**The role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinity in men at the**

University of the Western Cape.

A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Research Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the

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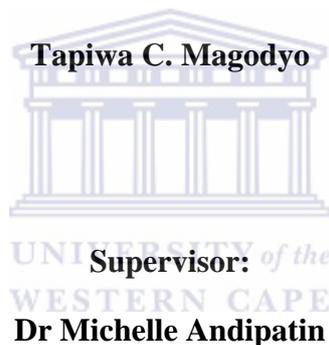
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Keywords: *Ulwaluko*, masculinities, social constructionism, hegemonic masculinity, Xhosa men, understandings of masculinity, qualitative exploratory study, purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, thematic decomposition analysis.

Declaration

I declare that *The role of Ulwaluko in the construction of masculinity in men at the University of the Western Cape* is my own work, and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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Abstract

Ulwaluko is a Xhosa word that refers to male circumcision, an initiation ritual performed to transform boys into men. The ritual is supposed to instil good moral and social values. Research has demonstrated that, the practice of *Ulwaluko* has undergone many changes primarily because of urbanization, acculturation and the emergence of back-door circumcision schools amongst other things. This has culminated in instances of moral decline such as criminal activity, drug abuse, risky sexual behaviour and inhumane behaviour among some of the initiates. There has been a recent upsurge in research on *Ulwaluko* in South Africa. However, lacking in this body of scholarship is a focus on how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinities. This served as the motivation for my study. Given the above, my study explored the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinity in men at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1994; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) was used as a theoretical framework conceptualizing this study. The study utilised a qualitative framework and data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Seven participants aged from 19 to 32, consented to be part of the study. These were recruited using purposive sampling. The ethical considerations of the study adhered to the guidelines stipulated by UWC. Data was transcribed, and analysed using thematic decomposition analysis. The findings of this study indicate that *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity in hegemonic ways. Through hegemony it establishes, maintains and retains control over young men, boys and women. It constructs an idealised masculine identity that is morally upright, faced with ritual challenges and burdened by a prescriptive set of masculine role expectations. This study also shows the self-reflexive, critical and imaginative engagement by men as they negotiated *Ulwaluko's* ideal masculinity. Such contestations resulted in the creation of rival masculinities. It also demonstrates how subject position(s) impact understandings and constructions of masculinities. This study provided a richer and more nuanced contextual understanding of the psychosocial realities of men who underwent *Ulwaluko*.

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ulwaluko is a Xhosa word that refers to male circumcision, an initiation ritual performed to transform boys into men (Goniwe, 2004). Male circumcision is the partial or full removal of the foreskin of the penis (Hellsten, 2004). Among the Xhosa, an indigenous tribe predominantly residing in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, *Ulwaluko* is considered a sacred religious custom (Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman, & Toth, 2009) that instills good moral and social values (Pauw, 1975; Goniwe, 2004). In Xhosa culture, this tradition has been practised for more than a thousand years (Laidler, 1922; Mtumane, 2004). Such rites of passage are important in the socialization of boys and men throughout Africa (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

In South Africa amongst the Xhosa, *Ulwaluko* regulates and endorses culturally accepted norms of heterosexual manhood (Ragnarsson, Townsend, Ekstrom, Chopra, & Thorson, 2010). However, it has become evident that *Ulwaluko*, a practice that was once regarded as instilling good moral values, has suddenly become tainted by instances of moral decline (Ntombana, 2011). This includes among other things, an increasing number of fatalities among the initiates, criminal activities, drug abuse and inhumane behaviour involving the newly emerged men (Myemana, 2004; Vincent, 2008a). Men in this practice no longer uphold moral values as they did in the past (Myemana, 2004).

In a study on Xhosa male initiation and teaching of moral values, Ntombana (2009) implicates traditional guardians, tasked with the teaching and nursing of the boys during the initiation process. These guardians introduce into *Ulwaluko* alcohol, drugs and inhumane teachings (Ntombana, 2011). As a result, the behaviors of some of the initiates do not conform to the expectations identified by the ritual even though they have undergone the ritual, their lives are the same as when they were boys (Mcotheli, 2006). One such inhumane teaching is that when an initiate graduates, he must sleep with a woman who is not his girlfriend to supposedly remove the

bad luck acquired during the initiation ("A Young Girl Raped", 2006). Similarly, Vincent (2008b) cites a case in which eight initiates were accused of gang raping a 27-year-old woman. The accused had recently graduated from initiation school and reportedly gang raped the woman to remove a white substance (*ifutha*) that is used as part of the initiation process. Such beliefs perpetuate rape and the abuse of women (Ntombana, 2011).

Some people regard *Ulwaluko* as a gateway to sex rather than as marking the point at which responsible sexual behaviour begins (Vincent, 2008a). In some cultural groups, circumcised males are encouraged to engage in unprotected pre-marital sex for sexual exploration, or to prove their virility by impregnating a woman (Simbayi, 2002). There is wide agreement among leaders in South Africa that the historical mechanisms for the sexual socialisation of youth have largely broken down (Fuglesang, 1997; Vincent, 2008a). According to Ntombana (2009), in some instances the practice of initiation no longer contributes to the building of society but instead plays a part in the moral decline of the communities concerned.

1.1.1   *Ulwaluko* as a rite of passage

In South Africa, the ethnic groups that commonly practice male initiation rituals are some groups among the Xhosa, Ndebele, Sotho, Pedi, Venda and the Tsonga (Taylor, Lockwood, & Taylor, 1996; Shisana & Simbayi, 2002). Xhosa boys are usually circumcised between the ages of 16 and 26 (Peltzer, Nqeketo, Petros, & Kanta, 2008).

Like all anthropological rites of passage, *Ulwaluko* is divided into three phases: separation, transition (liminality) and reintegration (Turner, 1995). In the separation phase, the initiate (one who undergoes the cultural circumcision ritual) leaves the society and a farewell traditional ceremony is held for them (Meintjies, 1998). Turner (1995) calls this phase a period of seclusion which involves the initiates' separation from everyday existence and adherence to certain foods. The ritual takes place away from the community and is characterized by signals of

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gatherings, such as fire, trumpets and drums (Van Gennep, 1960). The initiate is translocated to a temporary hut built of grass, which is isolated from the community (Turner, 1995).

At this hut he is circumcised and remains here for a period of time, during which he heals and is traditionally taught about manhood (transition). The initiation process phase is characterized by various devices used to make the journey longer and more difficult (Ntombana, 2009). In addition, initiates undergo supervised physical training to overcome difficulties and pain, to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance and obedience. The goal of these devices is to make the participants stronger as they enter into manhood (Ntombana, 2009).

Finally, the initiate is welcomed back into the community and the ritual concludes with a celebration of his newly acquired manhood status (reintegration) (Mavundla et al., 2009). In the initiation process, one of the important elements of a ritual is the graduation ceremony which celebrates the successful outcome of a long and often painful learning process and the launching of a new breadwinner (Ntombana, 2009). It may further involve their eating, drinking and smoking together, being attached to each other, being covered together or sitting together on the same seat (Van Gennep, 1960). In Xhosa initiation the new man is given new gifts, new clothes and a new name – all of which are a symbol of a new life (Ntombana, 2009).

Of particular importance is the separation or seclusion part of *Ulwaluko*, in which the initiate undergoes a period of education or traditional schooling. The initiates receive instructions on courtship, social responsibility, marriage practices (Stinson, 2007; Meintjies, 1998), sexual education (Vincent, 2008a), adult life and its responsibilities (Pauw, 1994) as well as advice that they no longer live for themselves but for the common good of their families and community (Gitywa, 1976). This educational experience equips them mentally, physically, emotionally and morally for adulthood (Ntombana, 2009). According to Gitywa (1976) one of the most important aspects of the newly initiated is a change of behaviour. A clear distinction can be seen between the one who is not circumcised and the one who has been circumcised. Initiates are considered to

be men, while uncircumcised males, even if they are older adults, are still considered to be boys (Mavundla, Netswera, Toth, Bottoman, & Tenge, 2010).

Some young Xhosa males face enormous social pressure to undergo *Ulwaluko* (Vincent, 2008a). Peer pressure, being called cowards, being ridiculed and harassed, pressure from women and older people to maintain tradition and the desire to gain respect feature strongly in the self-reported motivations of Xhosa males to be circumcised (Vincent, 2008a; Mavundla et al., 2010). Perceived inability to meet cultural benchmarks of normative masculinity may result in anxiety, depression and hostility (McCreary et al., 1996). On the contrary, *Ulwaluko's "*traditional beliefs serves to construct masculinity, cultivating a self–conscious attitude of identifying with the voice of authority: man is the head of the house, the decision-maker, the provider for and protector of the family" (Goniwe, 2004, p. 5).

1.1.2 Defining masculinity

Masculinity has been defined as a collective gender identity and not a natural attribute (Morrell, 1998) that consists of a set of role behaviours that most men are encouraged to perform (Sorrell & Raffaelli, 2005). However, according to Connell (1995, p. 71), masculinity is neither an "essence", nor a "natural character type", nor a "role". Connell defines masculinity as "... simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices on bodily experience, personality and culture" (p. 71). From this definition, masculinity has three components. Firstly, it is a social location that individuals, regardless of gender, can move into through practice. Second, it is a set of practices and characteristics understood to be "masculine". Third, when these practices are embodied especially by men, but also by women, they have widespread cultural and social effects (Schippers, 2007).

Occupying the masculine position and performing it affects the way individuals experience their bodies, their sense of self, and how they project that self to others (Schippers,

2007). Instead of possessing or having masculinity, individuals move through and produce masculinity by engaging in masculine practices. The performance of masculinity often becomes habitual or routinized (Edley, 2001) as it occurs across space and over time and are taken up and enacted collectively by groups, communities, and societies. Thus Edley (2001) contends that to some extent men are not free to construct themselves as they wish because it is their cultural history which determines the kinds of identities they can assume. Of importance is how recurring enactment of masculine practices over time and space, structure the production and distribution of resources, the distribution of power in the form of authority, cathexis, by which Connell means the social arena of desire and sexuality, and symbolism or the production of meaning and values (Connell, 2000).

Murrie (1998) asserts that the primary functioning of masculinity within gender relations therefore, concerns ratios of power — the power of men as a class in relation to women and power differentials between dominant and subordinate groups of men. Although dominant constructions of masculinity are indeed attempts to fix gendered identity, masculinity never represents a stable formation (Murrie, 1998). Morrell (1998) reiterates that masculinity changes over time, being affected by changes elsewhere in society and at the same time, affecting society itself. As such this thesis will employ Connell's (2000) definition, summarily that masculinity is a social position, a set of practices and the effects of the collective embodiment of those practices on individuals, relationships, institutional structures and global relations of domination.

Clarity on what constitutes masculinity is imperative in exploring *Ulwaluko's* regulatory masculinity. A significant body of research (Adomako & Boateng, 2007; Campbell, 1997; Clowes, 2013; Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Hunter, 2005; Morrell, 2001; Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005; Ratele, 2006: 2008; Sev'er, 2012; Vincent, 2008a) has identified that some traditional performances of normative successful manhood relate with certain masculinities that hold harmful notions that facilitate violence, conflict, unsafe sexual practices, perpetuate gender abuse and inequality, substance abuse and criminal/gang activity. Likewise some previous studies on

Xhosa ritualized circumcision (Mcotheli, 2006; Myemana, 2004; Ntombana, 2011, Vincent, 2008a: 2008b) have demonstrated similar problematic behavior from initiates. It is within such a backdrop that the major thrust of the paper was to explore how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinities.

1.2 Rationale

This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature on the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinities in men. A fair amount of work on traditional ritualised male circumcision has been done in South Africa (Gwata, 2009; Kepe, 2010; Mavundla, 2009: 2010; Mayatula & Mavundla, 1997; Meissner & Buso, 2007; Ngwane, 2001; Ntombama, 2009: 2011; Vincent, 2008a: 2008b) but did not focus on *how Ulwaluko* constructs masculinities. This study aimed to fill this gap in the literature as it explored and attempted to unlock the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinities in men within a tertiary institution.

The study will bring an understanding of how *Ulwaluko* and masculinity plays out within Xhosa men at a tertiary institution. In this manner it avails valuable knowledge of the various contestations through which masculinities are constructed and reconstructed. This provides useful insights into deconstructing harmful notions of masculinity and promoting alternative ways to be a man. This study focused on a particular aim so as to unlock such insights.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

This study aimed to explore the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinities. The aim was translated into the following objectives.

1.3.1 Objectives

- To explore men's understanding of masculinity (ies).
- To ascertain how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity (ies).

1.4 Outline of thesis

Chapter one has provided the background to the study in addition to stating *Ulwaluko* as a rite of passage, the definition of masculinity and the rationale of research in this area. In chapter two, I discussed the epistemological and theoretical position locating the study, namely social constructionism and hegemonic masculinity respectively. These two positions brought to the fore, the role of *Ulwaluko* in shaping masculinity (ies). This chapter thus sought out to make clear the idea endemic in literature that masculinity is not a natural attribute but is a collectively negotiated identity, fluid, plural, historically and culturally specific. This avails possibilities for alternatives to dominant forms of masculinity.

In the third chapter, I reviewed the literature on masculinity. I began by highlighting the turn to masculinity studies in gender and provided an exploration of the concept of masculinity. I further reviewed research on masculinity in Africa, in Southern Africa and South Africa. An exploration of South African research on *Ulwaluko* and masculinity ensued.

Chapter four advocated for my choice of method and procedures followed. My research was grounded within a social constructionist epistemology, hence informing my choice of data collection method, the procedures followed and the data analysis technique used. Reflexivity and ethical considerations were also explored here.

In chapter five, I presented the findings and discussed the implications of the subject positions that men took. Thereafter I provided an overview of the key findings of the study and presented some recommendations in the final chapter.

2. CHAPTER 2

2.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITION

Social constructionism was adopted as an epistemological lens conceptualizing this study. The central tenet of social constructionism is that our experience of reality is socially, culturally and historically relative (Gergen, 1999; Burr, 1995). Fish (1990, p. 186) explains that social institutions which "precede us" and in which "we are already embedded" and "it is by inhabiting them, or being inhabited by them, that we have access to the public and conventional senses they make" and provide a source of the interpretative strategies whereby we construct meaning. Crotty (1998) agrees that for each of us, when we first see the world in meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed upon us by our culture. Our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning and by the same token, leads us to ignore other things. All reality, the whole gamut of meaningful reality, is socially constructed. Thus Burr (1995) emphasizes that our understanding of phenomena is framed within a particular historic-cultural milieu which is specific to the culture and time and social processes we are exposed to

Another important premise of social constructionism is that knowledge is sustained by social processes. Members of a culture construct beliefs, values, institutions, customs and laws that make up their social reality as they interact with one another (Burr, 1995; Freedman & Combs, 1995; Gergen, 1997). People's knowledge and experiences of the world and themselves are the product of social processes (Burr, 1995). Freedman and Combs (1995) add that social constructionists believe that categories such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, and nationality are socially constructed which may vary across time and culture depending on the specific circumstances, processes and forms of interaction. These social realities are constructed through language (Gergen, 1997). Language is an interactive and constitutive process, not merely a passive receiving of existing language (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1997). Gergen (1994) asserts that it is human interchange that brings meaning to language and it must stand as the critical locus of

concern. Potter (1996) reiterates that social constructionists are interested in how utterances work in bringing about an understanding of social practices and analysing the rhetorical strategies at play in particular kinds of discourse.

