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Xhosa-speaking gay men's experiences of Ulwaluko and its influence on
their constructions of masculine identity

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

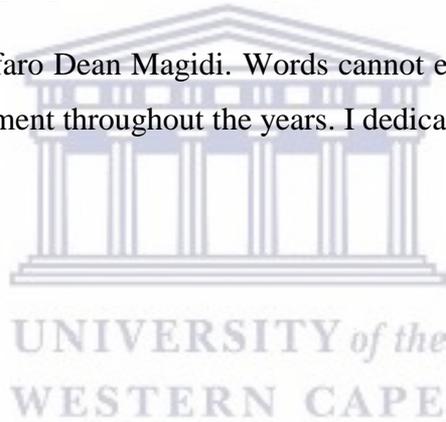
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ABSTRACT

‘Ulwaluko’ is traditionally a heterosexual Xhosa male circumcision rite of passage to manhood which defines their masculinity and educates them on their responsibilities as a heterosexual man. There is nothing in this rite which focuses on homosexual manhood. Despite the notable progressive legislation on Gay Rights in South Africa, there has been limited research on whether gay men engage in the circumcision rite of Ulwaluko and if they do, what are their experiences in relation to their identity as a gay man? The theory of hegemonic masculinity was utilized to critically analyze how gay men construct their masculine identity. The main aim of the study was to explore and describe Xhosa-speaking gay men’s experience of Ulwaluko and how this had influenced their construction of a masculine identity. This study focused on addressing the following research question; “What are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how has it influenced their construction of a masculine identity?” In attempting to answer the research question, the study used a Qualitative Research methodology, adopting an exploratory and descriptive research design.

In gathering the data for the study, the researcher made use of semi-structured in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted in English or Xhosa with the preference of the participants and was recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim. In analyzing the data, the researcher made use of qualitative thematic analysis. The study sample consisted of 11 young Xhosa gay men between the ages of 18-35. This sample was taken from the population of gay men who had undergone Ulwaluko in the Cape Metropole. The researcher made use of snowball sampling as she identified and negotiated access to research sites via Mosaic, Sonke Gender Justice, Reslife (University of the Western Cape Residential Service) and the Gender Equity Unit at the University of the Western Cape. The researcher also got the opportunity to interview an insider of the Ulwaluko rite to ensure trustworthiness. Ethics considerations were adhered to.

Four major themes emerged from the study with a total of nine sub-themes. The first theme that emanated was how the participants defined gay masculinity which was in relation to heteronormative gender roles. The second major theme that emanated was how participants indicated to have challenged the hegemonic masculinity. In this theme three sub-themes were emanate. Firstly this was how they expressed to have felt pressured by the families to undergo Ulwaluko with the belief that it will change their sexuality and make them more masculine. Secondly, it also indicated how they will use Ulwaluko to disproof the belief that engaging in this tradition circumcision will change their sexuality. Lastly, despite the pressure and disproof that

Ulwaluko can change their masculinity. The findings showed how they took pride and agency in engaging in the process of Ulwaluko.

The third major theme is how Ulwaluko is seen as a necessity for identity shaping for everyone that takes part in it and how it is seen as a healthy. The fourth major theme, is how these gay men experienced some form of rejection from the other initiate and the practice itself. In this theme it also become emanate how others engaged in sexual practices in order to get a sense of belonging and lastly, it also emerged how they enagement in Ulwaluko has gained them a sense of empowerment and access to the privileges obtain by the ‘real men’ as ascribed by the Xhosa culture.



KEY WORDS

Ulwaluko

Isi-Xhosa

Hegemonic masculinity

Gay

Social constructionism



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ANC: African National Congress
- GLOW: Gay and Lesbian of the Witwatersrand
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- IRIN: Integrated Regional Information Networks
- LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender
- NIV: New International Version
- OLGA: Organization of Lesbian and Gay Activists
- SACSSP: South African Council for Social Services Profession
- UDF: United Democratic Front
- UN: United Nation
- US: United States
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- UWC: University of the Western Cape



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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and rationale for study

The rite of passage rituals plays a very important role in African socialization, which marks the different stages of development in an individual's life. These rites of passage can vary from child birth and naming ceremonies, maturity, and marriage and for some cultures even death (Holcroft, 2010). Cultural practices such as Ulwaluko (male Xhosa circumcision rite) has been one of the most ancient cultural practices performed in South Africa to symbolize one's development from boyhood to manhood (Ncaca, 2014).

According to Uchendu (2008), Ulwaluko is regarded as the cultural practice that teaches Xhosa young men about the socially-expected behaviours and morals of being a "real man" which is basically conforming to heteronormative hegemonic masculinity. Authors such as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), Morrell (2001), Hearn (2004) and Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema (2007) have attempted to discuss the social and cultural construction of masculinity with some South African authors bringing in the concept of Ulwaluko. However, most of these authors focus on hegemonic masculinity, gender equality, the construction of masculinity and masculinity around race but they pay little attention to gay masculinity with specific reference to Ulwaluko.

Despite the progressive Constitutional Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the Civil Union Act (Act No 17 of 2006) which is to fight against the marginalization and discrimination based on sexual orientation, there are still challenges with homophobia and hate crimes perpetrated against these minorities (Klarsfeld, 2014). Most gay men do not usually undergo the traditional circumcision rite but are sometimes forced by their families as it is believed that those who participate in the process of Ulwaluko will revert to heterosexuality and become real men (Mtshiselwa, 2011). There is also pressure from the wider society and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) to embrace heteronormativity.

But then the question is, how do these cultural practices accommodate gay men, particularly those who are living in the Cape Metropole? Furthermore, after these rituals, are they considered as real men as these cultural practices are performed predominantly for the transition of becoming a man and for procreation with a woman? In addition, how do these

cultural practices affect gay men's identities in the Cape Metropole even though their initiation process mostly happens in the Eastern Cape? Therefore, how does the involvement of gay men in the initiation process change the understanding of becoming a man and the understanding of gay men's masculinity? There are possible mixed feelings for Xhosa gay men about engaging in this rite, as they are uncertain what will emerge from this experience. It is important to research what they encounter, but there is an awareness that Ulwaluko is a secretive rite with many cultural barriers to people talking about it. Chapter Four of this paper looks at attempting to answer these questions as ambiguously as possible.

1.2 Research question

According to Anastas (2012), a research question is an answerable inquiry into a specific concern or issue identified that the researcher would like to explore or describe. It is the initial step in a research project as all research projects are built on the foundation of research questions (Blaikie, 2009). Kumar (2014) argues that a research question defines the nature and scope of a research project where questions that you ask participants can provide the basis for answering the research question. Writing a good research question, as maintained by Silverman (2009), means you have something you want to study.

The research question for the study was "what are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how have they influenced their construction of masculine identity?" The research question is divided into two parts of the study:

- Exploring the experiences of Ulwaluko of the Xhosa-speaking gay men
- Exploring the influences on construction of masculine identity

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research will be to explore and describe Xhosa-speaking gay men in the Cape Metropole experiences of Ulwaluko and how this has influenced their construction of a masculine identity.

The objectives of the study were to: Explore and describe the -

- 1) experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men in the in the Cape Metropole
- 2) influence of Ulwaluko on Xhosa-speaking gay men's construction of masculine identity in the Cape Metropole.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The researcher made use of the qualitative research approach as the main aim of her study was to explore and describe the answers to her research question; “what are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how have it influenced their construction of masculine identity?” from the participants’ perspectives. This will be discussed further in the methodology chapter in Chapter 3.

1.5 Research design

For the purpose of this study the researcher incorporated an exploratory as well as a descriptive research design. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, (2006:44) an “exploratory study is used to make preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research”. The study attempted to explore and describe Xhosa-speaking gay men’s experience of Ulwaluko and its influence on their construction of masculine identity as there is limited research that has been done on the topic.

1.6 Population and sample, selection criteria, size, methods and procedures

Singh & Nath (2007) define a population as a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. In addition, populations are often defined in terms of demography, geography, occupation, time and care requirements, among other factors (De Vos et al., 2011). For the purpose of this study, the population was young Xhosa-speaking gay men in the Cape Metropole and the sample drawn was Xhosa-speaking gay men who have attended Ulwaluko. A sample as defined by Singh & Nath (2007) as a small proportion of a population selected for data collection and analysis.

The sample was taken as a means of helping the researcher to explain some of the features within the population group. Jones, Torres & Arminio (2014:4) argue that “one integral part of sampling, is that of gaining access to participants for research and developing rapport”. The sampling method that the researcher used for this research was snowball sampling. The researcher also incorporated some elements of network sampling as she identified and negotiated access to research sites via Mosaic, Sonke Gender Justice, Reslife (University of the Western Cape Residential Service) and the Gender Equity Unit at the University of the Western Cape where she requested the people from

these organizations to suggest/refer and encourage those who met the selection criteria to participate in the study.

The selection criteria for the study was 10-15 young homosexual men living in the Cape Metropole who are between the ages of 18-35 years old who have the knowledge and have undergone Ulwaluko. The researcher also aimed at getting an interview with an insider of the Ulwaluko rite as a key informant such as community elder who would be accessed through snowball sampling where participants would be asked to suggest/refer an elder who would be willing and available to share their insights on the topic.

1.7 Data analysis

In analysing the data, the researcher made use of a qualitative thematic analysis, which is defined by Creswell (2003) as an approach of dealing with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data. This enabled the researcher to move beyond counting obvious words or phrases but focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data which further requires a coherent and systematic approach (Creswell, 2003). Steps which the researcher employed were as follows:

- to read verbatim transcripts,
- to identify possible themes,
- to compare and contrast themes and identify structure among them and
- to build theoretical models, constantly checking them against the data.

The data analysis was based on transcripts and data collected from the interviews. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of the paper.

1.8 Defining of key concepts

Defining key concepts indicate the terms that are central to the overall argument contained in the research study, as the terms which the researcher continued to make use of throughout the study. Furthermore, the researcher find it imperative that she define the key concepts in order to avoid misconceptions of the terms used throughout the research study.

