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Advancing interreligious education through the principles of SeMoshoeshoe

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In this theoretical article, I have expressed sympathy for the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Lesotho over their worries about the marginalisation and prejudice of the Islamic faith in public settings. The article also takes into account the fact that the worry highlighted in respect to Islam religion comes at a time when demands for inclusive social, political, cultural and educational systems are being considered on a global scale. Education, which is considered a public enterprise, is rife with religious exclusionary practices in Lesotho. Only Christian education is taught in public schools; other religious traditions are not, most notably Basotho traditional religion. I employed cultural approach discourse (CAD) analysis and philosophical theory of pluriversality to argue that discrimination, particularly in education and religion, is against Basotho culture as enshrined in the SeMoshoeshoe values. I advocated utilising 'sekoele' – or returning to SeMoshoeshoe – principles of religious border pedagogy and religious public pedagogy to counteract the teaching of religion that is biased and marginalises other religious traditions.

Contribution: The general contribution of this article is to advocate for interreligious education, which plays a crucial role in creating a tolerant, empathetic and inclusive society. It emphasises the significance of people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds living and collaborating harmoniously. The article encourages empowerment to participate in constructive dialogues, embrace diversity and actively contribute to a more peaceful and unified global community.

Keywords: interreligious education; religious border pedagogy; religious public pedagogy; pluriversality; SeMoshoeshoe.

Introduction

In this article, I made an argument in favour of SeMoshoeshoe-based interreligious education teaching and learning. The inspiration for this article came from the realisation that, since the inception of a formal education system in Lesotho, only Christianity has been taught in schools as a subject of religious education in spite of contemporary social, educational, political and cultural demands. A diverse, inclusive and democratic viewpoint is replacing the universalised vision in society, education, politics and culture. Like every other nation on the planet, Lesotho is also seeing a surge in the number of adherents to various religions because of globalised civic life and business practices. In particular, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Lesotho has made a special submission that there appears to be a systematic exclusion of Islam from public life in Lesotho in favour of Christianity. This submission was made in light of the current public referendum on constitutional reforms. It is alarming because MoAfrica FM Listeners, an influential Christian radio station, advocated making Christianity the nation's official religion on the same platform ('Nyane & Makhobole 2019:32).

Islamic resentment highlights the contradictions between Lesotho's constitutional claim of religious freedom and the on-the-ground practices of structural marginalisation of other religions, particularly evident within Lesotho's education system. The constitution provides that every religious community has the right to establish and maintain its own educational institutions at its own cost. These institutions can provide religious instruction as part of their education. No one attending an educational institution can be forced to receive religious instruction or participate in religious ceremonies or observances that are not of their own religion, without their consent or the consent of their guardian if they are a minor (Government of Lesotho 2011:17).

However, Christian churches in Lesotho own and operate 83% of all primary schools and 66% of all secondary schools, as reported by the United States Department of State (2022). These Christian-owned schools are officially recognised as public schools, receiving full resources and funding

from the public purse for their educational programmes. Notably, in these publicly owned church-affiliated schools, and even in some secular schools, religious education is mandatory.

It is against this backdrop that the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs submitted a proposal to the National Reforms Authority (NRA). However, it is worth noting that the United States Department of State (2022) reported that the NRA, composed of representatives from political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) and other entities, rejected Muslim advice regarding the ongoing constitutional reform process.

It is also interesting that when Christianity first arrived in Lesotho, it encountered a vibrant Basotho traditional religion that, according to Western formal education, did not qualify as a religion or warrant introduction in schools. This article's key argument is whether promoting the use of SeMoshoeshoe principles in interreligious education may fulfil both these Islamic concerns and local and global educational demands. The simple question that served as the discussion's focus point was how could reclaiming SeMoshoeshoe encourage a shift from a religiously exclusive classroom approach to accept a plurality of religion teaching and learning in schools? Can SeMoshoeshoe teach Basotho some interreligious ideas?