Social constructionists believe that knowledge and social action go together. Our negotiated understandings could take a wide variety of different forms, and we can therefore talk of numerous possible 'social constructions' of the world (Burr, 1995). Thus it ascribes to the view that multiple realities exists (Guba, 1996). But each different construction also brings with it or invites a different kind of action from human beings. Therefore, by constructing our world we sustain some patterns of social actions and exclude others (Burr, 1995).

Social constructionism adopts and invites us to take a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge by remaining suspicious of the assumptions about how the world appears to be (Burr, 1995). We take the sense we make of things to be the way things are and accept our understandings as quite simply the truth. Crotty (1998) advises that understandings transmitted in this way take deep root and we find ourselves victims of the tyranny of the familiar. By adopting a critical stance, social constructionism bids us to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world (Burr, 1995).

Realities are constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus our interpretations are not constructed in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, languages and so forth (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Writing from a social constructionist perspective, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) point out that masculinity does not hold a universal meaning. It has multiple, ambiguous and often contradictory meanings, which change and shift overtime and context. It is a cultural construct, bound up with the political, social and economic structures of the world in which we live (Foucault, 1981; Gilfoyle, Wilson & Own, 1992). For the purposes of this research, social constructionist epistemology allows for an exploration of the role of

Ulwaluko in constructing masculinity in such a way that acknowledges men's subject positions and contextual givens.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the aim and objectives of the study, the theoretical framework chosen is hegemonic masculinity. The theory was developed by Connell (1995) and recently revised by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005).

According to Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985, p. 592), hegemonic masculinity is "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance". It is one kind or version of masculinity. The term hegemonic masculinity denotes a dominant form of masculinity, which presents its own version of masculinity as the cultural ideal (Morrell, 1998). It determines the standards against which other masculinities are defined and subordinated (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994). Through regulating the behaviour of men and boys, "they support it, are regulated by it and use it to judge other men's conduct" (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 351). In doing so, hegemonic masculinity silences or subordinates other masculinities, placing these in opposition to itself in such a way that the values expressed by these other constructions of masculinity do not have currency or legitimacy (Morrell, 1998). This is not an account of how "real men" are but an exemplar (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

The term hegemony was derived from Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony which explains how a dominant (economic) class controls society, promoting its definition of the situation (Hearn, 2004). According to Donaldson (1993) hegemony is about the attaining and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in that process. In this sense, it is about the ways in which the ruling class establishes and maintains its domination. Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the

media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear "natural", "ordinary", "normal" (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645). The state, through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement (Connell, 1987, p. 107).

The term hegemonic masculinity is most importantly a means to recognizing that all masculinities are not created equal (Kimmel 1997) and invokes a framing that draws attention to the diversity within masculinities, to multiple masculinities (Beasley, 2008). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 846) point out that "certain masculinities are more socially central, or more associated with authority and social power than others". Schippers (2007) adds that hegemonic masculinity operates not just through the subordination of femininity to hegemonic masculinity, but also through the subordination and marginalization of other masculinities. In addition, it will "dominate other types in any particular historical and social context" (van Kriekan, Smith, & Holborn, 2000, p. 413). It is not stable as it constantly responds to challenges, accommodating, or repelling subordinated, rival and marginalized masculinities and femininities (Gardiner, 2002; Morrell, 1998).

However, the term slides between many meanings. Flood (2002) suggests that its meaning can be a political mechanism tied to the word hegemony — referring to cultural/moral leadership to ensure popular or mass consent to particular forms of rule. Beasley (2008) concurs and adds that it further slides to its meaning as a descriptive word referring to dominant (most powerful and/or most widespread) versions of manhood. Finally, it can have a meaning that holds an empirical reference specifically to actual groups of men (Beasley & Elias, 2006).

These differing meanings creates certain problems. Flood (2002) argues that it is politically deterministic and defeatist to assume that the most dominant ideals/forms of masculinity are necessarily the same as those that work to guarantee men's authority over women. Beasley (2008) agrees that dominant forms of masculinity, for example, may not always, at all times, legitimate men's power and those that do legitimate it may not always be socially celebrated or common. Connell has acknowledged this slide between the meaning of hegemonic

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masculinity as a legitimating strategy and as merely dominant. Relatedly, Connell cautions that

hegemonic masculinity may in fact describe the position of a minority of men or may only

loosely correspond to the lives of actual men (Connell 2000; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005;

Beasley, 2006). Connell has recently reemphasized that the term be defined by its political

strategic function in legitimating patriarchy (Beasley, 2008). Thus this study will adopt Connell's

recent emphasis.

2.2.1   Hierarchy of gender hegemony

Connell's theory is built on a hierarchical understanding of gender, in which men position

themselves in relation to one another and in relation to hegemonic standards of gender (Coles,

2009). These relationships operate through levels of dominance and subordination between

groups of men. Furthermore, as Connell (1995) notes, men's masculinities may be marginalized

by factors such as age or ethnicity. Although these hierarchical relations appear rigidly structured,

they are continuously open to challenge and change (by both men and women). The dominance

of hegemonic masculinity is susceptible to the challenges of subordinated and marginalized

masculinities (e.g., gay men excelling in sports that epitomize hegemonic masculinity, such as

football and rugby) and femininities (Gardiner, 2002).

The ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity over other subordinate and marginalized

masculinities is equally important for gender hegemony. Complicit masculinities are

masculinities constructed in such a way that they receive patriarchal dividends without enacting a

strong version of masculine dominance or embodying hegemonic masculinity (Connell &

Messerschmidt, 2005). The dividend is in terms of honour, prestige, right to command and

material dividend (Connell, 1995). The majority of men support hegemonic masculinity as a

means to defend patriarchy as they benefit from the overall subordination of women (Coles,

2009). Thus hegemonic masculinity ensures male dominance. It is in relation to complicit

masculinities, and to compliance among heterosexual women, that the concept of hegemony is

most powerful. Hegemony does not imply or mean violence, although it could be supported by force, it means ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion. Ideologically, it legitimated the global subordination of women to men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Perhaps most importantly for Connell (1995) is the subordination of gay men by heterosexual men. Gay men embody what Connell refers to as subordinate masculinities. Schippers (2007) asserts that when held up against hegemonic masculinity as the ideal, subordinate masculinities serve as the inferior. Oppression positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of gender hierarchy among men. Connell suggests that subordinate masculinities are often conflated with femininity (Schippers, 2007).

Marginalizing other masculinities is another mechanism for the ascendancy of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995) offers the concept of marginalization to characterize the relationships among men that result as class and race intersect with gender. Marginalized masculinities are those of subordinated classes or racial or ethnic groups. Schippers (2007) maintains that this relationship is one of authorization and marginalization because hegemonic masculinity is conflated with whiteness and middle-class status, and it is conferred authority in a way marginalized masculinities are not. However, because gender hegemony is so inextricably tied to heterosexual, middle-class, and white status, according to Connell (1995), it becomes problematic when conceptually applied to other groups whose members are not white and middle class (in this study the Xhosa ethnic group).

On the contrary, authors who write about hegemonic masculinities generally move away from an essentialist conception of masculinity. They suggest that what is hegemonic and dominant is neither universal, nor is it set in stone, but rather it is dynamic, multifaceted and continuously changing to adapt to the challenges of the time and context (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As such this thesis will adopt a non-essentialist approach in exploring the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinities amongst Xhosa men.

Coles (2009) argues that masculinity is often only discussed at the structural level with little consideration given to the strategies men use to negotiate masculinities in their everyday lives. Similarly, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is deliberated at the structural level. This fails to accommodate men's lived realities of their own masculinities as dominant in relation to other men, despite being subordinate in relation to the cultural ideal (Coles, 2009). Furthermore, Whitehead (2002) emphasizes that it tends to be used to describe male power at a structural level with no real understanding of how power is organized in terms of complicity and resistance at the individual level. Thus there is a distinct need to take masculinity away from the structural and consider masculinities as collective human projects that are individually lived out (Watson, 2000; White, 2002). Masculinity does not mean the same thing to all men. It is varied in how it is understood, experienced and lived out in daily practice (Coles, 2009). Irrespective of these shortcomings, the theory of hegemonic masculinity has been used widely. In the next section I highlight why so much consideration is given to it in analyzing men.

2.2.2   Usefulness of Hegemonic masculinity as theoretical tool

The strength of hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical tool lies in its ability to describe nuances of power (resistance and subordination) (Coles, 2009) in aiming to understand the ways in which masculinity is practiced (Moller, 2007). As Demetriou (2001) suggests, a major strength of Connell's theorisation of masculinities lies in his critique of sex role theory. Connell (2005, p. 27) notes that this approach to gender "has a fundamental difficulty in grasping issues of power". Furthermore, the sex role theory homogenized the role concept and blurred behaviour and role norms (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). That is, it sharply criticized role norms as the source of oppressive behaviour by men (Brannon, 1976). This leaves sex role theory unable to satisfactorily account for changes in the performance and meaning of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity seems to provide an alternative, more critical way of thinking about gender relations and has been particularly successful in identifying the ways in which some men dominate both women and

other men (Hearn, 2004). Kopano Ratele (2008) agrees that along with the notion of masculinity, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has generally proved useful in bringing to attention, following feminist thought, the understanding of manhood (as opposed to maleness) as a social practice that manifests in many forms (such that we now speak of masculinities).

The usefulness of Connell's theorisation of masculinity lies in his understanding of masculinity (ies) as actively and socially constructed (Moller, 2007; Morrell, 1998). Since masculinities are socially constructed, there must be conditions under which masculinities can be changed. Moller (2007) suggests that if masculinities are malleable, at least to some extent, then it becomes less necessary to live with those articulations of masculinity that are damaging. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity provides a framework to understand the various contestations through which masculinities are constructed and reconstructed. In addition it is the fluidity of gender relations and the challenges that hegemonic masculinity endures that validate it (Coles, 2009).

Cornwall and Lindesfarne (1994) proposes that it is within the fluid masculinities that an idealized normative masculinity mingles with local ideas of masculinity and produces new expressions of what it means to be a man within a certain culture. People's social identity is based on aspects of their self-definition that arise from membership of particular social groups within specific contexts, which in turn affect and influence behaviours that are shaped and constrained by collectively negotiated social identities (Campbell, 2003). As such, hegemonic masculinity must be understood within a social context and as constantly produced and contested. Thus, focusing on specific locations allows one to analyse the ways in which these processes unfold (Morrell, 1998).

2.2.3   Summary

In this chapter I advocated for social constructionism as an epistemological position. In doing so, I discussed social constructionism's tenets and highlighted its usefulness in viewing our

understandings of knowledge or reality. Exploring *Ulwaluko* and masculinity from this lens allows for consideration of multiple realities that are socially and experientially based, local and specific, constructed and co-constructed and dependent on their form and content on the persons who hold them (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This enables a thick description of the phenomenon under study. In addition the epistemological stance enables me as a researcher to be aware of the subjective interrelationship I have with the participant and the co-construction of meaning. This raises the need to be reflective and reflexive of my position as a researcher. Most importantly, such a lens bids us to use methodologies that ensure an adequate dialogue between the participant and inquirer in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. In other words, this epistemological stance informed the methods I used.

Secondly I adopted hegemonic masculinity as my theoretical approach to understanding this study. I highlighted its definition, its hierarchical structure and discussed some of its challenges and through literature, advocated for its usefulness in analyzing masculinity. The theory of hegemonic masculinity is underpinned by social constructionism. Thus it blends well with the epistemological position as masculinities are actively, socially constructed and not a natural attribute (Connell, 1995; Moller, 2007; Morrell, 1998; Sev'er, 2012). The theory of hegemonic masculinity was utilized to obtain a contextual understanding of the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinities among Xhosa men in a university context. In the following chapter, I review literature on masculinity.

3. CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The following review substantiates the turn to masculinity, explores the concept of masculinity and its construction in Africa and South Africa. The last section of this chapter will narrow its focus, providing a review of literature on the intersections between *Ulwaluko* and masculinity.

3.2 Turn to masculinity studies

Concern over gender based abuse and inequality, violence towards women and other men, as well as legislation and cultures which shore up such practices, have been advanced as important reasons for the turn to masculinity studies (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Morrell, 2001; Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005; Reid & Walker, 2005; Ruxton, 2004). In addition to bringing about interventions, such studies enable us to minimise "problems brought by the excesses of masculinity and harmful concepts of masculinity" (Adomako & Boateng, 2007, p. 71). Kopano Ratele (2008) asserts that in many cultures violence is central to being a man and it is mostly men who enact violence. On this basis, and given the fact that most authority figures – those in better positions to influence change – are also men, it becomes imperative to engage men to end gender-based violence (Ratele, 2008). In introducing the collection of studies in "From boys to men" by Shefer and her associates (2007), Connell reiterates that as the principal holders of power in modern gender orders, men are gatekeepers for reform.

Studying gender makes masculinity visible. According to Kimmel (1997), masculinity is almost invariably invisible in shaping social relations, its ever-present specificity and significance is shrouded in its constitution as the universal, the axiomatic and the neutral. Masculinity assumes the banality of the unstated norm — not requiring comment, let alone explanation. Hence its invisibility bespeaks its privilege (Gardiner 2005; Kimmel 1997),

"The very processes that confer privilege to one group and not to another are often

invisible to those upon whom that privilege is conferred . . . men have come to think of themselves as genderless, in part because they can afford the luxury of ignoring the centrality of gender . . . . And the invisibility of gender to those privileged by it reproduces the inequalities that are circumscribed by gender" (Kimmel, 2003, p. xi).

Masculinity studies brings the centrality of gender to the fore, offering a challenge to existing power relations and their continuing reiteration (Beasley, 2006). This also holds true regarding rites of passage in South Africa. Unpacking the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity enables us to take a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge. With this in mind it is imperative to briefly explore work done on masculinity.

3.3 Masculinity

Research on masculinity is characterized by a view that the masculine identity is a cultural and historical phenomenon (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990; Seidler, 1989; Toerien & Durrheim, 2001). Men are gendered beings, socially constructed and reproduced, not just agendered, asexual, neutral adults, citizens or people (Hearn, 2004). Masculinity is achieved in the context of social intersections where versions of masculinity are always open to contestation (Epprecht, 1998). In addition, masculinities are contested, constructed and reconstructed and are highly dependent on positions in the social structure (Connell, 1994). Therefore being a man involves negotiating ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988) since men define themselves as particular types of men. As a result, it has been noted that masculinities are plural and hierarchical.

In noting the plurality of masculinities, Connell (2000) suggests that there is no one type of masculinity that is found everywhere. Multiple patterns of masculinities have been identified in many studies, in a variety of countries, and in different institutional and cultural settings (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (1995: 2000) argues that because different cultures and different periods of history construct gender differently, we need to speak of masculinities

and not masculinity. Certain masculinities are more socially central, or more associated with authority and social power, than others (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (1993) proposes four fluid categories (hegemonic, complicit, submissive and oppositional masculinity type), to make sense of the relationships between groups of men.