Ulwaluko: “Ulwaluko is a Xhosa circumcision ritual that transforms boys into men” (Perryer, 2004:54).

Masculinity: Pascoe (2012:6) defines masculinity as religious gender practice which is enacted by men.

Gay masculinity: This is the masculinity which is associated with femininity that has been frequently been defined as ‘everything else’ which is ‘different’ or ‘other’ in relation to hegemonic masculinity which is therefore seen as subordinate (Plummer, 2002)

Hegemonic masculinity: According to Connell (1995:77) hegemonic masculinity is the “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women”.

Social constructionism: Rothenberg (2013) ascertains that social constructionism is how the society groups people and how it privileges certain groups over others.

Traditional surgeon (Ingcibi): A trustworthy man from the community who performs the circumcision procedure who also does the appointment of an *Ikhankatha* (traditional nurse)

Xhosa: According to Collins English Dictionary (2012) Xhosa is the language belonging to the Bantu group of the Niger-Congo family: one of the Nguni languages, closely related to Swazi and Zulu and characterized by several clicks in its sound system.

1.9 Thesis structure

Chapter 1: This chapter acts as an introductory chapter which provides an overview of the entire research paper. Within this chapter the researcher gives the background, rationale for the study, aim and objectives of the research study, introduces the research approach, design, and methods adopted for the proposed investigation and further defines the key concepts used throughout the research paper for the reader to get an understanding of the terms.

Chapter 2: This chapter is the literature review chapter where the researcher explores previous research done on Ulwaluko, gay masculinity, hegemonic masculinity,

social constructionism among other topics which are related to the research question. This chapter identifies the similarities, differences and further explores the gaps in the literature in order to give a broad conceptual framework that guides the research study.

Chapter 3: The methodology chapter, this chapter describes the methodological framework and method used for the research study. In this chapter the research approach, research design and research process such as the population that the research participants were drawn from are comprehensively discussed, further highlighting the selection criteria, methods of data collection and data analysis. The chapter also illustrates the role of the researcher, the interview skills adopted by the researcher during data collection and ethical considerations. In addition, the research limitations, trustworthiness and self-reflectivity are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the findings from the interviews conducted are discussed, interpreted and substantiated with literature. A representation of the research participants is illustrated, and short biographies of the participants are written in this chapter for the reader to get to know them. The researcher's observations are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter encompasses the core of the study.

Chapter 5: This chapter consolidates the thesis and gives a collective description of the general findings of the study. In this chapter recommendations for future research studies are highlighted and the research limitations of the overall study are further discussed.

1.10 Conclusion

In this chapter the introduction and rationale for the study was discussed, providing the research questions and aims and objectives of the study. The chapter further presented a brief explanation of the theoretical framework, research design, data analysis and provided definitions of the key concepts. In conclusion of the chapter a summative structure of each chapter was given.

The following chapter will focus of the literature review where the similarities, differences and gaps are explored to give a broad conceptual framework that guides the research study.



CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

In this literature review, the researcher looked for similarities and differences and explored gaps in the literature of the research topic. This gave her insight into areas on the topic that still needed to be researched (Hart, 1998).

The literature review looked at historical development of social constructionism as the theoretical framework which worked as guidance to the research. Furthermore, the literature review also highlighted masculinity providing an overview of the different types of masculinity and the social constructionism of hegemonic masculinity. Through this, the researcher provided literature on the gendered power within hegemonic masculinity and the history of sexuality. Before moving on to looking at gay masculinity, she first tried to give a brief understanding of the gay men and homosexuality terminology which also formed as a guideline throughout the research study. In addition, she also looked at literature on the marginalization of gay men from around the world and Gay Liberation. In conclusion, she ended with the main part of the research study which was the rite of passage starting from the rite of passage from around the world moving down to the Xhosa rite of passage to manhood which is Ulwaluko and its purpose.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Knight & Ruddock (2008) state that theories are used to explain and predict. Grabherr, Mucina, Dale & Ter-Braak (1990) argue that "a theoretical framework is a conceptual frame of reference" that is a basis for observations, definitions of concepts, research designs, interpretations, and generalizations. Knight & Ruddock (2008) further state that theoretical frameworks provide the organization for the study as they give guidance to the research in the interpretations of the results. The importance of the theory is dependent on the degree of research-based evidence and level of its theory development (Knight & Ruddock, 2008).

a) The historical development of Social Constructionism

Social construction theory or social constructionism made its first appearance in mid-1970, where it demonstrated a gradual development of the ability to imagine that sexuality is socially constructed (Berger, Wallis & Watson, 1995). Stabile & Ershler (2015) maintain that

the social construction theory recognizes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and is more of a shared rather than an individual experience. It is further argued by Berger et al. (1995) that it differs in the views of what might be constructed, variously including sexual acts, sexual identities, sexual communities, the direction of erotic interest and sexual desire.

Looking at social construction and the essentialist theory, according to Xue (2008) the essentialist theory believes that there are some essential biological differences in brain structure, learning styles and interests, between males and females. Xue (2008) adds that the essentialist theory believes that gender is natural and stable therefore cannot be changed. Essentialism also refers to adrenalin and hormones and differing rates of maturity for boys and girls (Xue, 2008).

Gender researchers such as Bing & Bergvall, 1998; Ferree .et.al 1999; Hare-Mustin & Maracek 1994; Hollway, 1994 & Kitzinger, 1994, however started to move away from the essentialist theory as its biological determinist premise was seen as problematic as it could not provide an adequate explanation for the wide range of differences in behaviours amongst females as a group, or for the wide range of behaviours amongst males as a group (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). According to DeLamater & Hyde (1998), these groups were then seen as not homogenous as identities, like social structures, are not natural and immutable, but are, in fact, dynamic and shifting constructions.

Gender researchers such as Shields 1975 and Tavris & Offir 1997 then moved to the sex role theory. The sex role theory believes that boys and girls experience a passive, sponge-like absorption of messages, from models of masculinity and femininity, which is mediated through social institutions such as the family and schools (Gelfer, 2013). The sex role theory has however, been criticised for “implying that gender represents two fixed, static and mutually exclusive role containers and assuming that women and men have innate psychological needs for gender stereotypical traits” (Tovey & Broom, 2009). The sex role theory has also been found to have strong links between socialisation theory and biological determinism theory as mentioned by Gelfer (2013). According to Delaney (2009) “socialisation explanation also fails to account for individual agency in choosing ideas and behaviours, or the influence of gendered power differentials in diverse environments. That is, it does not explain why gendered behaviours are not consistent - why some boys and girls do not exhibit the characteristics and behaviours ascribed to their sex, or how people are able to

act differently according to their changing social contexts, that is, depending upon where they are and who they are with. This notion of choice or agency is a significant gap in the socialisation explanation for behaviour and is accounted for in the Social Construction of gender model”

The social construction theory emphasizes the role/importance of culture, socialization in the cognitive development of individuals and context in understanding what occurs in society. It is believed that it is through social construction that individuals develop cognitive tools that allow them to construct new knowledge on the basis of knowledge previously acquired (Cui & Zhao, 2015). Berger et al. (1995:42) maintain that social construction approaches “adopt the view that physically identical sexual acts may have varying social significance and subjective meaning, depending on how they are defined and understood in different cultures and historical periods”. This is supported by Gwata (2009) who states that agents of socialization vary from society to society. However, almost universally, an individual’s parents or members of the nuclear family are the primary agents during the first stage of socialization. Gwata (2009) further mentions that other important agents of socialization include educational institutions which are an important feature of the later stages of one’s development. However, rituals such as circumcision are also deemed important agents of socialization in some societies.

According to Shuford et al. (2006), social constructionism is based on precise assumptions about reality, knowledge and learning:

- 1. Reality:** Social constructivists believe that reality is constructed through human activity. Members of a society together invent the properties of the world
- 2. Knowledge:** To social constructivists, knowledge is also a human product, and is socially and culturally constructed. Through knowledge individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment in which they live.
- 3. Learning:** Social constructivists view learning as a social process. It does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviours that are shaped by external forces. Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

According to Henderson (2010), social construction theories are usually found in studies that use qualitative research methods such as life histories and ethnographic research. In these studies, it is believed to look beyond the categories of gender through examining the intersections of multiple identities and the blurring of the boundaries between essentialist categories (The Lumen: Boundless Sociology. (n.d.). Garner & Hancock (2014) argue that the social construction theory focuses on how gender differences are constructed, and borders formed in ritual, play, child socialization, initiation rites and the practices of states and organizations. The social construction theory strives to blur the binary in which categories such as male and female are frequently presumed as essential (The Lumen: Boundless Sociology. (n.d.). This statement made in the article on the Lumen: Boundless sociology is supported by Garner & Hancock (2014) who argue that social constructionists believe that to say we are now living in a truly liberated society, it will mean living in a society where same sex desires are not stigmatized where everyone will freely acknowledge feeling same sex sexual desires. Social constructionists try to encourage everyone to accept their own queer potential and see same-sex desires as a natural part of what all humans are capable of experiencing (Garner & Hancock, 2014), which this study tried to achieve.

2.2 Masculinity

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that masculinity has emerged as the most important growing area of study in Africa. In the article published by the Grinnell College on Searching for the Gay Masculinity, it is argued that defining masculinity can be quite difficult. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) define masculinity as the practices that are organised to structure gender relations. However, according to most sociologists as maintained by Pascoe (2012:6) “masculinity is a multiplicity of gender practices enacted by men and whose bodies are assumed to be biologically male”. Reeser (2010) maintains that masculinity does not have a single meaning even for a given individual, but its definition however changes through relations to various external factors that arise. This is supported by the Grinnell College article published on Searching for Gay Masculinity that “on a basic level, masculinity is understood to be one part of a dualistic gender structure”. Morrell (2001), who writes about African masculinity on the other hand, states that masculinity is located within the constant dominance of men over women, polygamy, and economic independence such as homestead subsistence and that the male species constantly demand the respect from younger men and women. Ouzgane & Morrell (2005), argue that for most African men, their masculinity is

signified by their eligibility to marry, provide for their family, be the leader, inherit land and participate in family courts. Nevertheless, the concept of masculinity “is criticized for being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentializes male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005:836).