These questions were addressed employing Shi-xu's (2005:68) cultural approach discourse (CAD), which emphasises cultural deconstruction and transformation. Shi-xu claims that on the one hand, there is a deconstructive approach on which CAD aims to destroy culturally repressive discourses, the discourses that oppress, exclude or discriminate against communities and groups because of 'cultural difference', regardless of the difference's historical, geographic, ideological, racial, ethnic or linguistic origin. On the other hand, CAD becomes transformational when it makes an effort to develop and disseminate cooperative, non-hegemonic discourses about cultural 'others'. Shi-xu's method of analysis is pertinent because this study views religion as a component of culture, reiterating the compelling arguments made by Beyers (2017:3), Rees (2017:6), and Roy (2013:109) for the inclusion of religion in culture. Equally important Shi-xu puts forth a discussion of a cultural strategy that essentially tries to deconstruct cultures. In order to teach and learn about religion in schools, this article proposes avoiding the mono-religious approach, which is a discourse that oppresses other religious traditions. In order to convey the transformation component of Shu-xu's CAD, the SeMoshoeshoe philosophy is recommended for the purpose of religious collaborative discourse or interreligious educational contexts.

Frame of analysis

The pluriversality analytic framework championed by Mignolo (2018:ix) had an impact on the discussion processes in this study. Pluriversality aligns with Shi-xu's CAD (2005:68) since they both emphasise the recognition and validation of diverse cultural perspectives and knowledge systems, challenging dominant or hegemonic narratives in favour of a more inclusive and equitable understanding of the world's cultural diversity. Pluriversality is a decoloniality-focused way of thinking, and a response to the harshness and oversimplification of universalised Western imperial knowledge. It encourages cosmopolitics and multiverse ethics based on interspecies and multi-natural kinships as well as a better understanding of the plethora of worlds and world-making processes that make up the post-globalisation future (Mercier 2019). The idea of pluriversality advanced by Querejazu (2016:3) contrasts with universalist discourses centred on a Western unitary ontology. It claims that in addition to many various kinds of worlds, reality is made up of a variety of different kinds of worlds, ontologies and modes of existence. Mignolo (2018:xi) claims that pluriversality does not deny universalism but rather the universalisation of Western cosmology. It recognises the proper role of Western universalism amid the diversity of meaning. The dominant and all-encompassing Western cosmology has given way to a variety of different cosmologies. The ontology of diversity aspires to respect people and their genuine differences.

In terms of epistemology, Paulson (2018:91–92) compares pluriversality to a rainbow of knowledges. A range of knowledges that, rather than being seen as distinct cultural ways of knowing or civilisations, each with its own logic, have co-evolved and are always altering in connection to difference and power. Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2008:xvix) claim that the goal of plurality endeavour is to eliminate the epistemological privilege accorded to modern science, which has contributed to the suppression of other, non-scientific forms of knowledge as well as the subaltern social groups whose social practices were influenced by such knowledges. This benefit has strengthened Western supremacy. Instead of dismissing science and Western knowledge, pluriversalism offers an alternative epistemology that positions it in the context of the variety of knowledges present in modern civilisations.

From a methodological standpoint, Santos (2007:75) claims that pluriversality suggests intercultural translation. The term 'translation' is used metaphorically and does not only refer to the literal translation of one language into another but also to cultural translation, where one culture is translated into another, hence the term 'intercultural', which denotes mutual translations between equal cultures. Intercultural translation is an intellectual nonconformist approach that seeks to incorporate different knowledges or cultures to solve current social problems. Intercultural translation seeks to advance a society with a varied range of cultures through the mutual articulation of knowledge ecosystems. According to Santos (2007:75), intercultural translation requires looking for isomorphic concerns and underlying cultural presuppositions, detecting cultural differences and similarities, and, when necessary, creating new hybrid forms of cultural understanding and intercommunication. These new hybrid forms might help in fostering communication and fortifying alliances' ability to combat unwarranted societal issues.

Pluriversality provides a helpful analytical framework for this article. Firstly, it provides analytical tools to assess SeMoshoeshoe and decide whether it has traits that permit an ontology of plurality for application in interreligious interaction. Secondly, it also makes it possible to assess how well suited the SeMoshoeshoe epistemology is to dealing with different types of knowledge. Thirdly, it provides a useful framework for utilising SeMoshoeshoe as a transformative method for interreligious education.