The hierarchical organization of masculinities has been reported in several studies (e.g. Cheng, 1999; Connell, 2002; Donaldson, 1993; Luyt & Foster, 2001; Wetherall & Edley, 1999). These studies demonstrated that some forms of masculinity are prized, honoured and desired above others. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) describe this hierarchy of masculinities as a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force. The hierarchy and plurality of masculinity have been noted in the research on masculinity conducted in Africa.

3.4 Masculinity in Africa

In this section, I will explore notable works that address the construction of masculinity in Africa. I approach this section with care so as not to portray a uniform African masculinity. Such precaution is necessary because literature has largely seen African men as monolithic, and usually negative, and often seen as motivated purely by economic issues, including land use and work (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

Culture, imperialism, race and class have been implicated in the construction of masculinity in Africa. In an article entitled "Of boys and men: gender and masculinity in Southern African studies" Robert Morrell (1998) reasons that masculinity was hegemonic in pre-colonial society. This is evidenced by rites of passage, sexual division of labour, male-dominated social and political hierarchies, the organization of leisure time and the gendered nature of space. Magubane (1979) observed that capitalism destroyed subsistence production and with it, the autonomy of pre-capitalist modes of production and produced a racialised working class in Africa. Connell (1994, p. 199-200) agrees that with imperialism came the destruction of "indigenous gender regimes" creating new and transformed existing masculinities. Nevertheless,

Morrell (1998) contends that indigenous social institutions continued to exert a residual influence. The ever-changing character of masculinities is also a reflection of the racial and ethnic diversity of the African continent and its history of colonialism, apartheid and neocolonial capitalist expropriation (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005).

Barker and Ricardo (2005) explored the constructions of masculinity in young men in Africa. The study consisted of extensive literatures reviews, informant interviews and focus group discussions in Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. They underscored that versions of manhood are socially constructed, fluid over time, vary in different settings, and are plural. Similarly, Ratele (2008) points out that African masculinity is plural and being a man or boy can be internally inconsistent. Consequently they can be renegotiated and redefined. The study also identified financial independence, employment or income, and having a family as vital in attaining manhood. Older men have a role in holding power over younger men and thus in defining manhood. Rites of passage may reinforce patriarchal gender norms, strict sex segregation and gender inequalities, while also serving as a form of positive social control, and offering assistance and guidance to young people. Sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into adulthood and achieving a socially recognized manhood (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

Sorrell and Raffaelli (2005) conducted interviews and focus group discussions to explore constructions of masculinity, sexuality and HIV/ADS on the Owambo men and women in Namibia. They described that some cultural groups construct ideal notions of masculinity that represent models for behaviour. Having multiple sexual partners, fathering many children, a car, money, education, a job, agricultural wealth and material possessions were reported as important markers of masculinity. These notions of masculinity were linked to the HIV epidemic directly and indirectly. An Owambo saying, 'AIDS didn't come to Africa for dogs, it came for men' may be a creative way for men to express their masculinity against the novel threat of HIV/AIDS and gain control over an otherwise uncontrollable disease by relating it to existing gender norms of male domination and power (Sorrell & Raffaelli, 2005). In keeping with this notion, respondents

described sexually transmitted infections as a marker of manhood (syphilis in the past, HIV in the present). The study highlights important linkages between evolving notions of masculinity and sexual behaviour.

These studies reflect that masculinity is plural, fluid and socially constructed. Importantly there is no one African masculinity hence confirming Ratele's (2008) assertion. This multiplicity emanates from heavy contestation due to the varying influences of race, economics, class, politics, religion, history (Lindsay & Miescher, 2003), culture and imperialism. These varying influences have been implicated in the construction of masculinity in South Africa.

3.5 Masculinity in South Africa

While acknowledging the plurality of masculinities, certain common practices that contribute to the construction of masculinity can be identified in South Africa (Lynch, Brouard & Visser, 2009). In this section I highlight major works done on the construction of masculinity focusing on black men in South Africa.

A historically ruling masculinity in South Africa is described by Ratele (2006) as constituting assertive heterosexuality, control of economic decisions within (and outside) the home, political authority, cultural ascendancy and support for male promiscuity. Ratele (2006) further argues that this ruling masculinity indicates a design of practices, relations and supportive cognitive and affective discourses that seek to inculcate a belief in the naturalness of men's power over women, other men, and children. This ruling masculinity has developed against the backdrop of the destruction of the material foundation of African masculinity resulting from colonialism and apartheid. This period made it difficult for black South African men to attain manhood through traditional signifiers such as paying lobola (dowry) or acquiring land (Hunter 2005). Migrant labour during Apartheid caused many fathers to be absent from their families, serving to influence constructions of black South African masculinities (Morrell & Richter, 2004).

Such socio-economic and political situations were identified by Hunter (2005) as influencing the construction of masculinity. Hunter (2005) traces the historical construction of the *Isoka*, (the Zulu man with multiple sexual partners) over the last 100 years. This form of masculinity evolved through changing conditions caused by capitalism, migrant labour and Christianity. From the 1970s, high unemployment threatened previous expressions of manliness (such as marriage, setting up an independent household and becoming a household head) – this placed a high value on men seeking multiple partners to compensate for becoming a man through previous means (Lynch et al., 2010). However, shaken by huge numbers of AIDS related deaths, men are showing increasing doubts about the *Isoka* masculinity (Hunter, 2005).

More or less similar changes have been noted in contemporary South Africa. Walker (2005) reports that traditional versions and expressions of masculinity have been disturbed and destabilized due to the 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights which advocates for liberalism in gender relations. In interviews with seventeen African men in a South African township, Walker (2005) highlights that some men's responses to the shifts in gender power relations has been violent, ruthless and reactionary, whilst others have embraced the change. Some men felt anxious about the improved status of women because their dominant position has in some way been unseated and undermined as a consequence. The men in the study spoke of the psychic, social and political disorder, which dominated their lives. These men reflected on the roots of their violence as psychological and social. Explanations for violence stem from environments in which they grew up, apartheid, poverty, the densely populated urban township, violence within their schools and strikingly the presence of violence in their families. The study highlights the psychosocial realities of men, who want and need to be different — different from what they were in the past, different from their fathers, different from many of their peers — young men attempting to reclaim and remake their lives. And embedded in this process is a realization that past versions of masculinity which may be violent, authoritarian and "traditional" may represent a "masculinity which has gone too far" (Hunter 2003, p. 25). Walker (2005) argues that

contemporary expressions of masculinity are embryonic, ambivalent and characterized by the struggle between traditional/conventional male practices and the desire to be a modern, respectable and responsible man.

Such struggle between tradition and the contemporary male practices have been reported elsewhere. Sideris (2005) describes how some rural South African men are contesting dominant constructions of masculinity through purposefully negotiating more equal relationships with their partners. Sideris describes the voices of these men as "strongly individualized", "personal requests" to undo the damage of their own childhoods by creating more stable and harmonious family lives for their children (Connell, 1995, p. 118). Yet they live in a social context where ideas, values, as well as social and institutional practices that affirm gender inequalities still hold currency. Furthermore they are viewed by friends and colleagues as mad, bewitched, a threat to other men and considered deviant. By embracing discourses of human rights combined with Christian principles, they make sense of their changing practices. While drawing on these discourses, they call on culture to help explain the authority of being head of the family. Giving up their domination is seen as a threat to difference and these men displayed the anxiety associated with not knowing how to validate their sense of themselves as men (Connell, 1995; Segal, 1990). Thus by appealing to cultural constructions of manhood, they escape the personal uncertainty that change induces. Sideris (2005) notes that by reverting to tradition some of these men are seeking ways to rework the notion of head of the family by reinventing the care and responsibility it implies and downplaying the control that it contains. Similarly, Morrell (2003) raises similar questions about whether the elements of personal discipline, responsibility and reciprocity contained in African conceptions of manhood and family relations represent a set of values that men can draw on to construct a more positive sense of gender identity. Sideris (2005) and Walker (2005) provide significant peaks into possibilities for gender democracy.

The implications of notions of masculinity for sexual behaviour change have also been explored. Similar implications as those cited in research in Africa (Barker & Ricardo, 2005;

Sorrell & Raffaelli, 2005) exist in the South African context. Campbell (1997) has reported that masculine role expectations have limited intervention programme effectiveness among South African mine workers, who endorsed; (a) a heightened sexual desire driving them to seek multiple partners; (b) a lack of caution in high risk situations; (c) a need for pleasure of 'flesh on flesh sex'; and (d) the desire to father many children. A similar study by Abdool-Karim, Abdool Karim, Preston-Whyte, and Sanka (1992) reported that condom use mitigated against young men's notions of masculinity in South Africa. The need for men to engage in sex with multiple partners, combined with negative attitudes towards condoms and the primacy of fertility, place their sexual health at risk (MacPhail & Campbell, 2001).

These studies demonstrated the malleability of masculinity within the South African context. Most notably is how hegemonic values still hold sway and how masculinity is constantly negotiated through various contestations. These studies highlight important findings for gender reform.

3.6 *Ulwaluko* and Masculinity

There is a dearth of literature focusing on the intersections between *Ulwaluko* and masculinity. In this section, my review draws on relevant literature from other fields such as anthropology, epidemiology and HIV/AIDS studies among others.

Ngwane (2001), reports on a historical ethnography of generational conflicts in a rural community of Cancele in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Ngwane (2001) highlights that through cash from migrant labor, rural household heads monopolized control over the labor of women and children to reproduce domestic economies based on cattle and small-scale farming. Further, by sponsoring the schooling of their children, and the initiation ceremonies (*Ulwaluko*) for their sons in particular, these older men were investing in the future of these domestic economies over which they hoped to retain control even past their working years. Since the 1980s, the older men lost the material base for their monopolized control due to rising

unemployment. This resulted in generational conflicts as the household heads struggled to renegotiate their hold on power. Ngwane (2001) notes that the local school (juxtaposed with incomplete manhood) was perceived as a threat to older men's control of their means of social reproduction as young people left the community after school into the wider world and away from control of their parents. Yet for young men the school (juxtaposed with proper manhood) referenced an alternative site for, and mode of producing social subjectivity. Hence the tensions ensued. Ngwane (2001) argues that these latent tensions were dealt with by reconstituting the initiation rite, which put a local mark on the bodies of young men leaving school - entrusting them with the responsibility of investing their future earnings in their fathers' homesteads. By doing so, this reasserted local forms of gerontocracy and patriarchal control that rested on a rearticulated symbolic relation among institutions of social reproduction such as chiefly court, schooling and the initiation rite. Ngwane's (2001) analysis presents an important peak into the macro-level power relations permeating ritual circumcision. However at the micro level, undergoing *Ulwaluko* presents the initiate with power.

Ulwaluko has been reported by Meissner and Buso (2007) as giving men power in society. Such power comes with the status of manhood, which is achieved after successfully complying with all the requirements of the ritual. The power that is accorded to ritually circumcised males is associated with greater rights and responsibilities, and also gives these men a higher standing in society (Lee, 2006; Meissner & Buso, 2007). It also gives men power to appease ancestral spirits because only 'men' can speak to the ancestors. As such, achieving manhood status gives power to express or exercise masculine traits and identity (Meissner & Buso, 2007). Undergoing *Ulwaluko* is propelled by the individual's need to conform and attain a range of masculine characteristics, which is impossible if one has not undergone the ritual (Mavundla et al., 2010). Other than giving power to men, the ritual carries socio-cultural significance.

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Using in-depth interviews with four heterosexual and one homosexual young man in exploring the perceptions of Xhosa men on *Ulwaluko*, Gwata (2009) affirms that the ritual carries social and cultural significance and is understood primarily as an agent of socialization. Respondents stressed the importance of the ritual in becoming a man, but point more to manhood being inextricably linked to the endurance of pain than to changing one's subsequent behaviour as a marker of that transition. Meintjies (1998) agrees that the overriding significance of the bush experience (among the youth) was the pain and suffering one endures. Interestingly, in Gwata's study hegemonic masculinity was contested. One participant a homosexual man, refused to undergo *Ulwaluko* because it did not suit his "style of being homosexual" (Gwata, 2009, p. 22). Surprisingly he is stigmatized more for being uncircumcised than for his sexual proclivity. Interviewees gave several examples of people within their own circles who refused to subscribe to the tradition of male circumcision on the basis of seeing no use for it and for religious reasons, such as being a Christian or Rastafarian. Importantly the ritual inculcates various social responsibilities. Finally, manhood is understood as being determined primarily by one's journey through the ritual and not by age or physical development (Gwata, 2009). In addition to carrying socio-cultural significance, *Ulwaluko* has been reported to hold religious meaning.

Mavundla et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study on the meaning of indigenous circumcision to Xhosa men in South Africa. The study utilised individual interviews, focus group interviews, and community meetings discussing this ritual. A total of 25 men were interviewed. The study demonstrated that Xhosa men regard traditional circumcision as a sacred or holy religious custom and equal to a religious belief. It is seen as the symbolic birth of a man from a boy (Mavundla et al., 2009: 2010). According to the Xhosa tribe, the ancestors are also closely involved, from the initial family decision to engage in the ritual, until successful completion of this life cycle ritual (Mavundla et al., 2009; Meissner & Buso, 2007). Kathryn Stinson (2011, p. 3) explains that initiation is seen as the "formal incorporation of males into Xhosa religious life and tribal life", and before circumcision a male cannot marry, start a family or inherit

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possessions. It creates social cohesion not only at the community or tribal level but also on a family level. It grants authority to a man to partake in decision making processes with regards to household and tribal issues, to perform customary rituals such as sacrifice and it also legitimizes him to become an ancestor once dead (Mavundla et al., 2009: 2010). Undergoing ritual circumcision accords one automatic respect from those who share the same culture but have not yet undergone the ritual (Gitywa, 1976). Unmarried women are also expected to show this respect to circumcised males, unless if they are substantially older than the circumcised male in question. Therefore, it is clear why the proper execution of this life cycle ritual is critically important to Xhosa people (Mavundla et al., 2009).

The above studies highlight the positive aspects of *Ulwaluko* in constructing a culturally responsible masculinity (Meissner & Buso, 2007; Gwata, 2009; Mavundla et al., 2009). However, just how effective is the ritual in maintaining important teachings about respect and non-violence? Wood and Jewkes (1998) argue that in reality many who profess respect for initiation teachings seem quickly to lapse into pre-circumcision behavior. This can be alluded to the fact that boys undergo the ritual too early, for wrong reasons such as competition with peers and that these days circumcision school is short-lived and without follow-up many boys clearly disregard what they learn there. In the same vein, Wood and Jewkes (1998) point out that the lack of positive role models hamper proper mentorship as some of the older males reinforce violence and sexual exploitation of young women, for instance, in the common practice of 'sugar daddies' in which girls exchange sex with older men for money, clothes, food and other presents. This also holds true for male teachers who sexually coerce pupils (Abrahams, Mathews & Ramela, 2006; Wood & Jewkes, 1998). Furthermore, modernization weakened and treated with suspicion traditional institutions (such as chiefly rule, communal tenure and initiation) that were seen as safeguards against corrosive processes of change (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Ngwane (2001) concurs and implicates schooling (which is associated with modernization) as being in conflict with and threatening the male initiation rite (*Ulwaluko*).