According to Reeser (2010), masculinity has no meaning itself. Reeser (2010) argues that masculinity has meaning in the way it is put in dialogue with another and in the way in which it is perceived at a given moment in a given space. Reeser (2010:45) further argues that “a gay man might perceive the same masculinity in a way unlike the way a lesbian perceives it, meaning that the sense attached to a given masculinity inevitably varies widely. In other words, masculinity is not inside a body, but exists as a relation between the perceiver and a body or a sign”. Reeser’s view of masculinity is supported by Pascoe (2012) who states that there are a variety of masculinities which are believed to make sense only in hierarchical and contested relations with one another instead of focusing on masculinity as the male role. These masculinities are listed by Pascoe (2012) as follows:

1. *Hegemonic masculinity:*

This type of masculinity is listed on top the masculinity hierarchy which is the type of gender practice which at times supports gender inequality. This is the dominant type of masculinity which is socially and culturally accepted the most in the global community. According to Connell (1995:77) hegemonic masculinity is the “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women”. In addition, Minicheillo & Scott (2014) say that hegemonic masculinity is about relations between and within genders. Harrison (2008) states that the hegemonic masculinity limits emotional horizons for sensitivity and does not allow room for creativity or otherness for boys and men. Furthermore, this type of masculinity exerts influence through cultural and institutional practices which creates strong roots in patriarchy. This is also maintained by the Grinnell College article published on Searching for Gay Masculinity who state that hegemonic masculinity can only exist within patriarchal structure in which most heterosexual men control the dominant position in relation with the sexes.

2. *Complicit masculinity:*

This type of masculinity describes the men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity such as not having the characteristics of the dominant masculinity and do not challenge it, but instead they admire it. Harrison (2008) argues that the greatest benefit in belonging to this masculinity is the gain achieved through the subordination of women.

3. *Subordinated masculinity:*

This is primarily gay men as they are believed to exhibit the opposite values of the hegemonic masculinity and are seen to have physical weakness or even very expressive with their emotions. This is contestable as many gay men embrace a masculine body image so as to pass as heterosexual (Goffman, 1959). This type of masculinity describes the men who are oppressed by the definitions of the hegemonic masculinity. Through subordinated masculinities it is believed that hegemonic masculinity maintains itself not through violence but through social interaction, cultural ideals and various social institutions (Connell, 2005).

4. *Marginalized masculinity:*

This type of masculinity describes the men who are positioned to be powerful in terms of gender but not class or race. These men subscribe to norms of hegemonic masculinity like physical strength and aggression. This masculinity according to Harrison (2008) is marginal in the sense that it only influences one particular sphere of society.

Looking at the variety of types of masculinity one can also notice that hegemonic masculinity plays a major role in all types of masculinity as most heterosexual men ascribe to it as the dominant and acceptable masculinity. Hence, Ratele (2013) defines hegemonic masculinity as the dominant/acceptable norm of gendered behaviour for men and boys. Harrison (2008:24) on the other hand argues that hegemonic masculinity asserts its superiority by “convincing complicit masculinity that subordinate masculinity is illegitimate thus setting itself up as legitimate”. Harrison (2008) further argues that hegemonic masculinity and marginalized masculinity do not name fixed character types but rather configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships.

Hearn & Morrell (2012) ask questions such as how does this hegemonic masculinity operate in day-to-day relations in our societies? Can this dominant/acceptable masculinity be easily identified in the daily experiences of men and more especially gay men? Do all, or most, men contribute to the construction of a hegemonic masculine identity and if so, how?

Furthermore, does hegemonic masculinity exist in the same way in all settings? It is hoped that this study was able to answer some of these questions. With these questions in mind the researcher moved on to look at literature on the Social Construction of hegemonic masculinity and its role in society.

2.3 Social construction of hegemonic masculinity.

Rothenberg (2013) ascertains that social constructionism is how the society groups people and how it privileges certain groups over others. Through social construction it is believed that our experience of reality is socially, culturally and historically comparative (Aronson & Kimmel, 2004). Freedman and Combs (1995) argue that categories such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and nationality are socially constructed which may possibly vary across time and culture depending on specific circumstances, processes and forms of interactions. It is through the social process that we come to differentiate between what is normal and what is not normal such as how to behave as a woman or a man (Rothenberg, 2013). Hegemonic masculinity is seen as the most important aspect of socialization of young men, which is used to refer to the expected norms of society of how a man should behave and present himself in depicting being a real man (Ratele, 2013).

Ratele (2013) argues that boys or men are socially positioned by other boys or men and women in their society in relation to the hierarchy, which in turn renders them to be powerful, successful, envied and desirable. According to the Grinnell College article of Searching for the Gay Masculinity, “this view is a result of the patriarchal structure of our society which places men in positions of power, while women are forced into subordination”. This can be highlighted in societies such as in the traditional Zulu societies, which is discussed by Hunter (2005) who states that the social construction of hegemonic masculinity in the traditional Zulu societies is to accumulate as many cattle, take several wives and thus build a successful homestead. For the Zulu men, the more wives they have the more labour they are able to control and the richer they are, the more esteemed an *umnumzana* (house-hold head) becomes. The ideal behaviour and representation of the hegemonic masculinity in most men in Africa is the breadwinner ideal, which defines a man who can provide economically for his female partner and families who can earn his male authority through this practice (Goes-Green, 2009). This is argued by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) as hegemonic standards or norms of masculinity behaviour or representation which is often culturally informed or culturally bound.

Furthermore, Groes-Green (2009:292) says that “hegemonic masculinity is to be seen as a cultural prototype or ideal masculinity which is largely acknowledged and accepted by both women and men in a society, even if they have no chance of conforming to the ideal”. However, looking at Groes-Green’s (2009) definition of hegemonic masculinity, one can identify that this term or its social construction rejects or ignores the prejudices and isolation it creates among other men such as gay men, other young men and women which only a few researchers/scholars have highlighted in their studies. This is supported by Swarts (1998) who states that social constructionism rejects the notions of innate characteristics as it argues that gender construction is only the result of intersecting historical, social and cultural factors at a particular moment in time. As a result, the term does not capture the social inequalities and complexity of male power (Groes-Green, 2009).

Positivists would argue that everyone has the inherent ability to make his/her own choice in terms of what and what not to conform to. Connell & Messerchmidt (2005) maintain that most men choose when to adopt hegemonic masculinity and when to distance themselves strategically from it. However, although at times the dominant masculinity remains intact to some, Connell (2005) argues that there are different masculinities that are constructed that are not necessarily in opposition to the heteronormative masculinity such as the alternative masculinities. Martin (2012) states that while these alternative masculinities might not challenge the gender structure, they provide new characteristics that might become part of the dominant masculine norm over time. This is maintained by Milani (2015) who argues that athlete Caster Semenya, who is a South African Olympic Silver Medallist and has been called a ‘hermaphrodite’ which is a person having both male and female sex organs or other sexual characteristics (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2011), in particular reminds that masculinities are not necessarily synonymous with biological maleness but shows that it can be dislocated from it. This is supported by Plummer (2002) who articulates that alternative masculinities might include Feminist men and a variety of homosexual identities. Hence, hegemonic masculinity is not an identity or a set of expectations but rather a dominant cultural and political force about which men and women orient themselves (Connell, 2005). The researcher then attempted to give a broad understanding of the gay men and homosexuality terminology first before giving a broad explanation of the alternative (gay) masculinity which is highlighted by Plummer (2002).

2.4 Understanding the terminology of gay men and homosexuality.

Before one can come to understand the term ‘gay masculinity’ and how it was constructed in Africa one first needs to have an understanding of the terminology of homosexuality and gay men. According to Swan (2005), the terminology of the homosexual is more of a clinical term that is used to refer to certain behaviours which implies that gays, lesbians and bisexuals are one dimensional sexual beings who are without culture or history. Isay (2009:11) argues that “homosexual men have a predominant attraction to others of the same sex, meaning their sexual fantasies are either mostly or fully directed towards other men and have been so since childhood”. Furthermore, Connell (1992:737) states that homosexuality is “understood as a condition of the individual for which causes must be found, whether family pathology, gender or biological predisposition”. Connell’s argument is supported by Henderson (2010:37) who highlights that “homosexuality was regarded as a mental disorder before its removal in 1974 by the American Psychological Association”. Henderson (2010) further argues how Le Vay described homosexuality as hormone, brain or parental upbringing abnormality. Defining the concept ‘gay men’ on the other hand seems to be a challenge for many authors as it is a term which is evolving through social constructionism. The term ‘gay man’ is also constructed differently across cultures and historical periods which make it more difficult to define. Hence, it is likely to have a personal meaning for those who endorse it. In addition, it encompasses a variety of meaning and behavioural patterns. However, it excludes men who have same-sex sexual contact but do not identify themselves as gay (Day, Stannard, Coleman & Repino, 2008).

Trying to look at the different meanings of the terms produces some confusion as to which term is more appropriate, mostly used and which term best describes the difference of homosexuality to heterosexuality such as the fact that many authors such as Isay (2009) and Swan (2005) use both terms ‘homosexuality’ and ‘gay men’ interchangeably throughout their research. Furthermore, reviewing the arguments presented by Connell (1992) and Day et al. (2008), it presents that both authors argue that homosexuality and gay men are understood as an individual condition as opposed to Swan (2005) who argues that homosexuality is more of a term used to define behaviour of a group such as gays, lesbians and bisexuality. To avoid confusion, in this paper, the researcher made use of the term ‘gay men’ as it is regarded as the appropriate, progressive and recommended term which is a generic term used to describe people. However, the term ‘homosexual’ is appropriate to others but not recommended or

preferred by many, as it has been used in a generally negative sense in the past (Beins & Beins, 2012).

