

***ULWALUKO KWA XHOSA: Young Xhosa Men's Lived Experiences in the Context of
Traditional Male Initiation***

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

(Clinical Psychology)

from

RHODES UNIVERSITY

By

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February 2015

Declaration

I declare that ***ULWALUKO KWA XHOSA: Young Xhosa Men's Lived Experiences in the Context of Traditional Male Initiation*** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

SIGNATURE

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DATE

Abstract

This thesis explores the lived experiences of young *amaXhosa* men in relation to *Ulwalukokwa Xhosa* (traditional male initiation [TMI]) and its impact on their sense of masculinity. The conceptual framework of this study is located within African epistemology focusing on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in South Africa. The study aimed at enabling young *amaXhosa* men who had undergone TMI to reflect on their first-hand, personal accounts of *Ulwalukokwa Xhosa* and manhood. Six semi-structured interviews and a follow up focus group discussion were held with 23-27 years old *amaXhosa* men residing in Joza Township in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape. Participants were identified through purposive sampling. The thesis reports on the following findings: (a) the significance of the place/location of initiation, and the guise of modernity; (b) feelings of anticipation experienced by the young men; (c) the theme on *ubudoda*(manhood) affirmation *Ndiyindoda!*; (d) the theme on the concealment of pain (perseverance); (e) the theme on respect for self and others and *ubuntu*;(f) *Uzimelegeqe* (independence and autonomy) and (g) social role and responsibility. The paper argues for the relevance of TMI as a significantrite of passage from boyhood to manhood among*amaXhosa* men.

Keywords: *ulwaluko*, traditional male initiation (TMI), masculinity, rituals, African epistemology and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

my late grandparents

NOMAGCALEKA ESTHER AND JAPHET SISWANA;

&

NONCASA AND MAMAJOLA CITA;

my late aunt and niece

ANDISWA SISWANA

&

HLUMELO SISWANA

and

my late master's classmate

NQOBILE SHONGWE

HayilnywebaAbanayoAbefeleEnkosini!

Acknowledgements

"I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, *iGqilinoThukela*, and the sands of the *Kgalagadi*, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say - I am an African!

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape - they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result..." Thabo Mbeki.

Kwa Xhosa kuthiwaumntwanaunxonxwa, ekhuliswasisizweesiqulateisiseko sekhaya, inkonzo,nabahlali (A child is raised by 'communities' composed of society, a family, church and the broader community). Indeed, I am the epitome of the African cosmos that resembles a sense of identity, the values and principles of the African community. I feel indebted to say *enkosi, ndibulelangokungazenzisiyo* (expressing my sincere gratitude) to everyone who has touched my life in a special way.

However, it is almost impossible to mention all the names, but I will mention a few and these are:

- **God Almighty**, the omnipotent God, the giver of life that sustained my passion and zeal for my work throughout this study.
- The research participants for allowing me to journey with them into the world of their lived experiences.
- My supervisor Mr Werner Böhmke for his continued assistance, the confidence he displayed in my abilities and for allowing me to be explorative throughout this study.
- **The Cannon Collins Legal Trust** for funding my postgraduate studies.
- **Ubuntu Education Fund** for planting the seed for my academic formation.
- My mentors: Phumeza Kota-Nyati, Dr. Hanna van Lingen, Professor KopanoRatele, Rev MSJ Losaba; and Mr Kungwayo.
- My mother and family for their prayers and support.
- To Siyanda Qoto for his tireless assistance in translation and continued support throughout this study.
- To all my friends that prayed and supported me during testing times.
- Dr Lisa Saville Young, Mr Jan Knoetze, Mr Scott Wood and Mr Iain Reid who, with no doubt, instilled a sense of identity and confidence in my formation as a Clinical Psychologist.
- Mr Alfred Lungcuzo, Dr LuvuyoNtombana, Professor Louise Vincent, Professor VelileNotshulwana, Dr MathaboKhau, thank you for exposing me into the world of academia.
- Brian Carlson for professional editing.
- Penny Busetto for proof reading.

In essence, what you have each given me in your own unique way goes beyond words!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the Study

The focus of this study is on investigating the experiences of a small sample of young *amaXhosa* men who underwent traditional male initiation. I am interested in identifying and exploring subjective experiences of young *amaXhosa* men in relation to the practice of traditional male initiation [TMI] and the impact of these experiences on their sense of manhood and masculinity using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The aim was to allow space for young *amaXhosa* men to reflect on their first hand experiences of initiation and the effect of these experiences on their personal sense of manhood. Accordingly, the following research question was the focus of investigation: ***What are the experiences of young Xhosa men of the practice of traditional male initiation in relation to their sense of manhood?*** This study was conducted in *isiXhosa*, the participants' home language. The use of local indigenous languages is something that is generally missing in similar research projects.

1.2 Context of the Study

Male circumcision is a practice that has been conducted for centuries by different communities in Africa and around the world (Deacon & Thomson, 2012; Mogotlane, Ntlangulela, & Ogunbanjo, 2004). Several scholars note the difference between circumcision and initiation. Circumcision is defined as the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis (Funani, 1990; Nyaundi, 2005; Vincent, 2008). For different cultures such as Jewish and Muslim societies circumcision usually takes place a day or seven days after the birth of the male child (Doyle, 2005; Mhlahlo, 2009). Initiation rites of passage are practised in a widespread fashion across Africa, particularly in parts of West Africa, East and Southern Africa, with tremendous local and regional differences (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). A rite of passage is defined as a basic act or set of rituals executed according to set social rules and customs (Ampim, 2003). According to Barker and Ricardo (2005), in Africa the details and content of the transfer of information and skills ranges from methods of hunting, strategies of treating women, how to build a house, warrior or fighting skills and historical information about the cultural group and its rituals.

In South Africa ethnic groups that practice male circumcision regard the practice as an initiation ritual which indicates the rite of passage from boyhood into manhood (Deacon & Thompson, 2012; Gwata, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Five ethnic groups that promote the practice of traditional male initiation are the Nguni people (*amaXhosa* and *abaThembu*), *ba* Sotho (including the Tswana people), *vha* Venda and the Tsonga people (Deacon & Thompson, 2012). In the Eastern Cape Province, the *amaXhosa* are the predominant ethnic group that still preserve TMI, *ulwaluko*, as a rite of passage in a widespread fashion (Ntombana, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Initiation usually takes place in the 'bush or mountain' an area secluded from the larger community (Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008). The 'bush' or 'mountain' symbolises a place of isolation where the actual healing and initiation teachings are practised (Mhlahlo, 2009; Lungcuza, 2013; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). Initiation rituals are treated with a high level of secrecy and sacredness and detailed information about TMI, specifically the similarities and differences between different ethnic groups, are generally not available in the literature (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008).

It is clear that the medical science focus surrounding initiation rituals, particularly *ulwaluko*, has become powerful as a result of the increased attention on circumcision related, firstly, to the safety of traditional circumcision and initiation rituals for initiates and, secondly, to combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Peltzer & Kanta, 2009; Vincent, 2008). A growing body of research suggesting that medical circumcision interventions assist with the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STI transmission has led to widespread media attention and advertising of medical male circumcision procedures (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). Ndangam (2008) notes that research and media reports concerning traditional male initiation have been focused on the prevalence of initiate injuries and deaths during various initiation seasons in South Africa, and the hospitalisation of many initiates following complications from circumcision wounds (Doyle, 2005; Funani, 1990; Nyaundi, 2005; Vincent, 2008). Furthermore, recurrent deaths of initiates and concerns with initiation rituals serve to bring the practice of circumcision as a rite of passage under increasing scrutiny (Ndangam, 2008; Vincent, 2008). For example, negative news around traditional circumcision indirectly threatens the credibility of the initiation practice to the *amaXhosa* culture by foregrounding the attendant risks that come with the ritual (Gwata, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Vincent, 2008). The medical science focus has potential negative

consequences on traditional initiation rituals for initiates and does not adequately appreciate the full and deep cultural significance of the practice of initiation for the communities that engage in these rituals, or recognise the individual psychological meanings attached to the experience for the individuals that undergo the initiation (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

Consequently, Vincent (2008) notes that despite evident dangers and negative media reports about numerous circumcision related complications, about 10 000 Xhosa men are circumcised annually in the Eastern Cape. A great number of young Xhosa initiates regard the practice as a necessary ritual as a rite of passage (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009). Vincent (2008) notes that initiation is regarded as a significant and meaningful ritual for *amaXhosa* boys. The cultural significance of initiation rituals is the strongest determinant of the continued practice of TMI (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008). The practice of initiation provides space for socialisation of gender role practices, and shared norms and values around manhood (Gwata, 2009; Vincent, 2008). This space of socialization is not uncontested and has been identified as traditional and patriarchal in that it focuses on the reproduction of very particular culturally located ideals of masculinity (Ratele, 2013a; Vincent, 2008).

Morrell (1998) argues that the aim of initiation rituals is to promote certain models of manhood and ideals of masculinity. While it is acknowledged that every individual man will vary according to how much he adheres to these social norms and that social gender norms constantly evolve or change over time as individuals and groups reconstruct them, for the most part initiation schools can be said to subscribe to the idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Morrell, 1998). Accordingly, men are expected to withstand physical pain, have physical strength, be emotionally robust, and able to provide for and protect the family (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Ntombana 2011a).

In the context of the *amaXhosa* people successful performance of manhood means the ability to provide support and assistance in community ceremonies, to run traditional functions, to educate the community about the ideals of manhood and to act as pillars of strength (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a). Moreover, differences are noted concerning the stages of manhood among *amaXhosa* men which are not merely determined by age or simply by having completed the initiation ritual (Mhlahlo, 2009).

Instead, 'manhood' is determined by the attainment of social status and the fulfilment of social expectations in the years post initiation (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). In the *amaXhosa* tradition, the young men's phase, *isifana*, is usually between five and nine years after initiation though this varies in different areas around the Eastern Cape (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a). During the *isifana* phase, a young man is expected to establish himself through marriage and the acceptance of other responsibilities in the community (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a). Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities attached to manhood are to assist older men in traditional rituals, for example to stand and address other men *ebuhlanti* (in the kraal), on behalf of the family, and in the slaughtering and skinning of livestock during traditional ceremonies and celebrations (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). *Abafana* (young Xhosa men) also have a responsibility to build initiates' huts and monitor the boys during the initiation season (Mhlahlo, 2009).

In theorising 'masculinity', continuous contestations in the studies of men and masculinity have resulted in debates around the meaning, relevance and conceptualisation of the idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Ratele, 2013a). Scholars argue that the notion of 'masculinities' as plural or multiple creates a discourse of on-going struggle between 'traditional masculinities' and 'hegemonic masculinity' as a universal ideology (Morrell, 2002; Ratele, 2013a; Spronk, 2014; Tamale, 2011). In Western societies 'hegemonic' masculinity is connected to ideas of patriarchy, heteronormativity, racial and classed locations of Western, white males (Connell, 1995; Morell, 2002; Ratele, 2013). Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002) take it further to note that within this idea of masculinity men are described as being objective, rational, independent, achievement-oriented, aggressive, and emotionally unexpressive. In this framework of thinking about 'hegemonic masculinity', working class masculinities, black and gay masculinities have been thought of as 'subordinate' and 'marginal' masculinities with their own specified cultural norms of masculinity (Alsop et al., 2002; Ratele, 2013b; Tamale, 2011).

However, in the context of this study, the use of the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' refers not to the above mentioned assumption of a white, Western and economically affluent dominant male ideal, but rather is used to refer to specific culturally-located forms of masculinity that, through cultural practice and tradition, have come to be regarded as dominant within a specific context. It is important to note that, despite cultural locatedness, there are often elements of these norms that are common, or shared in a global society

that are still predominantly patriarchal and adjudicated on the basis of classist ideologies (Ratele, 2013a; Ratele, 2014). This leads to the idea that 'hegemonic masculinity' is both context-specific, in its various forms and practices, and universal in terms of shared social ideals across contexts that value particular forms of masculine gender roles and ideologies (Connell, 2002; Ratele, 2013; Ratele, 2014). Thus, the focus is also on the meaning of initiation for the experience of manhood and, therefore, I drew on these sorts of theoretical debates about the notions of masculinity

1.3 Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study situated within a paradigm of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), aimed at making sense of people's experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In the context of this study, IPA aims to allow participants to begin a process of reflection and engagement with the meaning of their personal experience of having undergone initiation as young *amaXhosa* men, and the impact of these initiation experiences on their current sense of self as *amaXhosa* men. The IPA approach argues that the meaning individuals make of different events can be understood by a process of interpretation (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). The use of interpretation focuses on the meaning-making process which is at the core of the individual's social life and culture (Magnusson & Marecek, 2012). Thus, in this study the use of interpretation facilitated the process of discovering culturally located experiences of these young *amaXhosa* men regarding TMI and the particular gender and sex role socialisation processes related to this cultural practice. Furthermore, the conceptual framework of this study is located within an indigenous paradigm and African epistemology focusing on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in South Africa.

1.4 Problem Statement

This study explores the lived experiences of young *amaXhosa* men as felt by those that underwent TMI. This study sought to critically evaluate the experiences of young *amaXhosa* men of the practice of traditional male initiation in relation to their sense of manhood. This study also sought to critically evaluate the theoretical underpinnings of a particular masculinity theory. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine traditional male initiation in terms of dominant ideals of manhood amongst the *amaXhosa*. To this end, this

research aimed to examine the ways in which culturally located ideals of masculinity are linked to and shape individual men's experiences of traditional initiation customs and gender role socialisation.

1.5 Research Objectives

- To identify and explore the subjective experiences of young *amaXhosa* men in relation to the practice of initiation and the impact of these experiences on their sense of manhood.
- To examine traditional male initiation in terms of dominant 'hegemonic masculinity' ideals of manhood amongst young *amaXhosa* men.

The key study objectives were met and these are well reflected in the study results and addressed as part of the interview discussions. All participants were young *amaXhosa* men, fluent in speaking *isiXhosa*, and were all within *izilimela* (the five year period after initiation). The data collection took place over a period of a week, followed by a focus group interview a couple of weeks later.

1.6 Brief Overview of Chapters

This study consists of five chapters. The following presents an overview of the chapters included in this thesis.

Chapter 1. The chapter presents the aims of the thesis and provides a rationale for the study. The rationale of this study is on investigating the experiences of a small sample of young *amaXhosa* men who underwent traditional male initiation using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). An overview of the focus of the thesis is provided. The latter part of the chapter presents a summary of relevant arguments and research concerning the study.

Chapter 2. The chapter begins by contextualizing the research through a discussion of initiation rites of passage in Africa and South Africa. The conceptualisation of TMI is explored during the colonial period as well as during apartheid and the new political

dispensation in South Africa. Important concepts and definitions are explained. The chapter includes a review of the international and South African empirical literature exploring the influence of modernisation on initiation practices; initiation and socialisation; and other factors around initiation. The chapter follows an engagement of some central concepts such as gender and heteronormativity, theorisation of masculinity including hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordinate masculinity, marginalised masculinity, and dynamic relations between masculinities. The following section focuses on the discussion on African masculinities and conceptualisation of manhood in Africa. The last section follows a discussion on public health and circumcision, including safety for initiates and circumcision schools, HIV/AIDS, MMC and TMI.

Chapter 3. This chapter outlines the methodology followed and the research framework for this qualitative research. The nature of the sample, the procedure followed while conducting this research and the analysis method used are also outlined. Reflexivity as well as general ethical considerations are included in this chapter.

Chapter 4. The results and their relevance to the literature reviewed are discussed in this chapter. Results are presented from an analytic framework used to extrapolate relevant themes from the interviews conducted. These results have seven emergent themes around (a) the significance of the place/location of initiation, and the guise of modernity; (b) feelings of anticipation experienced by the young men; (c) the theme on *ubudoda* (manhood) affirmation *Ndiyindoda!*; (d) the theme on the concealment of pain (perseverance); (e) the theme on respect for self and others and *ubuntu*; (f) *Uzimele Geqe* (Independence and autonomy); and (g) social role and responsibility.

Chapter 5. The final chapter summarizes main arguments made, and concludes with some central thoughts and observations. The limitations of the study are recognised and recommendations for future research are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section covers the historical background of initiation rituals and also deals with the contextualisation of *ulwaluko kwaXhosa* (TMI). The second section deals with initiation, sexuality and conceptualisations of masculinity which are explored in depth to provide clarity on the theoretical assumptions and debates around masculinity. The theoretical framework aims to explore contestations around the theories of masculinity and to interrogate the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Traditional male initiation practices and the conceptualisation of manhood are also explored as they pertain to the research question. In this study I engage with both Western and traditional notions of masculinity.

The works of Connell (1995; 1998; 2005), Morrell (1998; 2002) and Ratele (2008; 2013; 2014) are reviewed to trace and understand the debates and global notions of masculinities. Essentially, the aim of focusing on these scholars is also to explore the nuances and conceptualisation of making sense around the idea of 'African masculinities', particularly within the context of South Africa. The writings of various theorists are discussed as they relate to the main theoretical topic. The third section deals with public health and circumcision safety measures to prevent circumcision and initiation complications, including HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. In extrapolating the concept of the TMI within the context of *ulwaluko kwa Xhosa*, I heavily focus on the work of the following scholars: Gwata (2009); Ntombana (2009, 2011); and Mhlahlo (2009). Alfred Luncguzo's (1993) work focuses on giving the *amaXhosa* historical background of initiation, while Ncaca (2014) and other scholars have also investigated this phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, these scholars are relevant as they have conducted empirical research regarding this practice.

2.2 Contextualising Initiation Rites of Passage

2.2.1 Historical background to initiation

According to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CPPRCRLC, 2010), both internationally and in South Africa, various cultures have different cultural practices that are regarded as important aspects of life. Rites of passage are predominantly practiced in various African societies (Ampim, 2003). In South Africa the following ethnic groups: (a) *vha* Venda; (b) *ama* Pedi and *aba* Tsonga practice traditional male initiation rites of passage (CPPRCRLC, 2010). These rites of passage (rituals) have different names; the Xhosa people refer to *ulwaluko* (initiation), the *vha* Venda and the Basotho respectively call their initiation rites *howela*.

Ndangam (2008) notes that *ulwaluko* (TMI) is predominantly practised by the *amaXhosa* people in the Eastern Cape. It is noted that the *amaXhosa* people and other ethnic groups that promote this practice regard it as a fundamental rite of passage into adulthood (Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008). Another important aspect around TMI is that it is regarded as promoting values of solidarity among men, especially where male ties are important (CPPRCRLC, 2010). It is also regarded as an institutional practice which maintains solidarity in a historical group (CPPRCRLC, 2010). Initiation rites of passage are also enshrined and promoted in the South African Constitution, which protects the integrity of cultural rights and promotion of indigenous practices (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Ncaca, 2014). According to Barker and Ricardo (2005) many cultural groups in Africa have been performing initiation rites of passage as a way to socialise boys to become men. It is noted that rites of passage usually involve stages of transition which are important both for the community and for the psychological development and functioning of an individual (CPPRCRLC, 2010).

Barker and Ricardo (2005) note that in Eastern Uganda a cultural group known as the 'Bigisu' practices the initiation ritual which involves circumcision. It is regarded as part of the rite of passage to manhood. Accordingly, it is expected that every two years young men between 15 and 18 years consent to participate in a month-long process involving entire communities (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). These young men go through the initiation

school, firstly, by being circumcised in a non-clinical setting without the use of anaesthesia by 'traditional surgeons' (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). It is highlighted that during this process there are certain practices done with the intention to elicit pain and to see the extent to which they are able to endure it; for example, some young men are said to pour salt and pepper in the wound to enhance the pain (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

The CPPRCRLC (2010) highlights that the aim of the initiation process is to educate young boys into becoming men. Thereafter, these young men become fully part of a community and that is associated with the rights to participate in the decision-making processes of the clan and the family; to share in the privileges, duties and responsibilities of the community; and, in many instances, to take a wife and raise a family (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009). Essentially, it is noted that all these practices have the same conceptualisation around the ideas of crossing-over, shedding the old self and embracing a new understanding of the self and attaining a form of personhood (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Vincent, 2008). Initiation rites are also embedded within ideals, values and aspirations of both the individual and the community (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008; Venter, 2011). These are then reflected and embraced through the transmission of culturally located knowledge and practices that are significant during the process of initiation (CPPRCRLC, 2010). So, from this perspective, initiation is not merely a common practice but rather a holistic process that extends from the individual to community values, aspirations and heritage (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011b). It is also noted that initiation in its own right embraces and promotes the protection of a community's cultural, spiritual and religious rights (CPPRCRLC, 2010).

2.3 Conceptual Definitions

It is important at this point to define some of the key concepts which are significant to this thesis. Ntombana (2011b) notes that, in order to understand the meaning of the initiation practice, it is important to grapple with concepts such as tradition, customs, and common practice. These key concepts are used throughout the thesis to emphasise their importance and to assist in understanding the intricacies and deep cultural significance of *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*.