Vincent (2008a) reported on a study aimed at understanding how cultural and social meanings of traditional Xhosa male circumcision have shifted. The study was based on documentary sources, news reports and interviews with key informants - hospital personnel, doctors, traditional healers, government spokespeople and traditional leaders. The study argued that traditional circumcision rites once played the role of socialising Xhosa youth into social expectations of responsible and restrained sexuality. *Ulwaluko's* cultural and social meanings have not remained unchanged. This includes the erosion of the role which circumcision schools once played in the sexual socialisation and the emergence of the idea that initiation gives men the unlimited and unquestionable right to access sex rather than marking the point at which sexual responsibility and restraint is introduced into the lifestyle of young men (Vincent, 2008a).

Of particular importance is how uninitiated men face social degradation, are ostracized and ridiculed (Bottoman, 2006; Mavundla et al., 2010; Tenge, 2006). Marginalization of uninitiated Xhosa males comes about through rejection, and lack of respect (Mavundla et al., 2010). These men are rejected by the community at large by being excluded from community events, and by their (already initiated) peers and women who maintain that they prefer to form relationships with men. Furthermore, this rejection also exists at the family level as an uncircumcised male is thought to bring shame to the family (Bottoman, 2006; Tenge, 2006). Such individuals are not afforded respect and are continuously subjected to ridicule through associations with immaturity and inferiority, by being referred to as boys or dogs (Mavundla et al., 2010). Such stigmatization leads to psychological stress and trauma. Tenge (2006) reports that the pressure is so intense that many individuals secretly take off to initiation schools without the knowledge or consent of their parents. They are accepted into circumcision schools in contravention of the law by unscrupulous operators. Thus the pressure to conform to *Ulwaluko* is ubiquitous amongst Xhosa communities.

These studies underscore the centrality of *Ulwaluko* among the Xhosa. *Ulwaluko* is also perceived as holding socio-cultural and religious significance. In addition, it develops a culturally

responsible behavior and a sense of togetherness. However an arsenal of criticism has been leveled at initiates behavior that fails to live up to normative *Ulwaluko* masculinity. Implicated in this criticism are older men who have failed to act as role models.

3.7 Conclusion

The literature review indicates how the social, environmental, political and economic aspects creates changes in the dominant masculine identity within a specific culture, and varying access to hegemony. This in turn creates heightened opportunities for role conflict and stress that are highly relevant to other areas of functioning (Campbell, 1997; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003). While the significance of masculinity studies is without a doubt a panacea to the legion of social ills created by masculine excesses, research on *Ulwaluko* and masculinity in South Africa does not focus on *how Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity. Unlocking the means through which *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity provides possible insights into deconstructing some harmful notions of masculinity. Given this backdrop, this study aimed at addressing the gap in literature on *Ulwaluko* and masculinity and to contribute to current knowledge on masculinity.
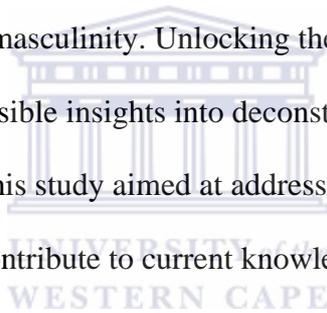
4. CHAPTER 4: METHOD

This chapter will outline the method employed in this study. I will begin by presenting an overview of qualitative research and highlight the procedures followed in conducting the research. Furthermore, I will also explain how I recruited participants, collected and analyzed the data and explain my rationale for using these methods. Finally I will examine the ethical considerations and discuss issues pertaining to reflexivity and trustworthiness.

4.1 Qualitative research

The study explored the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity. Informed by a social constructionist epistemology, the study utilized a qualitative exploratory design. From the literature review it is clear that masculine identities are cultural and historical phenomenon (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990; Seidler, 1989; Toerien & Durrheim, 2001), socially constructed and reproduced (Hearn, 2004), achieved in the context of social intersections and open to contestation (Epprecht, 1998; Hearn & Collinson, 1994). Therefore it is fluid (Morrell, 1998). Since masculinity is a cultural construct (Foucault, 1981; Gilfoyle, Wilson & Own, 1992) it becomes necessary to utilize methodologies that aim to explore human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). It is against this backdrop, and a consideration of the aim and objectives of this study, that the study employed qualitative methods. This enabled the study of the socially constructed nature of reality from the perspective of the social actors (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research echoes social constructionism's tenets as it acknowledges that the meaning of people's experiences and behaviour can only be understood in relation to the specific social, cultural and historical context in which it occurs. An exploratory design leads to insight and comprehension so as to understand phenomena (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). This is particularly relevant to the current study, as it aims to explore the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity (ies).

4.2 Participants

Seven participants were recruited from a population of male UWC Xhosa students. It is taboo for circumcised males to openly discuss traditional circumcision with outsiders (Vincent, 2008a). As such this study utilized university students for they were easily accessible. A purposive sampling method was used (Babbie & Mouton, 2007) to select cases based on the following criteria (Neuman, 2000); they were Xhosa men who went through *Ulwaluko*, UWC students, willing to be interviewed in English and audio recorded. This age represents the age range of university students and is a period in which young adults engage in pursuing new, intense and risky behaviours (Arnett, 2000). Six to eight participants for a qualitative sample will often suffice (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Initially I sought participants within the range of 18 to 25 years. However, I had difficulties in recruiting participants for the study due to the sensitive nature of *Ulwaluko*. As such I managed to recruit seven men aged 19 to 32. Of the seven participants, two were recently married. One was a postgraduate student, the rest were undergraduate students. Some of the participants worked part time jobs at the university and one worked full time off campus and studied part time. All the participants underwent ritualized circumcision in the Eastern Cape and were in Cape Town to pursue university studies and to look for employment. All participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities. Table 1 below describes participant's details.

Table 1

Participant details

Name	Age	Ethnic group	Marital status	Employment status
Thabo	32	Xhosa	Single	Student/works part time
Zukile	29	Xhosa	Single	Student
Andile	24	Xhosa	Single	Student
Xolani	23	Xhosa	Single	Student
Mandla	19	Xhosa	Single	Student
Zuko	30	Xhosa	Married	Student/works part time
Thembani	32	Xhosa	Married	Part time student & works full time

4.3 Procedure

The study was conducted at UWC after obtaining clearance from higher degrees and research committees of UWC. My initial recruitment strategy involved speaking to Xhosa men in groups normally after a lecture period. However, my attempts at recruitment yielded no response. Most men felt uncomfortable, sighed, walked away or held their heads with both hands upon hearing the word *Ulwaluko*. I was aware that discussing the ritual with outsiders was considered a taboo (Vincent, 2008a; Mavundla et al., 2009). However, I did not expect such reactions considering that in the recruitment sessions I had clearly explained that the study is not about the sacred ritual proceedings but about an exploration of men's understandings of masculinity, *Ulwaluko's* role in building masculinities and an opportunity for them to tell their stories. I asked one group why people reacted in that way. They informed me that I was not a Xhosa man, the ritual was sacred and that people were afraid of being judged when asked to discuss *Ulwaluko* because some of them felt ashamed to talk about the ritual.

Thereafter, I decided to recruit potential participants on a one on one basis. This yielded results and I used snowball sampling to recruit further participants. Participants were informed that taking part in the study contributed to knowledge and current debates on masculinity (see Appendix A). Consent forms were given to participants prior to interviews (see Appendix B). In-depth qualitative interviews (semi-structured) of approximately one hour were conducted, audio-recorded and transcribed.

4.4 Data Collection

Data was collected by means of in-depth qualitative interviews (semi-structured), audio-recorded and then transcribed. Interviews were conducted in English using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C). Semi-structured interviews were used because of the sensitive personal nature of *Ulwaluko* and allowed the interviewee to talk freely and extensively. This aided in freely exploring, probing and asking questions to expand on or clarify particular topics to generate extensive and rich data (Howitt, 2010). In addition it is human interchange that brings meaning to language (Gergen, 1994). These interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. English was used as the language of the interview as it is the language most UWC students converse in for academic purposes.

My aim for data collection was to keep the interviewees at ease, so that they can freely talk. I wanted to create a more conversation like interaction so that the interviewee would not feel as if it was a formal interview. This was achieved by use of a semi-structured interview technique. I conducted one pilot interview to assess the interview schedule. Afterwards, I removed, added and rephrased some questions to make them more appropriate for further interviews. This elicited long sections of talk and detailed accounts of their experiences.

4.5 Data Analysis

Given the theoretical framework, aims and objectives of this study, I established and traced a path through themes to illustrate the role of *Ulwaluko's* regulatory ideal in the

construction of masculinity (ies) — and how masculinity (ies) can be variously co-constructed. As such, the data analysis chosen was thematic decomposition analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Stenner, 1992, 1993; Ussher & Mooney-Somers, 2000), a method akin to, but less formal than, discourse analysis (Stenner, 1992). It involves a close reading, which attempts to separate a given text into coherent themes or stories (Stenner, 1992) and then traces the subject positions (Harré & Davies, 1990) that individuals take and *how* these subject positions impact on constructions of masculinity (ies). Subject positions are simply locations or parts allocated to a person within a story (Stenner, 1992) and are identities made relevant by specific ways of talking (Edley, 2001).

I engrossed myself in the data by transcribing each interview and then thoroughly reading and re-reading transcripts. This was done whilst listening to the tape recordings, which led me not only to get a better grasp of the participants' accounts, but to be able to pay more attention to the *words* that were spoken as well as to *how* they were spoken. This process brought forth an understanding of how masculinity was constructed through *language*. Edley (2001) concurs that many writers now insist that masculinity (ies) are something constructed in and through discourse.

Initially data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis. I specifically used theoretical thematic analysis. This is a thematic analysis that is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst driven. A constructionist epistemology provided a lens to view the data and the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity brought attention to how *Ulwaluko* and masculinity played out across the data. Furthermore, I identified themes at the latent level (Boyatzis, 1998). A thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations - and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In conducting the thematic analysis I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis namely: 1)

familiarizing myself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, 6) producing the report.

After the thematic analysis, I conducted a thematic decomposition analysis. However these processes occurred more or less simultaneously. My employment of thematic decomposition brought to the fore how masculinity is socially constructed and reproduced (Hearn, 2004). The impetus was not to validate the truthfulness of men's stories, but rather to explore what these story lines achieved or the constructive effects (Stenner, 1992). This approach was informed by the idea that discourse does not simply express or reflect meanings, rather, meanings are constructed through discourse (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Throughout the thematic analysis, I also identified and noted the subject positions within story lines. This was based on the premise that there is an on-going dynamic relationship between the subject positions individuals take up, the practices they engage in, and what they think or feel, i.e. their subjectivity (Davies & Harre, 1999; Willig, 2004). After reviewing themes (phase 4 of thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke, 2006) I looked for and selected predominant themes. Thereafter I traced a path through the stories so as to identify how the subject positions were constituted in these themes. I was mindful that subject positions are not static or fixed but changing, fragmented, and inconsistent (Gavey, 1989). My aim was to see how in each interview, which subject position(s) a man took, how this impacted on their understanding of masculinity and how (through positioning) *Ulwaluko* constructed masculinities. I also explored the ways in which *Ulwaluko* as a rite of passage held sway, and how rival masculinities were created as men negotiated *Ulwaluko*.

The final part of my analysis involved selecting themes to report on. I chose those themes in which the subject positions were well constituted. I also considered some themes in which subject positions were not well constituted but explicitly brought out the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity. However, it is important to note that even though my write up was

informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) sixth phase of thematic analysis, it deviated slightly because it included a thematic decomposition analysis.

4.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the act of reflecting on the role the researcher plays through their own "personal, political and intellectual autobiographies ... in creating, interpreting and theorising data" (McKay, Ryan & Sumsion, 2003, p. 52). I am a black Zimbabwean male of the Manyika ethnic group, Christian and foreign postgraduate student at UWC. My culture does not practice ritualized circumcision. I believe that being a man is unrelated to initiation but to an upright moral standing. I grew up in a rural community and was exposed and socialised to traditional notions of manhood. With exposure to tertiary education, I had to learn to negotiate the cultural ideal of manhood. Being cognizant of my own experiences, I was continuously and consistently aware of how I was positioned, its impact on participants and construction of the research findings. As such, I was reflective and reflexive in the manner in which I conducted the study from beginning till the end.

Perhaps surprisingly, my nationality and ethnic identity had minimal influence on the interaction with the men. In fact, the social and cultural distance between me as a foreigner, non-Xhosa and non-Xhosa speaking male and the respondents, seemed to facilitate the discussion rather than restrict it. Being an outsider created a non-threatening space in which to converse. Most men felt that discussions about *Ulwaluko* were often avoided. They highlighted that it is something that needs to be discussed. So they felt that it was an opportunity for them to engage in it and share their thoughts and experiences. One man indicated that he felt safe because I as a researcher was not there to judge him. Furthermore the assurance of confidentiality, anonymity and the purpose of the study being for academic purposes (and not a discussion in the community) provided a safe net to freely converse. This brought a much deeper appreciation of my participant's efforts in volunteering their time and energy in this study. As such, I felt the

importance and significance the study had to them as they broke a taboo that prohibits discussion of traditional circumcision with outsiders.

4.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability and dependability. Credibility was ensured by prolonged engagement in interviews, the adoption of research methods well established and developing an early familiarity with the culture of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was ensured by a thick description of phenomenon in sufficient detail so that one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations and people (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It should be noted that the results of this qualitative study must be understood as contextual and particular to this group of participants. To ensure the extent to which findings may be true of men in other settings, similar research employing the same methods but conducted in different environments could well be of great value (Shenton, 2004). Dependability was ensured by having my supervisor examine both the process and product of the research study. The purpose is to evaluate the accuracy and evaluate whether the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data or not (Shenton, 2004).

4.8 Ethical considerations

The ethical consideration was guided by the guidelines stipulated by the University of the Western Cape. I initially obtained permission to conduct this study from the Higher Degrees committee, which requires that all research proposals undergo rigorous ethical scrutiny in order to be ethically cleared. Participants volunteered willingly after being informed of the nature and intention of the study and that there was no harmful procedure involved. This was done in clear and simple English and participants were given an information sheet outlining the aim of the study (see Appendix A). Participants had to consent to being interviewed and audio recorded and consent forms were given requesting signing before participation (see Appendix B). Due to the

sensitive nature of the topic, participants were assured that audio-recorded interviews, transcriptions and information provided remained safe, secure, anonymous and confidential. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the research process, at any stage or time, without consequence or prejudice. I also informed them that they had a right not to respond to a question(s) that they felt uncomfortable with. Importantly I informed participants that findings of the study will be made available to them if they desired and that an article about the study will be published in a journal. Furthermore, if problems or concerns arose as a result of the research, counselling would be made available to the participants.