2.5 Gay masculinity

According to Harrison (2008), gay masculinity, as also argued by Plummer (2002), is the masculinity which is associated with femininity that has been frequently defined as ‘everything else’ which is ‘different’ or ‘other’, which is therefore subordinate. The gay clone, according to Murphy (2013), is the “specific articulation of gay masculinity that emerged in the major urban centres of gay life in the era between the Stonewall riots of 1969 in the USA, which signalled the birth of the Gay Liberation Movement and the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980’s. Minichiello & Scott (2014) state that gay masculinities are the practices of gay men who not only reinforce the patriarchal goal of hegemonic masculinity but also help define the hegemonic ideal itself. Harrison (2008) further argues that gay men spend their entire lives in direct opposition to the dominant sexual and gender paradigms. Psychoanalysts, according to Edwards (2006), have earlier theorized that boys who later became gay had failed to develop a masculine gender identity. Empirical research, on the other hand, indicated that gay men do, however acquire, the masculine gender identity as men.

According to Edwards (2006), it is believed that gay sexuality goes against masculinity and ascribes more to femininity as they are said to be too promiscuous, too phallic or too lacking in masculinity. Gay men on the other hand as prescribed by Shaw & Ardener (2005) define their masculinity in a way which allows them to avoid the problematic politics of admitting a feminine component to gay maleness. Cooper (2013) argues that gay men can learn to perform some aspect of heterosexual masculinity which can be done through self-monitoring, although it is out of line with their sense of self. He further states that the position of gay man in relation to masculinity, creates some form of contradictions between the identities and heterosexual norms. Cooper (2013) also suggests that gay men are not compatible with masculinity making them feminine and simply cannot be accommodated in the hegemonic masculinity. This is however, refuted by Nardi (2000) who states that hegemonic masculinity is being redefined to include gay male identities. This is further argued by Murphy (2013) who states that gay masculinity has become more visibly diverse as more gay men have adopted heterosexual patterns, developing lasting partnerships and long-term “marriages”, families with adoptive or biological children.

Connell (1992) maintains that the masculinity of gay men only varies a little from the heterosexual man thus indicating that gay men can achieve their masculinity in ways which can be slightly different from those of straight men. This is further supported by Nardi (2000:77) who states that:

“gay men are men and thus acknowledge their sexuality and masculinity”.

This is also supported by the article published by the Grinnell College on Searching for the Gay Masculinity, which states that:

“because gay men are able to embrace their femininity, they are ultimately able to stabilize their gender identity as a whole”.

This will be highlighted later in this chapter as to how gay men construct their masculinity which enables them to stabilize their gender as a whole. The researcher then looked at how gay men are marginalized around the world and most specifically in Africa.

2.6 The marginalization of gay men around the world

Gay men from around the world are marginalized in some way or another. In most countries gay men experience discrimination, name-calling, death, torture and criminalization and among others. According to Dworkin & Yi (2003), in most societies gay men and transgendered males are believed to betray male gender role superiority and privilege and therefore deserve to be punished. In Russia, for example, teenagers who are believed to be gay are tortured and are then forcibly recorded on video to ‘come out’. These videos are then posted on social media sites exposing these teenagers to humiliation and sometimes death (Saner, 2013). Brown (2012) argues that social media sites violate confidentiality as the involuntary disclosure of sexual orientation increases the possible violence of targeting LGBT youth. It was reported that one of the victims aged 19, committed suicide after his sexuality was revealed on social media sites (Saner, 2013).

Some countries, such as Tunisia for an example make use of medical services to force a change to heterosexuality. In some countries the medical interventions range from institutionalization to Aversion Therapy, and chemical castration (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). In Tunisia, according to an article published in the Human Rights Watch, they use forced anal examination as a way to collect evidence as proof against people who have been accused of homosexual conduct. Recently, two cases were documented by the Human Rights Watch in

late 2015 where seven men were subjected to forced anal examination by police officials who suspected them to be homosexuals. It is believed that these men were taken to the hospital where they were penetrated by forensic doctors using their fingers or other objects in order to examine their anal sphincters to find proof of homosexual conduct. According to the Human Rights Watch, these tests or ways of finding ‘proof’ of homosexual conduct in Tunisia are based on “antiquated and erroneous theories” and simply an act of the marginalization of gay men. These cases are rarely reported and documented as they are mostly perpetrated by authorities. Dworkin & Yi (2003) add that in other countries, indigenous medicines also are used to attempt to change sexual orientation.

Furthermore, in Russia, the president has passed quite a number of anti-gay laws and legislations which punish those whom are believed to be distributing information which is considered by the country as being the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations. Russia has laws as far as having powers to arrest and retain foreign citizens who are believed to be gay or pro-gay (Saner, 2013). Russia is not the only country which has laws to criminalise homosexuality. According to Saner (2013) there are more than 75 countries which have laws that criminalise homosexuality, with 37 African countries out of 54 which have laws that have banned homosexuality with laws that describe homosexual acts as criminal acts which may lead to a jail sentence of many years (Onyeani, 2014). Most of the African countries for example, have passed laws that have banned the practices of same-sex marriages as it believed that homosexuality and same-sex marriages are a Western culture and are unnatural and unlawful to African cultures (Onyeani, 2014). Saner (2013) adds on to highlight how other countries have criminalized homosexuality such as Nigeria where a bill was recently passed which outlawed same-sex marriage punishable with a 14-year prison term. Politicians in other countries such as Uganda who are attempting to pass a similar bill.

In countries such as Iran and Cameroon on the other hand; homosexuality is punishable by death (Saner, 2013). Eric Ohena Lembembe, an outspoken LGBT rights activist and openly gay man in Cameroon, was found at his home in Yaoundé to have been tortured, his neck and feet broken, his body burned with an iron and murdered (Saner, 2013). Cameroon is known as a country where homosexuality is punishable with prison. It is also known as a country where violence against LGBT people is rife and almost never investigated. Shneer & Aviv (2006) argue that these laws did not only criminalize gay men’s sexual behaviour but it also criminalized their association with one another, their culture as gay men and most importantly, their efforts to organize and speak on their own behalf. Shneer & Aviv (2006:16)

further argue how these laws have made gay men targets of harassment and violation of their human dignity. They add on to say:

“Their social marginalization gave the police and popular vigilantes even broader informal authority to harass them; anyone discovered to be homosexual was threatened with loss of livelihood and loss of social respect.”(Shneer & Aviv, 2006:16)

Politicians in Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Uganda, including South Africa and many more have voiced their discrimination against sexual practices and sexual relations other than heterosexual ones. Zimbabwean’s President Robert Mugabe for example, has verbally expressed his views regarding gay men in the United Nations General Assembly meeting. Mugabe went on to say in rejecting calls from the UN to implement gay rights in his country as cited in the public news hub 29 September by Ngwenya (2015):

“We equally reject attempts to prescribe new rights that are contrary to our norms, values, traditions and beliefs. We are not gays. Cooperation and respect for each other will advance the cause of human rights worldwide. Confrontation, vilification and double standards will not,” (Ngwenya, 2015)

Mugabe’s argument as he mentioned at the UN General Assembly meeting, was that upholding human rights is the obligation of all member states, but he strongly rejects the obligation of what he called "new rights" for gay marriage that have been advocated elsewhere in the world. President Robert Mugabe is not the only state president to express his views verbally regarding gay men. The State President of South Africa Jacob Zuma, before his election into office has also voiced his views regarding gay men. According the Sunday Times, 23 December 2007 cited in Msibi (2012:52), President Jacob Zuma publicly went on to say:

“Same-sex marriages were a "disgrace to the nation and to God," and that when he was growing up an "ungqingili" (derogatory for gay man) would not have stood in front of him as he would "knock him out"

Kopano (2006) states that president Robert Mugabe and many other African presidents do not only make homophobic pronouncements, they have also developed homophobic or discriminatory policies.

After president Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe shut down the Gay Book Fair in Harare, he maliciously undermined the gay community by saying, “homosexuality degrades human dignity” (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). Other presidents such as the president of Uganda, went as far as ordering the Criminal Investigation Department to hunt out lesbians and gays and lock them up (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). According to Onyeani (2014) in Cameroon, same-sex sexual activity is illegal and banned and in February 2011, Malawi which already had laws criminalizing homosexuality among men also passed a law which criminalized women for lesbianism. This new law was to convict defendants of same-sex activities with five years’ imprisonment if found guilty. He adds on to say that when President Joyce Banda came into office, she announced that she was going to review the law and the police would be authorized to stop arresting same-sex offenders. It was only on December the 1st, 2006 that the South African government passed the Civil Union Bill which legalized same-sex marriages, making it the first African country to pass that law. This is after the 1996 South African Constitution included in its statutes that gay men and women could not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation.

In addition, Pushparagavan (2014) also argues that not only politicians discriminated against gay men but also Christianity rejected them since it was believed to be unnatural and sinful in the Bible as stated in Leviticus 20 verse 13.

“If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads”

Larsen (2013) adds on to say early Christians tried to put this into practice as they tried to overcome homosexuality by torturing and burning alive anyone who was believed to be gay as they believed that it was punishable by death. The last recording of burning of gay men was in Amsterdam in 1730. Things then started to change in the gay community in the 19th century when homosexuality was viewed as a sickness which was curable instead of a sin, which was punishable by death as practiced in Tunisia. People tried to cure homosexuality in a number of ways that ranged from drugs to electric shock therapy to psychotherapy which was found to be ineffective in curing people of homosexuality (Larsen, 2013).

The belief that homosexuality is a sickness which is curable is still evident in today’s modern society more especially in South Africa. There have been a number of corrective rape cases reported from around the world. An article published online by Chatterji (2015) highlights how some parents in India are using corrective rape as a cure to homosexuality for their

children. The article highlights how Deepthi Tadanki, a researcher on taboo topics came across two stories of corrective rape.