2.3.1 *Isiko* (custom / long standing practice)

According to Ntombana (2011b) the concept of *isiko* refers to a long-standing practice that has been followed over decades by different generations. It is important to note that an *isiko* is referred to as a custom that cannot be changed. *AmaXhosa* customs are embedded in religious beliefs which are deemed to connect African people to God and the ancestors (Ntombana, 2011b). *Isiko* constitute various practices such as: (a) *imbeleko* (initiation into life or infant initiation), usually conducted after the birth of a child (b) and *ulwaluko* (initiation) to mark the transition from being a boy to becoming a man (Ntombana, 2011b).

2.3.2 *Isintu* (tradition)

Venter (2011) notes that *isintu* (tradition) refers to the habits or rituals which have been established through the ages among the *amaXhosa*. It also involves the transfer of knowledge such as handing down of opinions, principles, doctrines or customs from ancestors to posterity through oral tradition (Ntombana, 2011b; Venter, 2011).

2.3.3 *Isithethe* (common practice)

Common practice, *isithethe*, refers to activities/events that are often linked with a custom because those two cannot be separated, though they are clearly defined (Ntombana, 2011b). However, it is important to note that though *isithethe* is a common practice within a particular cultural group, there are existing differences; for example, customs are practiced differently in urban areas as opposed to a rural area (Lungcuza, 2013). Ntombana (2011b) notes that *isithethe* is not related to spirituality or worship; it is rather an understanding and behaviour that becomes accepted in a particular culture. So, it is noted that *isiko lokwaluka* (initiation custom) is located within the broader *amaXhosa* socio-cultural context (Lungcuza, 2013; Ncaca, 2014, Ntombana, 2011a).

2.3.4 *Ulwaluko/ukwaluka* (traditional male initiation)

In the context of the *amaXhosa* tradition, the concept of *ulwaluko kwa Xhosa* carries a significant meaning and a deep cultural value (Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008). Ntombana

(2011b) notes the word 'circumcision' in isiXhosa is used differently and is often referred to as *ukwaluka* or *isiko lokwaluka* (initiation custom or rite/ritual). Mhlahlo (2009) and Ntombana (2011b) note the complexities attached to the understanding of the concepts of 'initiation' and 'circumcision'. The term *ulwaluka*, also known as *ukudlangwa* (the cutting procedure) refers to an initiation ritual which is not limited to the mere cutting of the foreskin (Lungcuzo, 2013; Ntombana, 2011a). However, it is rather a symbolic operation deemed as a transitional stage for the *amaXhosa* (Lungcuzo, 2013; Ntombana, 2011a).

In *isiXhosa* the concept of *ukoluka* or *ukweluka* (the cutting of the foreskin), or going for the initiation ritual, signifies the first phase of the process of initiation (Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). The procedure of circumcision is conducted by an *ingcibi* (traditional surgeon) usually an elder with great expertise in the practice of circumcision; moreover, one with a good reputation as a man (Lungcuzo, 2013; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011b). This means that this man should be someone who is well respected in the community (Lungcuzo, 2013; Mandela, 1994; Ncaca, 2014). Gwata (2009) notes that traditional male initiation is conducted under non-clinical settings and is performed by a traditional practitioner, hence the inclination to use 'traditional initiation' as opposed to 'circumcision' (Gwata, 2009; Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009).

2.3.5 Circumcision/medical male circumcision (MMC)

Medical science defines 'circumcision' as the removal or cutting of the foreskin (Deacon & Thompson, 2012). This is a common terminology for medical procedure to denote medical circumcision which is not associated with a cultural significance (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011b). The aim of this concept clarification is to provide a picture of the intricacies embedded in the understanding and use of the terms 'circumcision' and 'initiation' in this study. In essence, it is observed that the concepts of 'circumcision' and 'initiation' speak to each other but they are quite clearly defined. Thus, in this study I use the terms 'initiation' and 'circumcision' carefully to capture the difference between the traditional male initiation and medical circumcision.

2.3.6 *Bush and mountain*

Ulwaluko usually takes place in the 'bush' or on a 'mountain': an area secluded from the larger community (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Ncaca (2014) raises critical questions around the authenticity of what constitutes a legitimate initiation school. According to Ncaca (2014) the location where initiation takes place is very meaningful and sacred (Lungcuza, 2013; Ntombana, 2011). Scholars note the difference between 'going to the mountain' and 'going to the bush' (Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a).

It is noted that the use of *entabeni* (mountain), refers to the distance, darkness and seclusion away from people/familiarity (Gwata, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). The 'bush' analogy signifies the connection between wildlife, nature and cosmology (Ncaca, 2014). It is noted that the 'bush' or the 'mountain' embodies the actual enactment where successful manhood is achieved (Ncaca, 2014, Ntombana, 2011a). Ideally, this is where the first phase of initiation begins and the 'cutting of foreskin' takes place. It is noted that during the procedure the newly initiated boy has to confirm, in response to the initiator's instruction, "*Yithi uyindoda*" ["I am a man!"] (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a).

This is regarded as the most profound statement made by the initiate to publicly affirm/declare his manhood in the presence of older and experienced men. Others note that the 'bush' or 'mountain' symbolises a place of isolation where the actual healing and initiation teachings (transfer of knowledge and skills) are practised (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011; Vincent, 2008). Gwata (2009) and Lungcuza (2013) recognise that traditional circumcision is referred to as 'going to the bush' or 'going to the mountain' to note the sacredness of the area which is usually secluded from the general public and is an uncultivated area where it will be easy to build *ibhuma* (the new house for the initiate). Lungcuza (2013) notes that the 'bush or mountain' experience refers to the beginning of a new life and a 'school' whereby the initiates are initiated and educated about the basic principles of manhood. Ideally, the education 'curriculum' is about teaching the initiate ways of being and self-control (Lungcuza, 2013).

According to Lungcuza (2013) this is done to inculcate a new mind-set, a set of values and principles to guide their lives during the initiation process and it is expected that those values and principles will translate into other areas of life. For example, it is highlighted that one of the greatest lessons is self-denial such as limited access to water and eating food without salt or a preferred meal before the seventh or eighth day and, most importantly, the endurance of pain (Lungcuza, 2013; Mandela, 1994). However, it is noted that due to changing times and modernity, there is limited space for making initiation schools during initiation seasons (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). This has resulted in some initiation schools being located within close proximity to the community which then negates the notion of traditionality in a secluded space (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009, Ncaca, 2014). It is noted that because of limited uncultivated areas it has become difficult to locate initiation schools away from the general public, particularly in urban areas which potentially nullifies the idea of sacredness and seclusion (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

2.4 Conceptualisation of the *AmaXhosa* Initiation

2.4.1 Initiation in the colonial period

The CPPRCRLC (2010) highlights that colonialism has been shown to have impacted traditional African cultures and customs particularly in South Africa. Maluleke (2012) notes that colonisation has had a significant influence in the changes that have taken place in African societies. It is noted that acculturation was the greatest influence during colonial times as a way to control and dominate African communities. According to the CPPRCRLC (2010) acculturation means African people were lured to adopt new ways of being through the guise of Western influence and this also influenced Africans to forget their belief systems and undermined their sense of identity.

The practice of initiation has been influenced by various aspects such as colonialisation, medical science and over commercialisation (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a). In practice, colonisation, the arrival of missionaries and the apartheid era perpetuated problematic influences through the advancement of colonial superiority at the expense of indigenous practices and belief systems. This was also done through the

derogative labelling of indigenous cultural practices. For example, initiation was called a 'barbaric' practice (Ntombana, 2011). The arrival of missionaries also had a negative influence, as initiation was regarded as a practice associated with a pagan belief system (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Ntombana, 2011a). CPPRCRLC (2010) notes that such statements and qualifications did not serve good intentions, but rather diminished the value of cultural practices.

According to Ntombana (2011b) the influence of colonialism was evidenced in one of the ancient *amaXhosa* prophets, Ntsikana, son of Gabba. It is noted that Ntsikana became very unpopular among *amaXhosa* communities because he promoted and embraced ideals of colonialism and he encouraged the abolition of initiation rites, specifically *ulwaluko kwaXhosa* (Ntombana, 2011a). According to Ntombana (2011b) attempts to abolish initiation have been consistent since the time of Ntsikana, missionaries and other Christian preachers. There were African Christian scholars and writers who also encouraged the abolition of initiation rites (Ntombana, 2011b). For example, Myemana (2004) is an African theologian with strong Christian beliefs and advocates Biblical principles. He encourages the abolition of traditional male initiation practices arguing that the practice of initiation no longer serves good intentions due to its lost meaning and socio-cultural significance (Myemana, 2004). Myemana (2004) also expands on his argument by drawing on the changes and problems that are associated with this practice such as malpractices, botched circumcision, and the escalating number of young initiates dying when they go to the bush.

2.4.2 *The apartheid era*

According to CPPRCRLC (2010), during the apartheid era the practice of initiation suffered in various ways. It is noted that *ulwaluko* was practiced under the apartheid pass laws such as forced removals which impacted on the effectiveness of this practice (CPPRCRLC, 2010). The forced removal of black South Africans led to potentially problematic circumstances which eventually forced most people, particularly black men, to leave their homes to work on the mines and in the cities (CPPRCRLC, 2010). This also influenced changes around the practice because it meant that young boys would undergo initiation without their father's presence and participation during the process of initiation

school (CPPRCRLC, 2010). For example, most fathers would miss the opportunity to teach the fundamentals of initiation and only came back for the preparations of the home-coming celebration (CPPRCRLC, 2010).

It is interesting to note that initiation is still practiced and embraced by the *amaXhosa* people and other ethnic groups (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011b; Vincent, 2008). Venter (2008) also notes that, despite negative assumptions and evidence from media coverage, *amaXhosa* men and *amaXhosa* communities still take pride in and place value on initiation rites of passage. The CPPRCRLC (2010) also notes that despite the colonial subjugation and marginalization of many African cultural practices, the initiation rites and circumcision ritual are still practiced and honoured by its people. They highlight that the reason this practice still thrives is because of its fundamental values that are deeply embedded in African society, and it is regarded as an important part of living among communities that emphasise the importance of resilience as an instrument to cope with life challenges (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Vincent, 2008). In the post-colonial period circumcision practices have also been affected by socio-economic change and increased state regulation (Vincent 2008).

2.4.3 The new political dispensation in South Africa

There is limited literature that solely focuses on the intricacies of the initiation practice in the new political dispensation. To this end, the CPPRCRLC (2010) and Ndangam (2008) note that in the political dispensation there have been progressive attempts to bring back the socio-cultural significance of this practice. It is highlighted that the new developments, particularly the introduction of the Constitution in 1996, opened the opportunity to embrace cultural diversity and the promotion of cultural practices (CPPRCRLC, 2010). In the twenty one years of democracy in South Africa, one of the things that need to be highlighted is the shift towards the promotion of individual human rights and the preservation of cultural practices (CPPRCRLC, 2010). It is also worth noting that the government's rainbow nation initiative strives to embrace the idea of cultural diversity (CPPRCRLC, 2010). Thus, many South Africans, particularly those who believe in initiation rites, are encouraged to embrace their heritage (CPPRCRLC, 2010). In contrast it is worth noting that despite the changes in the new political dispensation there are still problems around this practice. It is

noted that the role of traditional leaders and elders as custodians of initiation schools is not actively felt due to problems that are still experienced and reported (Kepe, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011b). Initiation schools have lost their meaning and the practice is subject to scrutiny (CPPRCRLC, 2010). Psycho-socio-economic problems have also contributed to a high rate of unemployment and economic deprivation that has led to over-commercialisation and illegal initiation schools in various urban areas across South Africa (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuza, 2013; Ntombana, 2011b).

It is important to note that arguments on the abolishment or discontinuation of the practice need to be critically examined. I also share similar notions with that of Ntombana (2011a) noting that to turn a blind eye to the current problems around initiation practice would be a sign of being in denial. Indeed, over the last year, evidence and media coverage concerning initiation practices in South Africa have shown problems associated with this practice, such as negligence, over commercialisation, alcohol abuse and lack of discipline, which has resulted in the death of many initiates (Kepe, 2010; Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2009; Venter, 2008; Vincent, 2008).

2.5 Influence of Modernisation

2.5.1 Changes in traditional male initiation

It is noted that various factors contribute to changes around the practice of initiation. These changes can be traced through the first half of the twentieth century (Kepe, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). These factors contributed to a number of changes such as the influence of modernisation (Deacon & Thompson, 2012; Kepe, 2010). This has posed a number of changes as to how the practice has been conducted in the past, and current practice is noted to be 'diluted' by urban influences and problematic practices which have brought about misconstrued ideas and public discourse around initiation (Kepe, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a). Kepe (2010) note that urbanisation has led to a problem of limited space to practice initiation. It is noted that due to such changes, initiation takes place in urban areas rather than in the rural areas where it is assumed to retain its deep cultural and social significance (Kepe, 2010). As a result of limited space/location, this has led to the practice of initiation taking place in township

open spaces and between residential areas for convenience (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). This potentially raises questions around the loss of significance of the secrecy and sacredness of initiation practices. Furthermore, on the issue of convenience, initiation only takes place in two seasons: (a) during winter, in June; (b) and during summer, in December, particularly because the schools are closed for the holidays at these times (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010).

The influence of modernisation extends from limited space to the introduction of modern applications, highlighting the use of technological appliances such as mobile phones, radios, bed mattresses, special dieting, and that the duration of stay at the bush has changed from a period of a month to three weeks (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). It is also highlighted that the short period of stay at the bush can be attributed to situational factors such as schooling, internships, vocational jobs and supplementary exams particularly for high school learners (Kepe, 2010). This also potentially raises questions around the loss of significance of the secrecy and sacredness of initiation practices. These reported accounts nullify the aims and objectives of the practice that are about socialisation into manhood through fundamental teachings. Initiates are expected to learn to understand aspects of suffering, self-denial and perseverance through the difficult living circumstances of initiation school (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014).

In my view, this potentially exposes the practice to more scrutiny and public discourse. Furthermore, all these changes through the influence of modernity seem to be continuing to problematize the practice further. The concern raised by scholars in this field such as Kepe (2010), Lungcuza (2013), Mhlahlo (2009), Ncaca (2014) and Ntombana (2011b) is that initiates miss the point of being properly trained and made to understand the deep socio-cultural significance of initiation school. I'm consciously aware of the fact that modernity has its advantages and that probably the practice of initiation needs to adopt or subscribe to such changes. However, I argue that such changes should not be considered at the expense of undermining significant and essential components of *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*.

2.6 Initiation and Socialisation

Initiation rites of passage in African literature are deemed as an important aspect in the lives of the African people (Ndangam, 2008; Spronk, 2014). It is noted that in Guinea initiation is regarded as a rebirth process from childhood into becoming a man (Ndangam, 2008). According to Ndangam (2008), in this context the initiated young man is expected to take over his father's hut and be solely responsible for it. The most important aspect of this ritual is the embodiment and the enactment of successful masculinity (Ndangam, 2008). According to Ndangam (2008), the aim of initiation is similar in African regions; for example, in the Masai groups and the Bukusu in Kenya, males become warrior *moran* in Masai culture once they are circumcised, and men acquire a social position as elders when their children have been circumcised. It is noted that male circumcision is also considered as an important aspect of being positioned as a full member of society among other groups such as the Meru in Kenya, and the Bendel state in Nigeria, and in rural Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (Ndangam, 2008).

Mandela (1994) notes the value of initiation rites as central to personal development and a sign of maturity. It is also noted that, at the same time, initiation rites hold a deep cultural resonance and often serves as a basis for transferring social norms (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). Barker and Ricardo (2005) note that often initiation rites involve a process of seclusion from the general public and familiar places. This includes activities such as the seclusion of young men from their families and from women and girls (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). This is also a space where transfer of local/cultural teaching takes place in an informal learning context (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). In a study conducted by Mavundla, Bottoman and Toth (2010) initiates regarded initiation as an exposure to different forms of socialisation and the success of the initiation period was noted to be the most vital aspect of proper circumcision.

Meintjies (1998) notes that the overriding significance of undergoing the bush experience is often associated with the pain and suffering one endures throughout the initiation process. According to Gwata (2009) initiation rituals aim to build a socially responsible man. Gwata (2009) investigated the socio-cultural significance of traditional initiation among young *amaXhosa* men and noted different views relating to the meaning and significance of traditional male initiation. It is noted that traditional circumcision was

percieved as an agent of socialisation intended to introduce the initiate to the realities of manhood within an *amaXhosa* context (Gwata, 2009). According to Mhlahlo (2009) initiation is intended to test a man's ability to endure pain. Meintjies (1998) explains that the ability to endure pain indicates a strong sense of achievement over the test of manhood. Other scholars also note that the overriding importance of the bush experience is around the endurance of pain and accomplishment throughout the initiation process as an embodiment of successful manhood (Mandela, 1994; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). It is extremely important for young *amaXhosa* men to try their level best to be strong enough in order to gain social status (Gwata, 2009; Mavundla, et al., 2010; Vincent, 2008). Mandela (1994) notes that successful completion of initiation in the *amaXhosa* tradition is very important as it marks the beginning phase of manhood.

2.7 Costs Associated with *Ulwaluko*

2.7.1 Social pressure

One of the social pressures relate to the conceptualisation of 'failure' around TMI. It is important to understand the context of failure around initiation relates to young *amaXhosa* men who experienced botched circumcisions deemed as unsuccessful in the context of TMI (Gwata, 2009; Mavundla, et al., 2010; Mggolozana, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). It also relates to *amaXhosa* men who underwent circumcision in a hospital (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). Douglas, Maluleke, and Nakin (2014) note that these men are given derogative names such as *amalulwane* (bats) or *intaka* (a bird) and such names place much pressure on them to explore ways of going for initiation. It also refers to an uninitiated *amaXhosa* man (*inkwenkwe* or *inja*), meaning being a boy or a dog for the rest of his life (Mavundla, et al., 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). Lastly, notions of 'failure' refer to initiated *amaXhosa* men who went through initiation and were deemed as successful; however, due to certain rules and rituals that did not take place they are not regarded as having completed the course of manhood (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

2.7.2 Psychological implications

It is noted that those who fail to go through the necessary steps of TMI are subjected to severe pressures socially, in the community and psychologically (Douglas et al., 2014). Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman, Toth and Tenge (2010) note that fear of social rejection is one of the most important influences for young *amaXhosa* men to go to initiation school. Among *amaXhosa* young boys and men there is a strong yearning to become a successful man. Gwata (2009) notes that some of the justifications relate to succumbing to social pressure to avoid being labelled as *amagwala* (cowards) amongst peers and community members. It is also to be noted that those who fail the test of manhood are not regarded as 'men' enough according to *isiko* (long standing practice) and are victimised, harassed, and stigmatised by their peers (Bottoman et al., 2009; Vincent, 2008). Some are often denied rights and privileges, for example, a man cannot inherit his father's wealth and officiate during traditional ceremonies/rituals (Mandela, 1994; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

Mavundla et al. (2010) expand by highlighting that the community rejects men who are uncircumcised and those who fail the process are disrespected by other men. Furthermore, it is also highlighted that the lack of social acceptance potentially leads to long term psychological effects (Mavundla et al., 2010). According to Mavundla et al. (2010) these psychological factors are anxiety, personality changes and lack of confidence which impacts on one's self-esteem as a man. Douglas, et al. (2014) found that in Libode, Mpondoland, in the Eastern Cape men who are circumcised medically and those uncircumcised are subjected to the psychological pressure of being dehumanised through victimisation both at school and in their communities. There is also disrespect, even towards elders and parents of those who are uncircumcised, and this kind of disrespect happens also within families (Douglas, et al., 2014; Mavundla et al., 2010).

It is strongly highlighted that, despite reported cases of botched circumcision and deaths, the initiation ritual of *ulwaluko* still holds significant and meaningful value for young *amaXhosa* men and for the entire community (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Vincent, 2008). The cultural significance of initiation rituals is the strongest determinant of the continued practice of traditional male initiation (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2009). The practice of initiation provides space for socialisation of gender role

practices, and shared norms and values around manhood (Gwata, 2009; Vincent, 2008). This space for socialization is not uncontested and has been identified as traditional and patriarchal in that it focuses on the reproduction of very particular culturally located ideals of masculinity (Ratele, 2013; Vincent, 2008).

2.8 Initiation, Heteronormativity and Masculinity

2.8.1 Defining gender

According to Connell (1995) gender is described as a set of social norms that are prescriptive and are passively internalised and enacted in different contexts as subjects are constantly produced and reproduced in social practice. Connell (1998) further notes that gender practices take place within different historical-cultural contexts and, since they are also performed by agents of different races, classes or generations, that on its own creates space to talk about different masculinities/femininities and not masculinity or femininity as single, fixed entities. Addis and Cohane (2005) note that gender role socialisation is of high interest in masculinity research. Gender also refers to specific and exclusive social differences that are believed to exist between women and men (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). According to Hearn (2007) gender is located in the discourse of oppression over women, discrimination, unfairness and violence which contribute to the problems associated with men. Barker and Ricardo (2005) note that a gender approach and gender mainstreaming have often been ignored in the studies of men and boys. Within the construction of gender, women and girls are often marginalised given the extent of gender inequalities (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

2.8.2 Heteronormativity

Spronk (2014) highlights that research on sexuality in Africa has been understood from the perspective of global health discourse and has been problematized and framed with negative ideas such as unwanted pregnancy, high rate of HIV/AIDS infection and domestic violence (Vincent, 2008). However, Spronk (2014) notes that African sexuality should ideally be studied within its own context in order to make sense of what constitutes aspects of this concept. According to Barker and Ricardo (2005) young men in sub-Saharan Africa are socialised to the idea of sexual experience as an entry into manhood.