4.9 Summary

In this chapter I provided an overview of my research design namely qualitative exploratory design. I further provided a rationale for the techniques used in recruiting participants, research procedure, data collection and analysis. In the next chapter, I will present the findings and discussion of the study.
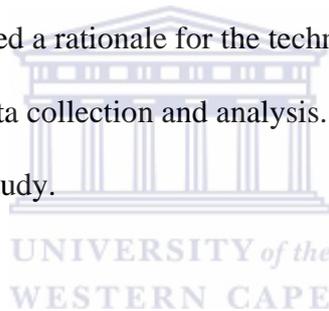
5. CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

There is no set way or recipe for which themes to use when doing a thematic decomposition analysis. By identifying and tracing a path through the overarching themes that speak to or address the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity (ies) in men at UWC, I intend to explore the impact of the subject positions that men take up and the impact thereof on constructions of masculinity (ies).

The predominant themes which emerged associated with the subject positions men adopt in relation to *Ulwaluko* and masculinity are, "hegemony", "ideal *Ulwaluko* man", "resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal" and "understandings of masculinities". All the seven men in the study underwent *Ulwaluko*. These men identified with and acknowledged *Ulwaluko* as playing a primary role in moulding their early sense of identity. They however differed in their understanding of its role in developing their present sense of self and how they project that self to others, their understandings of masculinity (ies) and the behaviour thereof. Such contention was reflected by positioning of three men as the "*Ulwaluko* man", whilst the remaining four men positioned themselves as "resistant to *Ulwaluko* hegemony". The latter distanced themselves from the ritual, rejecting it outright even though they took part in it. Amongst these, one man expressed preference for Christian manhood. The remaining three, however exhibited their "own man". This identity shifted between *Ulwaluko* hegemony and rivalry of it. The above mentioned attests to what Connell (1994) terms the fluidity of masculinity. In the same vein, Ratele (2008) maintains that African masculinities are plural and being a man or boy can be internally inconsistent.

My analysis is twofold. I begin by an analysis of each theme and then dwell on how subject positions were constituted in each respective theme. In other instances, I report on themes that stand out without highlighting the subject positions. This is because subject positions were

not adequately established in these themes and that the themes explicitly brought out the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity. In this chapter, I present an analysis focusing on how the main subject positions – "powerlessness", "*Ulwaluko* manhood", "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", "Christian man" and "the own man" – were constituted in the dominant themes on masculinity and how these subject positions played out in the various contestations and co-constructions that masculinities are always open to. In doing so, I engage in an exploration of the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity (ies).

5.2 Hegemony

All the participants expressed how *Ulwaluko* was dominant in society, culture and in the lives of Xhosa men. This dominance was spoken of in natural ways, as a means to defend punishment for non-conformity and otherness, and justifying power of older men. The term hegemony was derived from Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony which explains how a dominant (economic) class controls society by establishing and maintaining its domination (Hearn, 2004). It involves persuasion and the organization of institutions in ways that appear "natural", "ordinary", and "normal" (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645) and through punishment for non-conformity (Connell, 1987, p. 107).

5.2.1   Naturalness/Normalcy

Ulwaluko was perceived by men as *"natural"* and *"the normal thing to do"*. When asked about motivations for attending *Ulwaluko*, Thabo answers:

> **Thabo***: "It's like when a woman is pregnant, she has to give birth. That's it. No choice! That is the nature of it. That is how I feel about Ulwlaluko."*

Likening *Ulwaluko* to pregnancy and the inevitability of delivery gives *Ulwaluko* unquestionable power as a natural process that boys have to go through to "*…give birth*" to manhood. It's perceived naturalness in this instance ("*That is the nature of it*"), positions Thabo as a weaker being. Not just a weaker being but a pregnant woman. Thabo's subject position as

"powerless" leaves him with "*no choice*" but to conform to undergoing *Ulwaluko*. He further emphasises the question of "*choice*" by indicating that, "*It is not my choice, it's not anybody's choice it's something that has to happen*". I would like to draw attention here to delivery as seen as a given – that is, a woman has no option but to continue with the pregnancy until the delivery of the baby. Such constructions or formulations of pregnant women and no choice over attending *Ulwaluko* are more available than others because they are culturally dominant. That is, they assume the status of facts or knowledge, taken for granted as true or accurate descriptions of the world (Edley, 2001). The result is naturalization/normalization of the ritual and consequently conformity towards the regulatory ideal.

The question of choice Thabo raises has been reported by Venter (2013) who argues that *Ulwaluko* rests on an ideology that tolerates no dissent or critique and that deprives individuals of their decision making power. The freedom of choice which Xhosa boys are believed to have according to the law may not be free individual choice in the real sense of the word, but rather a false perception of choice. The belief that *Ulwaluko* is natural is confirmed by Mavundla et al. (2010, p. 937) who notes that "…as it is believed that men should be circumcised, in the emic sense, it is just the way things naturally should be". In other words, hegemonic masculinity legitimates and reproduces institutions that generate its dominance (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1987). In this instance *Ulwaluko's* regulatory ideal presents its own version of masculinity as the cultural ideal by portraying itself as normal and natural.

5.2.2   Punishment for non-conformity

Further to the naturalness of *Ulwaluko,* is punishment for non-conformity. Several men indicated that only the men who have undergone *Ulwaluko* are allowed to discuss family issues, learn certain customs, inherit property, perform rituals, partake of certain types of meat during ceremonies and to marry amongst other things. In addition punishment also comes in non-recognition of uninitiated men as men. Andile reiterates this punishment,

Andile: *"If you are a Xhosa and you haven't gone to the mountain you are not a man."*

Andile highlights that only those who have undergone *Ulwaluko,* herein referred to as going "*to the mountain"* are men. Uninitiated males, even though older are considered boys. Several studies have reported similar findings (Barker and Ricardo, 2005; Mavundla et al., 2009: 2010; Meissner & Buso, 2007; Vincent, 2008a; Wood & Jewkes, 1998). According to Mavundla et al. (2010), labelling of uncircumcised adult males as boys, links them to culturally constructed stereotypes about adolescence. Therefore, they are believed to be immature, irresponsible, and not ready for family, tribal, and social affairs. In doing so, Mavundla et al. (2010) asserts that a rationale is constructed for devaluing, marginalizing and ostracizing them. The consequence of this is a downward placement on the social hierarchy. Similarly Lindsay and Miescher (2003, p. 5) demonstrate that historically the term boy was particularly used as an insult by European men toward African men and also by African elders to keep the younger generation of men "in their place". Morbidity and mortality during the ritual are considered normal, with complications being seen as punishment for some wrong-doing, and deaths being seen as a way of separating out boys who are not fit to be men (Meintjes, 1998).

Punishment for non-conformity is a way that *Ulwaluko* asserts dominance, maintains conformity and subjugates rival masculinities. This system of dominance and subordination creates gender hierarchies, in which men position themselves in relation to one another and in relation to hegemonic standards of gender (Coles, 2009). As Jenkins (1996, p. 4) argues, the creation of an identity is essentially the establishment of similarities and differences between people. For uninitiated men this results in varying access to hegemony namely loss of status, unequal access to tribal institutions such as rituals and unequal access to women (Mavundla et al., 2010).

Akin to the punishment for non-conformity of uninitiated Xhosa men is how non-Xhosa men are viewed as the 'other'. This otherness is noted when I asked Thembani how he felt about being a Xhosa man? He responded,

Thembani*: "Being Xhosa ... the way we do things is different ... Xhosa men believe that theirs is the best. (Laughs)*

Thembani positions himself as an "*Ulwaluko* man." At the beginning of the interview he mentions that he "*prefers*" the *Ulwaluko* manhood and sustains his positioning and affirms it in this extract. He believes "*the way we do things is different*" and because of that difference, "*Xhosa men believe that theirs is the best*". Here, he perceives this as a shared belief. However, this view is not shared among all the Xhosa men. Thabo disagrees and acknowledges that some "*Xhosa men think that they are better than other men*". Contrary to that notion he feels that "*it should not be the case*". Both the ostracism of uninitiated Xhosa men and the othering of non-Xhosa men serve to maintain the hegemony of *Ulwaluko*. This finding corresponds to Dowsett and Couch's (2007) emphasis that circumcision or the lack of it is a mark of citizenship, religious or cultural affiliation or a sign of 'otherness' that signals exclusion, marginalization or oppression.

5.2.3   Power of older men

Ulwaluko also maintains hegemony through power of older men over young men. Men in this study reported that older males decided for them when to undergo the ritual, framed the ritual proceedings, taught 'good' morals values and provided mentorship during and after the ritual. Whilst such guidance is necessary to develop a culturally accepted masculinity, the influence of elders and their unquestionable centralized decision making was noted as a concern by some participants. Zuko notes that,

Zuko *"...you do not even ask that question why do I want to do this? ... . For what reason will you say you do not want to do these things… . You can't just be strong for something that is not yours. Because sometimes as much as it is performed to you, you do not have ownership of it… you have no authority over who comes and who does what… ?"*

Zuko expressed serious concern over the framing of *Ulwaluko* in that one does not "*even ask that question*". Here Zuko is referring to questioning why certain procedures during the ritual are conducted in certain ways. This verifies the power of older men and the powerlessness of young men. In this excerpt, Zuko positions himself as "powerless". Such a positioning disempowers young men to such an extent that one gives up an attempt at questioning. However, the act of thinking about questioning older males' framing of the ritual further positions Zuko as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony". This positioning sets the stage for an alternative masculinity as it enables him to engage with his own emotions and feels that as an initiate, one is just "*there visiting*" during the ritual and one has their "*… own feelings*". He feels that he "*can't just be strong for something that is not…*" his. In this instance men are encouraged and required to be strong, endure and not show pain during the ritual. Thus Zuko directly disagrees with this requirement because he has no "*ownership*" as it is something required of him by older men and as a cultural obligation. He reiterates this power struggle by emphasizing his lack of authority "*over who comes and who does what….*" This is followed by a conclusion - rejection of the ritual's purpose "*... to me that does not make one a man*".

Kepe (2010) reports similar contests of hegemony and notes that due to the knowledge gained by initiates through their formal education, some of them question certain instructions given by the elders responsible for the ritual. Similarly, Barker and Ricardo (2005) reiterate that older men concentrate power in their hands and determine when young men can own land, have access to capital, family goods or wealth and when young men can marry. This puts younger men at the service of elders and in turn creates structural conflict. In addition Ngwane (2001) argues that the hegemony of older men through the initiation rite is a way of reclamation of the bodies and consciousness of young men so as to maintain their control of the means of social reproduction. In South Africa, young men escape rural power hierarchies by migrating to the cities and modernization have become ways for young men to usurp the power of elders (Barker & Ricardo, 2005). Zuko's rejection of the ritual is consistent with Connell's (2005) view that

although hegemony embodies the currently accepted strategy, it does not imply total control and may in fact be disrupted.

In summary men's stories in relation to *Ulwaluko* and masculinity reveal a great deal about how they negotiate masculinity and how *Ulwaluko* maintains its dominance. *Ulwaluko* maintains and perpetuates its dominance through means and ways that are perceived to be natural, through punishment for non-conformity and by upholding the power of older men over young men. Through the way that men positioned themselves, men either conformed to *Ulwaluko* or reflected on and resisted some of its values. In conforming, men embodied a particular masculine identity, namely the ideal *Ulwaluko* man.

5.3 Ideal *Ulwaluko* man

The "ideal *ulwaluko* man" was one of the predominant themes that permeated the interviews. Perhaps this was a result of all the seven men interviewed having undergone the ritual. The "ideal *ulwaluko* man" was seen as a direct product of the ritual and was spoken of in relation to a morally upright character, associated with secrecy, facing ritual challenges and burdened by *Ulwaluko*.

5.3.1 Character

Most men in the study concurred that character development is one of the central aims of the ritual. The teachings and mentoring instils good moral values and adult roles and responsibilities. A sense of identity and belonging, decision making, problem solving, self-control, ability to handle pressure, leadership skills, knowledge of traditional ritual and ceremony proceedings, working hard, self-reliance and endurance are cultivated during and after the transition. In addition to these attributes, the ideal *ulwaluko* man is expected to be responsible, selfless and respectful to family, elders and society at large. A number of studies report similar findings namely that the ritual develops character and responsible behaviour that would benefit initiates, their families, community and the nation at large (Mavundla et al., 2009: 2010; Mbito &

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Malia, 2008; Munthali & Zulu, 2007; Ntombana, 2009: 2011; Niang & Boiro, 2007; Wood & Jewkes, 1998). Barker and Ricardo (2005) noted that rites of passage are important factors in socialization, serving as a form of positive social control, offering assistance and guidance to young people in Africa. Likewise, in a pseudo-autobiographical novel, *A man who is not a man*, Thando Mgqolozana's (2009, p. 65) illustrates that "the circumcision process is a physical and tangible manifestation of what manhood is really all about. It teaches you how to endure, how to manoeuvre your way through and out of the difficult situations that life presents to you. It trains you in the lessons of patience, for it is something that cannot be rushed through but can only be completed step by step". Eakin (1999, p. 46) affirms that "in forming our sustaining sense of self, we draw on models of identity provided by the cultures we inhabit".

5.3.2 Secrecy

Secrecy on certain issues regarding the ritual was evident in the interviews. The seven men interviewed indicated that there are certain parts of the ritual that men are not allowed to divulge to outsiders. In this instance an outsider is not only a non-Xhosa man but also Xhosa women, boys and uninitiated men. I was aware of the cultural requirement, respected it and did not include any questions in that regard. Irrespective of that, most men indicated this requirement without being asked about it. I had difficulties recruiting participants for the study because most men indicated that they could not discuss the ritual with someone who has not undergone it. During the recruitment exercise, upon introducing my study, most potential participants walked away silently, sighed or simply gave an excuse for not volunteering. These findings correspond with Mayatala and Mavundla's (1997) study in which they raise concern over lack of wide research or discussions within South Africa because powerful taboos are attached to the discussion of circumcision rites with outsiders. Similarly, Vincent (2008a) and Mavundla et al. (2009) concur, the ritual is shrouded in secrecy and it is considered a taboo to discuss it with outsiders. In addition, anthropologists working in African societies have presented male initiation

as secretive, culturally-tight rites of passage from boyhood to manhood (Boyle, Goldman, Svoboda, & Fernandez, 2002; Meissner & Buso, 2007; Munthali & Zulu, 2007; Niang & Boiro, 2007). Such secrecy serves to maintain the status quo – hegemony of *Ulwaluko* over young men and women alike. By not talking about it, people fail to reflect on it and takes it as a given. This perpetuates *Ulwaluko's* dominance and therefore it remains uncontested.