“When I was researching on this subject for my film, I came across two gut wrenching stories of corrective rape — one, where a gay girl was raped by her cousin so that she could be “cured” of homosexuality; and another, where family members forced a gay boy to have sex with his mother, in a bid to turn him ‘straight’. I tried reaching out to these victims, but they refused to talk.”

In reference to South Africa, corrective rape is believed to have the highest rape cases. According to Brown (2012), the term "corrective rape" stems from the prevalence of the crime in South Africa, where it is used to describe rape perpetrated by straight men against lesbian women in order to "correct" or "cure" their "unnatural" sexual orientation. Brown (2012) mentions the story of a 13-year-old girl who was raped near Pretoria in South Africa on the 4th of May 2011 for the reasons of her sexual orientation. When questioned the 13-year-old reported that the perpetrator told her that he was “curing” her of her sexual orientation. The issue of corrective rape is not only evident in South Africa and India only. There have been recent reports of corrective rape in countries such as Uganda, Zimbabwe and Jamaica. The term ‘corrective rape’ is now also being used across the world and broadly including the rape of any member of a sexual minority such as gay men in an effort believed to be correcting them (Brown, 2012).

However, corrective rape is unfortunately not the only crimes that many LGBT individuals face. Dworkin & Yi (2003) argue that LGBT people as well as LGBT activists around the world are not only targeted because of their activities but also on the basis of who they are. They experience violence in their homes such as Eric Ohena Lembembe, school and community. We have seen how state presidents have passed laws against LGBT where their freedom of association is denied. This included how access to services is limited, such as reporting rape, as these are sometimes perpetrated by authorities who are there to protect and serve their country.

Figure 1: The below image show a visual view of how gay men are marginalized from around the world

Global Laws Against Homosexuality Visualized

Global laws regarding homosexuality in 2016

Punishment for homosexual acts

● Homosexual acts can be punished by death

● Homosexual acts are illegal

Relatively neutral

● No specific laws on gay rights

● Homosexual acts are legal

Recognition of same-sex unions

● Same-sex marriage is allowed

● Same-sex marriage is allowed in some jurisdictions

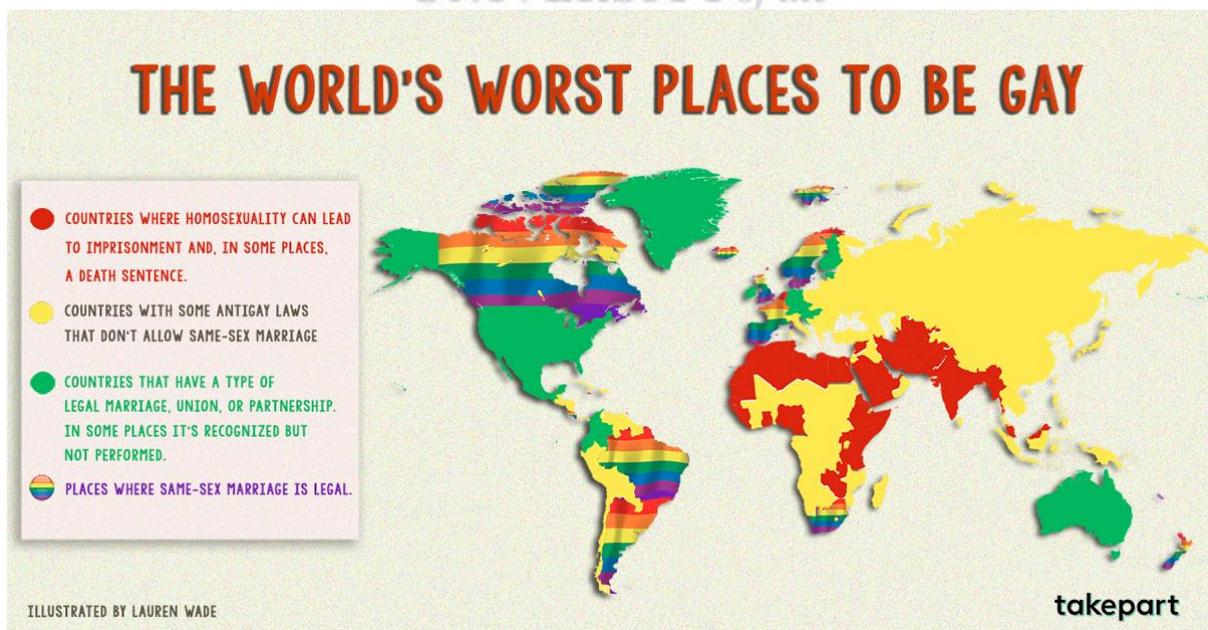


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Source: Washington Post

statista

Figure 2: The worst places where to be gay can be punishable by imprisonment and for some even death.



Despite all this marginalization of gay men across the world, it is evident that pre-colonial African societies accepted homosexuality on a situational basis (Pushparagavan, 2014).

Murray & Roscoe (1998) state that homosexuality was accepted among the Zande warrior tribe of Sudan where these warriors would select young boys between the ages of 12-20 and ask for their hand in marriage. The young boys were made wives or what they called “boy-wife”. Sanders (1997) further argues that although homosexual acts are currently strongly rejected by the Zulu culture, they were previously accepted and referred to as ‘*hlobongo*’ meaning boy-wife. Ratele (2006:56) argues that “heterosexual masculinity is not only about what a male says or does about sex, but equally about the techniques of power”.

2.7 Gay liberation around the world

Throughout the world there has been some progress in protecting and accepting LGBT individuals. Although this has only been a few countries at least we can say there is change indicating that most people are becoming more and more knowledgeable of sexual orientations. According to Sanders (2013), the Human Dignity Trust have challenged laws to end the persecution of LGBT people around the world. The United Nations Convention Against Torture have also adopted laws that prohibit force, pain, suffering both physically and mentally when it is perpetrated by a public official or any person in an official capacity (Dworkin & Yi, 2003). This indicates that most LGBT violence which is perpetrated around the world such as the torture and video recording of teenage boys believed to be gay in Russia is prohibited by this convention.

Politicians in US and other countries, some of which are senators for example have stood to support same sex marriages. According to Larsen (2013), in 2005 for example, Canada became the fourth country in the world to legalize same sex marriages and the attitude towards homosexuals has positively changed over the past 100 years. In 2013, countries such as England, Wales and France joined by countries such as Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina also came to terms with legalizing same-sex marriages (Encarnacion, 2014). Furthermore, the year 2013 also become the year where Uganda passed a law of criminalising some homosexual acts which included a seven-year jail sentence for anyone who conducts same-sex marriage ceremonies. According to Encarnacion (2014), this was actually less severe than the 2009 legislation that was passed in Uganda which was the “kill the gays bill” which called for the death penalty and a seven-year sentence for family and friends who failed report the gay men to authorities.

Furthermore, in Malawi, President Joyce Banda announced in 2012 that laws that criminalise homosexuality would be revoked, and although she has distanced herself from the statement

that she made, there has been change in Malawi as there has been no prosecution of gay men (Sanders, 2013). The year 2012 also became the year when Argentina's Gender Identity Law allowed the change of gender on birth certificates for transgender people. The Gender Identity Law also legalised same-sex marriages in 2010 giving them equal rights as heterosexual couples and the right to adopt children (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

Larsen (2013) further gives an overview of how the law against LGBT has changed throughout the years. According to Larsen (2013) the Gay Rights Movement has been progressing slowly since the 60's when gay men began to fight for protection against discrimination and to be granted equal rights. In 1969, the Federal Government of the U.S ruled out the criminal charges of same sex practices and in 1974, homosexuality was removed from the American Psychiatric Association list of mental illness. However, it was only in 1996 when the Federal Government amended the Human Rights Act to include the Prohibition of Discrimination against Homosexuals. In 2015, international agencies such as 12 United Nations agencies including the UN Refugee Agency and the World Food Program got involved in emergency response that began to narrow the protection gap of homosexuality. These agencies issued a joint LGBT rights statement which highlighted how the LGBT people are often faced with violence and discrimination when seeking refuge (Humans Rights watch, 2016).

Shneer & Aviv (2006:20) argue that in the pre-war years, gay men did not speak of coming out of what we nowadays call 'coming out the closet' but rather spoke of coming out into what they called homosexual society or the gay world. It is believed that from the late 19th century, gay men in New York began writing polemical articles and books, wrote letters to newspapers and also published their own articles to urge jurists and doctors to change their views on homosexuality (Shneer & Aviv, 2006). However, in doing this, they had to be cautious while also constructing spheres of relative cultural autonomy. In New York these men forged a huge gay world of overlapping social networks in the New York streets, private apartments, cafeterias and saloons. Moreover, they held communal events such as the massive drag balls which attracted thousands of participants and spectators in the 1920's.

According to Encarnacion (2014), it is believed that New York's 1969 Stonewall riots which were a series of violent clashes between the police and gays, lesbians and transgender after the police raided the Stonewall Inn bar on Manhattans West Side, ignited the second wave of gay activism and the launch of today's Gay Rights movements. In the United States, the

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force adopted the U.S Civil Rights Movement and began appealing to court to fight the anti-gay laws which discriminate against LGBT and most importantly sodomy laws which were believed to be in violation of the U.S Constitution to guarantee equal protection.

All this shows how slowly the Gay Rights movements have been progressing as stated by Larsen (2013). For example, from 1996, when the Human Rights Act was amended, it was only in 2003 when homosexuals were listed in the group of those who are protected against hate propaganda. This further shows how important it is for societies and policy developers to have the knowledge and understanding on LGBT more especially, as LGBT individuals are still discriminated against in most aspects such as culture, hate crimes and propaganda which still exist in our modern society.

