

## **A critical examination of the Namibian children of the liberation struggle as presented in *The Price of freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707***

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### **Abstract**

*The paper offers a critique of the traumatic experience of the Namibian children during the liberation struggle as presented in “The Price of freedom” and “Walking the Boeing 707”. When Namibia gained independence in 1990, many Namibians came back home from exile and amongst them were children. The paper found that the memoirs, “The Price freedom” and “Walking the Boeing 707”, capture the traumatic experiences faced by the Namibian children while in exile and even upon returning home. The children of the liberation struggle grew up in children’s homes away from their biological parents. This rendered the Namibian children of the liberation struggle vulnerable as they were confronted with various problems such as dropping out of school, death, and grief with no psychosocial assistance. Moreover, the study adopted a qualitative literary research approach that examined the lives experience and traumatic events. The findings suggest that there is compelling evidence that many Namibian exiled children deserve to be recognized as heroes and heroines as they also contributed to the independence of Namibia. Children of the liberation struggle literally and figuratively placed their life and limb in harm’s way to liberate the country.*

**Keywords:** *children of the liberation struggle, trauma, heroes, heroines*

### **Introduction**

The paper critiques the lives of Namibian children during the liberation struggle, reflecting on their experiences as presented in the autobiographies *The Price of freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707*. The slogan One Namibia! One nation! (Dobell, 2000) are the chants of the Namibian liberation strugglers including men, women and children. Children of the Namibian liberation struggle reflect on the traumatic effects as depicted in the two selected memoirs. Children in the liberation struggle are not recognised in the adult environment, equally, literary representation of children in African war novels is limited (Nahole, 2017). Nabutanyi (2013) alludes that although children are victims in war zones, they are also active participants in the liberation struggle. Many Namibian children had sacrificed their youth and joined the armed struggle to liberate Namibia.

Namibia is one of Africa's biggest countries, located in the south-western of the African continent. Between 1884 and 1990, the German and South African led governments-imposed war and

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apartheid policies on Namibia (Nghiwete, 2009). During this time, many Namibians, including women and children, went into exile to join the army liberation struggle in neighbouring countries such as Angola and Zambia. While they were in those countries, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) established civilian refugee camps as well as military bases (Krause & Kaplan, 2017). Many Namibian children were born in these countries as a result of this establishment.

Furthermore, when Namibia gained independence in 1990, it was a watershed moment in Namibian history. Over 43,000 Namibians who had been living in exile were repatriated to their homeland, Namibia (Nghiwete, 2009). Since the arrival of the Children Liberation Struggle in Namibia, some Namibians had given these children different names such as "SWAPO Kids," "Struggle Children," "Exile Kids," and "Returnees Children." (Kaxuxuena & Janik, 2020) as cited in (lipumbu, 2009; Nghiwete, 2009). Many, if not all, children involved in the liberation struggle have experienced a traumatic event while in exile. As a result, the children's liberation struggle resulted in violence among the general public. For example, in August 2014, there was violence between the Namibian Children of the Liberation Struggle, and the Namibian police which resulted in the death of one of the liberation struggle children (Tjihenuna, 2014). Some children involved in the liberation struggle appear to believe that exile is a safer place for them than Namibia. In a bit to shed light on these issues, the paper examines the traumatic life of Namibian children during the liberation struggle, as presented in *The Price of Freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707*.

## **Literature review**

### **Personal accounts of the Namibian children's liberation struggle**

Acceptance by the receiving society will determine whether the children's liberation struggle can be submerged or they will continue to swim in the original sins of their inability to live in peace. If the majority of them find themselves in conflict with the new society without assistance, they would revert to their previous behaviour patterns (Shiningayamwe et al., 2014). This suggests that, in many cases, former refugees are not considered to be full members of society in their home countries and Namibia is not excluded. This is the case with the Namibian children's liberation struggle. In Namibia, many children have faced numerous obstacles. Among the obstacles are locating schools, adjusting to a new living and learning environment, seeking employment, additional training, language barriers, and acquiring official documents (Simataa, 2019; Shiningayamwe, 2014). These obstacles hindered their adaptability to the new society and advancement.