Conceptualisation of SeMoshoeshoe from pluriversality perspectives

SeMoshoeshoe literally translates as 'that of Moshoeshoe', the Basotho nation's first leader and founder. It refers to the morals and character traits that King Moshoeshoe displayed in his social and political life. SeMoshoeshoe, in its broadest sense, refers to the overall Basotho way of life, which served as an example and is still revered as King Moshoshoe's legacy. According to Mofuoa (2015:23), the allegiance to Moshoeshoe was shown through embracing his social, cultural, religious and political traits. That is to say, Basotho did not follow Moshoeshoe's ethical standards because of cohesive powerful political or social institutions. Instead, it grew out of the founder's character or personality. SeMoshoeshoe, then, refers to the Basotho worldview and cultural identity that were modelled after their ruler Moshoeshoe.

SeMoshoeshoe is the same as 'Sesotho', the language of the Basotho people. However, as Coplan and Quinlan (1997:28) noted, the realm of Sesotho in theory and in practice comprises not only the language but also the entire acknowledged culture of the Basotho people. Sesotho actually has more profound political implications and applications. Discursive, self-conscious definitions define Sesotho as anything the Basotho believe to be totally their own creation, unaltered by 'external' influences. Sesotho has no clearly defined borders or contents as a cognitive and behavioural defence against the loss of Basotho national identity and the unauthorised use of resources that this identity confers rights to. All Basotho classes view Sesotho as being essential to social and 'national' existence from various, possibly contradictory angles. Sesotho, which backs the SeMoshoeshoe, defines the social, economic, political and cultural identities of all people descended from Moshoehoe's subjects.

SeMoshoeshoe's philosophical tenets are conceptualised and employed in this study to address the issue of religious exclusivism in schools as public institutions, under the direction of Shi- xu's CAD. It is applied in accordance with the principles of pluriversality. First off, SeMoshoeshoe is used to connect with pluriversality ontology as a tactical response to the violence of universalism. Pluriversality is a political ontology that promotes a multiversal ethics, one that is more conscious of the variety of worlds and world-making techniques that make up the contemporary socio-cultural landscape. Political ontology, as it is applied here, functions under the premise that divergent worldings constantly result through negotiations, enmeshments, crossings and

interruptions, according to Mercier (2019). SeMoshoeshoe is by itself an ontologically pluralistic entity because, according to Kramm (2021:3), ontology is always ingrained in a way of existence and cannot be reduced to a set of ontological commitments or assumptions. As a result, local communities create their own ontologies and conform to them in their daily lives. There is room for political compromises that allow other realities to exist on their own terms since pluriversal rationalities are concerned with the coexistence of all those cosmologies and their interaction.

The core of the SeMoshoeshoe ontologies is the concept of '*O se re ho Moroa, Moroa tooe*', which broadly refers to the avoidance of categorising people according to their ethnic groups. According to Mahao (2010:333–334), this concept served as a distinguishing characteristic of Moshoeshoe's approach to unity in variety on a more general level. It firmly opposes discrimination based on racial, ethnic or socioeconomic distinctions, and defends the equality of all individuals. The idea also conveys a powerful moral message by forbidding prejudice and stereotyping. According to Du Preez (2011:12), Moshoeshoe's recognition of diversity was made clear during the 1823 upheavals (*lifaqane*) when he welcomed refugees and stragglers to his kingdom, provided them with food and shelter, and never insisted that they give up their native languages and cultural practices. Mofuoa (2015:280) notes that Moshoeshoe encouraged people arriving to pay loyalty to the overarching ideas of peace and social justice while keeping their languages and cultures rather than forcing them to do so, as was typical of African leaders of his time. The diversity of cultures evolved into a unifying characteristic over time. As a result, Moshoeshoe was able to show that diversity can bring people together in a situation where they might have otherwise expected it to cause conflict. Because SeMoshoeshoe harbours a variety of ontologies and presents itself as a world that has granted itself the right to incorporate all other worlds, it is able to reject and challenge the ontological universalism that eliminates possibilities for what lay beyond its boundaries by presenting itself as exclusive.