This is often associated with one of the aims of initiation practices for one to be granted status as a man (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). It is noted that such an idea reinforces the perception of sex as a way in which young men enact masculine prowess (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Vincent, 2008).

Spronk (2014) highlights that within an African context 'sex' is regarded as an important aspect of sexuality and manhood. Among African men there is a sense of connection between sexuality and Africaness in the sense that it influences the ways in which African men make sense of masculinity (Ratele, 2014; Spronk, 2014). Essentially, this argument suggests the idea that polygamy or having multiple, concurrent sexual partners is a cultural practice that is acceptable within an African context (Spronk, 2014). Spronk (2014) highlights that over the last century in Kenya the practice of polygamy has changed through the generations. The discontinuation of traditional practices of polygamy and the establishment of nuclear families as the social norm has led to the development of 'modern polygamy'. According to Spronk (2014) modern polygamy is defined as a having extramarital relationships ranging from one night stands to longer-term simultaneous relationships, though one is married. It is noted that young men, across cultures in Africa, are obliged to conform to the social norm and peer pressure to prove their masculinity through the experience of sexual activity and by having multiple partners in order to be seen as men (Spronk, 2014; Vincent, 2008).

Barker (2000) notes that the association between sexual activity and manhood is problematic because it has numerous direct implications for HIV/AIDS prevention. According to Barker (2000) this also implies that changing sexual behaviour among young men should take into account the extent to which behaviour is linked to the sense of self and desire to achieve a socially recognized version of manhood. According to Barker and Ricardo (2005) and Vincent (2008) initiation rituals in South Africa place a strong emphasis on sexual socialization and reinforce patriarchal gender norms which potentially perpetuate problematic gender differences. According to Connell (1995) such inclinations perpetuate the idea of patriarchy where men hold powerful positions and a privileged status in society by virtue of being male. Other studies suggest that initiation rites have also been found to have an impact in promoting heterosexual relations where women prefer to have sex with circumcised men (Spronk, 2014; Vincent, 2008). In Ghana, after initiation, young men are encouraged to have sex with any village girl/woman of their

choice, though it is noted that it should not be a woman they intend to marry in the future (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). The young man is also encouraged to get married immediately after this phase and begin his family for childbearing and to establish himself as a man. However, these kinds of practices are not left uncontested. It is noted that African men who operate within this framework are often regarded as chauvinists, unfaithful and self-centred (Spronk, 2014).

In South Africa Vincent (2008) notes that one of the aspects of initiation schools, particularly TMI, is the teaching around the promotion of sexuality of young Xhosa men. Vincent (2008) notes that circumcision, particularly TMI, has been utilised as a tool to perpetuate gender differences within the system of patriarchy. It is also noted that another interesting view around sexual prowess has to do with the notion that initiation affords men unlimited and unquestionable rights of access to sex (Ratele, 2014; Spronk, 2014; Tamale, 2011; Vincent, 2008). These ideas around sexual prowess and masculinity are increasingly being defined by the number of sexual partners one has (Vincent, 2008). It is important to highlight that such notions are informed by the norm that masculinity is 'what men do' in performing their gender and they 'do' the practice of defining their manhood in terms of number of sexual partners/sexual prowess (Spronk, 2014; Vincent, 2008). What this does then is to afford men the privilege to remain in power/control over women and have the ability to initiate and take a lead in sexual activities (Spronk, 2014; Tamale, 2011). It is also argued that these problematic practices contribute to the failure of campaigns aimed at the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (Tshemese, 2012; Vincent, 2008). For example, *amaXhosa* have a sexualisation practice of new initiates referred to as *ukosula*, which means to wipe (or *ukukhupha ifutha*) which means to remove fat from the new initiates (Ntombana, 2011a, Tshemese, 2012).

Ntombana (2011a) highlights that this is a modern practice which dates back from the 1950s and it is still practiced in parts of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. It is noted that those who promote this practice report that this practice has been done by elders and is still encouraged in the new generation (Ntombana, 2011a) as one of the ways of proving masculinity. This practice of *ukosula* or *ukukhupha ifutha* is usually performed by *amakrwala* (new initiates) following the ceremony of *umgidi* (the homecoming from the initiation celebration). It is important to highlight that this is an acceptable practice informed by the shared belief within the *amaXhosa* context that it removes any misfortune that an

initiate might have acquired during the process of initiation (Ntombana, 2011a; Tshemese, 2012). Tshemese (2012) refers to this practice as a phase of “Testing the Mercedes” which literally means to test if the circumcised ‘penis’ works well after the operation and the entire process of initiation. This is also regarded as a way of ‘testing’ one’s masculinity; in this sense successful performance of the test would be a good indicator for one’s masculinity. Ideally, the understanding of this practice is that new initiates should have sexual intercourse with any female that is not deemed as his girlfriend or a long standing partner (Meintjies, 1998; Ntombana, 2011a; Tshemese, 2012).

The practice of *ukosula* has been highly contested in South Africa, particularly in the Eastern Cape, Kwa Zulu-Natal and Limpopo (Maluleke, 2012; Ntombana, 2011a; Tshemese, 2012). The contestation is centred on problematic sexual practices which promote the dominant patriarchal system and also relates to the de-valuing of women, undermining young women under the guise of tradition and customs (Maluleke, 2012; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). There are instances where this practice has been regarded as a criminal act, where it is non-consensual, where these young men are involved in gang rape activities, particularly in urban areas (Maluleke, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Tshemese, 2012). Tshemese (2012) reports on several cases of sexual violence in the Eastern Cape by new initiates in East London. Vincent (2008) further argues that such practices promote and perpetuate gender stereotypes and problematic sexual socialization which normalises negative sexuality. It is highlighted that, despite this practice being deemed acceptable within a specific-cultural context, this does not negate the idea of it being contested and criticised as a phenomenon that can be challenged in different ways (Maluleke, 2012; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

However, it is emphasised that because practices such as *ukosula* (wiping) are deemed traditional does not negate their potential negative consequences. Cultural practices that are potentially harmful must not be left unchallenged simply because they are seen as traditional (Vincent, 2008). It is further noted that despite these contestations there is potential for positive aspects, highlighting the idea that these initiation practices aim to provide the foundations of processes/phases necessary for one to become a man (Ntombana, 2011a; Tshemese, 2012). Ntombana (2011a) and Tshemese (2012) propose the idea of moral regeneration as a model to effectively utilise initiation rites and other cultural traditions to critically examine the ways in which we can think about re-

constructing new ways of conceptualising masculinities, particularly the idea of traditional masculinities in South Africa and even across Africa. The next section focuses on theorising masculinity.

2.9 Theorising Masculinity

The conceptualisation of masculinity is explored in depth to provide clarity on the theoretical assumptions in relation to this concept. This theory aims to explore contestations around masculinity and interrogates the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Traditional practices of male initiation and the conceptualisation of manhood are also explored as they relate to the research question. Both western traditional notions of masculinity are discussed. The works of Connell (1995), Morrell (1995) and Ratele (2012, 2014) are reviewed. The works of other scholars are discussed as they relate to the main theoretical aspects of this study.

2.9.1 What is Masculinity?

The focus on exploring the concept of masculinity is growing rapidly both nationally and internationally (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala, & Buikema, 2007). Over the last decades the discipline of masculinity has gained credibility in studies of men and masculinity (Macleod, 2007). The concept of masculinity has its tradition in the discipline of gender studies and other different academic fields such as sociology, education and psychology (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This concept has been examined and studied by international key scholars such as Connell (1995), Edley and Wetherell (2001), Hearn (1996, 2004), Kimmell (1990), Mesner (1997) and others. In South Africa, the work of Morrell (1998, 2001), Ratele (2008, 2014) and others has been influential in examining the variations of this concept at a local level. There is movement towards exploring its conceptualisation, definition and its application in various disciplines, particularly Psychology (Langa, 2012; Shefer, et al., 2007). A theme that becomes evident in this field is that studies on masculinity have been heavily explored through a sociological lens, for example the work of Connell (1995, 2002) and Kimmell (1990) have a strong sociological influence.

It is clear that there are fewer studies that have paid attention to the psychological understanding of masculinity (Edley & Wetherell, 2001; Langa, 2012; Ratele, 2008, 2013). To counteract the dire need for psychological literature, progressive scholarship emerged, such as the work of Edley and Wetherell (1995), Frosh (1994), and Giligan (2009) which became influential in examining ways in which masculinity is conceptualised with a psychological lens. It is also important to highlight that the concept of 'masculinity' has led to various debates and criticism around its nuances (Hearn, 1996; Langa, 2012).

Macleod (2007) notes long-standing dynamics between feminist studies and the field of men and masculinity. According to Macleod (2007) masculinity cannot be entirely studied as an independent subject and argues that masculinity has always been studied in relation to feminist approaches. Macleod's contention is that the field of masculinity grew out of strong influences of feminist traditions. Hearn (1996) notes complexities around defining masculinity and argues that masculinity has a strong cultural construct. Moreover, Khan (2009) highlights that masculinity is a context driven concept that could fit and be applied in various academic disciplines. Khan (2009) also notes that masculinity is a versatile and dynamic concept; ideally this relates to the argument of context which plays an important role in its application.

2.9.2 Defining Masculinities

When thinking critically about masculinities, Connell's (1995) starting point was to recognise the diversity in masculinities and femininities. Masculinities refer to the multiple ways in which manhood is a socially defined construct across historical and cultural contexts and to the power differences that exist between different versions of manhood (Connell, 1995). For example, a version of manhood associated with the dominant social class or ethnic group in a given setting may have greater power and salience, just as heterosexual masculinities often hold more power than homosexual or bisexual masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell's (1995) idea led to the diversity of masculinities categorised in the order of gender relations, hegemonic and complicit, subordinate and marginal masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue for the move towards the development and description of types of masculinities in contributing to the debates around the idea of multiple masculinities. Below, I briefly discuss Connell's (1995) idea around categories of masculinities.

2.9.2.1 Hegemonic masculinity

In theorising and defining 'hegemonic masculinity', continuous contestations in the studies of men and masculinity resulted in debates around the meaning, relevance and conceptualisation of this concept (Hearn & Morrell, 2012). Connell (1995) defines 'hegemonic masculinity' as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted norm which legitimatises patriarchy and promotes male dominance over women. According to Connell (1995) conceptually the concept of hegemonic masculinity explains how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women and other gender identities, which are perceived as feminine in a given society. Thus, hegemonic masculinity is the term used to explain the criteria and standards set out for what constitutes manhood within a particular culture (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 1998). It is noted that the term serves as a prescriptive lens of what determines a 'real' man (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 1998). In Western societies 'hegemonic masculinity' is connected to ideas of patriarchy, heterosexuality and the cultural, racial and classed location of Western, white, affluent males (Ratele, 2013), being objective, rational, independent, achievement-oriented, aggressive and emotionally unexpressive (Alsop, Fitzsimons & Lennon, 2002). Connell's framework has been widely used across the world and applied in many South African studies of men and masculinity (Groes-Green, 2009).

2.9.2.2 Complicit masculinity

According to Connell (1995) complicity is a complex subject because of constructs such as marriage, fatherhood, and community life which often involve extensive compromises with women rather than simple domination over them. Connell (1995) recognises that the space of 'complicit masculinity' accommodates men who do subscribe to normative ideals of hegemonic masculinity but fail to achieve the dominant ideals/prescriptions of hegemonic masculinity. Barker and Ricardo (2005) note that most men subscribe to the idea of complicity, promoting the norms of hegemonic masculinity because of the privileges attached to the status of manhood, such as more free time or higher income, which arises from the patriarchal power which society affords to men. It is noted that the number of men practicing this kind of hegemonic pattern is a relatively small population (Connell, 1995). Interestingly, though most men do not actually meet the normative

standards of hegemonic masculinity, they still benefit from the patriarchal dividends and this is achieved through the subordination of women (Connell, 1998).

2.9.2.3 Subordinate masculinity

Connell (1995) notes that particular forms, or versions, of masculinity are subordinated by hegemonic practices and their situation is related in different ways. In trying to understand the concept of subordinate masculinity, Connell (1995) notes the issue of structural marginalisation through poverty and unemployment as factors that play a role in men's practices of violence and coercion over women. Connell (1995) argues that low socio-economic positioning in society and unemployment disadvantages young men from benefiting from patriarchal advantages. For example, in Maputo the absence of economic capital among young working class men is compensated by men's sexual performance as a way of gaining and retaining male dominance through satisfying a woman in bed (Groes-Green, 2009).

2.9.2.4 Marginalised masculinity

One of Connell's (1995) major progressive arguments is the theorisation of different types of masculinities referred to as 'protest masculinity'. Connell (1995) defines protest masculinity as those kinds of masculinity that are marginalised; those that do not necessarily fit the picture of ideal hegemonic masculinity, but within their context are embraced, promoted and acceptable. Connell (2005) notes that the concept of marginalised masculinity relates to young men who do not have the capacity and means to gain full access to nuances of hegemonic masculinities. These men only benefit from aspects of hegemonic masculinity by virtue of their gender. According to Connell (1995) marginalised men usually do not have the means or the social capital that eventually will fit them to standards of hegemonic masculinity, so consequently they rely on heterosexual sex to prove their sense of masculinity. Potentially such efforts lead to problems such as sexual vulnerability and the need to overly compensate for achieving a sense of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Instead, these men resist subordination and marginalisation through other means that will bring them close to the idea of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995).

2.10 Dynamic relations between masculinities

Connell (1998) highlights the notion of 'multiple masculinities' highlighting discourses of on-going struggle between 'traditional masculinities' within a particular culturally-located context and 'hegemonic masculinity' as a universal ideology. Whitehead (2002) notes the relevance and need for the consideration and promotion of masculinities in terms of diversity, multiplicity and differences. According to Whitehead (2002) there is more than one expression of masculinity. Scholars also note that there are universal masculinity ideals; however, it is argued that individual differences should not be negated with the assumption that all men are the same and fit within the category of hegemonic masculinity (Ratele, 2013b; Spronk, 2014; Whitehead, 2002). The broader focus of this study attempts to examine ways in which culturally located ideals of masculinity are linked to and shape individual men's experiences of traditional initiation customs and gender role socialisation.

In this study the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' refers not to the above mentioned assumption of a white, Western and economically affluent dominant male ideal, but rather apply its understanding and concepts to refer to specific culturally-located forms of masculinity that, through cultural practice and tradition, have come to be regarded as dominant within a specific context. It is important to note that, despite cultural 'locatedness', there are often elements of these norms that are common or shared in a global society that is still predominantly patriarchal (Ratele, 2013a). This leads to the idea that 'hegemonic masculinity' is both context-specific in its various forms and practices and universal in terms of shared social ideals across contexts that value particular forms of masculine gender roles and ideology (Connell, 2002; Ratele, 2013a).

2.11 Critiques

It is important to note that Connell's theory was not left uncontested; it has been criticised for various scholastic arguments such as the separation of masculinities from men (Hearn, 2007; Langa, 2012; Macleod, 2007). It is noted that the concept is flawed because of its 'essentialist' aspect which suggests legitimate rigidity of masculinity (Whitehead, 2002). It is also been criticised that this theory is conceptualised within a heteronormative understanding that legitimises gender differences between women and man (Macleod, 2007). The argument revolves around the understanding of the idea of masculinities which

rests on the logical dichotomy of 'sex' and 'gender' and the exclusion of gender categories (Macleod, 2007). According to Langa (2012) the work of Connell (1995) is heavily grounded on theoretically in sociology which does not fully acknowledge the discourses around the negotiation of masculinities. Langa (2012) also notes that Connell's work fails to explore other ways in which men resist dominant legitimised and socially constructed ways of masculinity.

In South Africa the concept of hegemonic masculinity has helped in the understanding of gender inequalities and injustices (Reid & Walker, 2005). However, despite progressive theoretical insights around this concept, it has not yet fully captured the nuances of social inequality and class complexities in Africa (Spronk, 2014). Spronk (2014) also highlights that when thinking about men in Africa, particularly in South Africa, one needs to be sensitive to the huge gap of class contradiction between the working and middle class masculinities. Certainly, from this perspective there are ways in which the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be applied to understand specific culturally located ideals of masculinity in South Africa and can also be used as a lens to make sense of African masculinities (Ratele, 2014; Spronk 2014).

Ratele (2013b) notes that what is often contested by critical studies of men as 'traditional masculinity' needs to be considered as an attempt to contextualise the meaning of manhood in the post-colonial era. According to Ratele (2013b) and other African scholars, Western epistemology cannot achieve universal hegemony within its own logic. The description of Western masculinity is questionable as it caters only for supreme or idealized types of masculinity (Ratele, 2013a). It is problematic that the Western view of hegemonic masculinity seems to dictate how African men interpret and enact their sense manhood in South Africa (Ratele, 2014). Tamale (2011) also notes that the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' does not have its origins in Africa but rather it is an imposed concept so African scholars critique its relevance in Africa.

2.12 Hegemonic Masculinity in an African Context

Ratele (2014) notes that African hegemonic masculinity is an idealistic concept that is regarded as too complex to contextualise without clear conceptual clarity. Ratele (2013) argues that African masculinities have been framed as non-hegemonic and subordinate

masculinity. Ratele (2014) notes that African men have less ground to claim power and dominance within the dominant patriarchal system of hegemonic masculinity. He further notes that such tension is applicable to black youth who are deemed as subjugated within a global network that is influenced by factors such as capitalism, racism and patriarchy. This debate makes it difficult to really make sense of what constitutes African masculinity and the nuances around the concept seem unclear and require further conceptualisation in order to fully understand African masculinities (Ratele, 2014).

Ratele (2008) notes that, within an African context, the concept 'hegemonic masculinity' is understood differently by people and its meaning can be contextualised through social groupings. It is recognised that even within social groupings, masculinity is conceptualised differently and there are often different, competing discourses about the meaning of manhood (Ratele, 2008). According to Ratele (2008) there is often a clash of ideas which could be the result of other factors such as ethnicity, culture, religion, political affiliation, age, race, marital status, income, geographical location, school ties and sexual orientation. Ratele (2008) acknowledges that in African masculinity there are multiple meanings that are context driven by culture and tradition. Barker and Ricardo (2005) also note that in Africa there are multiple versions of manhood; these are socially constructed, fluid over time and in different settings, and plural. According to this perspective there is no one typical young man in sub-Saharan Africa, confirming the idea that there is no universal African version of manhood (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

2.12.1 African Masculinity

2.12.1 What is an African man?

Spronk (2014) notes that people in Africa use the phrase "African men" to denote a particular kind of meaning for themselves and also use it to indicate the performance of manhood. It is important to understand the nuances of African masculinity so as to be able to understand its implications when studied in context (Spronk, 2014; Tamale, 2011). Spronk (2014) further notes that for centuries Western ideologies of what constitutes manhood influenced the construction of manhood among Africans. Ideally, Spronk's (2014) argument is that Western influence has 'othered' Africa and its people were

portrayed as opposite to Western ideologies. Western ideologies undermined African ways of living and enforced their dominant worldviews (Mignolo, 2007b; Spronk, 2014).

Silberschmidt (2001) recognises that across all societies there are universal traits of manhood despite issues of ethnicity, class or social environment. It is also noted that basic ideals of masculinities have positive benefits for young boys and men. Ideally, conforming to ideals of 'hegemonic masculinity', men are expected to play particular roles such as that of being providers, household heads (and they should behave in non-violent ways towards household and community members), be responsible members of the community, good negotiators and problem solvers (Silberschmidt, 2001). According to Silberschmidt (2001) these ideals are tied to a number of other conditions, such as physical aptitude, ability to procreate, access to economic resources, knowledge and skills, influence and decision-making power. These aspects are similar to ideas associated with what constitutes African masculinity.

According to Silberschmidt (2004) it is a common practice that in African societies the status of being a breadwinner is closely tied to the role of household head and a sense of power. In this framework of thinking about 'hegemonic masculinity', working class masculinities and black and gay masculinities have been thought of as 'subordinate' and 'marginal' masculinities with their own specified cultural norms of masculinity (Alsop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon, 2002). Tamale also notes that ideas of manhood are embedded in the beliefs that people have about the differences between men and women (Tamale, 2011). Ideally, the construction of manhood is the result of the interaction between men and women (Tamale, 2011).

Barker and Ricardo (2005) note that in Africa manhood comes at a price and holds a particular mandate with expectations to fulfil. It is also noted that the social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is tied to the achievement of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. It is noted that in northern Uganda manhood is tied to one's marital status and the number of children one has (Silberschmidt, 2001). In Uganda if a man does not have children he is regarded as a 'boy' (Silberschmidt, 2001). In essence, one of the terms of defining successful manhood in Nigeria is also closely tied to marriage. It is interesting to note that Silberschmidt (2001) highlights that unemployment is one of the factors that has an impact on how young men

could come to describe themselves as incompetent men, meaning that an inability to have economic strength would result in them not being socially recognized as adult men and not having the ability to get married (Silberschmidt, 2004).