Considering the findings of Simataa and Shiningayamwe regarding the documented lives and experiences of Namibian children's liberation struggle, it would appear that the social and economic experiences repatriated from other countries are full of traumatic events. Nambelala (1999) notes that during the Namibian children's liberation struggle, they were not only uprooted and traumatized, but also faced cultural identity challenges. In exile, for instance, corporal punishment was prohibited on the basis of Marxist pedagogy. However, when they returned home, this prohibition ran counter to Namibian cultural norms, especially among the Owambo people (p.3). Although there were Namibian caregivers who remained in touch with their own culture and mother tongue, many of the Namibian children who participated in the liberation struggle were not exposed to a social order in which, for instance, males exerted a great deal of control over women (Simataa, 2019). It seems this social hierarchy was strange to them. Furthermore, upon their return to Namibia, many children were unable to accept the conditions they encountered while staying with their own families (Williams, 2009). For example, living in huts without electricity or running water, gathering wood, and cooking over an open fire. This appears to be a big challenge for them to adapt to the new society.

In advising the argument, the Namibian government should take part of the blame because they did not prepare the children's liberation struggle for their return. The government was supposed to set up better transitional structures in terms of psychological readiness upon their return to Namibia (Kaxuxuena & Janik, 2020). However, Nahole (2017) contends that the SWAPO-led government registered the Namibian Children's liberation struggle with social workers prior to their deployment in various sectors, including government schools and government institutions. It appears that the children's acceptance of the new adaptation environment was their main concern. Additionally, these concerns shifted to the disobedient and haughty behaviour of Namibian children's liberation struggle engaged in the community. Shapwanale (2016) described the disturbing behavior of the Namibian children's liberation struggle at Berg Aukas, which included attacking, insulting, cursing at, robbing, and wreaking havoc in Grootfontein. It suffices to say that they did this to provoke the government into giving them an unrequired free job. However, the Namibian cabinet decided to train and prepare them for employment before employing them (Shapwanale, 2016).

### **Availability of literary studies**

The Namibian children's liberation struggle left the country in pursuit of freedom, equality and equity. As such, their traumatic recollections of their personal experiences may be captured through literary work (Baldick, 2014). Therefore, scholars of today need to recognise and acknowledge the work of other scholars through literature review. The role of the Namibian children's liberation struggle has received increased attention in social studies in recent years. This argument is congruent with Shands et.al (2015) line of reasoning, who posits that in the present day, there is certainly no doubt that there is an increase in interest in children's struggle analysis. Existing literary works demonstrate that the literary field offers renewal and sometimes even a revolution of life writing regarding perspectives on contemporary world events. Numerous notable and ordinary people from around the world have written about the children's liberation struggle as a response to world events that have shaped the world today.

Although Nghiwete (2009) observes the arrival of Namibian children involved in the liberation struggle from other countries, there are few studies on how these individuals survived and adapted to their motherland after independence. The literature on the survival of the Namibian children's liberation struggle is sparse, with the vast majority of research conducted by returnee and civil-society communities as opposed to academics. This supports Shiningayamwe's (2014) assertion that socioeconomic experiences of the Namibian children's liberation struggle are not adequately documented.

The Namibian war was not fought on one side of the country (Mbenzi & Kangira, 2015). As such, there are reports on the effects of the war on children who grew up in countries where Namibian ex-soldiers resided. There is a plethora of literature on the Namibian children's liberation struggle, emerging with Nahole, 2017; Shiningayamwe et al. 2014; Simataa, 2019; Akawa, 2014; Kaxuxuena & Janik, 2020). There is also evidence that support programmes for these children's liberation struggles during and after their arrival in Namibia were inadequate. As such, it suffices to say that scholars have written memoirs and biographies about the Namibian Children's liberation struggle. On the surface, the biography may appear to be an odd choice for scholars wishing to transcend nationalist discourse on exile. In fact, since its inception as a genre in the past few decades, biography has played a crucial role in the project of strengthening national communities through the remembrance of political leaders and returnees (Williams, 2009).