2.8 Gay liberation in South Africa

The raid in Forest Town of the weekend of January 1966, where police arrested nine men for dressing up as women and participating in indecent activity served as a movement to create the first explicit anti-homosexual legislation. Prior to this raid, the Immorality Act of 1927 basically outlawed homosexuality in public. This changed with the 1968 amendment to the Immorality Act of 1957 (Gevisser, 1995). These amendments included increasing the age of consent from 16 to 19, outlawed dildoes and the 'men at a party' clause which prohibited homosexual acts that would arouse 'sexual passion'. Gevisser (1995) adds that these amendments were done to try and minimize the presence of homosexuality and minimize the influence it was believed to have on societies. The Law Reform Movement of 1968 which was led by a small group of mainly white middle-class organizations had an objective to maintain the status quo that was to ensure that the way of life would not be hindered. However, Black homosexual people were still marginalized even within the gay community as this Law Reform Movement distanced itself from the anti-apartheid movement in order to be favoured by Parliament.

However, the 1980s marked the years where new Gay Rights activists such as the Gay and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) and the Organization of Lesbians and Gay Activists (OLGA) aligned themselves with anti-apartheid groups such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) (Pettis, 2005). In the 1990s GLOW and OLGA got the opportunity to engage in political discussions which included sexual orientation as a fundamental human right in the new South African Constitution of 1996

(Faderman, 2016). According to Villa-Vicencio, Doxtader & Moosa (2015) the South African Constitution is one of the most progressive constitutions in the world in terms of personal freedom. This gave rise to new laws and treatment of the LGBT community. The employment Equity Act (Act No 55 of 1998) ensured that employers could not discriminate based on sexual orientation and also the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) was also implemented in 1996 to ensure that schools were more inclusive (Faderman, 2016). In addition, on December the 1st of 2006 the Union Bill to legalize same-sex marriage was passed in South Africa making it the first African country to legalize same-sex marriages (Villa-Vicencio et al., 2015). Furthermore, as stated by Henderson (2010), this “facilitated the development of a stronger gay culture that was not only more inclusive but also were black role models, such as Simon Nkoli (1995) and Zakkie Achmat (1995) were visible”.

Despite all the studies that have been made on understanding gay men and their masculinity and the developments of positive legislation, it is evident that Africa will continue to remain hostile to the gay community as heteronormative masculinity is regarded as the definitive masculinity despite all the progressive developments. However, gay men still continue to battle for their freedom to construct their masculinity in societies that are rife with homophobia and where heteronormativity prevails. The researcher then briefly explains how gay masculinity is constructed in Africa despite the all the discrimination and hostility

2.9 The construction of gay masculinity in Africa

Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) argue that, to understand the construction of gay masculinity, requires one to have an understanding of gender relations in the family as the construction of masculinity is of vital importance in men. However, they go on to state that homosexuality is not the result of lack of masculinity as all men do engage with hegemonic masculinity. In addition, Pascoe (2012) states that homosexuality is viewed by social constructionists as an identity which is formed through a series of stages and as a subculture which is maintained in a mixed society by socialization and boundary negotiation.

Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger (2012) state that a specific masculinity either hegemonic or gay masculinity, does not constitute in isolation in relation to other masculinities and femininities. Therefore, there are men who are considered by society to be gay men but adopting aspects of the hegemonic masculinity such as playing football, providing for their families and going to the gym to gain that masculine structure and strength. Anderson (2005:26) argues that these men with most masculine capital are “provided with many social privileges, including

near immunity from homosexual suspicion”. Reid & Walker (2006) states that these developments have led to South African men distancing themselves from the previous traditional representations of masculinity. This is also supported by Cooper (2013) who states that these men seem to be creating their own gay masculinity (through their physical prowess) which results in other men accepting their identities. This is in line with what Goffman (1959) describes as ‘passing’ as a heterosexual. Although Cooper (2013) and Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) argue that gay men are able to transgress and modify aspects of hegemonic masculinity, it can also be argued that such experiences are limited as suggested by Gwata (2009) that they have to construct an alternative identity in search of their own masculinities. Authors such as Reilly & Bauer (2015) argue that masculinity is to be seen as a cultural prototype with the knowledge that there are various cultures and in each culture, they have their own way of doing things. The different cultural practices were then discussed.

2.10 Rites of passage from around the world

All cultures include “rites of passage as part of the process of moving from one stage in life to another, whether initiation into adulthood, marriage, funerals or other stages” (Edberg, 2013:101). The cultural initiation process of constructing masculinity often entails the teachings of what is necessary for males to embark on the new role of becoming real men within traditional African society. Nanda & Warms (2014) suggest that the concept of a ‘real man’ is a widespread cultural pattern which is when a man proves himself that he is now able to ‘control’ women, is successful in competition with other men and is aggressive. Male initiation processes often include rituals where boys are expected to bear physical pain without showing emotions and these rituals are namely known as part of the Rite of Passage rituals (Nanda & Warms, 2014). Holcroft (2010) defines the Rite of Passage as a series of events that mark the transition of a person’s life, for example the transition from puberty, maturity or marriage which indicates the time when someone stands up to be counted in an act of selfless bravery.

Mckay & McKay (2010) highlight a few of the rites of passage to manhood from around the world, starting with the Vanuatu Land Diving from the Island of the middle of the South Pacific. According to McKay & McKay (2010) the Vanuatu Land Diving is performed as a sacrifice to the Vanuatus Gods to ensure a bountiful crop and to also initiate the boys into manhood. The Vanuatu Land Diving consists of a man tying a vine around his ankles then

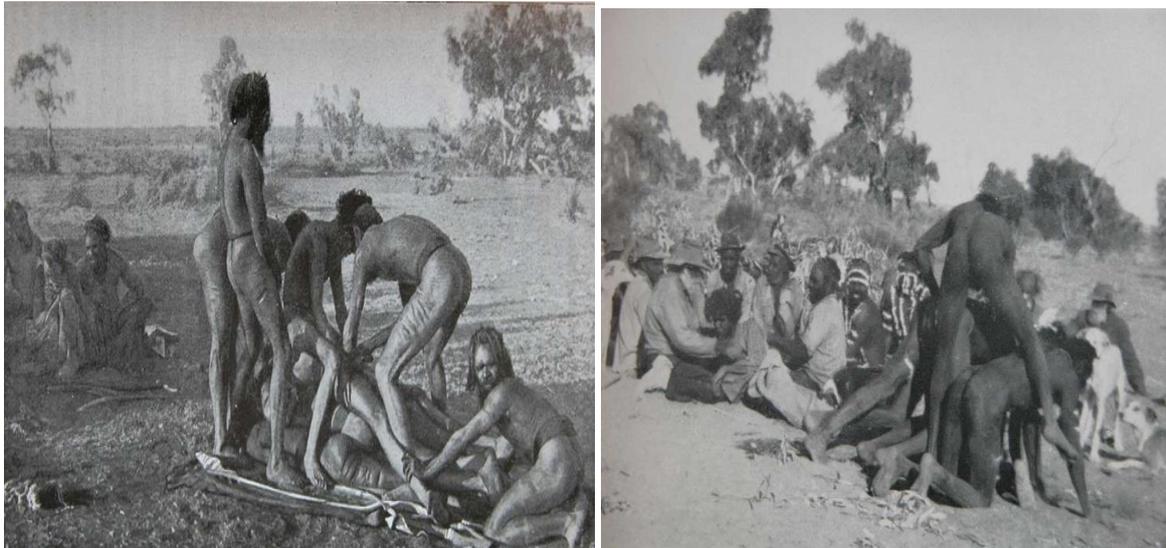
diving down headfirst, aiming to jump so close to the ground that his shoulders touch the ground. The Land Diving is made of crude wooden towers reaching heights of 100 feet or more and is believed to go back nearly 15 centuries. Boys as young as five years old will take part in the Land Diving which will often be followed by circumcision. For the Vanuatu tribe, the higher a man goes on the tower, the manlier he is considered by the tribe (Mckay & Mckay, 2010).

Figure 3: Vanuatu Land Diving.



Secondly, McKay & McKay (2010) highlight the Australian Mardudjara Aborigines' rite of passage. This tribes' rite of passage consists of two parts which is the circumcision and the sub-incision. Usually a boy of the age of 15 or 16 will be led by the elders to a fire and have him lie down next to it. The tribal elder who is in charge of the circumcision will lie on top of the boy's chest facing his penis while some tribal members surround the boy while singing and dancing and others crying. The boy will be circumcised with knives and after the circumcision is complete he will have to kneel on a shield which will be placed over the fire so that the smoke can purify the wound. He will then be requested to open his mouth and eat 'good meat' without chewing it which will be his foreskin. This is believed to grow inside the boy and make him strong. The second part of the initiation which is the sub-incision, will take place a few months after the initiation where he will be taken to the fire again where others will sing and dance around him. For the sub-incision, a small wooden rod is inserted into the urethra as a backing for the knife. After the sub-incision the boy will be required to stand above the fire and allow his blood to drip into the fire. After the boy has gone through this process, he will from now on be required to urinate like a woman.

Figure 4: The Australian Mardudjara Aborigines.



Thirdly, is the Hamar Cow Jumping. As highlighted by McKay & McKay (2010) for the Hamar tribe of Ethiopia to be regarded as a man, you will have to jump over a herd of cattle. The ceremony starts off with young girls, usually close friends or relatives of the initiate jumping towards the men who have been through the initiation process to hand them a green stick to lash their backs while they jump up and down. The young girls will be lashed until blood is drawn from their backs. The whipping is to represent how the women endured pain for the initiates. As soon as the whipping ceremony is complete, members of the tribe will surround the cattle while they sing. They castrate the cows in order for the ceremony to take place. The initiate is then required to jump onto the first cow running back and forth on the cows back three times and then he will be called a *maza*, meaning man.