Ampofo and Boateng (2007) conducted a study on multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana. According to Ampofo and Boateng (2007) manhood holds different meanings around the concept of 'traditional hegemonic masculinity'. In their study, it became evident that distinct differences of gender identity were attached to household tasks as they transitioned from boyhood to manhood, particularly the status of being married (Ampofo & Boateng, 2007). The position of marital status relates to manhood and a sign of accepting responsibility (Ampofo & Boateng, 2007). Ideally, Ampofo and Boateng (2007) note that the roles of manhood in marriage mean being a provider for the family and children as well as being an authority over this family. Nyaudi (2005) notes that in Kenya the practice of circumcision marks a transitional stage into marriage. Mhlahlo (2009) notes that, for the *amaXhosa* people, a successful performance of manhood means the ability to provide support and assistance in community ceremonies, to run traditional functions, to educate the community about the ideals of manhood and to act as a pillar of strength (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a).

Furthermore, differences are noted concerning the stages of 'manhood' among *amaXhosa* men which are not merely determined by age or simply by having completed the initiation ritual (Mhlahlo, 2009). Instead, 'manhood' is determined by the attainment of social status and the fulfilment of social expectations in the years post initiation (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). The first stage that marks the beginning is *ubukrwala* (the new stage of manhood) which is identified by the particular dress code (Ncaca, 2014). This particular kind of dress code relates to the enactment of masculinity within *amaXhosa* as it is highlighted that those colours symbolise *isidima nesithozelo* (signifies a sense of dignity), respect and recognition in the community (Gwata, 2009; Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). However, the focus in this study is on young *amaXhosa* men referred to as *abafana* (young men with at least five years of *isilimela/izilimela zendoda* (the acquired number of years in manhood) (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011b).

It is noted that this stage begins right after one has graduated from initiation; the period ranges from one to ten years after initiation (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a). This phase of manhood is associated with certain roles and responsibilities which are to assist older men in traditional rituals, for example, to stand and address other men in the *kraal* on behalf of the family, and in the slaughtering and skinning of livestock during traditional ceremonies and celebrations (Mhlahlo, 2009). Ntombana (2011a) also notes that during this phase *abafana* are expected to establish themselves by marriage and starting their own families. *Abafana* (young Xhosa men) also have a social responsibility to assist in family and community gatherings that require their involvement (Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a). These *abafana* also have a responsibility to build initiates' huts and monitor the boys during initiation season (Mhlahlo, 2009).

2.13 Public Health and Initiation

2.13.1 Safety for initiates and initiation schools

The present status of *ulwaluko* leaves one with questions and that potentially create space for scrutiny and debate (Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008). Medical science proves that complications are possible in both MMC and TMI; however, it is noted that they are more likely to take place in the procedure of TMI due to unsterile wound care, the tying of a tight thong around the base of the penis, dehydration which is as a result of fluid restrictions and active discouragement of seeking medical care in cases of early complications (Funani, 1990; Meintjies, 1998; Peltzer & Kanta, 2009). However, the medical focus has potential negative consequences for traditional initiation rituals for initiates and does not adequately appreciate the full and deep cultural significance of the practice of initiation for the communities that engage in these rituals, or recognise the individual psychological meanings attached to the experience for the individuals who undergo the initiation (Mhlahlo, 2009; Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008).

Careful consideration needs to be given to the above claims, because this argument does not invalidate medical concerns around the public health discourse. In contrast, it must be noted that the medical science approach could be sensitive to the nuances surrounding the deep cultural significance of TMI. In my view this argument could lead to progressive ways of thinking about the integration of the medical science approach in relation the practice of initiation. However, this aspect will be discussed further in the recommendation

section. According to Ndangam (2008), research and media reports concerning traditional male initiation have been focused on the prevalence of initiate injuries and deaths during various circumcision seasons in South Africa, and the hospitalisation of many initiates following complications from circumcision wounds (Doyle, 2005; Funani, 1990; Nyaundi, 2005). For example, negative news around traditional circumcision indirectly affect the credibility of this practice to *amaXhosa* culture by foregrounding the attendant risks that come with the ritual (Gwata, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Vincent, 2008).

2.13.1.1 Regulation of traditional male initiation

With regards to another aspect of the controversy, Mavundla, et al. (2010) recognises that health hazards and complications associated with circumcision have led various countries to develop strict guidelines, policies, or laws to control the circumcision of male infants and men. In South Africa the House of Traditional Leaders, in collaboration with the Department of Health (DoH), devised standards of practice to regulate initiation practices (Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). The problems around initiation required systemic interventions to deal with various factors which pose major challenges for TMI (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011b). This led to the formulation and application of Health Standards in Traditional Circumcision Act No. 6 (2001) which stipulates various guidelines to govern the practice of TMI. Such regulations include restrictions on who may perform circumcisions; official permission to conduct initiation rituals from the medical officer designated for the Provincial area; the training in and use of proper surgical instruments for traditional surgeons; and the official licencing of initiation practitioners and traditional nurses (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008).

It is also noted that the Act emphasised the regulation of initiation and the role of traditional surgeon's *iingcibi* (Kepe, 2010). Following the establishment of this Act there has been progress and positive outcomes in terms of reported cases of illegal practice and other problems related to botched circumcision and reported deaths of initiates. Despite these efforts, there were and are still reported cases of botched circumcision, illegal practices, criminal activities and casualties during initiation (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Kepe, 2010; Vincent,

2008). According to the CPPRCRLC (2010), the problems that are still reported around initiation despite the application suggest that the Act has not been as effective as intended.

2.13.2 Prevention of HIV/AIDS, MMC and TMI

Vincent (2008) notes the aim of promoting medical male circumcision (MMC) as an intervention strategy is to curb the high rate of HIV/AIDS. Such efforts endorse male circumcision as an effective component of addressing HIV prevention (Vincent, 2008). A growing body of research and control studies suggesting that medical circumcision interventions assist with the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STI transmission has led to wide-spread media attention and the advertising of medical male circumcision procedures (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). Vincent (2008) does not negate the notion that TMI has its challenges, and expands by arguing that the medical science approach needs to be sensitive towards, and respect, the socio-cultural context of traditional male initiation. Consequently, health related campaigns for circumcision aimed at the prevention of HIV/AIDS should not be used as a backdrop to undermining traditional practices (Doyle, 2005; Funani, 1990; Vincent, 2008). Ideally, alternative public health measures need to be understood within specific local cultural contexts (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a; Vincent, 2008). It is further noted that sexual reproductive public health interventions have the potential to confuse and communicate contradictory aims within messages of abstinence, sexual restraint and sexual responsibility and other rights and privileges that go with *amaXhosa* manhood (Vincent, 2008). It is important to highlight that the downside of these rights and privileges associated with manhood have the potential to contribute to the rise of the HIV pandemic in South Africa.

2.14 Conclusion

In this section the conceptualisation of masculinity was explored in-depth to provide clarity on the theoretical assumptions and debates around this concept. The theoretical framework was also explored to provide contestations around the theories of masculinity. It is acknowledged that much research on initiation and circumcision has been conducted with a narrow focus and such work has concentrated on circumcision as a public health

intervention for HIV and AIDS, and the prevention of deaths and medical complications (Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008). It is evident that much of the research reviewed here gave a synopsis of the broad background of circumcision and initiation rituals which also dealt with prevention strategies of HIV and STIs around circumcision and initiation complications. However, what is arguably absent is the documentation of the lived experiences of young *amaXhosa* men in their own voices, which is what this research project aims to redress.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Obasi (2002), "African philosophy is the study of a particular system of ethics, conduct, thought, nature of the universe, and so on, that has its basis in the culture and experiences of African people" (p. 54).

3.1 Introduction

The focus of the study is on investigating the experiences of a small sample of young *amaXhosa* men who have undergone traditional male initiation. This chapter provides a discussion of the theoretical framework and the methods of data collection and analysis that were used to answer the research questions. Accordingly, the trustworthiness of the study and how questions concerning this may be approached during data collection and interpretation are also discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations I had to comply with and appropriate measures taken to minimise the risk of harm to the participants and others. In the following sections I present the research framework of this study, which consists of the research paradigm, design and methodology.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Ponterotto (2005) a philosophical paradigm is a set of beliefs that form the basis of the research process. It serves as a lens through which the researcher makes sense of the research process (Goduka, 2012; Ponterotto, 2005). Creswell (2007) highlights that in qualitative research, philosophical assumptions are important to provide the logical reasoning of the study. Goduka's (2012) exposition is that paradigms are significant in the research process in the sense that they assist researchers to have a particular worldview which informs one's study within the research community. Goduka (2012) also notes that throughout the study the researcher's beliefs, values and worldview have a great influence on how one engages with research in terms of research design, methods of data collection and analysis, and how to work around the presentation/discussion of research findings. It is noted that it is essential for researchers to identify and locate their studies within a particular paradigm so that they can have a sound basis and foundation in the research process (Goduka, 2012). Scholars differentiate

between the concepts of 'coloniality' and 'colonialism' (Maluleke, 2012; Mignolo, 2007a). Accordingly 'colonialism' is defined as a practice of domination characterised by the suppression of a marginalised group by a dominant group (Mignolo, 2007a). On the other hand, it is noted that 'coloniality' is the embodiment/enactment of colonialism characterised by the lived experience of that domination (Maluleke, 2012). It is further highlighted that the impact of colonialism potentially undermined the significance of African initiation rites and painted them as unnecessary practices (CPPRCRLC, 2010).

Scholars problematise the tension and complexity around the relationship between research, paradigms and methodology (Baloyi, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Goduka, 2012). Baloyi (2008) and Goduka (2012) argue that these concepts offer a critique to define and understand what constitutes knowledge and science. In this context 'science' is described as a way of knowing which has its roots in a Euro-Western tradition and which, historically, has promoted its dominance as a paradigm of knowledge production through processes of colonisation and imperialism that have undermined and de-legitimised alternative and indigenous forms of knowledge (Baloyi, 2008; Goduka, 2005). Baloyi (2008) further notes that colonisation imposed the dominance of particular forms and practices of knowledge production and undermined the existence of other possibilities and perspectives. It is also noted that the argument around Euro-Western 'science' does not fully appreciate the existence of indigenous knowledge systems (Baloyi, 2008; Goduka, 2012). Noting scholarly contention concerning competing ideologies of knowledge generation, it is important to note that indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) acknowledge the contribution of Western approaches; however, they also highlight the importance of promoting other forms of knowledge production and understanding (Baloyi, 2008; Goduka, 2005). Goduka (2012) argues for the exposition of 'indigenous paradigms' which are dynamic, context-driven, inviting and useful for 'African researchers'. Briefly the concept of indigenous paradigms, as well as the fundamentals of indigenisation, is explained.

3.2.1 Indigenous paradigms

According to Sher (2013) the idea of 'indigenous paradigms' in the discipline of psychology emerged as a self-identifying and global movement dating as far back as the 1970s. It is noted that in psychology, the notion of an 'indigenous psychology' is understood in two ways (Sher, 2013). Firstly, indigenous psychology refers to common 'folk knowledge', or

the informal worldviews and psychological outlooks held by a certain group of people (Sher, 2013). Secondly, 'indigenous psychology' refers to a specifically formulated body of knowledge which is tailored to meet the unique psychological needs that exist within non-Western settings (Sher, 2013). Ideally, this concept draws upon a metaphor of the 'local' and the 'distant'. According to Danziger (2006) 'indigenization' refers to a process whereby formal and localised bodies of knowledge are interrelated. This process begins with a critique of traditional (Western) psychological knowledge and practices (Danziger, 2006). Indigenous paradigms are located within the framework of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) (Goduka, 2005). Goduka (2005) argues that is important for researchers to note the difference between the use of 'indigenous ways of knowing' and 'indigenous knowledge systems' (IKS).

Goduka (2005) notes that 'indigenous ways of knowing' can be used as a verb or a noun, whereas 'indigenous knowledge systems' is a term used to describe indigenous epistemologies. It is argued that this kind of knowing is located within a particular context and acknowledges indigenous practices of communal relations and interactions with the voices of ordinary people in conversations, for example through culturally and linguistically situated narratives (Goduka, 2005). Goduka (2005) argues that indigenous paradigms appreciate the identity of the evaluator and/or researcher as healer and play a role in how the researcher approaches the study. It is further noted that indigenous paradigms also influence how the researcher looks at or works with the data and emphasises an approach to this that is relational and holistic, giving prominence to other forms of data (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008). Goduka (2005) also highlights that within this paradigm there are different forms of data such as folk tales, counter narratives, proverbs, stories and spiritual accounts.

In this study, attention is given to cultural and linguistic metaphors; however, this is discussed further in the data analysis section. Essentially, indigenous approaches provide a lens to think critically about the understanding of philosophical assumptions and positions taken when engaging with research, particularly in qualitative studies (Baloyi, 2008; Goduka, 2012). Ideally, this creates an open space for noting and challenging notions of sameness, of 'othering', of objectifying those participating in the study (Goduka, 2012). This argument invited me to think differently and integrate that paradigm when I engaged with methodological concerns in this study. Furthermore, it also relates to the

analytic process of this study in terms of how I engage with the data and how I used theory to make sense of the data

3.3 Philosophical Assumptions

Goduka (2012) notes that in any study philosophical assumptions are fundamental to locate one's study within a particular stance. Accordingly, in the social sciences, there are basic beliefs and assumptions with five sets of philosophical foundations, namely ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology and rhetorical stance (Goduka, 2012). Philosophically, sound and clear assumptions are essential for any study and knowledge production in academia (Denzin et al., 2008; Ponterotto, 2005). Goduka's (2005) argument is that, while various scholars differ in philosophical stances, at the same time there are universal beliefs and assumptions in understanding worldviews. In this study, I engage with the following philosophical assumptions underpinning this study. Firstly, ontology explores the nature of reality of the phenomenon under investigation (Ponterotto, 2005). Ideally, ontology seeks to question and examine assumptions that inform our worldview. As I engaged with this study my ontological assumptions were centred on what constitutes 'personhood' in an African context. Mbiti (1986) and Menkiti (1984) highlight differences between the conceptualisation of personhood in an African context, and the understanding of personhood in a Eurocentric or Western worldview. Mbiti (1986) and Venter (2004) note that the Western view of personhood is minimal in the sense that it only focuses on the individual and negates the existence of others and the sense of communalism. It is noted that the Eurocentric view is based on the premise of the individual's existence independently of community, social relations and others (Menkiti, 1984; Venter, 2004).

3.3.1 Ubuntu and personhood

In an African context, it is noted that it is only by rootedness in one's own community that one may come to be known as a person (Menkiti, 1984; Venter, 2004). It is noted that one becomes a person after a process of incorporation into a community (Mbiti, 1986; Menkiti, 1984). Idoniboye-Obu and Whetho (2008) note that within an African context one's individuality or independence is not undermined, rather it is appreciated in relation to others. Furthermore, within this context an individual does not exist in a vacuum, but is rather considered as a part of an interrelated system that is interdependent (Venter, 2004).

In essence, this is captured through an African hermeneutic stance which embraces and embodies the philosophy of *ubuntu* through the expression which says *umntu ngumntu ngabantu*. This literally means that to be human is to relate with others, and points to the notion that one gets strength from one's relations with others (Ntombana, 2011; Venter, 2011). According to Maluleke (2012) the fundamental values and notions of the African cultures have always been grounded on ideals of *ubuntu*.

Maluleke (2012) notes that the essence of *ubuntu* embraces the values of personhood, a sense of belonging, communalism, and respect for human dignity despite any social status or positioning in society, and a concern with the welfare of their community. According to Venter (2004) in an African context *ubuntu* is a philosophy that is about humanity and is deemed as an aspect that connects people and also encourages the importance of human relations in a society. One of the fundamentals of this philosophy is that community is regarded as the basic foundation of human relations (Venter, 2004). However, academically *ubuntu* has been critically examined as an ideal concept to the extent that its meaning has become vague and unclear (Idoniboye-Obu et al., 2008; Venter, 2004). Furthermore, it is often misconstrued in interpretation and misused in practice for various reasons by the media, corporate companies and civil organisations (Venter, 2004; Idoniboye-Obu et al., 2008). It is also noted that the long standing influence of colonisation has been that of infusing African societies with the individualistic approach to understanding personhood and thus potentially undermining the essence of what it means to be African (Maluleke, 2012). It is also noted that gradually, due to lot of influences, there seems to be a decline and loss of such values in African societies (Maluleke, 2012; Venter, 2004).

In the context of *amaXhosa*, there are various ways of attaining personhood. There are also gender specific ways of determining personhood; for example, women's status of personhood is achieved through marriage and child bearing where one is then regarded as a complete woman. For *amaXhosa* men, one's status of personhood and manhood is traced through the rite of passage of *ulwaluko*. In order to understand this ritual from the viewpoint of the *amaXhosa* culture, one needs to understand the worldview of the *amaXhosa*. The *amaXhosa* people mark this ritual as an important phase of transition. The newly initiated man is granted personhood through *umgidi* (a homecoming celebration) to welcome the new man into the community. Usually on the day of *umgidi/ukubuya* the

family of the new man prepares a community feast, and the community rejoices/celebrates with the family (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a, Vincent, 2008). This speaks to what Mbiti (1986) has stated, i.e. that personhood, then, becomes something that is attained through a community. So, the community contributes an important role in the formation of one's personhood (Menkiti, 1984). This argument relates to what Mbiti and other African scholars call the 'proccessual' nature of being in an African context and understanding (Mbiti, 1986; Menkiti, 1984).

Secondly, epistemology explores the relationship between the 'knower', (the research participant) and the 'would-be knower' (the researcher) (Ponterotto, 2005). The aim of the current study was to discover the personal experiences of young *amaXhosa* men concerning *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*, the initiation rite of passage, and the subjective meanings they ascribe to these experiences in relation to their sense of manhood. In essence, it is to understand the experience of the role of this practice from the participants' point of view. To come closer to this aim, I adopted an epistemological stance situated within IPA, which falls under the interpretive paradigm in qualitative research (Smith et al., 2009). Opinions and experiences of the participants were crucial and significant in this study. Therefore, the epistemological stance of this study is located within IPA and indigenous approaches which are tied in tension in order to make sense of the participants' subjective meanings of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Essentially, in this study I engaged with two traditions, firstly, IPA which is situated within Euro-Western origins, and African epistemology located within African traditions. I used these approaches collaboratively as I grappled with complex ideas around this study. Below, I explore the framework and orientations of African epistemology.

3.3.2 What is African epistemology?

Chilisa (2012) and Goduka (2005) note that African epistemology is located within indigenous approaches which create an opportunity for the researcher to engage in a dialogue to think around ways of problematizing, re-thinking and deconstructing philosophical foundations that will frame ways of knowing within an indigenous perspective. Azibo (1996) notes that African epistemology is based on Africans' answers to the issues of cosmology, ontology, axiology, world view, ideology, and ethos. According to African scholars, a re-examination of indigenous knowledge systems is deemed

necessary as a model to respond to African questions and solutions to African problems (Azibo, 1996, Baloyi 2008; Goduka, 2005; Letseka, 2012). So, African scholars argue that a phenomenological approach to indigenous approaches is necessary because of its emphasis on truthful description of lived experience in order to prevent distortion, dilution and distillation of original sources (Azibo, 1996; Goduka, 2005). I am mindful of the notion that even with this kind of understanding it is impossible to fully achieve the above aspirations particularly around ideological assumptions. Letseka (2012) notes that ideally such an approach promotes authenticity, restoration and the beneficial use of original understandings of indigenous knowledge. According to African scholars, being sensitive and responsive to such a call is what sets this apart as distinctly “African” (Letseka, 2012; Maluleke, 2012; Menkiti, 1984).

3.3.3 Africanism/Africanisation

When addressing the notion of ‘Africanism’ or ‘African scholarship’, I think it is important to highlight the notion that we can talk and critically engage with the concept of what constitutes an ‘African’ or ‘Africanism’ without homogenising, essentialising and reducing a vast and complex array of culturally located beliefs and practices (Ncaca, 2014; Letseka, 2012). It seems as though the global understanding of ‘Africanisation’ or ‘Africanism’ tends to be explained through traditionalist and essentialist views, and that needs to be challenged (Ncaca, 2014). There is an *isiXhosa* proverb which says *imizi ayifani ifana ngehlathi kuphela*, meaning that there is never hegemony and that each house/clan has distinct common practices which are different across ethnic groups, though they may be categorised under traditions or customs (Ncaca, 2014). So, this argument negates the limited notion that that being ‘African’ or doing ‘African’ things/practices is the same across Africa. This means that what is regarded as ‘African’ in South Africa could mean something different in other parts of Africa. Even within South Africa, the notion of ‘Africanness’ or being ‘African’ has different meanings for different ethnic groups with certain cultural, and religious belief systems (Ntombana, 2011b). This also brings us to the notion that it is much safer not to set limits on claims of ‘Africanness’ but rather talk of a particular, local and socio-culturally located world view that is an example of an African cosmology (Letseka, 2012).