Scholarly work deserves credit for bringing the past to life. For example, the extent to which Namibian children born in exile during the liberation struggle are susceptible to inheritance disputes in Namibia. Scholars of inheritance in Namibia have asserted that the transfer of property

from the deceased to the family is a highly contentious issue; numerous accounts exist of children being "robbed" of livestock and other forms of property (Nahole, 2017). This is another fascinating aspect of the literature on the Namibian children's liberation struggle. This type of information cannot be substantiated without a mirror of academic works of literature.

### **Trauma and Resilience theories**

The paper employs the theoretical perspectives of trauma and resilience. The two theories are used to account for the challenges, realities, and aspirations encountered by Namibian Children of the Liberation Struggle. Trauma is defined by Mlambo and Cloete (2014) as an event that is too shocking to be fully registered at the time of its occurrence and is only experienced afterwards. As presented in *The Price of Freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707*, the definition captures the essence of literary studies as it pertains to the retrospective documentation of an event. A traumatic event is an unusual kind of occurrence that cannot be found within the confines of time and place, and it is sufficient to conclude that literature is one of the ways that can convey things about human experiences that other ordinary means of communication cannot cover (Marder, 2006). Trauma refers to a tragic event involving a single incident or experience and the emotions that may have severe long-term negative consequences, such as the Namibian children of the liberation struggle.

Through literature, traumatic events become meaningful to us as it reflects on the world expressed through fiction. Trauma is the story of the wound that reveals the reality or truth that can only be experienced through a careful reading of the text (Mlambo & Pasi, 2010). Consequently, the act of bearing witness to trauma may place the witness in a unique position of risk, involving selective memory, self-censorship, and betrayal due to an unrealistic memory. For example, the literature demonstrates that children raised in protected and stable environments have better manners than children raised in hazardous conditions. The absence of such conditions is associated with a variety of developmental difficulties such as poor interpersonal relationships, increased anxiety and depression and higher levels of aggression (Rahman et al., 2016). Magruder et al., (2016) support the view that the survivors who struggle to process trauma and make sense appear to be aggressive and avoid discussing their experiences.

An individual's exposure to trauma in the form of an accident or a sudden loss could be unanticipated. However, the trauma of political violence, such as that of the liberation struggle, is frequently perfectly predictable (Martn-Baro, 1996). It is this malicious intent that makes the effects of collective trauma so profoundly disturbing; therefore, it is sufficient to discuss trauma with the focus placed on the conditions that permit trauma to persist. It is sufficient to say that pathologising and individualising trauma often occurs sequentially, as the "trauma victim" shifts from being a victim of political terror to political violence. Consequently, trauma transforms the violence of occupation into individual suffering that must be conquered through personal autonomy, thereby transforming the political struggle.

Resilience is another important theoretical term used in this paper. Mlambo (2014) defines resilience as "the people's strengths rather than their vulnerability, through exploring their coping strategies" (p. 39). Resilience thus can be interpreted as the act of progressive adaptation to adversity and these are the very actions portrayed by the Namibian children of the liberation struggle. The resilience theory, therefore, looks at the factors that treat traumatic stress such as excessive fear and depression, as well as improve children's problem-solving skills, self-esteem, and future optimism (Nauyoma, 2020). For this reason, it suffices to say that resilience promotes individual healing through the outcomes of self-reliance and self-control, thereby enhancing communication with friends and society.

Different individuals respond in various ways to life's challenges. Some experience an emotional outburst, while others may become enraged and violent physically. Nonetheless, some survive this circumstance and these are resilient people who can quickly adapt to new circumstances in a resilient manner. Resilient people recover; they emerge more robust and improved than before as explored by the traumatic circumstances typical of the Namibian children of the liberation struggle. However, healing the physical and psychological scars of war is an individual responsibility to the community, which includes all members of the community. Thus, children may demonstrate collective resilience through a variety of activities that are frequently organised. We must remember that, within a liberation framework, children are not passive victims of their environments, but rather have political agency and social consciousness as well (Veronese et al. 2012). The concept of children's agency may be revolutionary in terms of children's capacity for active recovery and meaning-making calls into one of the most fundamental principles of resilience. However, it appears that many people mistakenly believe that children who were vulnerable during a war or actively resisted political violence afterwards are incapable of coping with life.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative literary research approach that examined the lives experience and traumatic events of the Children of Liberation Struggle as presented in the Memoirs. Thus, a qualitative study went beyond the numerical representation of data, as much pronunciation is on quality dealing with human feelings which are naturally innumerable. Purposive sampling was used to come up with the sample of these Memoirs. A thorough reading of the selected Memoirs was done with the researcher taking notes of all the relevant themes, characterisation, settings and styles that reflect on the lives of the children. Equally, the paper relied on document analysis as well as content analysis. Finally, findings were extracted from the interpretation and analysis to formulate discussions and conclusions.