5.3.3   Ritual challenges

Most men in the study reported facing ritual challenges. Ambiguity in some teachings and problematic guardians appeared often in interviews. With regards to ambiguity in some teachings, men indicated that teachings about what a man is were unclear and vague and that some of the teachings conflicted reality. I asked men what they did not like about some of the teachings, Zuko responded,
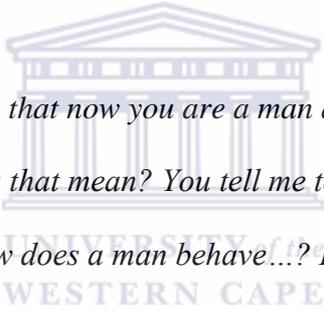
> **Zuko**: *"When people tell you that now you are a man and you have to behave like a man. We do not know… what does that mean? You tell me to behave like a man… what is it? How does a man behave, how does a man behave…? People say you need to be a man, just man up … do things right. What does that mean? Do things right."*

Zuko's dissatisfaction with some of the ritual teachings are clear and shows that there is need to unpack the definition and meaning of what a man is in ways that are easily understandable. Ambiguity leaves the interpretation of the teachings to the individual. Mandla reports that he chose those teachings applicable to him.

> **Mandla:** *"But I chose the one I thought this one I think is the best for me in this case."*

As in the case with *Mandla*, such vagueness thereby allows for one to choose what they think is "*best"* and what will work for them. This leads to inconsistency in behaviour among the newly initiated, as different men will behave differently depending on their understanding of the ritual's teachings. As part of this open interpretation, some men adopt behaviour displayed by significant men in their life or community as the ideal. This then presents problems in case the

role models' notion of masculinity is problematic and not in keeping with cultural standards. This was echoed by Zukile who reiterated that,

> *Zukile: "And when you get out to the real world, you take what you have been told and you compare to what you have seen happening outside. Which sometimes in other areas it conflicts what you have been told."*

This excerpt captures *Zukile's* reflections on his understanding of *Ulwaluko's* teachings. He refers to behaviour of some of the men which does not cohere with the ritual's teachings. Behaviour of some of the older men in the community has been reported by Wood and Jewkes (1998). They point out that lack of positive role models hamper proper mentorship of young men as some of the older males reinforce violence and sexual exploitation of young women. This also holds true for male teachers who sexually coerce pupils (Abrahams, Mathews & Ramela, 2006; Wood & Jewkes, 1998).

Another ritual challenge that men face is problematic guardians. Men reported that guardians hold a powerful influence on initiates. The guardians are responsible for looking after the initiates during the healing process by encouraging and strengthening the initiates. However some of these guardians are reckless, inexperienced, ill-mannered and are under the influence of alcohol during the aftercare period. According to participants, this results in some initiates imitating guardian's behaviour thereby leading to inhumane behaviour among some initiates. Zuko talks about this challenge,

> *Zuko: "Now you have this person that is doing everything for you. You kind of idolize that person. When you think of a man you think of this man in front of you".*

Zuko had earlier on indicated that the guardian allocated to him was someone who was disrespected in the community and abuses alcohol. He is presented with a man whom he is supposed to learn from and imitate. Zuko vehemently expresses his disgust and dissatisfaction that his guardian *"came drunk"*. Ideally the guardian must be an embodiment of a culturally

accepted masculine decorum. However for Zuko this was the exact opposite. Similarly on reflecting on some ritual challenges, Thabo highlighted the following,

> **Thabo:** *"I think it depends on who is responsible for you as a person who is there and how is that person able to translate the teachings to you and be able to heal you".*

Thabo's extract is clear. He feels that the type of man you come out as after the ritual is dependent on the guardians work. With reference to Zuko's extract in which he exclaims that "*When you think of a man you think of this man in front of you",* it becomes clear why Thabo sees the guardians as the key to attaining manhood. The guardian is idolised and it becomes easy for initiates to be influenced in negative or positive ways. This is confirmed by studies that report inhumane behaviour by initiates soon after undergoing initiation often because of incorrect teachings or imitating some guardians (Mcotheli, 2006; Myemana, 2004; Ntombana, 2011; Vincent, 2008a: 2008b).

Another challenge of undergoing *Ulwaluko* is the problem of risk of injury or death posed by inexperienced and reckless surgeons and guardians. Ideally they are supposed to regularly dress the circumcision wounds with traditional herbs and medicines (Jacobs, 2013) and monitor the healing of the wound. According to participants, the inexperience and recklessness of some surgeons and guardians leads to circumcisions that do not heal properly, penile amputations and death among initiates. In Zukile's words,

> **Zukile:** *"Yaah, those aftercare people, are not doing a good job … there is a lot of fake ones, that they do a lot of bad work".*

Zukile complains about the "*bad work*" by some of the guardians. By bad work he implies wrongly conducted surgical operations or improper healing that leads to damaging the penis or penile amputations and in some cases death. This finding also corresponds with Meissner and Buso (2007), who report that negligent parents, unscrupulous and inexperienced fly-by-night surgeons, and ignorant and careless attendants have resulted in young initiates suffering from dehydration, septicaemia and gangrene, and landing up in hospital in their hundreds every year.

Similarly, in a compelling pseudo-autobiographical novel, Mgqolozana's (2009) main character (Lumkile) blames his drunken grandfather (for his failed circumcision) whose duty was to host and supervise the circumcision ceremony. The grandfather abandoned him to his uncle, who in turn, instead of fulfilling his aftercare responsibilities as Lumkile's attendant, deserted him to go off sheep-shearing. A significant body of research has reported injury and death of initiates at the hands of inexperienced and negligent traditional surgeons and guardians (Anike, Govender, Ndimade & Tumbo, 2013; Glass, 2013; Mayatala & Mavundla, 1997; Mcotheli, 2006; Meintjies, 1998; Mogotlane, Ntlangulela & Ogunbanjo, 2004; Ntombana, 2009; Peltzer, Nqeketo, Petros & Kanta, 2008; Vincent, 2008a: 2008b). The initiates are often faced by these challenges on their journey to attain manhood.

5.3.4 Burden of Ulwaluko

The "ideal *ulwaluko* man" was also spoken of in relation to being burdened by *Ulwaluko*. Men expressed that living up to the "ideal *Ulwaluko* man" was no easy feat. They felt that it was a burden. This burden was felt to emanate from the cultural expectation that initiates had to plough back money spent on their ceremony, expected to work and provide for siblings and support parents and being financially independent of parents amidst high unemployment levels. Xolani talks about ploughing back expenses for the ceremony,

> ***Xolani****: "They will say… now ... because at that ceremony, they slaughter a cow and say all of these things that were given to you, we want them to be back and we need like everything to be expanded rather than to fall down".*

Xolani mentions the requirement given to him upon completion of the ritual. He has to return all costs spent on the ritual and expand his father's homestead. However, at the time he became a man, Xolani was still a teenager with no skills and still in high school thus not easily employable. This presents huge challenges to the newly emerged man. Zuko puts it more aptly,

> *Zuko:* *"If we were to look at the drop outs of the young males, it happens at that age, when they go to initiation school, when they come back they see themselves as different. Now, they have this burden on their shoulders, they must provide and must do these things."*

Zuko implicates the need of new initiates to live up to the *Ulwaluko* standard of masculinity as a reason why they drop out of school. He highlights that they drop out of school so as to go look for work so as to provide and be a man. Prior to this excerpt, Zuko explains that he himself had to drop out of school so as to go and work and raise money to fund the ritual ceremony. Interestingly participants gave several examples of people within their own circles whose character changed after attending *Ulwaluko* so as to assert their newly attained manhood. For example Thabo spoke of his friend who started smoking marijuana at school one month after attending the ritual. Thabo explains this change of behavior *"because he wanted to be accepted"*. Mandla speaks about his younger brother who *"… doesn't listen to parents… ,"* because he feels he is now a man and *"… has ownership of himself … drinks* (alcohol) *at school, he has a number of girls …"* and his performance in school has dropped. From the above extracts, it becomes clear that failure to attain the ideal *Ulwaluko* manhood through normal channels (e.g. employment) results in some of the men using other means and ways to assert masculinity or to attain important markers of masculinity such as through drug and substance use, promiscuity and disobeying authority figures. This finding provides support for Campbell's (1997) and Seal and Ehrhardt's (2003) observation that the need to attain the dominant masculine identity within a specific culture, and varying access to hegemony, creates heightened opportunities for role conflict and stress.

In the same manner, these findings are consistent with Lynch, Brouard and Visser (2010) who describe the construction of a normative masculinity as identified as being both idealised and perceived as a burden, in that men continually need to engage in actions that affirm their position as 'real' men. Likewise Barker and Ricardo's (2005) report that young men who do not achieve a

sense of socially respected manhood seem more likely to engage in violence. For example such young men have been reported to be drawn into ethnic clashes in Nigeria and in conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, or to gang-related activity in townships in South Africa. With regards to the need for initiates to reinvest, Ngwane (2001) cites similar findings. He reports on field work he conducted in a community in Cancele in the Eastern Cape and argues that older men, through reconstituting the initiation rite, entrusted younger men with the responsibility of investing their future earnings in their fathers' homesteads. By sponsoring the schooling of their children, and the initiation ceremonies for their sons in particular, these older men were investing in the future of domestic economies over which they hoped to retain control even past their working years. By requiring young men to reinvest in their father's households after *Ulwaluko*, older men maintain hegemony over boys, young men and women. This perpetuates and maintains local forms of gerontocracy and patriarchy.

In summary the "ideal *Ulwaluko* man" is expected to be morally upright and upholding confidentiality of ritual proceedings. However he is faced with ritual challenges and burdened by *Ulwaluko*. Whilst some men conformed to the ideal *Ulwaluko* manhood, others negotiated the ideal and in turn constructed rival masculinities.

5.4 Resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal

Another dominant theme to emerge out of the interviews was "resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal". Four men resisted *Ulwaluko* and positioned themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony". These men distanced themselves from the ritual, rejecting it outright even though they took part in it. Amongst these, one man expressed preference for Christian manhood. The remaining three, however exhibited their "own man". This identity shifted between *Ulwaluko* hegemony and rivalry of it. This theme will be discussed in relation to negotiating the *Ulwaluko* ideal and the resultant rival masculinities that emerged namely the Christian man and the own man.

5.4.1   Negotiating the *Ulwaluko* ideal

Most men negotiated *Ulwaluko* by validating their stance. According to Connell (2005, p. 37) even where a dominant hegemony remains largely intact, those who decide to reject the hegemonic pattern and create a different form of masculinity "have to fight or negotiate" their way out of the hegemonic masculinity. Thus most men negotiated *Ulwaluko* by reflecting on what constitutes a man. When I asked participants what they thought a man was, those positioning themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony" denied the definition based on *Ulwaluko*. This was evidenced in Andile, Thabo and Zuko's stories, who indicated that behaviour of oneself makes one a man. Most men said that they derived this definition from personal observations and upon reflecting on discrepancies between what they were taught and what happened in practice. Further to that, men negotiated *Ulwaluko* by evaluating its relevance in modern life. Men also negotiated *Ulwaluko* by drawing on other significant life events, people or parents, community and religion (Christianity) as building their character into the men that they are now.

By positioning themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony" these men rejected the contribution of *Ulwaluko* to their character development. Notably Zuko mentions that being a man does not start with *Ulwaluko*. He highlights this in the extract below,

> ***Zuko:*** *"… and to be a man it doesn't start when you are old… . That is how I believe it's something that is planted when you are a child, your parents, how they raise you and that thing lives within you … and how you are raised, plays a role on what a man is …".*

In this extract, Zuko's positioning as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony" gives him the opportunity to reflect on and make sense of what informed his character development as a man. He draws on the key role of parents in developing his character. Most importantly he rejects that being a man is derived from the ritual, but rather the attributes of a man are developed gradually through parental based socialization from childhood to adulthood. Barker and Ricardo (2005) point out that a high degree of self-reflection is an important protective factor in promoting

positive behaviours. The role of the individual's parents as primary socialization agents cannot be understated. Elkin and Handle (1989, p. 143) agree that the family becomes an individual's "reference group", the first group whose "values, norms and practices the child adopts and refers to in evaluating his or her own behaviour".

In addition, in negotiating *Ulwaluko*, men raised concerns of safety during initiation. I asked men if they had a choice to undergo *Ulwaluko*, would they have done so. In reply to this, Zukile raises this concern.

> ***Zukile:*** *"... some people lose their penis trying this culture and then afterwards, there are some other people who die, some lose their penis for life. Which one is better, your life or culture? I wouldn't care about culture as long as I am alive. What is culture going to do for me? Honestly, if I don't have a dick, is culture going to bring my dick back ...?! It can't, so why should I care. See this. Now the world is changing it is evolving. Yes we might have culture and things are changing now".*

Zukile challenges his culture with regards to risks associated with undergoing traditional circumcision. Such risks include dehydration, septicemia, gangrene, injury, penile amputations and even death. As he deliberates on this, he "*wouldn't care about culture as long as…*" he is "*…alive.*" Thus more value is placed on life than fulfilling expectations of normative masculinity. Studies indicate that medical complications or death of initiates are attributed to the influence of the ancestors (Venter, 2013) or as punishment for some wrong-doing, and deaths being seen as a way of separating out boys who are not fit to be men (Meintjes, 1998). Irrespective of all these beliefs embedded in his culture, by positioning himself as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", Zukile is able to negotiate the value of undergoing *Ulwaluko* if he had a choice, thereby, resisting its influence in this instance. This finding corresponds with Greely, Maharaj, Letsoalo and Miti (2013) who report that participants in their study supported traditional circumcision, however many participants also expressed their worries about the effects of botched traditional circumcisions resulting in poor health outcomes. Similarly, Peltzer, Nqeketo, Petros and Kanta

(2008) found that participants indicated apprehension of negative consequences and fear as barriers to traditional male circumcision.

Men also negotiated the *Ulwaluko* ideal by drawing on their experience from formal education. Even though the influence of school and university based educational experiences underpinned or provided a rationale to fuel most of the stories, in this particular theme, it was predominant. In asking men about what else contributed to the type of men they were, Zukile responded,

> **Zukile:** "*It has to be education because, the minute you get educated, your whole mind, the way of thinking sort of changes. If I do this you see the consequences of your action. ... say I am going to fight with you. Now being educated, you will think, hell, ... its not worth it. ... You will think ... I will get arrested, go to the proctor, my department and I might get chased out of residences* (University accommodation). *You see a lot of stuff that you were not able to see when you were not educated that how it comes.*

In this extract Zukile accepts the role of education in orchestrating a shift in thinking. This shift allows him to "…*see the consequences of*..." his "*...action*" and thereby choose less-harmful action of not fighting at all. This finding corresponds to Barker and Ricardo's (2005) study that reports that employment and school enrollment are protective factors that promote gender equality, health-seeking or health-protective behaviors and non-violence. In the same vein, Kepe (2010) reports that the knowledge gained by initiates through formal education makes some of them to question certain instructions given by the elders responsible for the ritual. In many clans, initiates are not supposed to eat food such as eggs, or meat (until after they have healed). One initiate, contested this by indicating that these foods contain protein which aids in the healing process. It is now common in urban areas to see initiates secretly, or openly, eating the food they want, despite being forbidden to do so. An initiate in Grahamstown was overheard voicing his disgust that the attendants and other initiates celebrated a brown smelly discharge from the wound (pus) (locally known as *ukugqutsa*) as a sign that it was moving towards healing.