Goduka (2005) draws on an *isiXhosa* idiom of *iziko/eziko* which literally means a fire-place or space. This idiomatic expression is located within the *Nguni* philosophical foundations that are participatory and includes pragmatic ways of knowing in a particular context (Goduka, 2005). In the *amaXhosa* tradition, families and community members usually gather in a circle around *eziko* to cook, dish out and eat (Goduka, 2005). Goduka's use of this idiom expands the notion of *iziko* to note the cultural and spiritual space where learning takes place and where intercultural and intergenerational dialogues are encouraged in a spirit of connectedness and respect (Goduka, 2005). This usually involves situations where elders pass on information and skills that are considered necessary for adult responsibilities in life (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Vincent, 2008), through the oral tradition. In Africa, specifically within the *amaXhosa* context, the oral tradition has been practiced for centuries through poetry, *intsomi* (stories) and in practices such as *ukuyala* (giving words of admonition to initiates or recently married women) (Lungcuzo, 2013; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011a).

Thirdly, axiological and rhetorical questions explore what is worth knowing and justifications for choosing a particular topic (Creswell, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). This study is about gaining an in-depth insight into the lived experiences of young, *amaXhosa* men who underwent the process of traditional male initiation and the impact of these experiences of TMI on their self-definition and sense of manhood/masculinity. This was achieved through conversations with participants trying to make sense of their experiences during initiation and afterwards in relation to their changed social status. It is deemed as important because it adds to the body of existing literature around initiation rites of passage in South Africa. It also aims to dig deeper to uncover psychological insights that are located within cultural traditions, customs and traditional initiation practices. It is also important because it addresses important questions asked around *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*, providing answers relating to its significance and meaning for the *amaXhosa* people.

Epistemologically, I find it very important to interrogate this phenomenon through an African epistemological perspective. So, I draw on the synergy between traditional/indigenous and Western approaches. It is also crucial to highlight the usefulness and importance of Western and traditional models. One cannot fully do justice to rely on one approach when dealing with critical studies that are deeply rooted in indigenous practices. I must also note that using these orientations is influenced by my sensitivity to

other forms of knowing such as African epistemologies. However, it is also important to note that certain questions, particularly ways of knowing, require one to be sensitive by being responsive to the call of a transformative agenda in African scholarship.

Creswell (2007) notes that the rhetorical stance requires authentic writing in the sense that the researcher writes as an active agent. According to Creswell (2007) authentic writing encourages the use of metaphors. In the *amaXhosa* tradition, particularly regarding *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*, concepts/things or subjects are not mentioned directly. The common practice around the use of metaphors serves as a way of showing respect and metaphorical language is used to keep certain things from being known by ordinary people. According to Creswell (2007) authentic writing encourages the presence and stance of the researcher to reference himself in first person and make use of "I". This idea of authenticity draws the researcher to have a leading voice in the study and invites the researcher to be directly engaged in the research process (Creswell, 2007).

In this study I grappled with striving for authenticity in my writing and how I approached this study. This struggle played out in relation to my work and influenced my stance in engaging with the subject matter around *ulwaluko kwaXhosa* and my understanding of manhood. There are different stances that researchers adopt in research such as dispassionate scientist, interested outsider wishing to learn, cultural insider or an advocate (Goduka, 2012). It is noted that these different positions or voices have implications for what one is trying to achieve with one's research and sometimes contain biases/blind spots (Goduka, 2012). So, as part of reflexively engaging with my work, I needed to be clear on the role I took as a researcher, and also where I stood, what I was trying to achieve, and be able to explain/justify this position in this study.

In terms of my stance, I chose to work as a cultural insider/insider researcher to advocate for the phenomenon under investigation. I would like to draw your attention to what informed my stance based on personal experience as a researcher. I went through the initiation in December, 2007, in Port Elizabeth in a semi-suburb called Kwamagxaki (Bush), which is located in the Eastern Cape. It is important to note that by virtue of being an *amaXhosa* man who went through the practice, I managed to engage with the participants with no questions regarding my manhood. That also afforded me an opportunity to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of that throughout the

research phase. Hence, drawing from the work of Goduka (2005), I decided to work from a position of relational self. Goduka (2005) notes that when one works from a relational self-perspective, one's life becomes intertwined, interdependent and integrated into the lives of indigenous people in any specific context such as a village/township and other indigenous communities. Thus the exposition I undertook was to adopt a rhetorical stance which argued for the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems and the preservation of initiation rites of passage, focusing on *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*. I also am mindful of and careful to acknowledge the fact that my stance as a cultural insider in relation to this practice is by no means biased and does not nullify the notion that TMI has potentially negative consequences. However, both of these aspects will be discussed further in the conclusion chapter.

3.4 The Research Design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) a research design is a framework of flexible guidelines that connect the theoretical paradigm and methods of data collection in order to set guidelines for strategies of inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note that the research design also serves as a framework for the research process, merging the research questions and the implementation of the study. The strategy adopted for this particular research was that of a qualitative framework. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative research as a framework which helps to focus a study. Ideally, qualitative research strategies study phenomena in natural settings and attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena through a meaning-making process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This meaning-making involves a collaborative process where the researcher engages with the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

This qualitative study is situated within the approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), aimed at making sense of people's experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). In this study, a qualitative research design was deemed suitable to gain in-depth insight into the lived experiences of young, *amaXhosa* men who underwent the process of traditional male initiation and the impact of these experiences of TMI on their self-definition and sense of manhood/masculinity. This was achieved through conversations with participants trying to make sense of their experiences during initiation and afterwards in

relation to their changed social status. Thus, a qualitative approach was a useful tool that facilitated the process of engagement and rigorous conversation with the participants.

3.4.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA, also, involves a double hermeneutic process whereby the researcher makes sense of the participants who are also negotiating the meaning of their own experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) focuses on the lived experiences of participants involved in the phenomenon investigated and is aimed at drawing from personal and meaningful experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA is grounded on three central philosophical assumptions, i.e. phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. In this section I describe these assumptions in detail as follows:

3.4.1.1 Phenomenology

Kafle (2011) notes that phenomenology can be used as a philosophy and a research methodology. Willig (2008) notes that phenomenology has its foundation in the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre who intensely studied human experience and its meaning. Essentially, various definitions of phenomenology provided by different scholars all agree on the idea that phenomenology explores the deeper meaning of human experience (Kafle, 2011; Kinsella, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2007). Secondly, it provides space to locate such experiences within a framework so as to understand a phenomenon in its original form as experienced by the individuals (Kafle, 2011; Kinsella, 2006). Phenomenology has different schools of thought that underpin its tradition; they are transcendental phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology and existential phenomenology (Kafle, 2011; Willig, 2008). However, for the purpose of this study I will only focus on hermeneutic phenomenology. Here follows a brief description about this school of thought.

3.4.1.2 Hermeneutic phenomenology

Phenomenology, in its distinctively contemporary form, originates from and develops through the work of Edmund Husserl (1958). Hermeneutic phenomenology has been largely influenced by the German philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger

(Kafle, 2011). Kafle (2011) notes that scholars of this movement argued for a paradigm shift from positivism to interpretivism. It is through their arguments that hermeneutic phenomenology developed as a result of the rejection of, and the retaliation against, suspending the personal views of the researcher and turned, instead, toward interpretive narration (Kafle, 2011). According to Kafle (2011) the basis of this rejection is around the notion that positivist and reductionist stances undermine and fail to pay attention to interpretations and subjective experiences. It is noted that this approach was an attempt to discover the world as experienced by the subject through his/her life world stories (Kafle, 2011).

Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology was established as a way of thinking and paying attention to get beneath the subjective experience and explore the genuine objective nature of the things as felt by an individual (Kafle, 2011). Therefore, the essence of hermeneutic phenomenology is about the subjective experience of individuals and groups. Hermeneutic phenomenology creates space for the interpretation of written texts, recorded interview narratives, verbal communication and other social phenomena and makes them easily accessible for interpretation (Dilthey, 1976; Tappan, 2001). Ideally, this school of thought promotes the depth of subjective experience as felt or realised by the individual (Kafle, 2011). According to Kafle (2011) it also encourages the research to be sensitive to not making pre-judgements that are objective but rather appreciate and work with what the participants bring into the meaning-making process. This approach also invites the researcher to participate in the co-construction of creating rich accounts of a phenomenon at the same time as uncovering meaning, rather than seeking for accuracy and asserting objectivity (Kafle, 2011). It is noted that our experiences are more meaningful when we reflect on them by telling stories of that experience.

In this study the argument is that hermeneutics is appropriate to locate/contextualize individuals' experiences. So, this approach speaks to contextual factors around practices, culture and values that are fundamental to individuals' lived experiences which require this integrative approach. Essentially, the use of interpretation enabled the discovery of particular culturally/traditionally located experiences of these young *amaXhosa* men regarding traditional male initiation and the particular gender and socialisation processes related to this cultural practice. Thus, an interpretive approach using data (participant's

experiences) enabled me to answer questions about how young Xhosa men make meaning of their 'real' experiences in relation to their sense of manhood.

3.4.1.3 Idiography

Lastly, it is also noted that IPA is idiographic. This approach relates to two levels of understanding: firstly, to pay attention to in-depth analysis and attention to detail (Smith et al., 2009). This was done using a qualitative framework and through a data analysis phase. This pays attention to its commitment to the subjective experiences of particular individuals within particular contexts (Smith et al., 2009). IPA provides space to locate such experiences within a framework so as to understand a phenomenon in its original form as experienced by the individuals (Kafle, 2011; Kinsella, 2006). So, the use of IPA enabled me to speak to the subjective experiences of the participants in a manner that was culturally sensitive and responsive to the specific aims of IPA approaches/guidelines.

3.5 Methodology

Fourthly, Goduka (2005) brings us to methodology. It is noted that this concept is derived from the Greek words *methodos* (method) and *logia* (study) (Goduka, 2005). Methodology is defined as an approach which seeks to address the desired aim of a study and applies various investigative techniques in academia (Goduka, 2005). Creswell (2007) also notes that methodology focuses on the methods used in the research process. According to Tappan (2001) it is important that researchers should work within a qualitative methodology that speaks to validity concerns. This is particularly significant when one relies heavily on interpretations and interpretations are inevitably subjective (Tappan, 2001).

One of the key methodological frameworks in this study relates to oral tradition. According to Baloyi (2008) oral tradition refers to unwritten philosophical and methodological traditions used for producing, preserving, and disseminating knowledge. Baloyi (2008) further notes that the fact that information or knowledge is not recorded does not nullify the significance of such knowledge, but it is regarded as an important form/way of learning within a specific context (Baloyi, 2008). Ideally, the oral tradition promotes the use of the spoken word as a method to transfer knowledge and to explain cultural specific narratives

(Baloyi, 2008). So, the focus of oral tradition is aimed at drawing on the experiences of elders, those that have life experience and other forms of understanding. It is worth noting that, considering the interpretive nature of this study, the reflexivity of conducting the study and the need to contextualize the experiences shared, the theoretical framework underpinning the methodology was Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

3.6 Research Procedure

3.6.1 Sampling and participant selection

After receiving ethical clearance, purposive and convenience sampling strategies were used to recruit participants for the study (Babbie, 2005). The priority for this study was to identify and select a homogeneous sample of eight young *amaXhosa* men aged between 23 and 27 years, living in Joza Township in Grahamstown. However, only six participants met the criteria to participate in this study. IPA specifically focuses on a small homogenous sample in order to elicit and locate rich contextualised data about a particular shared experience (Smith et al., 2009). The research question is: what are the experiences of young Xhosa men of the practice of traditional male initiation in relation to their sense of manhood?

3.6.1.1 Inclusion criteria

This study was conducted in *isiXhosa*, the participants' home language, which is something that has been under-represented in psychological research in South Africa – to conduct studies using local, indigenous languages (Goduka, 2005; Lesteka, 2012). The basis for selection was that:

- The participant had to be an *isiXhosa* speaking man, residing in Grahamstown.
- The participant had to be aged between 23 and 27 years.
- The participant must have personally undergone traditional initiation in the first five years of *isilimela*.

- The participant must be willing to discuss his experiences in relation to the practice of initiation and manhood.

All participants interviewed for this study met the above criteria.

3.6.2 *Contacting participants*

I became interested in investigating the subject of *ulwaluko kwaXhosa* through my interactions with a group of young Xhosa men with whom I went to the initiation school. The conversations emerged from questions that we had in relation to the practice. However, my interest was more on the 'psychological' experience of this transitional phase in a traditional sense. An opportunity for empirical research came during my masters training year one (M1) while I was exploring possibilities for a research topic for my proposal at Rhodes University. However, due to logistics and time constraints I then considered finding participants from the 'class of 2007' Xhosa men residing in Joza Township in Grahamstown. Subsequent to that, I was connected and introduced to one of the key informants in this study. It is through his facilitation that I was able to access eight participants. The key informant organised a meeting at his house where I had a briefing with the participants about the details and contents of the research process.

It is important to highlight that because I was dealing with a controversial, or rather a sacred space regarding initiation, I needed to abide by certain rules. Firstly, I had to introduce myself appropriately as a Xhosa man, which I did. However, to gain access and to fully participate or engage with that group, I had to comply with *isithethe samadoda kwa Xhosa* (tradition followed by men) and that was to bring a bottle of brandy as *imvula mlomo* (consent/access to begin a conversation). This raised a lot of ethical tension around culture/tradition and 'ethics' that had to be adhered to. The final stage was organising logistics and setting up an interview in terms of venue and date for the first interview. All interviews were conducted over a period of one month on different occasions.

3.6.3 *Data collection*

3.6.3.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

In IPA studies, semi-structured interviews are well-suited to the task of capturing people's lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Participants were asked a range of questions relating to what initiation has meant for the development of their sense of manhood. Interviews were conducted in *isiXhosa* as this was the home language of the participants and the researcher. Initially, the structure of the interview was a two-fold process of interviews scheduled on different days. The first set of interviews was aimed at gathering descriptions of the participants' backgrounds and their experiences of initiation. I started with a one-on-one interview to elicit in-depth data from each participant in relation to their experience of initiation.

A follow-up interview also took place which was aimed at reflecting on participants' lived experience following the completion of the initiation process. It is interesting to note that the level of participation varied for each participant. Some interviews took more than 40 minutes because the participants gave rich descriptions of their experiences, whereas other participants required in-depth probing to enable them to share their experiences. Transcripts were translated into English primarily to facilitate the checking of the analysis. Following data collection and during analysis of audio records and transcription, I then picked up missing links and gaps as I was engaging with the process of translating data. A dominant theme that became noticeable was the participants' responses focused more on technical descriptions of manhood with less emotional content in relation to the experience of undergoing initiation. Despite the gaps noticed, there were also instances of similar experiences shared by participants and other commonalities that were spotted during analysis. Another follow up interview became necessary; however, this time I considered a focus group to gather all the participants to discuss further aspects that were common and to validate their experiences.

3.6.3.2 *Focus group*

The next phase of interview was a focus group discussion (FGD) facilitated by me with the same participants. Having read the translated transcripts of individual interviews, I then considered a focus group for further discussion. The aim of the focus group was to engage the group to reflect on their experiences by focusing on emotions in relation to how they felt and experienced initiation and its impact on their sense of manhood. The focus group enabled an opportunity for robust debate about

the phenomenon on how men ought to express their emotions and subjective experiences. The focus group approach also assisted me to place the participants' responses in perspective. I was aware of the individuals' voices in how they positioned themselves in the group. The interview was dominated partly by the eloquent young *amaXhosa* men who were able to speak freely and openly. It became evident that some men dominated the discussion by not giving others a chance to speak.

I managed the group dynamics that were evident during the interviews by addressing that problem. Gradually, everyone got involved in sharing their experiences and views around controversial issues that were part of the group discussion. However, this had no significant impact in skewing the data.

3.6.4 Data analysis

According to de Visser and Smith (2007) transcripts are coded and analysed on a case-by-case basis. Each interview was thus transcribed as an individual case. King and Horrocks (2010) note that IPA focuses at first on a single interview transcript according to five steps, namely: familiarisation with the data; identifying themes; structuring themes; constructing a summary table; and integrating themes across all transcripts. Following that, I read the collected data thoroughly whilst simultaneously listening to the audio-recordings. The transcripts formed the basis for the analysis. I then read and re-read the data to gain a better sense of all of it. I noted that at the end of this stage of analysis the data base enabled me to know where things could be found and what sorts of interpretations were likely to be supported and which not (de Visser & Smith, 2007). It is also important to note that at this point I had to go back to my participants for feedback on initial summaries obtained. Ideally, this was one of the ways of obtaining verification and clarification from the participants' perspective in terms of whether the recordings relayed the participants' subjective views.

Inducing themes. I read individual interview transcripts repeatedly to identify themes and emergent themes within them. These were then analysed and categorised into super-ordinate themes (de Visser & Smith, 2007). I then made comparisons between cases/interview transcripts in order to identify common and recurrent themes that reflect

shared and divergent participant understandings and experiences of initiation (de Visser & Smith, 2007). I also attempted to move beyond summarising by thinking in terms of processes, functions, tensions and contradictions. This was done to make sure I had done a proper analysis and to work around themes that emerged during analysis. Ideally, the themes chosen reflect the interest and focus of the study such as the meanings attached to *ulwaluko* and their sense of manhood.

Structuring themes. In this phase of analysis I collated all data relevant to each theme identified in previous phases. I also reviewed the themes categorized, and explored them by looking for consistency between the steps of analysis. I did this by interpreting emergent themes which included the participants' thoughts and original words. All themes that resonated and connected well with each other were organized via a superordinate theme (Smith et al., 2009). Lastly, for the write up I then produced a comprehensive discussion section based on these themes. A detailed description and reflexive account of the coding/analysis procedure will follow in the next chapter.

In writing up the analysis, appropriate measures were taken to ensure that the identities of the participants were protected, and the interview transcripts were kept confidential. It is worth noting that an appreciation of the *amaXhosa* cosmology in my process of analysis enabled me to make meaning of experiences around initiation and manhood.

3.7 Reflexivity

The inspiration to conduct this research was influenced by my own personal experience of the bush tracing back from 2007. Since then I reflected on a number of lessons and experiences I gathered during the process of my initiation. It became an interesting discover for me to examine and explore the questions I had through a process of research engagement, because the questions I had were difficult to understand on my own. In the initial stages of my proposal I struggled to ask the right questions until I discovered that the answer was located in my own subjective experience. Essentially, the questions I had asked emanated from my own experience and curiosity to explore other men's views and experiences regarding the practice of *ulwaluko kwaXhosa* and its impact on one's understanding of manhood/masculinity.

I explored both variations around the advantages and disadvantages of doing research as an 'insider'. I engaged with my experience carefully with a level of awareness

influenced by own experiences as a Xhosa man. So, how I engaged with my reflexivity is deeply influenced by the experiences, attitudes and the perceptions of the participants I worked with in this research. I am aware that *ulwaluko*, initiation, is treated with a high level of respect, dignity and secrecy; moreover, it is regarded as a sacred practice among the *amaXhosa* people (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011). I experienced that I had an advantage/familiarity with cultural imperatives as an initiated *amaXhosa* man. In the process of data collection and relating with my participants, I discovered both the advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, the fact that I am an initiated *amaXhosa* man was an advantage. The initiation practice is one of those practices that is guarded against intruders and is kept a secret from those who have not gone through it, including women. So I had an understanding of *amaXhosa* culture which enabled me to communicate better with my participants. I was also able to negotiate the social taboos around talking about ritual practices with cultural outsiders, or revealing taboo details by focusing on investigating not only the participants' experiences of initiation in relation to already widely known aspects of this particular cultural practice but also the significance of initiation for the formation of participants' personal sense of manhood.

My position as cultural insider, therefore, had a positive impact on the data collection process in the sense that it made it possible for me to create a good atmosphere for participants to be comfortable, free and able to express their views in a safe space with someone who understood and had a lived experience of the process. The environment also created a space for me to be received as an insider researcher and one of them. As an insider researcher, I was aware of the intricacies around confidentiality guided by the principle which states that "what happens at the mountain stays at the mountain". Sharing information about the ritual is only restricted to *amaXhosa* men who have undergone initiation. So, detailed information and access to knowledge regarding the initiation process is limited to the public because the ritual is regarded as a secretive and sacred practice (Vincent, 2008).

I also had the advantage of understanding the nuances of language which enabled me to engage fully and freely with my participants. As an *amaXhosa* man I also did not need to learn the participants' language so it was easy to relate and engage freely with them. I also did not need the services of an interpreter, therefore, that eliminated some of the challenges experienced by outsider researchers. I could also relate to idiomatic

expressions and specific language exclusive to Xhosa men. Kepe (2010) and Ncaca (2014) note that *ukuhlonipha*, which means respect, is one of the important aspects taught during initiation. Kepe (2010) highlights that in urban areas *ukuhlonipha* is no longer embraced or regarded as important,. So, it was quite interesting to notice rural *amaXhosa* young men drawing from metaphors and idioms to describe their experiences. Ideally, the *ukuhlonipha* is related to the secrecy of protecting the nuances and intricacies of traditional practices from the general public and un-initiated people (Kepe, 2010; Ncaca, 2014). It also is located within the understanding of using codes as a way of communication when *amaXhosa* men are together, for example sitting in the *kraal* (*ebuhlanti*) and engaging with critical issues. This is an exciting way of communication that really speaks to the notion of respecting culture and embracing the importance of indigenous languages. This also played an important role in the analysis process.