### **Findings and Analysis**

#### **The Namibian Children of the Liberation Struggle's role in exile**

The Namibian Children of the Liberation Struggle are the sons and daughters of veterans who were born or grew up in exile and were under the age of 18 at the time of Namibian Independence (Iipumbu, 2009; Nghiwete, 2009). Based on the aforementioned definition, it appears that many struggling children were raised in harsh conditions in exile camps without their parents or with little attention from their parents. There is a plethora of studies that portray children as vulnerable people who are subjected to abuse without considering the binaries as agents of change. Most children of the liberation struggle do not receive the recognition they deserve, which may be due to the neglect of those in power. Many, for example, focus on their parent's achievements in the liberation struggle to be recognised as heroes or heroines. This is not a negative idea as such, however, we argue that those in power must balance and give recognition to the scarification that children endured during the liberation struggle.

Furthermore, as depicted in *The Price of Freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707*, children played important roles in a country's liberation struggle in such a way that some children are compelled to join the army groups or join them on their own. Although the Namibian children of the liberation fight depicted in *Walking the Boeing 707* and *The Price of Freedom* are not presented as having participated in any combat, their acts and responsibilities have contributed to the liberation effort in some manner. Shaketange (2008) quotes their group leader as saying to them when they reached Zambia:

*"You 15 young children have come to school here in Zambia? SWAPO does not recruit children of your ages for military purposes" (p. 53).*

As a result, many children were separated from their families and forced to feed themselves. This is evident in *The Price of Freedom* for instance when Namhila reveals that:

*"I was already in exile when I realised I had departed Namibia, my family, and friends, and that I would probably never see them again. It meant leaving my food, my language, my culture and my traditions behind (Namhila, 2014, p. 33).*

The aforementioned notion demonstrates that children were afraid of travelling to an unknown world, but they were eager to demonstrate that they are agents of change. Williams (2009) refers to this past and present exilic adversity as "exile history." Children in *Walking the Boeing 707* for instance, were not just victims, but rather individuals who demonstrated endurance despite the harsh conditions of the struggle they were undergoing.

Children experienced adversities in exile with focus, determination and perseverance as Shaketange narrates that:

*"The long, difficult, and exhausting journey of a little girl fleeing the colonial authority in search of freedom. Within my exhaustion lay unshakeable determination to reach my goal. I had come to understand the hardship of the journey and I was determined"* (Shaketange, 2009, p. 358).

From the above quote, this paper demonstrates the role of children's war memoirs as a powerful, culturally recognised space for children's voices in accounts of the war. Nonetheless, children's capacity is often excluded in dominant narratives of their experiences of war, framing limits the ability to understand children's experiences and narrows possible responses and support. The paper, therefore, argues that memoirs can be seen as one site where children's agency in war is evident. This type of literary writing includes stories of agency and resilience by children affected by war; illustrating the various ways in which children have managed armed conflict. Furthermore, the accusatory tone of children in memoir writing symbolises their involvement in international human rights institutions. These explorations thus address the systematic and comprehensive silencing of children's voices in the institutional architecture concerned with children in war. It is therefore pertinent that liberation struggle children play a big role in the route to Namibian Independence.

### **Emotional wounds**

The psychological experiences that the Namibian children of the liberation struggle have endured during the liberation struggle have left most of them with perpetual invisible wounds and scars that demand continuous nursing of their minds. These back-story wounds have led to psychological traumatic situations in many children of the liberation struggle.