SeMoshoeshoe subscribes to the political epistemologies defined by Santos (2018:2), Langa and Gonçalves (2022:44–45) and João Arriscado Nunesa (2020:3) as the epistemologies that aimed at challenging the dominant epistemologies. The epistemologies that consider it a crucial task to identify and discuss the validity of knowledges and ways of knowing not recognised as such by the dominant epistemologies. However, the idea is not to topple the dominant epistemologies to be replaced by the local and supressed epistemologies. Instead, Santos (2007:65) highlights that it is premised upon the idea of the epistemological diversity of the world, the recognition of the existence of the plurality of knowledges beyond the dominant, modern knowledge. It thus, renounces any universalised knowledge and proposes pluriversalised knowledges. SeMoshoeshoe cherished the principle of learning from others and respecting other people's ways of knowing, according to Du Preez (2011:3). According to Mahao (2010:334), the idea of learning from others is

prevalent in everyday conversational speech among Basotho. Basotho subscribes to the philosophical credo '*Ha o nyatse Morwa, o nyatsa moqheme*', which translates to 'It is not the ideas you detest, but the person spouting them'. implying that individuals frequently discount and reject the ideas and knowledge of those who are different. In an effort to learn from others, Moshoeshoe bartered 200 animals in exchange for sending the missionaries to his kingdom, according to Du Preez (2011:12). He quickly appointed a young missionary as his de facto minister of foreign affairs, sending letters on his behalf and offering him guidance on how to deal with other white people, namely the British and the Boers. The objective was to comprehend white men's technology and literacy.

SeMoshoeshoe suggests using plurality methodology to effect societal transformation. According to Santos (2007:75), pluralistic methodology is revolutionary because it is built on the practical notion that it is vital to reevaluate the practical interventions in society that many knowledges may provide. In view of the specific goals that various knowledges practices are trying to achieve, the pluriversal method favours context-dependent hierarchies rather than adhering to a single, universal and abstract hierarchy of knowledges. The relative importance of various real-world actions leads to the emergence of concrete hierarchies. According to Gill (2010:114), Moshoeshoe understood that time cannot be fixed which is why he advocated for '*tsoelopele*', or progressive, or adapting to the needs of the times. He had therefore demonstrated through his experiences with Western missionaries and British colonists that adaptation and change are inevitable. According to Coplan and Quinlan (1997:28), Moshoeshoe had already approved the transcription of Sesotho because he thought that a fixed 'Sesotho' would inscribe a linguistic basis for the future political identity and irreducibility of his new state. This was before a group of '*tsoelopele*' ('progressives') with missionary education rose to prominence in the 1920s. Regarding the written Sesotho, Moshoeshoe remarked,

> My language is nevertheless very beautiful. We are only beginning to realize this since we have seen it written down. Thanks to the little books of the missionaries, it will not be altered; oh! Your paper; that paper organizes everything well. (Coplan & Quinlan 1997:28)

This demonstrates that SeMoshoeshoe agrees that different worldviews can lead to transformation.

SeMoshoshoe and the promotion of interreligious religion

It can be argued that SeMoshoeshoe has the potential to impact the establishment of interreligious education in Lesotho if one takes into account the claim that SeMoshoeshoe upholds the ideals of plurality. The ontological pluralist conception of religion is one that SeMoshoeshoe supports. As was previously indicated, the term 'ontology' is not used in this work in the narrow sense of a one-world that favours itself as the arbitrator of explanation and reproduction, and forbids the possibility of other vistas and ways of living in

order to establish its legitimacy. Instead, it places a focus on ontological multiplicity, which acknowledges the various enactments and sets of relations that make up the possible forms of life, including local ontologies. Moshoeshoe rejected the idea that one religion might satisfy everyone's religious needs. Even while he acknowledged the differences between Christianity and the indigenous Basotho faith, he thought that these differences did not give one religion a moral advantage over the other. Moshoeshoe makes the following declaration after learning about the nature of the Christian God:

> You believe, then, that in the midst of and beyond all these, there is an all-powerful Master, who has created all, and who is our Father? Our ancestors used, in fact, to speak of a Lord of heaven. We did not know the God you announce to us, and we had no idea of the Sabbath; but in all the rest of your law we find nothing new. We knew it was very wicked to be ungrateful and disobedient to parents, to rob, to kill, to commit adultery, to covet the property of another, and to bear false witness. Casalis (1889:220–221)

Casalis (1889:222) affirms that Moshoshoe related the sameness in difference of religions to the difference and sameness of the Basotho and missionaries. Moshoeshoe had declared,

> [*B*]lack or white, we laugh or cry in the same manner and from the same causes; what gives pleasure or pain to the one race, causes equally pleasure or pain to the other. (Casalis 1889:222)