I became aware of my potential bias regarding my position as cultural insider and that may have impacted on the data collection in a negative way. To some extent I think that my participants were aware that I might have experienced what they went through. Some participants did not understand the concept of research and despite my justification, they still wondered at being asked obvious questions by the person who is supposed to know. It seems as though this may have limited them from giving descriptive answers because they felt I already ought to have known the things I was asking them about and which are already commonly understood by insiders and not in need of further explanation.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Smith et al. (2009) refer to Yardley's (2000) criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research. Yardley's first principle is that of *sensitivity to context* (Yardley, 2000). This is said to take place in the form of a discussion of the existing literature on the topic under investigation. In the context of IPA methodology, sensitivity is essential during discussions with participants when recruiting a purposive sample, liaising with participants and when conducting interviews with people who may be resistant to sharing critical information with an outsider in a one-to-one situation (Smith et al., 2009). Firstly, it is worth noting that to some degree an indigenous approach/paradigm in this study contributed very important insights in ensuring that my analysis displayed a high

degree of sensitivity to the context in which the experiences under investigation took place, and the manner in which the research was conducted. Secondly, in this study sensitivity was an essential aspect, particularly around asking questions relating to the *amaXhosa* initiation ritual and the 'bush' experience. It is noted that discussing the intricacies of the ritual with people who had not yet been to the mountain is considered a 'taboo' (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a).

Sensitivity is also evident throughout the stages of analysis and by ensuring that any interpretative claims made were grounded in the original data; this also enabled the reader to check any interpretations being made with the original data (Smith et al., 2009). In the present research, sensitivity to context was demonstrated by a review of the literature that attempts to describe the socio-cultural context of the *amaXhosa* initiation ritual of *ulwaluko* in South Africa, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of young *amaXhosa* men who went through the initiation ritual, while the analytic claims were substantiated through verbatim extracts of the participants' experiences.

Commitment and rigour is the second principle used to assess the quality of qualitative research (Yardley, 2000). In IPA, commitment refers to the researcher's ability to be attentive to the participants during data collection, and to the transcripts throughout the analysis of each case (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher is a trainee clinical psychologist and that afforded me the space to draw upon my training and experience of attending to clients. Rigour was achieved by a thorough and systematic approach to the analysis (Smith et al., 2009). As mentioned in the results section, each theme is supported by quotes drawn proportionately from each participant where relevant (Smith et al., 2009). In the process of this analysis transcripts were translated into English for purposes of supervision, to enable the same level of understanding and also for easy communication of research findings. Thus, a careful interpretation was also checked by a second reader and discussed with the research supervisor.

The third principle is *transparency and coherence* (Yardley, 2000). An IPA researcher describes each stage of the research process in great detail in order to demonstrate transparency (Smith et al., 2009) and to ensure that interpretations of participant experiences remain close to the collected data. An aspect of coherence refers to a fit between the research question and the methodology used to answer that question

(Yardley, 2000). This study explored the lived experiences of young *amaXhosa* men who underwent *ulwaluko kwaXhosa*, which is fully aligned with the research methodology.

The fourth principle of *impact and importance* focuses on the significance and usefulness of a qualitative research project (Yardley, 2000). The voices of young men around the experience of traditional male initiation are largely missing in academic, medical and public health debates concerning this cultural practice and this study is an attempt towards creating a more sensitive and detailed understanding of the significance of the *amaXhosa* initiation practice (Smith et al., 2009). Many studies rely on quantitative analyses while even qualitative studies often recruit bilingual rather than monolingual young men, who perhaps represent a more empowered group of men than those who cannot speak English or Afrikaans. So, it is important to engage participants in their own language to trace the nuances and deeper meaning of the subjective experiences and important narratives.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was sought from the Rhodes University Psychology Department's Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) and the RU Humanities Higher Degrees Committee (HHDC). An information leaflet that outlines the study's aim, duration, potential benefits and issues that may emerge in the research process was provided to participants. The information leaflet assured the participants of their voluntary participation, freedom to withdraw without penalty, as well as details concerning the management of collected information in order to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality (see attached appendices).

In this study, the participants' informed consent was obtained after they had been briefed on the aim, procedures, possible risks, and benefits of the research. These were explained in *isiXhosa*, the home language of the participants, rather than English. The participants were also assured of confidentiality, as well as the anonymity of names and sensitive information that might emanate from the research process. They were also assured of constant communication from the researcher during the research process. Informed consent to participate was obtained from the participants, and consent was obtained to use aspects of the songs and drawings

and the discussions of the participants 'verbalisations' during the discussion of the data. Furthermore, only limited personal identification information has been used with the permission of the participants. Essentially they determined how much was disclosed and to what degree they would discuss what they experienced. The participants were made aware that a final copy of the thesis would be made available in the university library after the completion of the study. It was further explained that the interview transcripts would be kept confidential and that pseudonyms would be used throughout the written thesis. Potential participants were also invited to raise any concerns and ask any questions before agreeing to and starting the interview process. They were subsequently asked to give consent to voluntarily participate in the research process through filling in the appropriate form after all the relevant information had been given.

3.10 Conclusion

The aim of this research project was to explore the lived experiences of a small sample of young *amaXhosa* men who live in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, which was successfully achieved by interviewing these young men, analysing the interview transcripts from this perspective and by using the methods offered by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Ethical considerations pertinent to the research were anticipated and addressed. The findings of this analytic effort are described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The thesis reports on seven emergent themes that emerged during data analysis. The themes are as follows: (a) The significance of the place/location of initiation, and the guise of modernity; (b) Feelings of anticipation experienced by the young men; (c) *Ubudoda* (manhood) affirmation *Ndiyindoda!*; (d) The concealment of pain (perseverance); (e) respect for self and others and *ubuntu*; (f) *Uzimele geqe* (Independence and autonomy) and (g) Social Role and Responsibility.

4.2 Results and Discussion

4.2.1 The significance of the place/location of initiation

When participants were asked to narrate their experience regarding their place/location of initiation this is what they reported.

Lazola (26 years) narrated the significance of his place as follows:

"...I chose to circumcise at Sonti under the instruction of my grandfather. It is a common practice for every man in my family to be circumcised in the same location. My (grandfather) wanted to keep the practice. So everything that they have done, I must also do there...I saw it as something special, something that shows that this is important, because grandfather would never speak in this manner with me, because when I was a boy he didn't speak in the same manner with me. I realised this as I was to undergo my initiation."

Lazola highlighted that for him it was not about a matter of personal choice, as being initiated at *Sonti* was to follow the family's tradition because it is how it has always been done. Lazola's decision to undergo the ritual in Grahamstown *kwa Sonti* was influenced by

several considerations such as family tradition, notions of *isiko*, and not negating the idea that it is *isithethe* (a common practice) and the personal choice of the Grahamstown community to use *kwa Sonti* as an ideal location for initiation.

Bongani (26 years) described the significance of his place as follows:

. "My wish was to go through my initiation in the rural Transkei, but that couldn't happen. It was seeing how the other men here (Grahamstown) who had gone through this process before me would come back into society unchanged, so much that although I was a boy, I'd be cocky with them as if they weren't men when they came back from the bush. After I had gone through initiation school here in Grahamstown, I realised that the issue wasn't the town itself, but the individual – the issue of manhood; the way you perceive manhood..."

Bongani's reasons to choose *kwa Sonti* were influenced by various reasons such as disappointment at being unable to go to the rural Transkei for his initiation. Bongani, 27 years, made a distinction highlighting the advantage of being initiated in the Transkei and the disadvantage of being initiated in a 'non-traditional' context. According to Bongani in the Transkei the initiation process is intended to change someone's behaviour in a positive way, highlighting that being initiated in Grahamstown is not always associated with positive/successful outcomes. Bongani further said that most young men who are initiated in other areas in Grahamstown come back to society unchanged. In the same quote, Bongani introduced another point, that of personal choice and subjective experience. He acknowledged from his experience that the place of initiation itself does not necessarily change and shape one's understanding of manhood. Bongani indicated that other areas/locations in Grahamstown are associated with negative connotations such as lack of behaviour change and exposing the practice to un-initiated boys. However, these participants noted that for their experience a place/location did not necessarily imply significant meaning in terms of where they were initiated.

Luzuko (30 years) stated that:

"...I also went to Kwa Sonti because it was a suitable location. The last participant, Nkosinathi notes that, I went to KwaSonti, because it's closer to home and all people

from my neighbourhood also went to Kwa Sonti. Also, my friends went to Kwa Sonti too, even though I was the first to go..."

This participant was also initiated in *kwa Sonti*, primarily focusing around convenience as a matter of common practice *isithethe*. Luzuko's reason for choosing *kwa Sonti* is around convenience and relates to the norm of common practice *isithethe*. The above quotes suggest that in Grahamstown *kwa Sonti* is regarded as a common location that still preserves the socio-cultural significance of the practice of initiation. These participants shared similar narratives regarding the experience of being initiated *kwa Sonti* in Grahamstown. Initiation is performed differently in rural areas compared to urban areas (Kepe, 2010; Lungcuzo, 2013; Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008). There is a general consensus among *amaXhosa* men that between rural and urban areas there are differences of ways in which 'initiation' is practiced (Kepe, 2010; Ntombana, 2011a). Ntombana (2011a) notes that even though *ulwaluko* is practiced across the Eastern Cape there are specific nuances of how it is done in rural areas such as in Mpondoland compared to uMtata and other rural areas such as King Williams Town. It is noted that in the Eastern Cape, specific regions have particular practices that are influenced by culture and specific goals; for instance *amaHlubi* or *amaZawa* do initiation differently compared to *amaXhosa* (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Ntombana, 2011a). It is argued that in rural areas initiation is done thoroughly and in a traditional way which retains the deep cultural and social significance of what the practice aims to achieve (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntomabana, 2011a).

In contrast, around urban areas there are various factors to be considered regarding the ideal or convenient location to perform initiation. It is highlighted that urbanisation is one of the factors which has led to problems of limited space to practice initiation (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010, Ntombana, 2011a). The consequences of limited space/location has implications for initiation practiced close to industrial areas, in open spaces in townships and between residential areas for convenience (Kepe, 2010; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). Problems exist around crime and other bad influences such as over-commercialisation and modernisation associated with TMC (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010; Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008).

In relation to the influence of modernisation participants had a general view that indeed the use of technology during initiation better accounts for the current changes. This is what was narrated by participants:

Babalo (29 years) said:

“...nowadays initiates go to the bush with mattresses, pillows, radio, and some even post on Facebook to invite friends to their homecoming while they are at the bush...” Nkosinathi (28 years) supported that *“They destroy the suffering aspect of initiation. You must experience the suffering and poverty. If you are comfortable on your mattress, using your blackberry, you have not experienced the suffering.”*

Babalo (29 years) and Nkosinathi (28 years) referred to the use of gadgets and Facebook as a way of communicating with the outside world whilst at the initiation school. Participants also highlighted the destruction of the socio-cultural significance of initiation because fundamental teachings and lessons are not effectively taking place.

Bayanda (27 years) narrated that:

“...which means you felt no pain, for you to even have the time for your phone. If you have not experienced the suffering, you become irresponsible. You don't become responsible when you have not suffered.”

Bayanda, 27 years, said that technology has potential negative influences on how initiation is perceived and projected in the public space. Bayanda also narrated that technology limits the opportunity to feel pain and the teaching around endurance of painful experiences. Moreover, this participant made the connection between the lost experiences of pain and suffering and the development of irresponsibility within the character of a man.

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Bongani, 27 years, highlighted that technology has the potential to influence changes in how initiation is projected publicly. This participant also noted that the use of technology limits the opportunity to feel pain and the teaching around endurance of painful experiences. Moreover, this participant made the connection between the lost experiences of pain and suffering and the development of irresponsibility within the character of a man.

Luzuko (30 years) said that:

"To add, the guys these days are just concerned with going to the bush and being called 'bhuti'. If he is circumcised he is a man and he is done."

In support of this notion: Lazola (26 years) claimed that:

"It is now isithethe to go through initiation for the sake of being regarded as a man..."

These participants noted the notion of entitlement meaning that most young boys go to the bush merely to gain social status that grants them entitlement to be called 'bhuti' (a circumcised man). They also highlight that the focus of initiation is about educating young boys to become responsible men.

It is noted that initiates are expected to learn aspects such as the understanding of suffering, self-denial and perseverance through meaning-making arising out of that experience (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). The use of technology robs initiates of the opportunity to fully experience and engage with the entire phase of initiation. The participants' narratives are supported by literature. Kepe (2010) notes that modernisation

through technology influenced the current practice of initiation to the degree there is a huge shift between the old and new ways of doing initiation.

4.2.2 Feelings of Anticipation

When participants were asked about their feelings of anticipation regarding undergoing traditional male initiation, they narrated different experiences such as anxiety, fear of the unknown and dying in the process of initiation as indicated by Lazola (26 years):

"On my way there, it felt like I was dreaming as I couldn't believe that I'm going through with it, because I don't know what I'm there to do. But, my mind-set was that I'm going to go nonetheless. Others also went. When I arrived there I felt relax, because I went there tense, because I had many thoughts about what happens there...I was thinking that I could die, that I could be the first it happens to. It's not that I knew of anybody that that had happened to, but I felt that I could die here. I thought, "I don't want to be the first person that this happens to." But, I saw that what had to be done was done and it was fine. I felt free thereafter..."

Lazola, 26 years, described his anticipation in the form of a dream to capture his experience associated with anxiety and feelings of discomfort noted by pre-occupation with death and uncertainty about the whole initiation process. Lazola also referred to the experience of mixed emotions overwhelmed by intense feelings of anxiety and fear prior to arrival at the bus and the actual procedure performed by *ingcibi*. In the end Lazola, said that his anxiety lessened and he felt relief at the place of initiation.

In support, Babalo (29 years) narrated that:

"Firstly I was afraid, because of the frightening things people would say about this rite of passage. But, then I knew that these people were men and gone through this same thing, thus I asked myself as to why I should be afraid. So, I convinced myself to go ahead with it and having done that I realised there was no reason to fear."

Babalo, 29 years, also described his experience of intense fear and anxiety that he had to go through. Babalo claimed that his experience was also not easy as he experienced fear because of the uncertainty around initiation. Babalo emphasised the experience of feeling trapped as he had no choice but to face his fear by displaying bravery required during this phase.

Bongani (27 years) said that:

"There was a significant difference. Firstly, when you go there you know nothing. Once you've been circumcised your thinking changes. During your stay at the bush, you have no TV, no radio, and you're not wearing any clothes. So, that gave me the impression that I am being brought out of my old self and that I should forget about old thoughts. Now, it was a matter of focusing on my current situation and all else I'd deal with once I was done with this..."

Bongani, 27 years, began to narrate his experience by highlighting the change that happens in one's thinking and the transformation marked by the transition from the old self to the discovery of the actual self as a mature man. Bongani also described his experience of fear with positive outcomes such as the experience of positive change in terms of behaviour and mind-set, self-discovery and identity formation. Bongani emphasised the significance of change that is associated with being initiated. He also highlighted the transition marked by radical transformation of the self from boyhood into manhood. Towards the end of his quote he noted also the change of lifestyle that taught him ways of negotiating environmental adjustment and life changes.

In support Nkosinathi (28 years) claimed:

"I wanted to discover myself, as I knew nothing at the time about manhood. But when I went I saw many things, things I did not see as a boy. I felt better."

Nkosinathi, 28 years, recounted that his experience captured the curiosity and interest regarding a positive understanding about manhood. His first statement was marked by curiosity about self-discovery which he hoped would be revealed by the bush experience. In the end there was a feeling of relief and success over the first phase of initiation. In

essence, on the basis of these opinions there is an element of anticipation of change, transformation and identity formation. Nkosinathi also narrated the anticipation of the discovery of self which seems to have been achieved after the procedure was done.

In support Bayanda (27 years) said that:

"... I was comfortable/relaxed; because that is something I had wanted to do. I wanted to go to initiation school after matric. I finished my matric in 2006 and I wanted to go that year, but I couldn't because of my age. And then there were others I lived with at home who went that year. They were 3 and in my age group, 18 or so... So I really wanted to go..."

Bayanda, 27 years, described positive emotions such as feeling of being relaxed and comfortable with less anxiety around his experience of anticipation in relation to the bush. Bayanda maintained that initiation was a positive experience for which he had been hoping for a long period of time.

In the entire process of initiation *amaXhosa* initiates are trained to be able to deal with pain and not to express feelings of pain and discomfort (Mandela, 1994). It is evident that these participants did the opposite by acknowledging their experiences of emotional content such as fear and anxiety associated with death and fear of the unknown/uncertainty. Literature supports that young *amaXhosa* boys to be initiated get overwhelmed by fear and anxiety, particularly regarding the actual cutting of the foreskin (Mandela, 1994; Ncaca, 2014). Douglas et al. (2014) notes that young *amaXhosa* boys experience social pressure which creates anxiety around the process of and preparations for initiation. It is also noted that part of the reasons to deny fear is around various extreme social pressure faced by un-circumcised young *amaXhosa* boys and men who are medically circumcised (Douglas et al, 2014; Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Such pressure results in those young boys and men being harassed and pressured to undergo initiation because the *amaXhosa* promote the practice of initiation.

Gwata (2009) notes that the overall impression is that young *amaXhosa* men face tremendous pressure to undergo traditional circumcision and judging from some of the above comments it would appear that resisting this social pressure is next to impossible.

Lungcuzo (2013) and Ncaca (2014) note that initiation has different phases which all need to be observed. The first phase of initiation begins with the process of *ubukwhetha* (the new initiate status). This is a process where an initiate negotiates with the experience of enduring pain, and is confronted with uncertainty in various ways (Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014).

In contrast, despite potential negative implications associated with TMI, young *amaXhosa* boys decide to undergo initiation (Gwata, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008). The cultural significance of initiation rituals is the strongest determinant of the continued practice of TMI (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2009). The practice of initiation provides space for socialisation of gender role practices, shared norms and values around manhood (Gwata, 2009; Vincent, 2008). This space of socialization is not uncontested and has been identified as traditional and patriarchal in that it focuses on the reproduction of very particular culturally located ideals of masculinity (Ratele, 2013; Vincent, 2008).

Referring to the participant narratives, I noticed that the dominant underlying need around feelings of anticipation was predominantly influenced by the need to belong and in order to obtain the 'official' status of manhood. The above narratives expose a lot about the 'fragile nature of masculinity' which often gets hidden and masked during this phase of initiation. What is evident in these narratives, for example, the fear of dying, demystifies the dominant view that men are brave and fearless. Here there is also a classical dramatization of young *amaXhosa* men in touch with and exposing their inner internal world view that is often rare to find among most men. This also suggests a different kind of hegemonic masculinity which challenges the dominant view that men are deemed as less emotional. As well as the resistance towards men regarded as emotional beings in contrast this finding suggested ways in which men negotiate ways of expressing emotions.

Drawing from Connell's (2005) arguments this suggests that these young *amaXhosa* men reject the dominant idea of hegemonic standards in terms of what men should do and how they should act. These participants negotiated and created a different form of masculinity that allowed them to relate to their emotional experiences in relation to initiation. According to Connell (1995) gender is understood as a set of social norms that are prescriptive and are passively internalised and enacted in different contexts as subjects are constantly produced and reproduced in social practice. Connell (1995) notes that it is through gender

socialisation that boys and girls are differentiated in terms of their gender and prescribed activities that are strictly meant for these genders. Alsop et al. (2002) highlight that boys and men are socialised into being objective, rational, independent, achievement-oriented, aggressive and emotionally unexpressive. It is interesting to note that these participants related to experiences that contradict the idea of gender role socialisation of men socialised to suppress the expression of emotions.

4.2.3 Ndiyindoda! (I'm a man!)

Claiming manhood led to a moment of reflection which allowed participants to grapple with the meaning of their affirmation. Bayanda (27 years) describes his experience of affirmation dramatically displayed through the below extract:

"My body was shaking. And when the man said I must say, 'I am a man' I knew that it has happened. I felt that I am now a man. It has happened and now it is done."

The above description is metaphorically described. Bayanda (27 years) relates to his experience by symbolically expressing his state of being at the time of initiation. He also makes a deep connection with an emotional experience associated with a physiological response.

Babalo (29 years) supported this by saying that:

"...I felt like something had been removed from my body and my body felt free as if I was freed from a rope that had kept me bound... Yes, I confirmed [that I am a man]... with the hope that they would tell me the meaning of what I was confirming."

Babalo also drew on the experience of doubt and uncertainty regarding how he was instructed to confirm his manhood. His uncertainty was influenced by his longing and anticipation for a better explanation which was not granted to him. For the *amaXhosa* a boy is usually referred to as *inkwenkwe* (a young boy) a thing deemed as welded by ropes of boyhood. It is also evident that there are also positive experiences associated with this

moment of affirmation. The experiences associated with feelings of empowerment were evident in the narratives.

Bongani (27 years) supported this by saying:

"...I felt empowered to withstand anything that comes my way. The way they tell you to say, 'ndiyindoda' is in a strong, commanding tone of voice...To have a way of dealing with things... It is agreeing to manhood, but then this manhood is accompanied by responsibility."