Figure 5: The Hamar Cow Jumping



Mckay & Mckay (2010) further highlight Satere-Mawe Bullet Ant Glove rite of passage ceremony from the Satere-Mawe tribe from the Brazilian Amazon. For a male from the Satere-Mawe tribe to be considered a man, the initiate should insert his hand in a Glove full of Bullet Ants for 10 minutes without making any noise showing that they can with stand the pain. The initiate will have to insert his hand several times in the glove to be considered a real man. This process paralyzes his arm and leaves him shaking uncontrollably for days. According to Galvan (2014:47), the sting of a bullet ant is so painful that it is “described to be as equal to or exceeding the pain of a bullet wound”. Galvan (2014) further states that the pain of a single bullet ant sting lasts somewhere between three to five hours and will dissipates over a twenty-four-hour period.

Figure 6: The Satere-Mawe Bullet Ant Glove



Lastly, Mckay & Mckay (2010) highlights the Sambia of Papua New Guinea. For the Sambia tribe, the initiation ceremony begins when the boy turns seven when he is separated from his mother to stay with other men in a male hut. The young boy is then subjected to the ceremony of bloodletting from the nose. This process consists of the boy being held against a tree and then stiff, sharp grasses and sticks are shoved up his nose until his nose starts bleeding. After the bloodletting the boy is then whipped and beaten which is believed to toughen him up and prepare him to live as a warrior. The rite of passage does not end with the bloodletting. The second rite of passage then moves to drinking semen. The young boy will then be required to drink a mature man’s semen as it is believed to be a body part that allows for procreation. Drinking the mature man’s semen (man milk) is believed to make the young boy stronger and he is encouraged to drink it several times.

At the age of 13 years, the young initiate then begins another nosebleed initiation ceremony and is now considered mature to provide man milk to other young boys who have been separated from their mothers. At the age of 20, the boy is now considered to be mature enough to marry where is now taught by the elders the secrets of protecting himself from the impurities of women. The Sambia man is then considered to have his full rights of masculinity after his wife has given birth.

Figure 7: The Sambia of Papua New Guinea



In addition, Pfeffer & Nunez (2014) add the sixth rite of passage to manhood which is performed by the Massai of Kenya and Tanzania. According to Pfeffer & Nunez (2014) the night before the ceremony, boys between the ages of 10-20 will sleep outside in the forest and return for a day at dawn to the houses built specifically for the occasion singing and dancing. Before they can be ready for the circumcision and being transformed into real men, warriors and protectors of the tribe, they will first feast in a mixture of alcohol, cow's blood and milk while others will feast in large portions of meat. Similarly, to other rites of passage to manhood which is to endure pain, these initiates should also not show pain by flinching while they are being circumcised as this would shame their families and they will be regarded as weak and not brave. After the initiation ceremony the young men would stay at the warriors' camp for 10 years where they will learn the skills of a great warrior. There will also make the transition from a warrior to a senior warrior, giving them the title to marry the woman of their choice.

Figure 8: Massai of Kenya and Tanzania



2.11 Rites of passage in Western cultures

Sweet sixteen

The transition to adulthood is marked differently throughout the world. In middle-class America after the World War II, the transition from girlhood to adulthood is marked by what they call the Sweet Sixteen birthday ceremony/ritual (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2007). According to Mitchell & Reid-Walsh (2007:566) for the Sweet Sixteen ceremony “the birthday girl traditionally invited family and friends to celebrate her impending adulthood and to reminisce about her past”. This marks the time when the birthday girl can be legally permitted to drive and for some potentially to own a new car meaning freedom.

21st birthday celebrations

As important as it is to be sixteen in the middle-class America as mentioned by Mitchell & Reid-Walsh (2007), turning 21 is also just as distinctive. Correia, Murphy & Barnett (2012:23) argue that “the 21st birthday marks the transition to the legal drinking age in the United States and is often considered a rite of passage among young adults”. This transition ceremony is also evident in most South African societies although the legal drinking age in South Africa is 18. In South Africa, this will be celebrated by the young adult being given a gift in a symbol of a key as in the picture below, which is believed to be the symbol to unlock adulthood and the traditional legal age to marry and independence.

Figure 9: 21st birthday celebration key



Jewish Bar and Bat Mitzvah

According to Snyder (2001:264) “adolescence has become to be the time of dramatic change involving psychological, sexual and cognitive maturation with new expectations and the need for a clearer identity”. Despite the sweet sixteen and the 21st birthday celebrations there is also the Bar Mitzvah which is celebrated or observed among the Jewish population. According to McBride (2011), the literal meaning of Bar Mitzvah is the ‘Son of the Commandment’ and for the girls which is the Bat Mitzvah the word ‘bat’ means ‘daughter’. For the traditional Jewish it is believed that before the boy turns 13 and the girl turns 12, they are under their fathers’ authority and are not directly responsible to God. When the boy turns 13 and the girl 12, they will then be obliged to follow the Jewish laws as they will then be a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

However, as the Sweet Sixteen and 21st birthday rites of passages are about inviting people and having a huge celebration, for the Bar and Bat Mitzvah no ceremonies are actually needed as the boy or girl automatically becomes the Bar or Bat Mitzvah upon reaching the appropriate age. Receptions and parties that are done nowadays are only modern innovations. McBride (2011) further states that Bar Mitzvah is the celebrants first *Aliyah* which means reading from the Torah in Hebrew by reciting a blessing over the reading during services which is considered an honour in the Jewish tradition. Furthermore, the celebrant which will generally be the Bar Mitzvah will also be required to make a speech which will begin with the phrase, “Today, I am a man”. Today this religious service is followed by a huge celebration which is more likely to be equivalent as a wedding ceremony. This is the same for the Bat (daughter) Mitzvah.

2.12 Rites of passage in South Africa

The major life cycle transition such as birth, adolescence, marriages and death are mediated through rites of passage. According to Chidester (2014), women as opposed to men play a major role in the rites of passage of birth and death. Chidester (2014) provides examples of the Zulu tradition where women are regarded as the mother of birth (*umdlezane*) and the mother of death (*umfelokazi*). In the first 10 days after giving birth, the *umdlezane* should remain in the company of married women as her association with her new-born places her in a dangerous position of ritual pollution. After this period of confinement, a sacrifice is made to celebrate the new birth and introduce the child to the ancestors (Chidester, 2014). As in childbirth, Chidester (2014) adds that death also represents dangerous rituals pollution and also signifies the passage of the deceased and should be taken care of by the women. In the Zulu culture, the women are responsible for the washing and preparing of the corpse for the funeral. The women serve as the principal mourners in the funeral ritual.

Furthermore, Chidester (2014) states that in South Africa, for most cultures, the rites of passage from childhood to adulthood is marked by rituals of initiation symbolizing the death of childhood and the rebirth into adulthood. I will go through this in detail later in the literature review looking closely at the Xhosa ritual of initiation. Lastly, marriage as the rite of passage is marked by the ritual *lobola* which is the payment of bride-price. According to Chidester (2014), the payment of the bride-price is made in the form of cattle to the father of the bride. This is believed to interlock the sealing of a marriage arrangement between the couple and also the extended family.

Chidester (2014:24) further argues that “in the world of the homestead, social relations, males/female, adults/children, seniors/juniors were all reinforced by ritual, particularly by those rites of passage that marked the most intimate, personal transitions in the human life cycle and social relations”.

2.13 The different cultural initiation practices that construct masculine identity in South Africa

In South African the Xhosa people are considered to be one of the most culturally-sensitive people in country who place a very strong emphasis on traditional practices and ancient customs. It starts off with a ritual called '*imbheleko*' which is performed to introduce the new born to the ancestors so that they can protect the new-born and prevent the suffering of

spiritual imbalance. It is then followed by *'umphumulo'* which involves young men moving from *'indodana'* (young elder) to *'Ixhego'* (elder) (Asante & Mazama, 2008). The initiation process which is performed for recognizing the transition from boyhood to manhood is called *'Ulwaluko'* which is performed by young men between the ages of 15 and 26, which requires going into the 'woods' and erecting small houses, where they are circumcised by older males who have successfully been through this initiation rite. Xhosas, Ndebeles and Sothos perform the circumcision initiation process as a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood (Asante & Mazama, 2008).

Ulwaluko is one of the traditional ancient circumcision practices that Xhosa people perform in recognizing the transition from boyhood to manhood. This is more likely the same as the circumcision initiation process that the Ndebeles and the Sothos perform as a rite of passage ritual (Asante & Mazama, 2008). The Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (2009) states that the Zulu's used to have a more similar rite of passage ceremony to the Xhosas'. However, it was abolished by King Shaka in the war of 1810. The circumcision process was later reintroduced by King Goodwill Zwelithini Zulu in 2009 in Kwa-Zulu Natal, but this time around it was more in line with medical procedures than customs (IRIN, 2009). Other African cultures perform different initiation practices to those of the Xhosa, Sotho and Ndebele which are not based on circumcision but based on a challenge for young men. Some cultures such as the Massai in Kenya, the ancient history of the transition to manhood, was to kill a lion with their bare hands. Others in some cultures will do whippings and scarification as a rite of passage to manhood which is believed still to be performed by societies such as the Betamarribe society of Benin and the Fulani tribe in Northern Benin of West Africa. However, there are similarities to these rituals as they are all based on enduring pain and facing their fears to prove their manhood, and in all rituals, the male elders play dominant role in coordinating these rituals (Marsiglio, 2008). Mason (2006:96) argues that it is "believed that without the initiation ritual process, young men are unable to transition from boys into manhood and they are unable to experience the transformation needed for heroic consciousness to develop as real men".

2.14 The purpose of Ulwaluko (male Xhosa circumcision rite of passage)

"Ulwaluko is a Xhosa circumcision ritual that transforms boys into men" (Perryer, 2004:54). The initiation process of Ulwaluko is usually performed on boys between the ages of 16-26. This process is considered to be of great importance and the only way a boy can successfully

transition from boyhood to manhood (Gwata, 2009). It is meant to guide the young adults to the dignity of manhood where they are taught about the tradition, expectations and morals of their community which will enable them to contribute to the maintenance of social order (Veit, Gould & Gould, 2014). In the Xhosa culture as maintained by Gwata (2009) the adulthood of a Xhosa man is not marked by his age or physical strength, but marked by his journey to the mountain.

