16 September 2021

School of Social Science

Private Bag X 01

Scottsville 3209

UKZN

Email: 207525479@stu.ukzn.ac.za

ntombizonina@gmail.com

Dear Mr. N.H Vundla

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EMACAMBINI COMMUNITY UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF HIS MAJESTY-  
INKOSI M MATHABA

With a much deeper deliberation as the **Macambini Traditional Council**, we hereby grant you the permission to conduct research at eMacambini community under the stewardship of Ubaba Inkosi Mathaba, provided that the Ethical clearance has been obtained from your institution of learning. This permission will only grant you an access to 14 sub-place (izigodi) of eMacambini community.

We note the title of your research project as:

***Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African indigenous societies: a case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of e-Macambini community during the alert level 5 of national lockdown.***

It is noted that you will be constituting your samples as follows:

- Having the total sample number of 20 participants who will purposefully recruited from families who has lost and buried their loved ones during level 5 of national lockdown.
- With the request for responses from selected individuals, the one-on-one interviews will be conducted, adhering to all Covid-19 curbing protocols.

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire when interviews are set to be taking place:

1. Ethical Clearance number
2. Research tittle and details of the research, the researcher's details and the supervisor
3. Consent form is attached to the questionnaire and to be signed by the participant before the start of the interviews
4. The participant, rights clearly stated in the consent form and even in the data collection tool.
5. This letter as the proof that the we as MTC permitted you to conduct your study in the community' sub-places.

You are not authorise to divert the centre of your questionnaires. This study is permitted based on the concept that you have pitched into the Traditional Council, nothing more and nothing less. Identity numbers and any other personal information of individuals are not a matter of public record and are therefore protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act.

Please note that all collected data must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity as you stipulated in your consent form.

[Info@macambini.co.za](mailto:Info@macambini.co.za)

Macambini tribal council  
"EYOMBUSO WASEMACAMBI"

tele/fax: 0324530007

"EYOMBUSO WASEMACAMBINI"  
MACAMBINI TRADITIONAL COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 350  
NYONI  
3802  
ILEMBE DISTRICT



"EYOMBUSO WASEMACAMBINI"  
MACAMBINI TRADITIONAL COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 150  
NYONI  
3802  
ILEMBE DISTRICT

Mr M. Ntuli

Mr M. Ntuli  
Secretary General  
Macambini Traditional Council  
TELE/FAX-032 453 0007

16/09/2021

Date

Cell: 078 288 4971

Mr N Vilakazi

Mr N Vilakazi  
Induna yeNkosi EMhlabulweni  
Macambini Traditional Council  
TELE/FAX-032 453 0007

16-09-2021

Date

Cell: 073 693 7458



## APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT – ENGLISH VERSION

### Informed Consent Form

#### Dear Participant

I am **Ntokozo Howard Vundla**, student number **207525479**, a registered Master of Social Science candidate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus. The title of my research is ***Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African Indigenous societies: A Case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of eMacambini community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown.*** This proposed study is a critical analysis of the integration of cultural and religious perspectives of indigenous communities during COVID-19 pandemic. It seeks to understand how the rules and regulations created to curb the spread of COVID-19 have impacted the death, religion, and cultural schemas of indigenous societies by examining the funerals held, and burial rites performed, by the members of eMacambini Community. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research or academic purposes only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice whether to participate or not in this research. You will not be penalized for taking such of any action between the two.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- Because of Covid19 which is prohibiting human contact and the promotion of social distancing which is what anthropologist like the most when conducting their research. All COVID 19 curbing rules, protocols and regulations will be observed. I expect both of us to wear our masks and to keep a significant distance between ourselves during data collection.
- I resume the role of being a principal investigator of the study hence data collection and the recording of data is done by me. When asking you, a set of questions will be professionally chosen word, meaning that they will not dehumanize you as a human being as well as a research participant. Feel free to stop me at any time in case I am rushing, or you need clarity on the question I may have posed.
- The interview will take approximately 30 minutes per session or more. The issue of time is depended on process of asking and probing for clarity.
- Please note that data collection will be collected through field notes as well as thorough a voice recorder which will enable me to capture the nuanced discussion between us. The record (if consented by you as key participant) as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in my supervisors' office in a steel cabinet, and as she will want to verify the validity or the accuracy of narrative that I would have presented as past analysis chapter.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures). Because of wanting to ensure ethical considerations such as privacy and confidentiality, I will not allow any person to serve as a witness to validate your participation.