Prasad and Prasad (2009, p.167) point out that children living in refugee camps experience more psychological problems than non-refugee children. Moreover, following a disaster, children may exhibit a wide range of emotional and psychological reactions. In *The price of freedom*, for instance, Namhila who was 14 years by then, personally narrates the aftermath of the Cassinga massacre and its effects that:

*"There were corpses everywhere, some burned and others with gaping wounds. Even my training as a nurse had not prepared me for what I saw. For several weeks I cannot eat, I lost my appetite"* (Namhila, 1997, p. 41).

This proves that the aftershocks of trauma have diverse detrimental effects on individuals, and can alter and undermine their ability to achieve meaningful goals. Once more, the memoirs reveal that there were no rehabilitation and therapy services that would help the survivors to deal with their nightmarish experiences (Namhila, 1997). While in The Gambia, even though she was far from the frontlines, Namhila cowers to the sound of the plane flying overhead:

*“One day while I was at school, I heard the sound of an aeroplane. I immediately took cover, lying flat on the ground like we used to do in the camps”* (Namhila, 2010, p. 66).

Her classmates were hysterical about Namhila’s reaction; they ridiculed her actions as they could not understand why someone should be afraid of the 'sound' of the aeroplane. Little did they know that refugee children had been subjected to psychological trauma and the trajectory of their story demands an understanding and sensitive heart. From the foregoing, it is clear that Namhila’s ridiculous reaction to the sound of the plane is unquestionable. Her reactions capture the idea that the war has affected children in a variety of ways, and in most cases, children have undergone traumatic experiences that have left them with permanent and persistent "wounds of the mind." The above agrees with what Purwar, Dhabal and Chakravarty (2010) who declare that young children lack the cognitive capacities available to the adult. Their theories are egocentric. Young children are rarely able to communicate about their traumatic experiences; unable to convey their internal conflicts and sentiments via words, these sensations are represented through recurrent re-enactments, intrusive visual pictures, trauma-specific phobias, and other behavioural states.

Moreover, the memoirs also recount that while in the camps following the Cassinga massacre, some girl-children were affected by a condition that they termed ‘the fainting illness’, whereby they would lose their consciousness and occasionally faint, while others suffered from enormous stress following the loss of their friends. Schauer and Elbert (2015), note that children who are repeatedly exposed to chronic and traumatic stress during their development suffer from mental and physical illnesses, most notably Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and severe personality changes. Kaxuxuena and Janik (2020) also emphasize the need to not overlook the detrimental influence of unstable living situations, neglect, and bad child-rearing settings on healthy psychological development. This type of exposure deprives children of normal and healthy development and hinders their integration into society as fully functioning members.

It has been noted by Dawson and Rahman (cited in Kaxuxuena & Janik 2020) that the impacts of unresolved trauma and negative consequences of refugee experiences can be noted in a young person’s identity formation, self-esteem, future aspirations and distress tolerance. Individuals may also experience personality shifts and dysfunctional behaviours. This may attest to the current behaviour of the children of the liberation struggle, hence a necessity to help them to transit from their psychologically traumatised world through emotional therapy and rehabilitation sessions.

Furthermore, children in the memoirs, for example, were handed over to foster families when they had to attend secondary school in Western Africa. Most of the foster parents did not entirely understand that these children were coming from war. Children were given to foster parents who treated them like 'normal children'. Little did they reckon that these were traumatised children who had been faced with death, some of whom had held dead bodies which had been shelled and had seen people die before their eyes. As the narratives posit: *“We did not come from normal family life-type situations”* (Namhila 1997, p. 61). This shows that liberation children were rather deposited in Foster families which did not have a proper understanding of their situations. It is safe to say that this had an emotional impact on them since they were unable to appreciate all of their Foster parents’ efforts as they did not address their psychological requirements. One of the

prices that children had to pay to achieve independence was emotional anguish, hence that gives the title of the memoir "*The price of freedom.*"