He tried to convince his peers that the discharge meant that the wound was infected, and that there was nothing to celebrate about it (Kepe, 2010).

By positioning themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", most men reflected on and negotiated *Ulwaluko* as an outcome. In doing so men drew on and reflected on what constitutes a man, *Ulwaluko's* relevance in modern life, significant others and community as building their character as men, religion (Christianity), concerns of safety during initiation and formal education. Through this men were able to contest the regulatory masculinity and subsequent rival masculinities emerged. The next few paragraphs explore the two rival masculinities that men identified themselves as by positioning themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony". These are the own man and the Christian man.

Before exploring these rival masculinities, it is important to note that hegemonic masculinity presents its own version of masculinity, as a standard of how men should behave and how putative 'real men' do behave, as the cultural ideal (Morrell, 1998). As a result it is susceptible to the challenges of rival masculinities and femininities (Gardiner 2002). Hegemonic masculinity operates through the subordination and marginalization of other masculinities (Schippers, 2007). Other versions of masculinity that do not concur with the regulatory ideal are repelled. I would like to reiterate that adopting the subject position of being "resistant to *Ulwaluko* hegemony", resulted in creation of rival masculinities. This affirms Gwata's (2009) finding that even though traditionally circumcised men continued to represent hegemonic masculinity, they admitted that this was no longer the only form of masculinity among the Xhosa.

5.5 The own man

Within the theme of "resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal", one of the preferred rival masculinities is the own man. This type of man negotiates *Ulwaluko* as indicated in the previous section on negotiating the ideal. I asked each participant what kind of man he thought he was. Most participants responded by highlighting that they developed their own concept of a man,

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based on personal experiences and observations. Some asserted that the experience of going to the mountain (undergoing *Ulwaluko*) contributed insignificantly to the kind of man they were as compared to the influence of family, community and formal education. To the same question, Zukile responded,

> **Zukile**: "*Me like I told you. I am a different man. If I feel like that's how I want to live, I don't need to bow down, or to stereotyping, because that is what is happening. So if I choose not to like that. I can be alone or I cannot marry if I do not want to get married, but that is what they push for. Hey you must get married and all those*".

Zukile, describes himself as a different man. By positioning himself as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", he becomes conscious of his own individuality and speaks about his choice. He feels he does not need to conform to the *Ulwaluko* requirement of getting married as a man since "*…that is what they push for*". Interestingly some of the participants who identified themselves as the own man, conformed to *Ulwaluko*. For instance Zuko earlier on indicated that he saw no use of undergoing the ritual and rejected the ritual's purpose "*… to me that does not make one a man*". However, in later part of the interview, he indicates that he would not stop his own child from undergoing the same ritual. Such inconsistences highlight the fluidity of masculinity.

These findings corresponds to Hamlall's (2013) study that brings to light that there are different alternatives or possibilities of 'doing or being a boy' that differ from the hegemonic standards and are contingent upon each setting and using the meanings and practices available, although some are more obvious and conspicuous than others. For men is the realization that past versions of masculinity which may be "traditional" represent a "masculinity which has gone too far" (Hunter 2003, p. 25). Similarly, Walker (2005) describes South African men who are trying to negotiate older versions of masculinity by building new notions of masculinity that draw from human rights enshrined in the 1996 South African constitution. These new notions however are embryonic, ambivalent and are characterised by the struggle between traditional/conventional

male practices and the desire to be a modern, respectable and responsible man. Sideris (2005) also describes how some rural South African men are contesting dominant constructions of masculinity through purposefully negotiating more equal relationships with their partners. For these men, seeking new ways to rework the notion of head of the family by reinventing the care and responsibility it implies and downplaying the control that it contains provides a basis for a more positive sense of gender identity.

5.6 The Christian man

With regards to religion, Xolani predominantly positioned himself as a "Christian man". This positioning drew on Christian discourses in negotiating *Ulwaluko*. Xolani said that he preferred the Christian man as compared to the *Ulwaluko* manhood. He indicates that when he came to university, he was introduced to the Christian faith and *"...was born again…"* and this introduced him to *"... a new definition of what a man is."* This change emanates from religion, namely in Christianity, God is the Creator of man. It is important to note that other men also positioned themselves as the Christian man. Nevertheless, they were more inclined to the *Ulwaluko* man or the own man. For instance Thembani said that he wanted to become a church minister one day, yet throughout the interview, he predominantly positioned himself an ideal *Ulwaluko* man. The Christian man is said to live up to Christian values. Belief in the Biblical God as opposed to ancestral worship, upholding God's commandments, loving your wife as one loves oneself, preference of hospital circumcision as opposed to ritualised circumcision, hardworking, marrying, providing and being faithful to one wife are some of the key attributes and values of the Christian man. By positioning himself as the Christian man, Xolani managed to justify his contestation of *Ulwaluko* and a rival masculine identity.

Interestingly the use of religion to negotiate hegemonic masculinity was implicated in Gwata's (2009) study. Participants gave several examples of people within their own circles that refused to subscribe to the tradition of male circumcision on the basis of seeing no use of it and

for religious reasons, such as being a Christian or Rastafarian. It has been noted that for more than 100 years Christian missionaries have been referring to *Ulwaluko* practice as a pagan custom and argued for the discontinuation of it (Laidler, 1922). In modern times the ritual among the Xhosa, is presently abound with bad practices, such as irresponsibility, alcohol abuse and lack of discipline, which has resulted in the death of many initiates (Ntombama, 2011). As a result, writing from a Christian point of view, Mcotheli (2006) and Myemana (2004), advocated for an end to initiation.

5.7 Understandings of masculinities

In studying the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity (ies), it is critical to explore men's understandings of masculinity. These understandings have implications for the practices through which men engage in gender. According to Schippers (2007) when these practices are embodied not only by men, but also by women, they have widespread cultural and social effects. Furthermore, performing the masculine position affects the way individuals experience their bodies, their sense of self, and how they project that self to others (Schippers, 2007). In this study, understandings of masculinity (ies) were heavily influenced by the subject positions that men took. There is an ongoing dynamic relationship between the subject positions individuals take up, the practices they engage in, and what they think or feel, i.e. their subjectivity (Davies & Harre, 1999; Willig, 2004). Men understood masculinity based on *Ulwaluko's* definition and roles men are expected to undertake. This will be explored.

5.7.1   Based on *Ulwaluko's* definition

Understandings of masculinity were heavily influenced by *Ulwaluko*. This is reflected in responses to the question "Let us talk about what you think is a man?" To this, the following responses were elicited.

> **Thabo:** *"When I was circumcised and went through all the processes of being transformed from a boy to man, I was taught what it means to be a man".*

>*Andile*: *"A man to me is someone who has gone to the mountain and who has come back there. When he comes back his behaviour changes… ."*

The above extracts clearly shows how *Ulwaluko* forms a basis for understandings of masculinity. In Thabo's extract, he acknowledges that the ritualized circumcision transforms boys into men. In this extract, Thabo's subject position is that of an "*Ulwaluko* man". This positioning enables him to accept the teachings of *Ulwaluko* as informing "*…what it means to be a man"*. Likewise Andile concurs with Thabo's story. Importantly for Andile is the need for the completion of the ritual cycle. He asserts that to be a man one has to go "*… to the mountain and … come back"*. Such talk reflects deeper meanings of Andile's understanding of being a man. That it is not only attending *Ulwaluko*, but a successful completion of the ritual cycle. This forms a basis for separating those who fail the cycle (seen as boys even though they might be older men) and those who complete the cycle (considered real men). As such Andile's subject positioning as an "*Ulwaluko* man" and his understanding of masculinity has implications for practice. This holds true for Thabo as well. These findings affirm Gwata's (2009) study that demonstrates that, manhood is understood primarily as an agent of socialization and is determined primarily by one's journey through the ritual and not by age or physical development. These findings also correspond with Mavundla et al. (2009: 2010) who notes that the ritual of *Ulwaluko* is seen as the symbolic birth of a man from a boy. Mavundla et al. (2009) and Meissner and Buso (2007) agree with these findings and affirm that according to the Xhosa tribe, the ancestors are also closely involved, from the initial family decision to engage in the ritual, until successful completion of this life cycle ritual. Therefore, it is clear why the proper execution of this life cycle ritual is critically important to Xhosa people (Mavundla et al., 2009). This echoes Andile's understanding.

On the contrary, some men positioned themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony" and in doings so, they differed with these understandings. When I asked men what they thought a

man is, Zuko and Thabo rejected the definition of a man as based on undergoing an initiation ritual.

> **Zuko**: *"Ummmm…. A man to me has nothing to do with…ummm…about being in the initiation school and that does not define what a man is for me".*

> **Thabo:** *"Okay yes I respect what I went ahhh through, but ahhh I cannot, under my definition of a man, I cannot claim that you are a man because you went through the traditional way you see. It depends on your behaviour after all you see".*

In both extracts men deviate from an *Ulwaluko* based understanding of masculinity. By positioned themselves as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony" they are able to come to a different understanding of what constitutes being a man. Zuko's outright rejection of the role of *Ulwaluko* in transforming boys to men is unwavering throughout his story lines. However, for Thabo the same cannot be said. In his previous story lines, Thabo acknowledges that ritualized circumcision transforms boys into men and accepts the teachings of *Ulwaluko* as informing "…*what it means to be a man".* However, in this particular extract, Thabo's subject positioning changes to "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony". He now gives value to behaviour as informing what it means to be a man, thus underplaying the significance of the belief in the ritual's transformative power. Interestingly, Thabo's response was to a follow up question regarding his definition of a man, a question that enquired if *Ulwaluko* manhood created problems within initiates. This also explains why he uses a disclaimer, "*Okay yes I respect what I went ahhh through…"* , before he positions himself as "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony". This finding confirms Kopano Ratele (2008) assertion that African masculinity is plural and being a man or boy can be internally inconsistent. This also affirms that masculinity is not stable but fluid (Connell, 2000). My presence as a researcher and questions that I posed to Thabo and other men alike presents a context of social intersections. This confirms that versions of masculinity are always open to contestation within social intersections (Epprecht, 1998; Hearn & Collinson, 1994).

5.7.2 Roles and responsibilities

Men also understood masculinity based on roles and responsibilities men are expected to undertake. This included being married, providing for family, raising children, being innovative and making decisions, being head and protector of the family, owning property (e.g. cows, land, house, car), conducting rituals and looking after siblings. These roles and responsibilities form part of the teachings during the initiation ceremony. Andile speaks about some of these.

> *Andile: "So you are expected to, when you are a man to have your own family sometime like to have to be on your own, being responsible and have your wife and work and all those things."*

Andile raises clear expectations from the ritual that he as a man must live up to. He highlights that *"… you are expected to, when you are a man…"*. This in a sense highlights that as part of undergoing the ritual and being transformed into a man, one is then expected to fulfill certain roles and responsibilities to live up to this standard of being a man. Thus not only does *Ulwaluko* transform boys to men, it further constructs masculinity based on a prescriptive set of expectations. Interestingly in the interviews, most men indicated that during university vacation, some of the community members would conduct checks and balances to assess any deviations from the *Ulwaluko* teachings. Often these were done in a subtle manner. Thus *Ulwaluko's* hegemonic norms play an important role in the regulation of the behavior of men. Through hegemonic masculinity "they support it, are regulated by it and use it to judge other men's conduct" (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 351).

The finding about the cultural expectations of Xhosa men resonates in a number of studies (Mavundla et al, 2009: 2010; Meintjies, 1998; Meissner & Buso, 2007; Ngwane, 2001; Stinson, 2011; Vincent, 2008a). "Traditional circumcision illuminates the qualities that separate boys from men and males from females" (Schneider & Schneider, 1991, p. 287). For the Xhosa, undergoing *Ulwaluko* implies eligibility for marriage, inheritance, partaking in rituals and to participate in family court (Stinson, 2011). This finding is also consistent with Gwata (2009) who assert that

being a Xhosa man, is an identity which comes with (or is meant to come with) greater responsibility. Equally, Barker and Ricardo (2005) reports that, research in Nigeria concludes that both men and women had clear age-specific expectations of men's roles, and that men and women both perceived that men are constantly assessed as to whether they live up to these expectations. Also consistent with the finding is Barker's (2005) emphasis that achieving manhood is in effect evaluated or judged by other men and women; young men in diverse social settings frequently report a sense of being observed and watched to see if they measure up to culturally salient versions of manhood. Indeed, a nearly universal feature of manhood is that it must be achieved — it requires behaving and acting in specific ways before one's social group (Connell, 2003; Gilmore, 1990). Thus for Xhosa men, performing these roles and responsibilities serves as a key ingredient in affirming masculinity.

5.8 Summary

This chapter explored the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity. This was done by exploring the predominant themes that emerged namely; hegemony, ideal *Ulwaluko* man, resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal and understandings of masculinities. In doing so, I engaged in a thematic decomposition analysis focusing on how the main subject positions – "powerlessness", "*Ulwaluko* manhood", "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", "Christian man" and "the own man" – were constituted in the dominant themes on masculinity and how these subject positions impacted on men's constructions of masculinity. From this I showed how *Ulwaluko* maintained its dominance and what kind of manhood participants perceived it produced. I then looked at the resources and strategies employed to negotiate *Ulwaluko's* masculinity and the resultant rival masculine identities constructed by the participants. The final section of this chapter explored men's understandings of masculinity. This exploration provided insights into how understandings have a direct bearing on practice. That is the enactment of what constitutes masculinity.

6. CHAPTER 6: CONCUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major thrust of this thesis was to explore the role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinity and men's understandings of masculinity. This chapter will present a summary of findings, limitations of the study and recommendations for practice and future research.

6.1 Summary of findings

This study found that *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity through hegemonic means and ways. By doing so it constructs a particular masculine identity - the ideal *Ulwaluko* man. Through adopting certain subject positions, men in this study supported and negotiated *Ulwaluko's* dominance hence creating some rival masculinities. Furthermore, the study explored men's understandings of masculinity and the implications thereof. These key findings will be highlighted.

6.1.1 Hegemony

Participants in this study highlighted that *Ulwaluko* was the only culturally accepted way of being a man among the Xhosa. Its dominance was spoken of as a normal or natural practice that boys had to undergo to become men. This was reflected in interviews in which men expressed that they had no choice but to undergo *Ulwaluko*. By portraying itself as normal or natural, *Ulwaluko* presented its own version of a dominant masculinity as the cultural ideal. This ensured that males conform to undergoing ritual circumcision and lived up to *Ulwaluko* male role expectations.

Through punishment for non-conformity *Ulwaluko* asserted its dominance. Participants in this study indicated that only the men who underwent *Ulwaluko* were allowed to discuss family issues, learn certain customs, inherit property, perform rituals, eat certain types of meat during ceremonies and to marry amongst other things. Uninitiated males, even though older were considered boys. This placed them at the bottom of the social hierarchy. By punishing uninitiated

males for non-conformity, *Ulwaluko* asserts dominance, maintains conformity and subjugates rival masculinities.