I can be contacted at School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus, Scottville. Email address: [207525479@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:207525479@stu.ukzn.ac.za). Cell phone number: 0685479191. My supervisor is Dr. Balungile Zondi, who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Pietermaritzburg campus. Email address: [zondiL4@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:zondiL4@ukzn.ac.za). Cell phone number: 0716065062.

If you have any questions or concerns about the legitimacy of the study, you can make use of the information provided above about supervisors. Alternatively, verify the legitimacy of the study by using the following Ethics Committee Contact details listed below.

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

**Research Office, Westville Campus**

**Govan Mbeki Building**

**Private Bag X 54001  
Durban 4000**

**KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA**

**Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609**

**Declaration**

I ..... (full names of participant) hereby consent to participate in the study as it is noted that this study involves interviews and participative observations (if any event related to the study do occur). I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to voluntarily participate in this research project.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research.

I hereby agree to participate.

I consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

Signature of the participant	Date	Place
.....	.....	.....

<b>Signature of Researcher</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>
.....	.....	.....

## **APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT INSTRUMENT – ENGLISH VERSION**

### **Recruitment instrument (English version)**

#### **Research title:**

**Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African Indigenous societies: A Case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of eMacambini community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown.**

#### **Part A: Consensual questions.**

1. Are you a member of eMacambini Community?

Yes

No

- If No,

Thank you for your voluntary participation. This study intends to recruit and engage with people who are members of eMacambini community.

- If Yes,

I would like to recruit you as an important respondent in this anthropological research.

2. Were you aware of National lockdown level 5 COVID 19 curbing rules impeding on how families were to bury their family members/loved ones during this level?

Yes

No

3. Have you lost or buried one of your loved ones in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic national lockdown level 5?

Yes

No

- If No,

Thank you so much for your time, the aim of this research is to interview people who have lost and buried their loved ones in the midst of COVID-19 national lockdown level 5.

- If Yes,

Can you please sign the consent form after I have read it for so that you will be aware of all your rights during data collection?

4. Do you consent your voluntary participation and the use of a voice recording machine which I place before you?

Yes

[ ] No

- If No,

Thank you so much for your time

- If Yes,

Can you please sign the consent form after I have read it for so that you will be aware of all your rights during data collection?

---

Participant's signature

---

Date

---

Time

**APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

**Data collection instrument (English version)**

**Research title:**

**Death, religion, and cultural schemas of South African Indigenous societies: A Case study of funeral services and burial rites of households and families of eMacambini community during the alert level 5 of National Lockdown.**

**Part B: Actual research questions**

5. Are coming from the family that is culturally rooter?

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6. What are your familial beliefs in relation to burying a family loved one?

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7. Are these beliefs guided by cultural indigenous knowledge or church specific beliefs or both?  
Please explain

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8. As you have mentioned that your beliefs are guided by church specific beliefs, what is the church involvement in burial processes or in informing any cultural schemas when someone has died in the family?

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9. What position do you hold at church or in the community at large? What are the roles and responsibilities trusted in your position?

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10. If a family member dies, what are the cultural schemas and burial rites that are needed to be observed by your church or the family?

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11. What impact did COVID-19 rules and restrictions at national lockdown level 5 brought into your family or church when performing burial rites and mourning for your lost loved one?

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12. How has your family and church adjusted to the announced restriction “new normal” during the Covid-19 pandemic?

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13. How, if ever, did the new normal temper with ancestor’s “gods” and what was the symbolic anger of your ancestors? If any....?

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14. How did the family or church respond to the expressed anger of the ancestors or gods?

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15. Were South African traditional councils and leadership consulted before the imposition of COVID-19 curbing rules? (Reserved for the societal leaders)

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16. Did COVID-19 protocols imply a hegemonic imposition over African communities and African churches based on the views of eMacambini community members, churches and leaders?

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17. Can you confirm that culture is really not static, that is learned hence you have come with new corrective ways to celebrate associated rituals (cultural schemas) and further explain how does this change conflict with the historical roots of the family and church?