In *Walking the Boeing 707*, Shaketange (2009, p. 35) reveals that during the liberation struggle children were sleeping under the trees without blankets mingling with dangerous creatures such as snakes and scorpions. The children in *Walking the Boeing 707* had to endure a long walk from Angolan borders to Zambia and they experienced nostalgia that left them with everlasting emotional scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scars have long-lasting effects throughout life. As such, children lived a nomadic lifestyle due to the war situation, and could therefore not be brought up within a proper family structure. However, Namibian former child soldiers who were raised in an environment of violence and devastation were expected to make a smooth transition back into society. In ICRC (cited in Nahole, 2017, p. 20) it is stipulated that "every child has the right to a normal childhood; therefore, former child soldiers must be helped to pick up the pieces of their shattered childhood." Hence a need for rehabilitation or emotional therapy in that regard.

### **Social acceptance and rejection**

According to Leary (2010), social acceptance is defined as the acceptable behaviour of people belonging to society with the indication that someone is welcome to be part of them. It is safe to say that Social acceptability can range from just accepting the presence of another person to actively pursuing someone as a romantic partner. In contrast, Leary (2010) further explains that social rejection is a complicated concept in which people in society have little desire to socially involve another person's presence. If the majority of people were to find themselves in conflict with the new society without assistance, they would revert to their previous patterns of behaviour (Mayer, 2008). It appears that most people who experience acceptance problems, destroy the prospect of achieving a sense of rootedness and belonging as seen with the Children of the Namibian liberation struggle.

Njogu, Waita and Muriiki (cited in Nahole 2017) claim that there is nothing more heinous than being a refugee as everyone from the bottom to the highest hierarchy reminds you of your refugee status. Similarly, Namhila's narrative *The Price of Freedom*, confirms that being a refugee is comparable to carrying a heavy load on your shoulders as it reads that:

*"I wanted to feel what it is like to live the life of a non-refugee"* (Namhila 1997, p. 66).

The children of the liberation struggle had experienced social rejection while in exile because of their refugee status. It can be argued that a society's attitude to receiving and welcoming its members after a war or crisis scenario may have an impact on the living standards of these newcomers. For example, in *The Price of Freedom*, Namhila was named "Jola" at school when in exile refers to the most disadvantaged tribe in the Gambia. This is evident in the context of the memoir that:

*"...being a refugee in the Gambia is associated with destitution, deprivation and hunger"* (Namhila, 1997, p. 6).

Namhila's psychological well-being was hampered by the aforementioned remarks, which made it difficult for her to form strong social relationships with other youngsters. In addition to that, Namhila further suffered societal rejection while studying in Finland, as she notes:



*“There was a period when Finns believed that every African had the AIDS virus and that if they shook hands with an African or sat where an African had sat, they would get it. (Namhila, 1997, p. 138).*

A peculiar incident is that of a Finns finding Africans in the sauna washing all the benches in the sauna while saying *“mina Tapan Aids viroksesta”* (I am killing the AIDS virus) (p. 138). Similarly, the author recounts how she has once rejected the purchase of cherries at an open market by a lady who yelled that she had nothing to do with "black money"; and this itself shows that there is a type of racial discrimination.

Furthermore, in *Walking the Boeing 707*, Shaketange (2009) revealed how fellow Namibians were exposed to societal rejection and humiliation at the hands of the Finns in England. Everywhere they went, people were interested to see if their black complexion was the product of filth or natural causes as noted:

*“They shake our hands and look at their own hands to see if they were dirty...of course, this was humiliating”* (p. 102).

The preceding remark justifies the exile life, which resulted in social rejection and condemnation of people. Namhila (1997) and Shaketange (2009) emphasise the concept that throughout the liberation fight, young people learnt to live with segregation, to live apart from their parents, and to grow up in barren "homelands" far off from their legitimate community of origin. In other words, the Namibian liberation struggle for children's life in exile symbolises redemptive pain. The path to national independence was fraught with dangers and stumbling obstacles that most Namibian liberation struggle children since their exile life were itinerant. Their testimonials illustrate just how much they went through. Not only were they forced to suffer in the jungle, but they were also subjected to communal rejection and humiliation after coming home. Meyer (2008) went on to explain that broken or disturbed families are a key deterrent to the healthy psychological functioning of the people involved. In several situations such as the experiences endured by the Namibian liberation struggle children, language barriers and the lack of friends or family members may contribute to respondents' inability to locate aid quickly in the society.