SeMoshoeshoe accepts a plurality of religious epistemologies, which rules out any one religion, specifically Christianity, as having all of the religious truths. Instead, as Ibrahim (2015:1) argues, pluralism recognises the epistemology that aids in realising that religion's Ultimate Reality is not real in and of itself but actual as understood by man. In accordance with religious multiple epistemology, the phenomenal religions may only be assessed for their applicability in terms of, for instance, moral validity and values. From this vantage point, Dastmalchian (2013:7) argues that all kinds of religious beliefs can ultimately coexist. This epistemological thesis refutes the idea that any one religion possesses a monopoly on truth by asserting that multiple religious worldviews that belong to various religions are all of equal epistemic quality. The Decalogue, the life, and the teachings of Christ enthralled Moshoeshoe, but according to Casalis (1889:224), he was shocked when he learned about the histories of the European nations. He did not understand why the people, who are followers of Christ and are guided by the golden commandments of the Decalogue, keep fighting and spend their time perfecting their military skills. Moshoeshoe was perplexed to realise that the only other role models he had were wild animals. He asked, 'But how can you enjoy fighting when you assert that you are the offspring of the One who said, "Love your enemies"? In other words, Moshoeshoe came to the realisation that no religion, not even Christianity, is able to address every ethical dilemma that people face.

The SeMoshoeshoe paradigm employs a multireligious transformative dialogue-based technique. Transformative dialogue, according to Lubarsky (1995:74), is a strategy for

approaching other traditions that leaves open the possibility that truth can be discovered there; if it is, our own understanding of ourselves might change as a result. Transformative conversation is founded on the idea that when truth is encountered, one must respond by moving beyond simple acceptance to incorporating it into one's own tradition. This is in contrast to discourse for the purposes of tolerance or admiration. In a pluralistic society, people will unavoidably encounter others whose views of reality differ from their own. Transformative discourse assumes that there might be something valuable in the other reality view, not just for the one who holds it but also for the person with the alternative reality view. Moshoeshoe became knowledgeable about biblical doctrine because of engaging in transformative dialogue, as Gill (2010:93) explains. He also articulated his own interpretation, according to which he believed that the interpretation of the Bible should take into account the local conditions and temperaments. He optimised a transformation by fusing Christianity and the local religion of the Basotho. As Mothibe and Ntabeni (2002:38) point out, Moshoeshoe did go beyond the missionaries' teachings and alter some of the indigenous religious traditions of the Basotho people, such as reviewing funeral procedures, initiation rites and polygamy. Moshoeshoe did not accept baptism because, to his sorrow, missionaries refused to modify incompatible Christian customs and beliefs, especially denominational differences. Moshoeshoe was frustrated by the missionaries' rigid mono-religious approach even though he believed in the transformative dialogue between diverse religions.

The teaching and learning of interreligious education through SeMoshoeshoe

SeMoshoshoe would assume the employment of border pedagogy and public pedagogy as two pedagogical methodologies to the teaching and learning of interreligious education, both of which are underpinned by plurality. According to Giroux (1991:51–52), the concept of border, both metaphorically and literally, signifies the various ways in which power is imprinted on the body, culture, history, space, territory and psyche. Therefore, borders cause us to recognise the ideological, racial, cultural and social lines that set some individuals apart from others. Borders not only highlight these distinctions but also provide people a chance to question them. They offer the opportunity to reorganise the possibility of border crossing. In other words, they represent specific forms of transgression, or the contestation and redefining of pre-existing frontiers created through dominance. One strategy to promote border crossing is to use educational settings where students cross borders to understand otherness. Understanding otherness offers a variety of religious tools that enable the creation of new identities within pre-existing diametrical arrangements. Border pedagogy functions as a component of a radical pedagogical practice that emphasises the necessity of creating an environment that encourages students to critically seek out many meanings and oppose being given a single, unvarying set of knowledge and abilities about the world.