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**Thank you for participating in the study!**

## APPENDIX E: IFOMU LOKUVUMA ELINOKWAZI

### Ifomu Lokuvuma Elinolwazi

#### Mbambiqhaza othandekayo

Igama lami ngingu-Ntokozo Howard Vundla, inombolo yomfundi engu-207525479, umfundi obhalisiwe we-Master of Social Science eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natali Pietermaritzburg Campus. Isihloko socwaningo lwami sithi **Ukufa, inkolo, kanye nezinhlelo zamasiko naamasonto omdabu: Ucwangingo olwenziwe ngezinkonzo zomngcwabo namasiko okungcwaba yamalunga omphakathi wesizwe sase-Macambini ngaphansi kwesigaba 5 sokuvalwa kwezwe**. Lesi sifundo esihlongozwayo siwukuhlaziya okubucayi kokuhlanganiswa kwemibono yamasiko nenkolo yemiphakathi yomdabu yase Afrika ngesikhathi sobhadane lwe-COVID-19. Lolucwaningo lifuna ukuqonda ukuthi ngabe imithetho nemithethonqubo eyenzelwe ukunqanda ukusabalala kwe-COVID-19 ibe nomthelela onjani ekufeni, enkolweni, nasezinhlelweni zamasiko emiphakathi yomdabu ngokuhlola imingcwabo ebibanjelwe, kanye nemicikilisho yokungcwaba eyenziwe ngama lunga omphakathi owakhele isizwe sase Macambini.

Sicela wazi ukuthi:

- Iminingwane oyinikezayo izosetshenziselwa ucwaningo lwezifundiswa noma izinjongo zezifundo kuphela.
- Ukubamba iqhaza kwakho kungokuzithandela ngokuphelele. Unokukhetha ukuthi ubambe iqhaza noma cha kulolu cwanningo. Ngeke ujeziswe ngokuthatha noma isiphi isenzo phakathi kwalaba bobabili.
- Imibono yakho kule ngxoxo izokwethulwa ngokungaziwa. Igama lakho noma ubuwena ngeke kudalulwe nganoma yiluphi uhlobo ocwaningweni.
- Ngenxa yeCovid19 evimbela ukuxhumana kwabantu nokwenyuswa kokuqedwa kwezenhlalo nokuyilokho isazi semvelo esithanda kakhulu lapho senza ucwaningo lwaso. Yonke imithetho ye-COVID 19 yokunqanda, imigomo neziqondiso kuzobhekwa. Ngilindele ukuthi sobabili sigqoke amamaki ethu futhi sigcine ibanga elibalulekile phakathi kwethu ngesikhathi sokuqoqwa kwedatha.
- Ngiqala kabusha indima yokuba ngumpheni oyinhloko wocwaningo ngakho-ke ukuqoqwa kwedatha nokuqoshwa kwedatha kwenziwa yimi. Lapho ekubuza, iqoqo lemibuzo lizoba igama elikhethwe ngokomsebenzi, okusho ukuthi ngeke likwehlise isithunzi njengomuntu futhi njengomhlanganyeli ocwaningweni. Zizwe ukhululekile ukungimisa nganoma yisiphi isikhathi uma kwenzeka ngiphuthuma noma udinga ukucaciseleka ngombuzo okungenzeka ngiwubuzile.
- Inhlolokhono izothatha cishe imizuzu engama-30 ngeseshini noma ngaphezulu. Ukukhishwa kwesikhathi kuncike kwinqubo yokubuza nokuphenya ukucaciseleka.
- Uyacelwa ukuthi uqaphele ukuthi ukuqoqwa kwedatha kuzoqoqwa ngamanothi wensimu kanye nokuqopha izwi okuzongenza ngikwazi ukubamba ingxoxo engahambi kahle phakathi kwethu. Irekhodi (uma livunywa nguwe njengomhlanganyeli osemqoka) kanye nezinye izinto ezihlotshaniswa nengxoxo zizobanjelwa ehovisi labaphathi bami kwikhabethe lensimbi, futhi

njengoba ezofuna ukuqinisekisa ubuqiniso noma ukunemba kokulandisayo engingakufisa sethule njengesahluko sokuhlaziya esedlule.

- Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza sicela usayine isimemezelo esifakwe kulesi sitatimende (kuzonikezwa ishidi elihlukile lamasiginesha). Ngenxa yokufuna ukuqinisekisa ukucatshangelwa kokuziphatha njengobumfihlo kanye nemfihlo, ngeke ngivumele noma yimuphi umuntu ukuthi abe ngufakazi wokuqinisekisa ukuthi ubamba iqhaza.