Bongani (27 years) also brings to light a different experience around coping mechanisms to negotiate the realities of the initiation school and in real life situations. He also expanded by noting that for him the agreement and affirmation of one's manhood is coupled with responsibility.

African literature and studies indicate that *ukwaluka* (to be initiated) begins by *ukudlangwa* (the cutting of the foreskin) followed by a series of rites and practices during initiation (Gqola, 2007; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). Gqola (2007) notes that this moment captures the climax of being an *amaXhosa* man and it is also regarded as a process of metamorphosis within a cultural space of *amaXhosa*. The 'cutting' is also described as symbolic beyond just the physical cut but rather extends to a religious and spiritual moment of introducing the initiate to the *iminyanya/izihlwele* (the ancestors) and thereby connecting to his clan and the broader community (Gqola, 2007; Lungcuza, 2013). Ncaca (2014) describes this as entrance to ancestral masculinity, one that is embedded within religious-cultural understanding of masculinity.

Gqola (2007) also notes that there is another interesting element in the process of *ukwaluka*. This is deemed as a rite of passage into adulthood and a significant phase which prepares one for dramatic life challenges (Gqola, 2007; Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Lungcuza, 2013; Ntombana, 2011a). In fact, it is through this phase that Gqola (2007) highlights classical representation of the body deemed as a powerful tool to describe ways of being in the world and the broader society of *amaXhosa*. In the context of *amaXhosa* the uncircumcised boy represents a male figure who is incomplete and has potential consequences such as exclusion from spaces deemed for *amaXhosa* men and

there are derogatory terms used to denote this aspect (Douglas et al., 2014; Kepe, 2010; Ncaca, 2014; Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008). It is noted that the concept of *inkwenkwe* is associated with the attributes of an animal such as an untrained dog with bad behaviour, a person who has made a limited contribution to society (Douglas et al., 2014; Kepe, 2010; Ntombana, 2011a).

4.2.4 The Concealment of Pain

The conversation around the concealment of pain was explored and the following sentiments were shared by the participants. Their comments included that of Lubabalo (26 years):

"The bush experience teaches perseverance. It also teaches you to be firm in anything you put your mind to. It is the beginning. The implicit message is that you are headed towards difficulty in life, so you must be tough and able to persevere. So, it is a test of whether you can persevere. You will come across tough situations in life that require perseverance, and the pain is preparation for these times and is incorporated in the practice."

In support of this Luzuko (30 years) narrates that:

"...pain is necessary so that you can stand your ground against anyone. To be able to say that you are the way you are due to the fact that you've experienced this pain and you persevered. Even if you were to fall and bruise yourself badly, you know that it is a very small thing compared to circumcision process..."

Furthermore, Bayanda (27 years) stated that:

"...He then proceeded to give counsel saying that 'here, nothing surpasses perseverance.' But I told myself that there's nothing here. Otherwise, it's just perseverance. Yes, there are things that will happen at a later stage... What I realised is that it's important to be a man, because as time goes by some things require perseverance. Also, this should help in knowing how to handle things in your household once you marry. We have for instance kraals where traditional

ceremonies are performed... for instance, I was learning even from my grandfather. When I became a man, I realised that the easy thing to do is to submit and do as the rite of passage prescribes..."

Nkosinathi (28 years) narrated that:

"...It helped me see the nature of life, the consequences, how you deal with challenges. It was just a week before I was going to leave the bush for my homecoming when my mother passed away. I had to leave the bush mid-week, but fortunately I had healed. The day I left the bush my father died. But, I'm proud that I didn't cry about it. In the midst of all of that, the guidance I was given came to me. I remembered the words, "Nothing surpasses perseverance in manhood". So I thought the easy thing is to just persevere these hardships...It was hurting to other people too. I didn't have a home coming. My father called the men in the community and told them why there wouldn't be a proper ceremony. But, I'm trying by all means that this December I could have a traditional ceremony, with alcohol, is it is custom. I had looked up to my grandfather, because he's the one who was behind all of these things. There are times... I'm not sure how I've been created, but to me nothing surpasses perseverance. I deal with whatever comes my way. I see no other way, but to persevere in anything...In my experience, people have said things but not directly to me. I don't bother myself with that though, because I know that I didn't cause for there not to be a proper ceremony. I will try by all means to do what needs to be done in that regard..."

The above extracts are associated with manhood accompanied by the experience of pain and the ability to persevere under difficult times. These participants also referred to the experience of loneliness in the bush as a significant contributor to the conceptualisation of independence and ability to negotiate the difficulties of the bush experience. These participants also noted the realisation of the importance of perseverance upon their return from the bush. The experience of the endurance of pain is centred on manhood and is associated with the ability to deal with the challenges of life. One participant highlighted that, by not having satisfied *amaXhosa* men through means of alcohol (brandy) and other required practices, he failed the test of manhood. This participant's story regarding his experience is different compared with the rest of the participants. He felt different about his manhood and inferior and thus unable to call himself as a man.

It is not only the experience of exclusion and stigmatisation but there is also a psychological tension of imposed guilt which is due to the belief that he is not a complete *Xhosa* man and that has made him withdraw from participating in certain rituals. According to Mavundla et al. (2010) there are psychological factors associated with the stigma one receives when one has not completed the expected rituals. These psychological factors are anxiety, personality changes and lack of confidence which impact on one's self esteem as a man. The above quote brings a different experience that is associated with psychological effects. For example, one of the participants experienced loss of two significant figures in his life and it is clear that the bereavement concerned him even though he mentioned that he did not cry about it. Mandela (1994) notes that one of the fundamental lessons one receives during initiation is the idea that a man conceals his pain and finds his own ways to cope with the difficulties of life. He also mentions the importance of perseverance in manhood as a coping mechanism.

In the context of *amaXhosa* successful masculinity and the status of manhood are determined through the endurance of pain over the entire process of initiation school (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). This occurs through the process of surviving the different phases and activities which include taking care of the wound, enduring the pain and negotiating the living conditions which are different. So, what I found among the participants is that the ability for one to endure pain was related to the resilience (the ability to bounce back and withstand life pressures) and most of them referred to 'perseverance' as a key trait that one learns throughout initiation. All participants in the focus group discussion clearly explained that the ability to endure pain also teaches one to be resilient.

The ability to bounce back and to stand up when things are hard in one's life as a man characterizes this resilience. It suggests that one actually negotiates ways of confronting every obstacle and trial based on one's experience of pain during initiation. So, those learned attributes and coping mechanism acquired during initiation are then translated into and incorporated as a lifestyle after graduation from the process. In this space, the concealment of pain is closely associated with traits of resilience and perseverance. It is indicated that one's successful manhood is around how one negotiates the whole experience of pain.

The experiences of the lack of acceptance and stigmatisation are understood through Connell's (2005) notion of 'marginal masculinity'. Connell (2005) notes that the concept of marginalised masculinity relates to young men who do not have the capacity and means to gain full access to the nuances of hegemonic masculinities. These men only benefit from aspects of hegemonic masculinity by virtue of their gender (Connell, 2005). In this context the prescribed standards of initiation are regarded as a way of promoting and maintaining hegemonic traditional practices of manhood (Mavundla et al., 2010). Locating the participants' experiences through Connell's (2005) lens, the consequences of these experiences revolve around stigmatisation, cultural marginalisation and exclusion that challenges the dominant notions of masculinity (Mavundla et al., 2010).

Literature suggests that there are shared universal norms of hegemonic masculinity across societies such as men being expected to play particular roles like that of being providers, household heads, responsible members of the community, good negotiators and problem solvers (Silberschmidt, 2001). The results indicated that the participants feel that for the *amaXhosa* people there are benefits associated with the successful performance of manhood such as the ability to provide support and assistance in community ceremonies, to run traditional functions, to educate the community about the ideals of manhood and to act as a pillar of strength (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ntombana, 2011a).

For *amaXhosa* the final stage of indicating the successful completion of initiation is *umgidi* (home coming celebration) where the family and community come to witness and celebrate with the new man (Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008). Nkosinathi's experience is complicated by the fact that he did not have *umgidi* a (homecoming celebration) due to a family bereavement. Nkosinathi noted that he had to face the consequences of that experience as there were negative statements made and judgements passed on him because he never had a proper ceremony.

Furthermore *amaXhosa* men *umgidi* is regarded as an important celebration; however, Nkosinathi had an organised family ritual referred to as *ukuhlanjwa* (this involves performing all the required rituals done when fetching new initiates from the bush; however, there is no celebration) (Lungcuzo, 2013). So, in this context *amaXhosa* men regard those who did not have *umgidi* not to have fully complied with the standards of manhood. The central argument around these standards is located on the basis of

successful completion of manhood. The argument is not about successful completion of the initiation course but rather the requirements which grant one full status as *Xhosa* men (Mavundla et al., 2010; Ntombana, 2011a).

4.2.5 Respect for Self and Others

Participants believed that the initiation phase creates the space for negotiating respect as a fundamental of manhood for self and others. Nkosinathi (28 years) said the following:

"...It has shaped relationships with others in a great way...It makes me feel like I'm someone who cannot do harm, so that makes me do the best I can because I know that there are people looking up to me and I don't want to disappoint them" (Nkosinathi, 28 years)..."

Respect is regarded as an important trait and value in developing relationships with others in various contexts such as family, church and in the community.

In support of this Bayanda (27 years) stated:

"...Strong relationships. People listen to me now. People can call me to help out. The church can call me to go and help. There's a working relationship with neighbours; we're one spirit. In the neighbourhood I am known, at church I am known because I like to work. Even in the community I'll be called to do work. What I'm trying to say is that now that I'm a man, most people know that I am someone who changed upon becoming a man, changing from my old ways. I don't just do things as before and that's important."

In support of this notion, Luzuko (30 years) narrated:

"...They can learn how to speak to men. Respect, number one. Respect is the utmost important thing. When you have no respect, nothing can take you beyond. If you have respect, you're doing something right. Respects builds upon other things; it can build upon the way you dress, it can build upon the way you speak to people, it can build upon... It builds many things. Even at home, that you may

not cheek your parents. When you have respect, you are lovable to people, so that even when people talk about you, they may say, 'That's a good person.' It doesn't matter what you wear, if you have respect people will love you...Our language (jargon) as men, also teaches respect such as what you would say if you were to meet another man you don't know. You can learn what to say when you speak to him. Also, how to greet someone in a way that indicates that you're a man."

The community has high regard for recent initiates that display self-respect and respect to other people. It is evident that by virtue of being a respectful person, there is a sense of reciprocity and connection with the community where one belongs.

In an African context, it is noted that it is only by rootedness in one's own community that one may come to be known as a person (Mbiti, 1986; Menkiti, 1984; Idoniboye-Obu et al., 2008). Participants agree with the notion that one is recognised as a complete person after a process of incorporation into a community. The African hermeneutic stance embraces and embodies the philosophy of *ubuntu* through the expression which says *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* (Venter, 2011). This literally means that to be human is to relate with others, and points to the notion of interdependence with other people. *Ubuntu* is a philosophy that is about humanity and is deemed as an aspect that connects people and also encourages the importance of human relations in a society (Letseka; 2014; Maluleke, 2012; Menkiti, 1984). It is also evident from the participants that this sense of belonging is not only related to sharing of clan names but also to the virtue of being human and recognising the importance of every individual in the community.

It is also evident that people seek counsel from men who have a good sense of respect. In contrast the concept of *ubuntu* also has its critics. Academic scholarship suggests that this is an idealized concept because of lack of conceptual clarity and applicability scientifically (Idoniboye-Obu et al., 2008; Venter, 2004). Other critics relate to the argument that it is often misconstrued in interpretation and is abused by capitalists. Under the guise of humanity, corporate companies and civil organisations adopt this concept for economic and personal gains (Idoniboye-Obu et al., 2008; Venter, 2004). It is important to highlight the influence of the dominant discourse of colonisation that problematizes the degeneration of African values and norms (Maluleke, 2012; Venter, 2004).

4.2.6 Uzimele geqe! (Independence and Autonomy)

Participants viewed independence and autonomy as one of the key performance areas of successful masculinity. In narrating the experience of independence and autonomy, participant Babalo (29 years) said:

"...Independence, self-conduct and knowing one's self. I'm still finding myself... I'm not yet where I'd like to be. My own path... just a way of life."

Here Babalo expresses a sense of doubt as he feels that he has not yet achieved the social standard of independence and autonomy due to his realization that he is still exploring himself. However, some participants share different sentiments suggestive of achievement towards the social expectation of successful masculinity.

In support Lazola (26 years) narrated that:

"...Now I am independent. I live by myself. Now that I'm back from the bush I need to work, because I have a child. So I need to take care of child. Yes. It makes me feel really good, even though my workplace is not ideal, but with what I get I can do things..."

In addition, Bayanda (27 years) stated:

"...The experience of being there taught me a lot because of the many things I learned there, which I apply in my life now. Things like taking care of myself, taking care of things, what's right, what's wrong, things I must fix... when you're at the bush, especially alone, you realise the things you were told about. You take care of yourself, introspect on self, and take care of your home and everything."

In drawing on experiences of autonomy, Luzuko (30 years) said that:

"...It has had a significant contribution. When I was a boy, I wouldn't do things on my own and finish what I start. Now I have the mentality that, "I a man is

independent. Indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo (A man shall eat by the sweat of his brow). So, now I can tell myself to do something and be convinced that I'll achieve it, because I have come a long way. I've overcome many hills... even the bush, so I cannot be overwhelmed by small things (Luzuko, 30 years)..."

In support of this understanding, Bongani (27 years) claimed that:

*"...When I was a bride (new man: 3 – 6 months after initiation), I was very happy, getting all that I wanted and people being excited for my transition from boyhood to manhood. However, now it is quite difficult as **one has to toil and eat by the sweat of one's forehead**. I struggle to find employment and there are people who won't believe you that I've actually looked for work. Whereas when you're still a bride, you can stay at home and have your needs catered to you. But, now one is at a stage of independence and there's pressure of preparing for marriage and all other things that come with growing up, but it's tough...."*

These participants used a very powerful isiXhosa idiom '*indoda idlaukubila kwebunzilayo*'. This expression means that a man shall eat by the sweat of his work/efforts. When focusing on key words of this metaphor, it means *indoda* (man) is the head; *ukubila* (to sweat) means to make an effort; and *isibunzi* (the forehead) is regarded as a tool to use. This statement is two folded (a) the first one relates to *intsebenzo/imisebenzi* (to work) which relates to the idea of being productive and prosperous and a home-maker. It also extends to the idea of accountability and taking responsibility for self and others and that includes family and the community. The second view relates to *umsebenzi/ukuqeshwa* (formal employment) that affords one economic/financial gains. It is a custom among *amaXhosa* that a man has certain expectations to fulfil. So, in this context a *Xhosa* man is measured on the basis of those standards of being able to take responsibility and the ability to provide and support his family financially. Basically, the yardstick to manhood generally comes down to the idea that a man must work hard in order to provide for his family.

In contrast, lack of job opportunities seems to challenge how these young men view themselves, potentially seeing themselves as failures as men. To be an unemployed man impairs one's sense of identity as a man, someone who is able to provide and execute all

the expected roles and responsibilities bestowed upon 'real men' who provide for themselves and families. Mhlahlo (2009) notes that *umfana* (one in the first phase of real manhood) is expected to execute all the role expectations. It seems there is a sense of failure that this identity did not bring long lasting benefits, expected within the first few weeks or months of being *ikrwala* and being treated with dignity. Their narratives are embedded within the context of being a man without *amandla* (power) due to their unemployed status. It seems that most participants presented with symptoms of depressions as they narrated their experience of unemployment.

Barker and Ricardo (2005) highlight that in Africa manhood comes at a price and holds a particular mandate with expectations to fulfil. It is also stated that the social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is tied to achievement of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family. It is noted that in northern Uganda manhood is tied to one's marital status and the number of children one has (Silberschmidt, 2001). Ratele (2014) notes that most black youth particularly young African men are measured on the basis of global standards subjected to factors such as capitalism, racism and patriarchy. Theoretically, this places young African men in the category of subordinate and marginal masculinities (Ratele, 2014). It is interesting to note that the use of the metaphor *Indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo* (*A man shall eat by the sweat of his forehead*) within the context of the *amaXhosa* suggests connection and links with universal ideas of hegemonic masculinity. It was interesting to note that, despite cultural locatedness evidenced by the use of the metaphor, there are often elements of these norms that are common or shared in a global society that is still predominantly patriarchal (Ratele, 2013b).

4.2.7 Social Role and Responsibility

For *amaXhosa* people successful performance of manhood means the ability to provide support and assistance in community ceremonies, to run traditional functions, to educate the community about the ideals of manhood and to act as a pillar of strength. Bongani (27 years) reported that:

"...Manhood has had a huge influence in my life; I've learned so much compared to when I was a boy. When I was a boy I just spent money, but now I know I

need to save for days to come. There are responsibilities; fixing the home, buying paint, I need to eat... there are many things. I need to do them, unlike before. And when I do things I need to think about my actions..."

According to Bongani, despite his single status, there is also a family expectation to take responsibility as a man in the house. By virtue of being a man that itself suggests that there is an expectation to provide and make sure that things are done.

Another participant who is of the same age, Bayanda (27 years), said that:

"...Being a man has had a significant contribution to my everyday life. At this age, there are grandfathers who compare themselves to me. At home, there are people who are far older than me, two of which are my uncles. But, I am regarded as if I'm older than them, because before anything is done they consult me first, although the uncles are much older than I am. That is all due to the role of manhood. At home they heed my counsel. At home they consider me senior so they don't just do anything, but they seek my counsel. These things require thinking, so when my uncles come to me for certain decisions, I wonder whether they cannot think or they're not confident in their thinking. You don't just do. They had been accustomed to just doing, but now they're afraid of just doing. However, they don't know what to do. So, they come to ask me. That is one of the things that has helped me grow in my manhood...Firstly, when I was growing up I used to stay in the cabin outside the house, while the uncles stayed inside the house. Now that I live inside the house, and they at the cabin, the situation inside the home has changed. They three old men in the house, but there was no change. When I stayed at the cabin, I'd be reluctant/afraid to go in the house because the atmosphere didn't indicate that there were older people staying in the house. And they're not just men, but old men. At that age, you would expect an elevated level of thinking. That's what I thought, that when you're an elder, your thinking becomes better. But, that isn't necessarily the case. Secondly, I had to revisit the meaning of manhood. Of which, a man is a man by his works. Now, where are my works when this is the situation at home? That allowed me to work hard and manhood was manifest even in other people. That's how it is."

The above quote suggests that the participant has gained status among older men by virtue of his being responsible. He has a good reputation in his community and his family that comes across in the manner in which he is treated differently, and his elders have high regard and respect for him. The respect he has gained qualifies him to be part of family meetings and he gives advice where needed and these are all essential aspects of manhood. However, he notes a down side of his experience of manhood that he had to revisit the meaning of manhood due to challenges and over burdening that he experienced in his family.

According to Babalo (29 years):

“... Things that have changed start at home. When you’re a man, there must be acts of manhood you perform at home. A man is obedient when asked to do something at home. A man heeds advice, because according to our teachings of manhood, a man has two pockets. There’s an open pocket and one that is closed. Take advice that someone gives and is sound, you put in the closed pocket. Then, the advice/talk which you feel isn’t right for you put in the open pocket so that it doesn’t stay with you. It’s a way of thinking, as to what advice do you heed. In terms of how I carry myself... I didn’t care, I didn’t care... I’m out to prove a point that I’ve changed... In such a way that I must love people, respect the figure called ‘father’ and to attend ceremonies hosted by my neighbours, because they (ceremonies) are important. It is tradition that if you won’t attend a neighbour’s ceremony, there should at least be a member of your family so that when your family has a ceremony, that those neighbours may also come... At home, I wouldn’t do gardening at home. My parents had to hire someone for that. I would come home to eat and sleep, and wake up and leave. Now I can be called to be asked to do something, whereas before I would switch off my phone to avoid being reached for requests.”

Important qualities of manhood include obedience, taking advice and being responsible. The roles and responsibilities associated with manhood are to assist older men in traditional rituals, for example, to stand and address other men in the *kraal* on behalf of the family, and in the slaughtering and skinning of livestock during traditional ceremonies and celebrations.

The aim of the initiation is to educate young boys into becoming responsible citizens in their respective communities and the broader society. Thereafter, *amaXhosa* young men fully become part of a community and that is associated with the rights to participate in the decision-making processes of the clan and the family; to share in the privileges, duties and responsibilities of the community and, in many instances, to take a wife and raise a family (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuza, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009). The overriding significance of this practice is centred on ideas of crossing-over, shedding the old self and embracing a new understanding of the self and attaining a form of personhood (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuza, 2013; Vincent, 2008). It was interesting to note that the dominant universal notions of hegemonic masculinity are not contested by *amaXhosa* men. This argument on the basis of the participants' experiences suggest the notion of uncontested hegemonic masculinity is both context-specific in its various forms and practices and universal in terms of shared social ideals across contexts which value particular forms of masculine gender roles and ideology (Connell, 2002; Ratele, 2013a; Ratele, 2014).