Moreover, Namibian children of the liberation struggle, for instance, are frequently not treated as complete members of their societies in their home countries. Children of the liberation struggle have experienced societal rejection in different spheres of life. lipumbu (as cited in Nahole 2017) there has a significant degree of hatred toward the liberation struggle's children, notably in print media. Amoah and Greenbaum (2005, p.6) concur with lipumbu that the current political situation is believed that the government has not fully recognised the struggle of all those who contributed to the country's independence, especially the children of the liberation struggle.

Children born or raised in exile have been stereotyped by some Namibians as being exceedingly lazy, greedy, ignorant, unskilled, arrogant, and uncontrolled individuals who are only interested in drinking and having babies (Tjihenuna, 2014). It has also been claimed that children of the liberation struggle frequently dropped out of school and squandered whatever opportunities they had. Other claims are that since independence children of the liberation struggle have received everything from the government on a silver platter. However, lipumbu (cited in Kaxuxuena & Janik 2020) expresses concern that the apparent demanding behaviour of a group of liberation struggle youngsters in Namibia leads one to explore alternative viewpoints rather than just rejecting their behaviour as demanding and deviant. Nambelala (1999, p. 3) affirmed that “many “Namibian children of the liberation struggle in exile had the physical wounds of the Cassinga attack, with

the psychological scars of war. Therefore, children of the liberation struggle were not only uprooted and traumatised but were also faced with cultural identity issues.

Consequently, many of Namibia's children of liberation struggle grew up in an unnatural atmosphere devoid of parental guidance. Some of them have never known their parents since they died in exile. From this point of view, it is reasonable to argue that the children of the liberation struggle in Namibia are captives of their past, and therefore, Namibians cannot neglect their acts and life experiences. Additionally, Shiningayamwe, Kanyimba, and Shalyefu (2014) highlight the hardships that the Namibian children of the liberation struggle are facing in Namibia due to the socio-economic context in which they found themselves after repatriation. Nonetheless, they perceive the Namibian government's provision of education and job opportunities as a means to a better future. The lack of education made it impossible for them to find work since their participation in the boycotts had been blacklisted, and employers were hesitant to hire them.

Several children of the liberation struggle have been recruited into government ministries and given skills training (Shapwanale, 2016; Smith, 2017). However, some of them are still searching for employment, while others have secured a job on their own.

## **Conclusion**

The paper focuses on the literary representation of the life experiences of the Namibian children's liberation struggle as presented in the autobiographies *The Price of freedom* and *Walking the Boeing 707*. The primary concern is the threat in the present and the future of the Namibian children's liberation struggle toward recognition within social acceptance by the Namibian people. As such, the detrimental influence of insecure living situations on healthy psychological development should not be underestimated. It is also important to emphasise that a problem like the "children of the liberation struggle" should not be neglected since it may be a direct outcome of the context from which these children had evolved. Exile histories in Namibia demonstrate that the past merits acknowledgement from the Namibian government for its awareness of mobility and the conditions under which children's liberation struggles migrate across borders, as well as the pain, suffered while in exile. Furthermore, analytical attention can be made to movement conditions in this manner, one can see how forced and voluntary migrations as conditions of Namibian liberation children presented are intimately related to carceral.

Through the analysis of the experiences of the Namibian liberation struggle children, reflections were on the traumatic consequences in the cited literary work, the constructive and stimulating ways were which the Namibian liberation struggle responded to these adversities. The paper revealed that their exile position left them susceptible and exposed them to a variety of social problems. As a result, some were pregnant at a young age, others engaged in anti-social behaviour and others suffered from identity issues as well as lived in social isolation. It can be claimed that many Namibian exiled children deserve to be recognized as heroes and heroines by the Namibian government. To accolade or not to accolade the Namibian exiled children as heroes and heroines in Namibia is a problem that can be wished away. Thus, it is entirely reasonable to wonder at the delay of accolade them.

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