**Ngingathintwa e-School of Social Sciences, e-University of KwaZulu-Natal campus yaseMgungundlovu, eScottville. Ikheli le-imeyili: [207525479@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:207525479@stu.ukzn.ac.za). Inombolo kamakhalekhukhwini: 0685479191. Umphathi wami ngu-Dkt Balungile Zondi, otholakala eSchool of Social Sciences, eMgungundlovu campus. Ikheli le-imeyili: zondiL4 @ ukzn. ac.za. Inombolo kamakhalekhukhwini: 0716065062.**

Uma unanoma yimiphi imibuzo noma ukukhathazeka mayelana nokuba semthethweni kocwaningo, ungalusebenzisa ulwazi olunikezwe ngenhla mayelana nabaphathi. Ngenye indlela, qinisekisa ubuqiniso besifundo ngokusebenzisa imininingwane elandelayo Yokuxhumana yeKomidi Lokuziphatha ebhalwe ngezansi.

#### **EZABASEBENZI NEZESAYENSI ZOKUPHILA UKUPHATHWA KWEZIMPILO**

**IHhovisi Lokucwaninga, Ikhampani yaseWestville**

**Isakhiwo sikaGovan Mbeki**

**I-Private Bag X 54001 Durban 4000**

**KwaZulu-Natal, ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA**

**Ucingo: 27 31 2604557- Ifeksi: 27 31 2604609**

#### **Ukuvuma ukubamba iqhaza**

Ngi ..... (amagama agcwele ababambiqhaza) ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni njengoba kwaziwa ukuthi lolu cwaningo lubandakanya izingxoxo nezingxoxo zokubamba iqhaza (uma kwenzeka noma yimuphi umcimbi ohlobene nalolo cwaningo wenzeka). Ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe yilo mbhalo kanye nohlobo lwephrojekthi yocwaningo futhi ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza ngokuzithandela kule phrojekthi yocwaningo.

Nginikezwe ithuba lokuphendula imibuzo mayelana nalolu cwaningo futhi ngaba nezimpendulo zokweneliseka kwami. Ngiyakuqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kuphrojekthi nganoma yisiphi isikhathi, uma ngifisa kanjalo. Ngiyayiqonda inhloso yocwaningo.

Ngiyavuma ukuthi ngizobamba iqhaza.

Ngiyavuma ukuthi le ngxoxo iqoshwe (uma ikhona)

Isiginesha yalowo obambe iqhaza

Usuku

Indawo

.....

.....

.....

**Isiginesha Yosuku Lomcwaningi usuku**

**Indawo**

.....

.....

.....



## **APPENDIX F: IFOMU LOKUNXENXA KWABAZOBAMBA IQHAZA (INGUQUKO YESIZULU)**

### **Ifomu lokunxena kwabazobamba iqhaza (inguqulo yesiZulu)**

#### **Isihloko socwaningo:**

**Ukufa, inkolo, kanye nezinhlelo zamasiko amasonto omdabu: Ucwaningo olwenziwe ngezinkonzo zomngcwabo namasiko okungcwaba yamalunga omphakathi wesizwe sase-Macambini ngaphansi kwesigaba 5 sokuvalwa kwezwe.**

#### **Ingxenye A: Imibuzo evumayo.**

18. Ingabe uyilunga lomphakathi wesizwe samasemacambi?

Yebo

Cha

- Uma uthi Cha,

Siyabonga ngokubamba kwakho iqhaza ngokuzithandela. Lolu cwaningo luhlose ukuqasha nokubandakanya abantu abangamalungu e-Ibandla Lama Nazaretha.

- Uma kunjalo,

Ngingathanda ukukuqasha njengomphenduli obalulekile kulolu cwaningo lwe-anthropological.

19. Ngabe bewazi ukuthi imithetho nemibandela ebekelwe unqanda ukubhebhethaka kwe COVID-19 ngaphansi kuka level 5 ibe nakhuphi ukugxambukela endleleni imindeneni efihla ngayo abathandiwe bayo abadlule ngaphansi kwalesi sigaba?

Yebo

Cha

- Uma uma uthi Cha,

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho

- Uma kuwuYebo,

Ngicela usayine ifomu lokuvuma ngemuva kokuthi ngilifundele ukuze uzokwazi wonke amalungelo akho ngesikhathi sokuqoqwa kwedatha?

20. Kungabe likhona ilungu lomndeneni noma othandiwe wakho odlulile emhlabeni futhi naphinde namufihla kulesisikhathi se COVID-19 national lockdown level 5?

Yebo

Chabo

- Uma uthi Cha,

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho, inhloso enkulu yalolucwaningo ukuxoxisana nabantu abalahlekelwe futhi babuye bafihla abathandiwe babo kulesesi sikhathi se COVID-19 national lockdown level 5.