In addition to punishment for non-conformity, *Ulwaluko* also maintains hegemony through the power of older men over young men. Participants in this study reported that older males decided for them when to undergo the ritual, framed the ritual proceedings and taught good moral values and provided mentorship during and after the ritual. Such guidance is critical in the socialisation of young men. In this study, it was demonstrated that positioning oneself as powerless, disempowered young men and they ended up conforming to the influence of older men. However, by positioning oneself as resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony, some men were able to raise concerns over the influence of elders and their unquestionable centralized decision making.

6.1.2 Ideal *Ulwaluko* man

In exploring the hegemonic nature of *Ulwaluko*, the study brought to the fore, the ideal *Ulwaluko* man, a dominant masculine identity emanating directly from ritualised circumcision. Participants spoke about the ideal *Ulwaluko* man in relation to a morally upright character, associated with secrecy, facing ritual challenges and burdened by *Ulwaluko*.

Participants agreed that *Ulwaluko* develops character, by instilling good moral values and adult roles and responsibilities. In addition to these attributes, the ideal *Ulwaluko* man is expected to be responsible, selfless and respectful to family, elders and society at large. This study also noted that the ideal *Ulwaluko* man was firstly unwilling to participate in this study evidenced by difficulties in recruiting participants. Secondly those that participated indicated their unwillingness to discuss certain parts of the ritual without being asked about them. The ritual was considered secretive and it was taboo to talk to women, boys and to outsiders about it. Such secrecy serves to maintain the status qou – hegemony of *Ulwaluko* over young men and women alike.

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This study illuminated some challenges that the *Ulwaluko* men often faced. This significant finding was highlighted by participants who indicated that some teachings were unclear and vague and often conflicted what they saw older males doing in practice. Ambiguity leaves the interpretation of teachings to the individual. This leads to inconsistency in behaviour among the newly initiated, as different men will behave differently depending on their understanding of the ritual's teachings. In addition, such ambiguity presents problems as initiates adopt problematic behaviour of some of the significant men in their lives or community as the ideal. This study also highlights that some guardians are reckless, inexperienced, ill-mannered and are under the influence of alcohol during the aftercare period. The guardian is idolised and it becomes easy for initiates to be influenced in negative or positive ways. Furthermore the risk of injury or death is high at the hands of inexperienced and reckless surgeons and guardians.

Further to the ritual challenges, the study brings to light how the ideal *Ulwaluko* man was burdened by *Ulwaluko.* Participants noted that this burden emanated from the cultural expectation that initiates had to plough back money spent on their transition ceremony, expected to work and provide for siblings and support parents and being financially independent of parents amidst high unemployment levels. A significant finding in this study is that failure to attain the ideal *Ulwaluko* manhood through normal channels (e.g. employment) results in some of the men using other means or ways to assert masculinity or to attain important markers of masculinity such as through drug and substance use, promiscuity and disobeying authority figures. By commanding young men to reinvest in their fathers' households, *Ulwaluko* aids older men to maintain and retain control of domestic economies. This in turn buttresses local forms of gerontocracy and patriarchy.

6.1.3 Resisting the *Ulwaluko* ideal

This study sought to investigate the resources and strategies used by men to negotiate *Ulwaluko* hegemony. The findings are by no means exhaustive and conclusive but reveal key approaches that men use as they resist hegemony. Most men negotiated *Ulwaluko* by reflecting on what constitutes a man. They derived their definition from personal observations and life experiences as compared to relying solely on *Ulwaluko's* definition of a man. Further to that, some men negotiated *Ulwaluko* by evaluating its teachings' relevance in modern life. Some men also drew on significant life events, people or parents, community and religion (Christianity) as constructing their masculinities. By doing so they refuted the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing their character. Some men weighed the risks associated with undergoing the ritual vis-à-vis upholding culture. Such risks included dehydration, septicemia, gangrene, injury, penile amputations and even death. The result was valuing one's health and life more that fulfilling cultural expectations of attaining normative masculinity. Most participants acknowledged the role of formal education in orchestrating a shift in thinking from the definition of a man based on *Ulwaluko* to a definition informed by formal education. By adopting the subject position of "resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony", most men reflected on and negotiated *Ulwaluko* and consequently resisted its hegemony. This study also showed the self-reflexive critical and imaginative engagement by young men within a practice that has formed them. Importantly, is the rival masculinities that this resistance created, namely the own man and the Christian man.

6.1.4 The own man

This study found out that by resisting *Ulwaluko*, some men created a masculine identity that deviated from the cultural expectations of the ideal *Ulwaluko* man. Some participants indicated that they developed their own concept of what it means to be a man based on personal experiences, observations, influence of family, community and formal education. Some participants who identified themselves as the own man upheld individual choice – something that

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deviated from communal expectations. Some men noted that they did not want to conform to cultural stereotypes such as getting married. However this identity shifted between *Ulwaluko* hegemony and rivalry of it.

6.1.5 The Christian man

In exploring rival masculinities, this thesis explored the Christian man. This study found out that the Christian man embodied the following values or attributes namely a belief in the Biblical God as opposed to ancestral worship, upholding God's commandments, loving wife as one loves oneself, preference of hospital circumcision as opposed to ritualised circumcision, hardworking, marrying, providing and being faithful to one. Perhaps a significant finding in this study is that some men positioned themselves as the Christian man, yet in most instances they predominantly positioned and advocated for the *Ulwaluko* man or the own man. This provided support for Connell's (2000) emphasis that masculinity is not stable but fluid. However, only one man consistently positioned himself as the Christian man. By positioning themselves as the Christian man, participants managed to justify their contestation of *Ulwaluko* and support for a rival masculine identity.

6.1.6 Understandings of masculinities

Central to exploring the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity is men's understandings of masculinity. This study brought to light these understandings and their implications for practices through which men engaged in gender. In this study, understandings of masculinities were underpinned by the subject positions that men took. This study demonstrated that understandings of masculinity were heavily influenced by *Ulwaluko's* definition of what it means to be a man and rivalry of it. Some men highlighted that to be a man one has to undergo the ritual. Such understandings formed the basis of seeing uninitiated males as boys resulting in dominating and subjugating rival masculinities. In addition understandings informed the

enactment of the whole gamut of expected *Ulwaluko* masculine practices. This held true for men who positioned themselves as "*Ulwaluko* men".

In contrast some men, who positioned themselves as resisting the *Ulwaluko* hegemony, differed with these understandings. This thesis explored these different understandings of masculinity. These men understood that being a man was based on one's behaviour, and denied the transformative power of the ritual in transitioning boys into men.

This study demonstrated that men understood masculinity based on roles and responsibilities they were expected to undertake. Being a Xhosa man, also entails living up to a set of prescriptive masculine expectations. This affirms that through hegemonic masculinity, "… men support it, are regulated by it … " (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 351). The study also lends support to the universal feature of manhood, that is, it must be achieved — it requires behaving and acting in specific ways before one's social group (Connell 2003; Gilmore 1990). Thus *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity through informing certain understandings of what it means to be a man and setting prescriptive practices that men need to live up to, to attain a normative masculinity.

In conclusion the findings and analysis in this study revealed masculine identities that did not fit the form of hegemonic masculinity among men. These identities were not subordinate to, complicit with or secondary to the hegemonic masculinity. They embody an autonomous configuration of being a man. These results are in keeping with the literature i.e. that although hegemony embodies the currently accepted strategy, it does not imply total control and may in fact be disrupted (Connell, 2005). In addition these findings provide support to the view that masculinities are a cultural and historical phenomenon (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990; Seidler, 1989; Toerien & Durrheim, 2001), socially constructed and reproduced (Hearn, 2004; Connell, 1994) and not a stable but fluid (Connell, 2000). This study shows some interesting findings for *Ulwaluko* and masculinity.

6.2 Limitations of the study

In light of methodological limitations, firstly the study utilized students as participants from the University of the Western Cape. All of these students grew up in the rural Eastern Cape where they underwent *Ulwaluko*. In the rural areas, the rite of passage still adheres to the traditional ideals. Thus the study's findings reflect experiences of men who underwent *Ulwaluko* in the rural areas. Their experiences might differ as compared to those who undergo ritualised circumcision in urban areas. Lastly, participants in this study were university students. The findings highlight that this group of participants are more informed, reflective and critical of their psychosocial realities. As a result, the findings might not constitute an exhaustive analysis of the role of *Ulwaluko* in constructing masculinity.

6.3 Recommendations

This research has endeavored to contribute to the knowledge base of masculinity studies in South Africa. It is important that in order to avoid ambiguity in teachings during *Ulwaluko*, teachings need to be clear so that initiates understand what it means to be a man. This will aid in avoiding open interpretation by initiates. Older men within communities must be encouraged to be good role models for younger men. Context specific interventions and preventive programs aimed at promoting gender democracy and alternative ways of being a man need to take into cognizance the very processes and ways in which *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity in order to be effective. With regards to future research, an exploration focusing on men who undergo *Ulwaluko* in urban settings may yield varied and broader overview of how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity. In the same vein, further studies can also focus on men in non-educational settings.

6.4 Conclusion

This study sheds light on how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity in men and on men's understandings of masculinities and the implications of such thereof. The thesis set out to explore the means and ways that *Ulwaluko* as a rite of passage establishes, maintains and retains its

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hegemony over males and women. The findings suggests that *Ulwaluko* maintains hegemony by portraying itself as normal or a natural process, through punishment for non-conformity and through the power of older men on younger males. It constructs a masculine identity – the ideal *Ulwaluko* man – that lives up to a morally upright character, associated with secrecy, facing ritual challenges and burdened by *Ulwaluko*. Interestingly secrecy and taboos about the ritual proceedings are a way that *Ulwaluko* maintains its hegemony.

As *Ulwaluko* perpetuates its dominance, it does not go uncontested. Such contestation was orchestrated through use of various strategies to negotiate hegemony. In doing so men used various strategies such as redefining what it means to be a man by drawing on personal observations and life experiences. They also evaluated *Ulwaluko's* teachings' relevance in modern life, drew on formal education, significant life events, people or parents, community and religion (Christianity) to make sense of what a man is. Interestingly some participants downplayed the value of upholding a cultural practice that could risk their health or lead to death. Importantly this study brought to light how such contestations intersect with construction of rival masculinities.

This study demonstrated that understandings of masculinity were heavily influenced by *Ulwaluko's* definition of what it means to be a man and rivalry of it. In addition they were also informed based on roles and responsibilities they were expected to undertake. To reiterate, some traditional performances of successful masculinity have been reported to be particularly problematic. Particularly "when conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the basis for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded" (Connell, 2005, p. 77). Subsequently, new groups may arise to challenge old solutions and thus create a new hegemony (Connell, 2005). Likewise, alternatives to hegemonic masculinities are important in gender reform. This study has highlighted how *Ulwaluko* constructs masculinity and establishes, maintains and retains conformity to its ideal form of masculinity. However, this study also shows contradictions to the *Ulwaluko* ideal as men show more increased understanding and buy-in to alternative versions of

masculinity. This thesis provides key insights into potential means and ways to promote alternative masculinity.

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Appendix A: Information Sheet

Project Title: The role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinity in men at the University of the Western Cape.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by a Master's Research student at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you a Xhosa man, of 18 to 25 years of age, enrolled at UWC, willing to be interviewed in English and audio recorded.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to be interviewed in English and audio recorded for approximately 1 hour. Interviews will be conducted at UWC. Some of the questions you will be required to respond to are: What is a man? How does sex relate to being a man?

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

To help protect your confidentiality, interview material (notes and audio recordings) will be kept in a safe and secure location. Instead an identification key will be used to link your interview and audio recording to your identity and only the researcher will have access to the identification key.

Audio-tape recordings

This research project involves making audiotapes of you. These are being made so as to analyse the interview data. The principle researcher will only have access to them and will be stored in lockable cabinets. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

What are the risks of this research?

Some interview questions might make you feel uncomfortable.

What are the benefits of this research?

The study will bring a better contextual understanding of the psychosocial realities of men. Therefore, contribute to knowledge and current debates on masculinity**.**

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or unfairly treated.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

If the interview results in any emotional discomfort or trauma, counselling will be arranged by the researcher.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Tapiwa C. Magodyo, a Masters Research Psychology student in Psychology department. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Tapiwa C. Magodyo at: Department of Psychology University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Belville 7535, telephone supervisor: (021)959 2454, researcher's mobile: 078 483 483 2, Email: 3218216@uwc.ac.za

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department: Dr M. Andipatin

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences: Prof Frantz

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

(021) 959 2163

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2852, Fax: 27 21-959 2755

Appendix B: Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The role of *Ulwaluko* in the construction of masculinity in men at the University of the Western Cape.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that I will be interviewed in English and audio recorded. My identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.
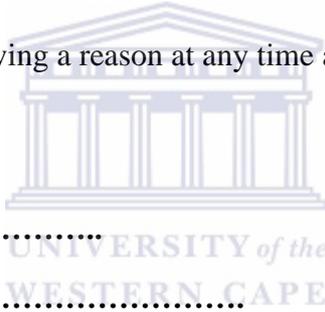
Participant's name…………………………..

Participant's signature………………………………

Witness……………………………….

Date………………………

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

Study Coordinator's Name: Tapiwa C.Magodyo

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Belville 7535

Telephone: (021)959 2454

Cell: 078 483 483 2

Fax: (021)959 2755

Email: 3218216@uwc.ac.za

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Introduction

This research is being conducted to explore the influence of *Ulwaluko* on the construction of masculinity. I am conducting this research for my master's course at University of the Western Cape in South Africa. The questions I would like to ask relate to masculinity and *Ulwaluko*. Everything you tell me will only be used for this research project. Also your name will not be used, to make sure no one can identify you with any answers. You have already consented to the interview with the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background information

No. of Interview: Age: Marital status:

Opening questions

1. Tell me about how long have you been at UWC?
2. What is it like to be a male student in this university?
3. What is it like to be known within your community as a man studying at university?

Questions about understandings of masculinity(ies)

4. Lets talk about what you think is a man?
   <u>Probe</u>: Why? How did you come to hold that definition?
5. Is there one version or different versions of being a man?
   <u>Probe</u>: Which ones.
6. Are there particular versions of being a man that you like? Or that you do not like?
   <u>Probe</u>: Which ones. Why.

Questions about *Ulwaluko*'s construction of masculinity

7. I understand you went for *Ulwaluko*? Why?
   <u>Probe</u>: Personal motivation, parents, cultural obligations.
8. If you had a choice, would you have attended Ulwaluko? Why?
9. How does it feel to be a Xhosa man?
10. Describe to me the ideal man taught during *Ulwaluko*?
    <u>Probe</u>: What sorts of ways of being a man are encouraged?
11. Let us talk about what you like or not like about the ideal man taught during *Ulwaluko*?
12. Would you describe yourself as the kind of man taught at *Ulwaluko*?

13. How has *Ulwaluko* influenced the kind of man that you are?

    <u>Probe</u>: In what ways?

14. What else has contributed to the kind of man that you say you are?

15. Let us talk about moments in everyday life in which you feel you fully expressed or lived out or acted out the kind of man you say you are?

16. Let us talk about moments in everyday life in which you feel you did not express or lived out or acted out the kind of man you say you are?

17. Do you have any questions?