Borders of religion are lines that separate one group of people from another depending on their religious beliefs and practices. Religious borders, however, do present opportunity to challenge current religious identity-based boundaries. By highlighting religious differences, they make it possible to examine religious boundaries in order to understand otherness and forge new religious identities. One strategy to promote border crossing is to use educational settings where students cross borders to understand otherness through pedagogies. Stanić (2019:23) gives the clearest definition of religious border pedagogy as pedagogical activity that guides students as they encounter the diversity of modern life and their connections to their religious traditions. They are given support to become cohesive so that they can form religious identities, which enables them to engage in meaningful and grateful interactions with others. The goal is to give them the chance to establish solid foundations in their own traditions and other social networks. This approach, which Fabretti (2013:54) refers to as 'learning through religions', reflects pedagogical adjustments made to religious studies that aim to help students become more self-aware, reflective and empathetic. This viewpoint contends that religious diversity in the classroom provides students with an opportunity to grow as individuals and to critically examine their values and beliefs. Religious border pedagogy also referred to, as 'learning from religions', is a strategy that emphasises the idea that one's own identity is complex and malleable by nature, making it susceptible to change and variation.

SeMoshoeshoe is capable of supporting religious border pedagogy. As Moshoeshoe learned about Christianity, he became aware of the physical and spiritual distinctions between the Basotho and the white missionaries. However, he recognised that these distinctions offered opportunities for bridging in order to develop mutual understanding. Casalis (1889:224), for instance, demonstrates how Moshoeshoe disciplined his followers when they denied missionary teachings because of their differences. Casalis had stated,

> You were in darkness, and we have brought you the light. All these visible things, and a multitude of others which we cannot see, have been created and are preserved by a Being all wise and all good, who is the God of us all, and who has made us to be born of one blood.

This last utterance disturbed the subjects of Moshoeshoe. One argued, 'What! That can never be! You are white; we are black: how could we come from the same father?' To which Moshoeshoe replied without hesitation, 'Stupid! In my herds are white, red, and spotted cattle; are they not all cattle? Do they not all come from the same stock, and belong to the same master?' (Casalis 1889:224). On the other hand, Moshoeshoe continued to rely on the guidance of 'Mantsopa, a traditional Mosotho prophetess. According to Hodgson (2003:217–218), Mantsopa as Moshoeshoe's spiritual adviser and counsellor reinforced the missionaries' teachings but with Sesotho meaning. She asserted that she and a blind young man named Katsi had journeyed to heaven to encounter the deity that the missionaries claimed to follow.

However, they distinguished themselves from the missionaries. They said that they had direct communication with God, while missionaries only obtained indirect inspiration through a book (the Bible). They disagreed with the missionary doctrine that vilified the Basotho people's long-standing religious practices. For instance, they asserted that God himself engages in polygamy and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are his children by different wives. Additionally, they asserted that the missionaries' belief that the way to heaven is narrow is nonsensical and that the road leading to God's town is in fact very broad and frequently crowded with people going to court. In fact, Mantsopa was assisting Moshoeshoe in his efforts to find a way for Basotho faith and Christianity to coexist. Specifically, creating a border crossing and overcoming challenges brought on by religious divides.

Public pedagogy is an additional educational strategy connected to the border paradigm supported by SeMoshoeshoe. Public pedagogy, to put it simply, is the process of educating people for the benefit of society. Public pedagogy, according to Sandlin, O'Malley and Burdick (2011:242), refers to education that explicitly promotes the formation of national identity and citizenship. When the term 'public' is employed, it refers to the development of a community that is unified in terms of ideals and collective identity, as opposed to a specific geographic site of educational phenomena. Public pedagogy, according to Giroux (2004:498), is defined as an educational endeavour that aims to give people those essential abilities, modes of reading, knowledge and skills that allow them to both read the world critically and take part in its shaping and governance. One of the only places where students may be taught to understand, interact critically and modify the dominant cultural spheres that are heavily influencing their views and sense of agency is in the formal spheres of learning.