Participants highlighted that initiation enabled them to have a deeper understanding about ideals of what constitutes manhood and the expectations that come with it. Participants gave several examples as indicated in the above quotes, particularly drawing from their lived experiences of manhood of people within their own circles. Among all participants I did not get the sense that there were differences or that there were those who refused to subscribe to the ideals of what it means to be a man through traditional male initiation. These young Xhosa men subscribe to the dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity particularly around hard work, access to financial gain and taking responsibility. However, what is noticeable with the use of *Indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo* (a man has to toil and eat by the sweat of one's forehead) relates to the experiences of manhood within a particular culturally located framework of the *amaXhosa* and that idea is linked to the understanding of traditional masculinity. In essence, theory suggests that there are various ways in which the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be applied to understand specific culturally located ideals of masculinity in South Africa and could also be used as a lens to make sense of African masculinities (Ratele, 2014; Spronk 2014).

In contrast responsibility in this context can be viewed in two ways as a burden on the other hand responsibility is associated with traits of manhood. It seems being declared *indoda* (a man) comes with all kinds of responsibilities, once celebrations are over. One of

the major expectations involves the need to seek employment in order to be able to execute and perform roles and responsibilities tied to manhood within the context of *amaXhosa*. It also confirms that Xhosa men subscribe to the dominant notions of manhood that are universally shared across men internationally and in Africa of men deemed as natural providers.

4.3 Conclusion

The aim of the initiation is to educate young men into becoming men. Thereafter, *amaXhosa* young men fully become part of a community and that is associated with the rights to participate in the decision-making processes of the clan and the family; to share in the privileges, duties and responsibilities of the community and, in many instances, to take a wife and raise a family (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuzo, 2013; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014). The overriding significance of this practice is centred on ideas of crossing-over, shedding the old self and embracing a new understanding of the self and attaining a form of personhood (CPPRCRLC, 2010; Lungcuzo, 2013; Vincent, 2008). Furthermore, at the opposite end, it was interesting to note that universal notions of hegemonic masculinity are not contested by *amaXhosa* men.

This argument on the basis of the participants' experiences leads to the idea that hegemonic masculinity is both context-specific in its various forms and practices and universal in terms of shared social ideals across contexts which value particular forms of masculine gender roles and ideology (Connell, 2002; Ratele, 2013a; Ratele, 2014). Participants highlighted that initiation enabled them to have a deeper understanding about ideals of what constitutes manhood and the expectations that come with it. Participants gave several examples as indicated in the above quotes, particularly drawing from their lived experiences of manhood of people within their own circles. Amongst all participants there were differences in terms of those who refused to subscribe to the ideals of what it means to be a man through traditional male initiation.

These young Xhosa men subscribe to the dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity particularly around hard work, access to financial gain and taking responsibility. In contrast, what is noticeable with the use of "*Indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo* (A man shall eat by the sweat of his forehead)" metaphor was related to their experiences of manhood

within a particular culturally located framework of the *amaXhosa* and that idea is linked to the understanding of traditional masculinity. Ratele (2014) notes that most black youth, particularly young African men, are measured through global standards which are influenced by factors such as capitalism, racism and patriarchy. Theoretically, this places young African men in the category of subordinate and marginal masculinities (Ratele, 2014). It became evident to note that the use of the metaphor within the context of the *amaXhosa* suggests connection and links with universal ideas of hegemonic masculinity. It was interesting to note that, despite cultural locatedness evidenced by the use of "*Indoda idla ukubila kwebunzi layo* (A man shall eat by the sweat of his forehead)" had elements of these norms that are common or shared in a global society that is still predominantly patriarchal (Ratele, 2013b).

It is evident that the cultural significance of initiation rituals is the strongest determinant of the continued practice of traditional male circumcision (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2009; Vincent, 2008). The practice of initiation provides space for socialisation of gender role practices, and shared norms and values around manhood (Gwata, 2009; Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008). This space of socialization is not uncontested and has been identified as traditional and patriarchal in that it focuses on the reproduction of very particular culturally located ideals of masculinity (Ratele, 2013; Vincent, 2008). These themes suggest that there are various ways in which the concept of hegemonic masculinity can be applied to understand specific culturally located ideals of masculinity in South Africa and could also be used as a lens to make sense of African masculinities (Ratele, 2014; Spronk 2014).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This section emanates from the data analysis process. It should be noted that the analysis presented in this study is not all-inclusive and definite. The phenomenon explored herein required careful consideration of different debates and other important aspects around the subject under investigation. It became clear that TMI practices promote some potentially positive practices and consequences for subsequent self-definition of masculine identities. However, I am careful and mindful of the potential negative factors and consequences of TMI which are also explored in this study. The factors mentioned above are discussed in order to understand their context.

This is a phenomenological study with qualitative strengths in respect of detailed individual accounts of lived experience. It is important to note that in-depth individual and focus group interviews conducted with six young, circumcised *amaXhosa* men suggests TMI is predominantly conceptualised as a phase of transition – most importantly a process to become a man. It should be noted that experiences of young *amaXhosa* men who undergo the ritual of *ulwaluko* have been examined in relation to the significance and understanding of initiation. Furthermore, in relation to their sense of manhood, it became clear that the overarching understanding is that the ritual is essentially deemed as an important tradition that is part of growth and development for young *amaXhosa* men. It is also noted that the place of location where initiation is performed is influenced by various factors such as that of family practice, personal choice, convenience and limited space in Grahamstown.

At the same time it is clear that for most participants, their experience did not necessarily imply significant meaning in terms of the location where they were initiated. This study also suggests that the entire aim of this ritual focuses on manhood. Initiation is intended to test a man's ability to endure pain as well as to prepare him to cope with challenging circumstances in life. Furthermore, pain is related to concepts such as perseverance and resilience and is deemed as an important part of becoming a man. It is also clear that the

experience of positive masculinity is associated with character virtues such as respect, not only for self, but for others as well. Independence is associated with autonomy with regard to the idea that a man should be independent through having a secured job or career and be able to provide for himself and his family.

Furthermore, it is evident that the transition to manhood is accompanied by various social roles and responsibilities. Mhlahlo (2009) notes that for the *amaXhosa* people successful performance of manhood means the ability to provide support and assistance in community ceremonies, to run traditional functions, to educate the community about the ideals of manhood and to act as a pillar of strength (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ncaca, 2014; Ntombana, 2011). According to Ampofo and Boateng (2007), manhood is loaded with different meanings around the concept of traditional hegemonic masculinity. It is interesting to note that universal notions of hegemonic masculinity are not contested by *amaXhosa* men. Individual participants highlight that initiation enabled them to have a deeper understanding about manhood and its expectations thereafter in families and their respective communities.

This study, however, provides a clear indication that qualitative research would not have value if the nature and extent of the problems around TMI and MMC were not acknowledged. In the literature review the practice of *ukosula* was explored in terms of how it perpetuates gender inequality and problematic sexuality as well as the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. I also noted that some of the values of masculinity transmitted in these practices, particularly *ulwaluko*, are potentially problematic in that they support gender inequality, male dominance, sexual entitlement, and masculine identities premised on heterosexual prowess. Potentially, some of these issues are due to problematic ingrained cultural values supporting patriarchy. Moreover, the contemporary erosion of the traditional meaning of the practices can be better accounted for by the influence of modernisation. Kepe (2010) notes that modernisation through technology influences the current practice of initiation to the degree there is a huge shift between the old and new ways of doing initiation. This also potentially raises questions around the loss of significance of secrecy and sacredness of initiation practices.

There are also changes in relation to the integration of modern medicine and initiation practices. Studies reveal challenges in the practice of *ulwaluko* and the construction of

masculinity, such as carelessness, neglect, and passivity by elders in the process; exclusivity that discriminates against others; and inflexibility toward other constructions of masculinity (Gwata, 2009; Ncaca, 2004; Ntombana, 2011; Vincent, 2008). Gwata (2009) highlights the need for an integrated approach of TMI and MMC in attempts to address health related problems and working towards the reduction of the risks of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In my view, despite the public health discourse on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and prevention strategies around traditional male initiation (Peltzer & Kanta, 2009; Vincent, 2008), the socio-cultural or rather holistic aim of initiation rites should not be undermined, but rather understood within a particular context. My exposition in this thesis highlights the importance of traditional male initiation (TMI) and the socio-cultural significance of traditional male practices. At the same time it notes the importance of the public health discourse and implications of medical science surrounding intervention strategies around TMI.

Contrary to that, failure to recognise and appreciate the significance of rites of passage, particularly TMI, has the potential to destroy meaningful identities because such practices contribute to a sense of personhood for certain ethnic groups such as the *amaXhosa*. I am aware of the idea that identities are not fixed, or unassailable, particularly if they are deemed as potentially problematic. However, it must be noted that if such practices are to retain relevance and meaning, they need also to be adaptable to changing social circumstances, one of which is modernisation. However, that in itself leads to a tension between the modern, Western, democratic ideals of human rights embodied in a liberal constitution on the one hand, and traditional, cultural modes of life on the other (CPPRCRLC, 2010). In South Africa, people have a right to exercise their culture (and this should be protected) but the thorny issue relates to implications of cultural practices that are potentially harmful, or in conflict with aspirations to human rights, democracy and equality. Ideally, it is important to stress the significance of TMI practices in terms of providing many economically disenfranchised and historically politically disenfranchised men in South Africa with a sense of identity. Thus, in this way TMI is potentially a way for subordinate and marginalised masculinities to resist the hegemony of Western domination and hegemonic masculinity. My point for doing this exercise is that, throughout this study and my arguments, I considered almost every aspect that enabled it not to sound culturally

essentialist and conservative. I also paid attention to highlight the fact that this is a complex study, and one can't simply wholeheartedly come down as either completely for or completely against TMI without careful consideration of nuances around this subject.

5.2 Limitations

This study was focused on a limited sample of young *amaXhosa* men based in a semi-urban area. A diverse sample from different geographical towns or places that include both rural and urban areas would have provided rich data from different perspectives. Furthermore, the participants I worked with are mostly from disadvantaged social backgrounds and most of them are unemployed with no formal education. This might have implications in relation to their experiences of manhood and how they made sense of their masculinity.

A larger sample size would have been beneficial; however, the scope of a mini-thesis did not allow the possibility of researching a larger sample with the potential of generating extensive data which would also be more representative and therefore generalizable. Another possible limitation during the interviewing process might have been my position as a cultural insider. The participants were aware of my status as an initiated *amaXhosa* man, so some of them were confused about the obvious questions I asked them. Potentially, this limited them from giving descriptive answers because they felt I knew these things which are already commonly understood by insiders and do not need further explanation.

Lastly, the interviews were conducted in *isiXhosa* and translated by the interviewer into English for analysis. Potentially, a limitation is that during translation meaning is often lost and that has implications for potentially losing the meaning of uttered as expressed in the original language. In IPA a challenge is experienced in the process of the double hermeneutic cycle whereby the researcher tries to make sense of the participants who are also trying to make sense of their subjective experiences. Essentially, in that process, translation adds a whole new layer of interpretation. It is important to highlight and emphasise that, despite the limitations described above, the results are often consistent with the existing literature, as supported by detailed excerpts that suggest that they are valid and meaningful.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study sheds light on areas of expansion and further research. It is important to note that an in-depth study explored from a different angle, for example a narrative approach, could bring rich narratives around the practice of initiation. Furthermore, research could be done around strategies to counteract the debates and challenges facing initiation rites in South Africa. Further research is recommended that would be focused on positive masculinity particularly studies looking at new trends of masculinity. It might also be useful to explore the identity construction and narratives of initiates who experienced botched circumcision and to look at the implications of penile loss due to penis amputation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

(isi Xhosa Information Letter)



INCWADI YOKUCELA UKUTHATHA INXAXHEBA

Mholo mnumzana;

Igam lam ndingu AneleSiswana, ongumfundi ogqibezela izifundo zakhe ezibizwa njenge Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology kwi Dyunivesithi yaseRhodes.

Kungoku njendenza uphando oluyinxalenye yezifundo zam nalapho ndiphanda malunga nolwaluko lwesintu, nolu sihloko sithi '*ulwaluko kwaXhosa*'. Nanje ngomfana ongumXhosa mna kuqala, nosele eyihambile lindlela yolwaluko lwesintu, ndiyayazi indlela elixatyiwe nelihlonitshwe ngayo elisiko linempandla lakwantu, yaye ndino lwazi nango kubaluleka koku ligcina li yimfihlo kwabo bangayo nxalenye yalo nabangekayi entabeni.

Ngenzame nenjongo zokuqinisekisa ukuhlonipha imithetho yelisiko kwakunye nokukhusela abantu endizakuthi ndidlane indlebe nabo kokulandelayo kuza wuthi kunikwe ingqalelo emandla:

- Imfihlelo nobuze bakho sokuze bujongelwe phantsi na njengoko amanyathelo okuqinisekisa oku ezakuthi athatyathwe.
- Ayizu kubakho imfuneko yokuba inikise ngeenkcukacha ze sazi sakho nezi nokubangela ukuba waziwe, nto leyo ithetha ukuthi ziinkcukacha zophando kuphela eziza kuthi zilindelwe kuwe.
- Iimpendulo zakho kudliwano ndlebe ziza kuthi zi shicilelwe zezigcinwe nge ndlela ekhuselekileyo, nalapho izakuba ngumphandi kwa kunye nomphathi wakhe kuphela abazakuthi babe negunya nemvume yokuzi phula phula.

Eyona njongo yoluphando kuku kunika ithuba lokuthi uzityande igila gabalala malunga nendlela owathi waluva ngayo uhambo lwakho lokuya ebudodeni. Awuzukunyanzeleka ukuba udwele kwizinto ezikhethekileyo ezinobuzaza, neziyinxalenye yokuqhubeka entabeni koko kufuneka uchaze ngokuphangaleleyo indlela oluthe lwanefuthe ngayo ulwaluko lwesintu kwindlela wena ozibona uyindoda ngayo namhlanje. Nceda uqaphele ukuba akuso sinyanzeliso ukuba yinxalenye yoluphando yaye unelungelo lokuyeka nanga liphina ixesha kudliwanondlebe xa uthewaziva unga khululekanga kuku qhu bekeka.

Inzuzo onokuthi uyifumane ngokuzibandakanya noluphando lithuba lokwazi ukuvuselela nokuhlalutya amava othe wawafumana nokwazi ifuthe athe analo lamava ekukhuleni kwakho ngokuthe gabalala. Ukuba uthe awaziva mnandi ngxenxa yoluphando, ndizakuthi, nge mvume yakho ndenze ama lungiselelo okuba ndikudibanise neziko lempilo iPsychology Clinic e Rhodes okanye isibhedlele iFort England ukuze uphononongwe ngamaxabiso afikelelekayo.

Nawuphina umbuzo othe wana womalungane liphulo, nceda uzive ukhululekile ukuqhagamshelana nam okanye umphathi wamu Mnu Werner Bohmke kwezi e-mail ne nombolo zingezantsi.

Anele Siswana (Umfundi ophandayo)

Email address: g13s5114@campus.ru.ac.za or Anele.Siswana@yahoo.com

Cell no: 078 260 1878

Werner Bohmke (Umphathi wophando)

Appendix B
Translated Information Letter



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good day

My name is Anele Siswana, a student researcher at Rhodes University, completing a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology.

Presently, I am doing a study on '*ulwaluko kwaXhosa*'. I am an insider researcher, a (Xhosa man) who went to the mountain. I am aware of the confidentiality principle which states that "what happens at the mountain stays at the mountain". In order to respect this cultural prohibition regarding revealing the nature of the initiation ritual to outsiders, as well as the secret and sacred status of the initiation practice, the following will be given careful consideration:

- Your privacy will not be undermined as required steps will be maintained so as not to violate your privacy.
- You will not be required to provide any identifying information, thus anonymity will be upheld with a high level of integrity.
- Interview recordings of verbatim responses will be saved and protected and access will be limited to the researcher and his supervisor.

Rather, the aim of the study is to give you space to reflect on your experiences of the initiation ritual in general rather than in specific terms, and the effect of these experiences on the development of your personal sense of manhood.

Please also note that you may refuse to participate without any penalty, or stop the interview at any point should you feel uncomfortable. There are benefits attached to participating in this research such as space to reflect on your experiences and personal awareness (growth). Should you feel any discomfort as a result of this study, I will negotiate for the necessary arrangements with the Psychology Clinic at Rhodes University and the Fort England Psychiatric Hospital for counselling at a nominal rate.

If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Werner Bohmke, on the e-mail addresses or telephone numbers provided below.

Anele Siswana (Student Researcher)

Email address: g13s5114@campus.ru.ac.za or Anele.Siswana@yahoo.com

Cell no: 078 260 1878

Werner Bohmke (Research Supervisor)

Appendix C



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ agree to participate in the research project of Anele Siswana on ***'Ulwaluko kwaXhosa': Young Xhosa men's lived experiences in the context of traditional male initiation.***

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted at 078 260 1878 or Anele.Siswana@yahoo.com. The research project has been approved by the Research Project and Ethics Review Committee and is under the supervision of Mr Werner Bohmke in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on W.R.Bohmke@ru.ac.za.
2. The researcher is interested in exploring the lived experiences of young Xhosa men on the practice of initiation.
3. My participation will involve an interview conducted at a time and place convenient for me and should last an average of 60 minutes.
4. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which am not willing to disclose.
5. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction. The

Psychology Clinic at Rhodes University at 046 6038 508 and Fort England at 046 6227003 may be contacted for further support should participants experience any form of distress during the research process.

6. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.

Signed on (Date):

Participant:

Researcher:

Appendix D



Interview Schedule

What are the experiences of young Xhosa men of the practice of traditional male initiation 'ulwaluko' and manhood?

- Athini amava akho ngokubaluleka kwesiko lolwaluko kwaXhosa?

Background Information

1. How old were you at the time of your circumcision/initiation?
 - **Woluka une minyaka emi ngaphi?**
2. Where was your place of initiation and why did you specifically choose it?
 - **Wolukelaphi, kwaye kwakutheni uze uyo kwalukela kulo ndawo?**
3. During which season did you go to the mountain?
 - **Woluka ngeliphi ixesha lonyaka?**
4. What did you feel about going to the mountain?
 - **Waziva njani ngokuya entabeni? Emveni kokuba wolukile (imizwa)?**

Initiation Experience

1. Elaborate on the feelings you experienced at the time you were at the mountain?
 - **Dandalazisaiimvakalelozakhongokowawusentabeni?**
2. What was it like for you to stay at the mountain?
 - **Kwa kunjani esuthwini? (ziintoni onozidla ngazo ngokuya esuthwini)?**
3. What went through your mind and feelings when you confirmed that 'ndiyindoda' I am a man?
 - **Yintoni eyathi qatha kuwe engqondweni nakwi mvakalelo emveni kokuba ungqinile wathi ndiyindoda?**
4. What did the statement 'ndiyindoda' mean to you? What does it mean to others?

- **Ntsingiselo nina owayifumanisayo xa usithi uyindoda? Ithetha ukuthini kumanye amadoda?**

Reflective Experience

1. Based on '*izilimela*' the number of years that you have acquired as a young man '*umfana*' so far what can you tell about your personal experiences of manhood?
 - **Zeziphi izinto onokuthi zitshintshile kuwe ngoku pha thelene nee ngcamango zakho, invakalelo nendlela yokuzi phatha njengoko uyindoda?**
2. In your life presently, how do you apply the teachings that you gained during initiation?
 - **Abantu banga funda ntoni kuwe njengoko uyindoda? (ingakumbi abantwana abeza emva kwakho)?**
3. How has being a man shaped what you do in your everyday life?
 - **Ukubayindondabubenagaleloliningendlelaophilangayoubomibakho?**
4. How has being a man shaped your relationships with others?
 - **Ukuba yindoda kwakho kunandima yini kubu dlelwane bakho nabanye abantu?**

Appendix E

Glossary of *isiXhosa* terms

Ukudlanga: refers to circumcision, i.e. the removal of the foreskin.

Ukwaluka: refers to the cutting/circumcision that is not only limited to the mere cutting of the foreskin but a transitional phase from boyhood to manhood.

Ingcibi: refers to a traditional surgeon who does the operation to remove the foreskin or prepuce.

Ikhankatha: refers to a traditional nurse/ teacher or guardian during initiation.

Ubukhwetha: refers to the new initiate's phase during initiation.

Umgidi /umphumo: refers to a home-coming ceremony to celebrate the arrival of the new man.

Ikrwala: refers to a new man phase after graduation from the bush.

Ndiyi Ndoda! "I am a Man": refers to one's affirmation of manhood.

Isihlonipho: refers to a particular way of communicating and indicates new vocabulary in the form of 'codes' during initiation. It is also used in sacred men gatherings.

Ukuyala: refers to a process of giving admonition and advice about the realities of life.

Ukunyamezela: refers to ability to endure pain and to persevere.

Indoda: is a circumcised man.

Ubudoda: refers to manhood particularly judged by actions and works.

Isifana: refers to a second phase of manhood after *ubukrwala*.

Izilimela: refers to the number of years that you have acquired as a young man; it begins with an experience of one to ten years as a man.

Isithethe: refers to a customary/common practice.

Isintu/Isiko: refers to a long standing practice that is fixed. It also refers to rituals which have been established through generations.