- Uma kuwuYebo,

Ngicela usayine ifomu lokuvuma ngemuva kokuthi ngilifundele ukuze uzokwazi wonke amalungelo akho ngesikhathi sokuqoqwa kwedatha

21. Ngabe uyavuma ukubamba kwakho iqhaza ngokuzithandela nokusetshenziswa komshini wokuqopha izwi engikubeka phambi kwakho?

[ ] Yebo

[ ] Cha

- Uma uthi Cha,

Ngiyabonga kakhulu ngesikhathi sakho

- Uma kunjalo,

Ngicela usayine ifomu lokuvuma ngemuva kokuthi ngilifundele ukuze uzokwazi wonke amalungelo akho ngesikhathi sokuqoqwa kwedatha?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Umbambiqhaza

\_\_\_\_\_  
Usuku

\_\_\_\_\_  
Isikhathi

## **APPENDIX H: ITHULUZI LOKUQOQA ULWAZI (INGUQULO YESINGISI)**

### **Ithuluzi lokuqoqa ulwazi (inguqulo yesiNgesi)**

#### **Isihloko socwaningo:**

**Ukufa, inkolo, kanye nezinhlelo zamasiko amasonto omdabu: Ucwaningo olwenziwe ngezinkonzo zomngcwabo namasiko okungcwaba yamalunga omphakathi wesizwe sase-Macambini ngaphansi kwesigaba 5 sokuvalwa kwezwe.**

#### **Ingxenye yesibili: Imibuzo Okuyiyonayona yocwaningo**

22. Kungabe uvela emndenini owagcinayo amasiko esintu?

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23. Iziphi izinkolelo enizilandelayo uma umndeni wakho ufihla labo obathandayo?

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24. Kungabe lezinkolelo zincike kakhulu enkolweni yesintu noma zincike kakhulu kwizinkambiso zesonto, noma zikuxukube kokubili? Naba kabanzi

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25. Njengoba ushilo ukuthi izinkolelo zakho zincike kakhulu kwinkambiso yesonto, ngabe iliphi iqhaza isonto elibe nalo ekungcwabeni noma ekufihleni enibe nakho noma ekugcineni yonke imicikilisjo yesintu okufanele ilandelwe uma kushoniwe emndenini?

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26. Isiphi iskhundla okusona ebandleni noma emphakathini owakhele? Kungabe imiphi imisebenzi ehambisana nesikhundla lesa osibambile?

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27. Uma ilunga lomndeni lishona, kungabe imiphi imikhuba yesintu Kanye neyokufihla edingakala ukube igcinwe Ibandla lakho noma umndeni wakho?

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28. Imuphi umthelela o lethwe ubukhona bemigoma nemithetha yokunqanda I COVID-19 esigabeni sesihlanu somvalazwe ekungcwabeni, nasekuzileleni laba abadlulileyo emndenini wakho?

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29. Njengomndeni ogcina amasiko esintu kungabe umndeni wakini wenze kanjani ukuzijwayezanalo mkhawulo omenyezwele "omusha" ngesikhathi sobhadane iCovid-19?

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30. Kungenzeka kanjani, uma kwenzekile, ukuthi usikompilo olusha luthikabeze abaphansi "ngonkulunkulu" bamadlozi futhi kube namphumela muni noma iluphi ulaka olungokomfanekiso lwamadlozi olube khona?

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31. Kungabe amabandla noma imindeneni egcina amasiko esintu aphenyule kanjani kulaka olukhonjisiwe lwamadlozi noma onkulunkulu?

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32. Ngabe kwaxoxiswa nabaholi bomphakathi bendabuko baseNingizimu Afrika ngaphambi kokubekwa kwemithetho yokunqanda i-COVID-19? (Iona ugcinelwe abaholi bomphakathi)

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33. Ngabe lezi zimiso ze-COVID-19 zaziwuphoqa noma ziyimpoqa enamandla phezu kwamasondo kanye nemiphakathi yase-Afrika uma kubhekwa imibono yabalandeli bamasonto noma amalunga Kanye nabaholi bomphakathi wesizwe sase-Macambini?

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34. Ungakuqinisekisa yini ukuthi isiko aliwona umile, okufundwe yingakho uze nezindlela ezintsha zokulungisa ukugubha amasiko ahambisanayo (amasiko amasiko) bese uchaza ngokwengeziwe ukuthi lokhu kuguquka kushayisana kanjani nezimpande zomlando weba wesizwe odabuka kuso?

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**Siyabonga ngokubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni!**