In this article, public religious pedagogy is adopted in line with Casanova's (1994:5–6) emphasis on de-privatising religion and acknowledging the contribution of all religious traditions to the advancement of the common good as well as Fabretti's (2013:56) post-secular religious approach, which in this article is translated to the public religious approach. Both emphasise the importance of public religious education in response to the growing religious heterogeneity in nations where no one religion holds the monopoly and the function that religion plays in public life. They also stress the need of public religious pedagogy, which encourages students to interact with shared ideals and convictions that advance individuals' intellectual, social and cultural development outside of conventional religious and educational institutions. Public religious pedagogy enables students to learn about religious 'civilisation'. Students can learn about religious 'civilisation' through public religious education. However, Katzenstein (2009:16) believes that civilisation in a plurality form is preferable than mono-civilisation, which is a European invention of the 18th century. The notion of a single civilisational norm was an ideal based on racial, ethnic and religious considerations as well as a strong conviction in the superiority of European civilisation. The civilisation learned from public religion is pluralist civilisation, which emphasises the idea that there are various religious civilisation areas and traditions, and that their historical distinctiveness differs from that of a single society. The pedagogy of public religion involves teaching students about religion as part of a larger effort to change the way of life of the public. To put it another way, public religious pedagogy allows students to learn from many religious civilisations that, in Sulaiman's opinion (2016:33), denotes infrastructure (material) and superstructure as well as material and moral values (spiritual). Civilisation in this sense is a high level of social development that actively fosters the intellectual, spiritual and physical development of its people while utilising technological advancements to advance society and cater to the needs of its people.

SeMoshoeshoe is in favour of public religious engagement. According to Mothibe and Ntabeni (2002:36), Gill (2010:78), and Manyeli (2001:74), Moshoeshoe welcomed the missionaries largely to acquire weaponry, have people who could negotiate on his behalf when confronted with white opponents, but more significantly to learn from their civilisation. The missionaries were aware of their responsibility to transform Lesotho into a Christian kingdom that embodied Western civilisation, and they were dedicated to doing so. They adopted western farming methods, as well as health and educational systems, with the aid of the Gospel. Therefore, the only way to integrate into the new society was to become Christian and follow its moral precepts, which include equality, justice and peace. Moshoeshoe and his people were enthralled by the Christian civilisation. However, they were outraged by the mono-universalised view of civilisation that Christian missionaries held, rejecting Basotho civilisation and asserting that all of the religious and social practices of the Basotho people were incompatible with civilisation.

Conclusion and recommendation

The article makes an anti-SeMoshoeshoe case against exclusionary religious education. All individuals descended from Moshoehoe's subjects have their social, economic, political and cultural identities defined by SeMoshoeshoe. Anything that the Basotho consider to be entirely their own work, untouched by 'external' influences, fits this description. It implies that their survival and identity must be upheld and safeguarded. Any ideology, practice or viewpoint that is anti-SeMoshoeshoe is anti-Sesotho and anti-Mosotho, and as a result, is directly at odds with the Basotho nature (Basotho self-identity). If exclusively religious education violates SeMoshoeshoe ideals, it is against being a Mosotho and needs to be stopped. To counterbalance the effects of exclusive religious education, the idea of 'sekoele Basotho' is advocated. Sekoele literally translates to 'yell at the troops for re-engagement after retreat' or 'give the enemy your back when fleeing from overpowered' in Sesotho. Sekoele is always used in conjunction with the word Basotho, that is, sekoele Basotho, to imply that running from the enemy is cowardly and antagonistic to the Basotho people or their culture.

The idea of *sekoele*, as Phohlo (2011:74) argues, encapsulates the spirit of resiliency and the mentality that has successfully protected Lesotho from her attackers in the past. *Sekoele*, in a wide sense, refers to regaining what one identifies as who, what and how one is Mosotho, according to Phohlo (2011:74) and Khau (2012:419). It is resistance to cultural appropriation and deprivation. It is used when it is recognised that Basotho ethnic and cultural identity are being undermined. To safeguard their Basotho by taking back what threatens to destroy it, the Basotho are being urged to adopt the spirit of resiliency and the attitude of *sekoele*. Exclusionary religious instruction is not SeMoshoeshoe, Seshoeshoe or Basotho, so *sekoele* urges Mosotho to embrace the idea of a pluralistic worldview, which assumes the existence of several ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies grounded by seMoshoeshoe. *Sekoele* advocates for religious border pedagogy, in which students are given the opportunity to learn from various religious traditions in order to understand what it means to be different and to create new religious identities that do not exclude or discriminate against others and lead to the full realisation of humanity in union. *Sekoele* advocates for public religious pedagogy, or religious education that produces benefits that all citizens can benefit from equally.

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Competing interests

Author's contributions

R.I.M., is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

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Disclaimer

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