Ferraro & Andreatta (2012) indicate that in every ritual, no matter the culture, there are three distinct ritual phases namely:

- The separation phase
- The transition and
- the incorporation phase, as in Ulwaluko.

The separation phase is the phase where the initiate is stripped of the old status (Ferraro & Andreatta, 2012) where he is now separated from the women and young men who have not undergone the ritual. The initiate now also undergoes the traditional circumcision where his foreskin is cut using a knife while he screams *ngiyindoda* (I am a man) claiming his new identity (Ncaca, 2014). The transition phase is considered to be associated with danger and ambiguity (Ferraro & Andreatta, 2012). It is where the initiate now endures the unpleasant ordeals such as loneliness as he is left alone in a small hut in the mountains for a period of about six months without water but just hard food. This transition phase of the unpleasant ordeals that they face is seen as demonstrating bravery and teaching endurance and discipline among the initiates (Uchendu, 2008). The incorporation phase involves integrating the initiate to his new status (Ferraro & Andreatta, 2014). He is welcomed with a huge feast and presented with gifts as the *amakrwala* (new man or recently circumcised man) and he is then advised by the elders about his duties and the expected behaviours towards wives and the in-laws (Uchendu, 2008).

The purpose of Ulwaluko is to acquire a new status in society as a 'real man' and carry a family name (Mtshiselwa, 2011). Hence, it based on hegemonic masculinity and rejects homosexuality as it is believed that the honour and morality of a 'real man' is jeopardised when subscribing to homosexuality. However, most researchers do not explore or describe how gay men contest this heterosexual assumption. There is an example of one study by Henderson and Shefer (2008) that highlighted an experience of Ulwaluko of a Xhosa-

speaking gay man and identified how this cultural practice exchanges power and abuse on gay men. In addition, the interview that was held between the first African homosexual couple to have a traditional Zulu wedding where they stated that their next step is building a home together and starting their own family (Kweyama, 2013) could also be contesting hegemonic masculinity. If this couple were Xhosa and they had undergone the traditional circumcision, will they still not be considered as ‘real men’ because of the basis of their sexual preference, although they conformed to the characteristics of being a real man and hegemonic masculinity?

In conclusion, the purpose of Ulwaluko is to acquire a new status in society as a ‘real man’ and carry a family name (Mtshiselwa, 2011). It is also to conform to the Christian values and beliefs as stated in Genesis 17: 10-11 (NIV) which states “This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of covenant between me and you”. This will then leave us with the question, ‘are there men who are not religious who attend Ulwaluko?’ And if so ‘how would they relate to Christian values?’

2.15 Conclusion

Through this literature review one can identify that most research studies done on masculinity pay little attention to gay or alternative masculinity and its social construction. Moreover, they do not explore how gay men who experience cultural initiation practices that construct masculinity such as Ulwaluko construct their masculine identity.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will provide a detailed description of the research methodology which was used for the study. Here the researcher will outline the theoretical research approach, research design, methods of data collection, methods of sampling, research process, the data analysis, the ethical considerations, research limitations of study self-reflectivity and trustworthiness.

3.1 Aims and objectives

The research question for the study was “what are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how has it influenced their construction of masculine identity?” The aim of this research was to explore and describe Xhosa-speaking gay men in the Cape Metropole’s experiences of Ulwaluko and how this has influenced their construction of a masculine identity.

The objectives of the study are: To explore and describe the -

- experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men in the in the Cape Metropole
- influence of Ulwaluko on Xhosa-speaking gay men’s construction of masculine identity in the Cape Metropole

3.2 Theoretical research approach

As stated by Creswell (2003), there are three research approaches which can be used in answering a research question, namely, the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach and lastly, mixed methodology approach. In answering the research question of “what are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how has it influenced their construction of masculine identity?” the researcher made use of a qualitative research approach as the main study looked at exploring and describing the answers of the research participants. This is supported by Kumar (2014) who asserts that the qualitative research approach is more appropriate in understanding, explaining, exploring, discovering and providing clarifications to feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of group of people. On the contrary, the quantitative research approach is based on the

measurements of quantity which neglect the need for in-depth exploration of people's views, feelings and beliefs as explained by Davies (2007).

Following a qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to gain new insights into the phenomenon of the study as it enabled her to redirect the conversations by not restricting it to the specific questions as mentioned by Kuada (2012), that using a qualitative research approach allows the participants to raise topics and issues that the researcher might not be anticipating but which might be critical to the research rather than finding confirmation for existing theories. This notion is further supported by Buckingham & Saunders (2008) who states that a qualitative study is also a holistic perspective which considers people's complexities and unpredictable perspectives.

Moreover, a researcher conducting research might be sensitive to others' opinions/experience or which might create biased views on the phenomenon. The researcher took a qualitative stance by acknowledging that she is part of the research process and therefore tried to treat her participants as equals and attempted to preserve the complexity of the phenomenon. By the researcher acknowledging that she is part of the research process, Brannon (2016) argues that she rejected the notion that she should be detached and impartial, but instead accepted the subjectivity of the research process and attempted to form cooperative relationships with those whom she studied.

Using the qualitative research approach also had its limitations during the research process. The researcher's presence as a female who is conducting a study on a phenomenon or cultural practice which is considered to be forbidden to be discussed or known by females according to the Xhosa culture, has also affected some of the participants' responses as it appeared as though they had to be mindful of their responses. This will clearly be discussed in the data analysis. This is supported by Anderson (2010:3) who attains that "the researcher's presence during data gathering, which is often unavoidable in qualitative research, can affect the subjects' responses".

3.3 Research design

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), research design refers to the structure of an enquiry which ensures that the evidence obtained enables researchers to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. In addition, De Vaus (2005) refers a research design to a structure of enquiry which is not related to any particular method of data collection. For the

purpose of this study the researcher incorporated an exploratory as well as a descriptive research design.

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006:44), an “exploratory study is used to make preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research”. Salkind (2010) describes an exploratory research design as a design which is used to gain insights on a phenomenon where there are few or no earlier studies to refer to or rely upon to predict an outcome. The research study attempted to explore and describe Xhosa-speaking gay men’s experience of Ulwaluko and its influence on their constructions of masculine identity. While looking at this topic, little to no research has been done on it. Furthermore, choosing the exploratory research design is supported by Terre Blanche, et al. (2006) as a type of research design that is most appropriate for studies where there are high levels of uncertainties on the topic and high levels of ignorance.

Incorporating the descriptive research design enabled the researcher to describe the research topic accurately, focusing on the research participants’ opinions and attitudes. Salkind (2010) states that descriptive research designs enable the researcher to describe a social problem in terms of who is experiencing the problem, how wide spread it is and how long it has existed. This is also supported by Terre Blanche et al. (2006) who state the use of a descriptive research design is to acquire brief information on the status of the phenomena and further describe what is there with the respect to variables or conditions in a situation. Moreover, incorporating descriptive and exploratory research design was effective for the research study as it enabled the researcher to provide an accurate description of the research objectives and generate new insights, which in turn, enabled the researcher to answer the research question as unambiguously as possible.

3.4 Research process

Population, sample, selection criteria, size, methods and procedures

3.4.1 Population and sample

Arkava & Lane (1983) postulate that a population refers to a group that you wish to generalize your research to. In addition, populations are often defined in terms of demography, geography, occupation, time and care requirements among other factors (De Vos et al., 2011). For this study, the population were young Xhosa speaking gay men in the

Cape Town Metropole, who are Xhosa-speaking gay men and who underwent the ritual of Ulwaluko, living in one of the following areas:

Table 1: Cape Metropole areas

Brackenfell	Durbanville	Bellville	Blue Downs
Nyanga	Crossroads	Eerste River	Elsies River
Goodwood	Gugulethu	Khayelitsha	Kraaifontein
Langa	Mfuleni	Philippi	
Parow	Mitchells Plain	Kuils River	

Due to the large size of the research populations, according to Sharma (2014), researchers often cannot include every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming therefore, relying on sampling techniques. According to Arkava & Lane (1983), a sample is defined as elements of the population considered for the actual same of the features within the population group. For the research study, the sample drawn from the population of the Xhosa-speaking gay men in the Cape Metropole, were Xhosa-speaking gay men who had undergone Ulwaluko which is the traditional initiation rite of passage to manhood practised by amaXhosa (Xhosa) and who were between the ages of 18-35.

The sample was taken as a means of helping the researcher explain some of the features within the population group, but moreover, to attempt to answer the research question **“What are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how have they influenced their construction of masculine identity?”** Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit (2004:71) argue that “sampling is not only vital for practical reasons, but it is also vital for the part of the process of delineating the inquiry-setting the definition post clearly”, which basically means that sampling includes identifying and negotiating access to research sites and subjects. Sharma (2014:206) defines sampling as “the process of obtaining information regarding a phenomenon about an entire population by examining a part of it”.

3.4.2 Sampling method and procedure

For the researcher to describe and explore the findings for a population, she had to make sure that she gets a good sample for the research study which vitally depended on her sampling method. In selecting the research method, the researcher had to take into consideration that the sampling is free from bias and errors and it's free from deliberate selection of the subjects as she also had to keep in mind that she was conducting research on a phenomenon which could be sensitive to some participants. With these in mind, the researcher made use of the non-probability sampling method. According to Hall (2008), a non-probability sampling method is a technique wherein the sample is gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected but provides a possibility to reflect on descriptive comments of the sample.

The use of a non-probability sampling method for this research study was aimed at not making a generalisation from the sample of the population but to select a certain type of participant, giving the researcher an opportunity also to systematically omit sectors of the population from the sample. Moreover, as the research goal was more about obtaining information about a highly specific event and process which was Ulwaluko, a non-probability sampling selection then deemed more appropriate in answering the research question.

Looking at how the study was structured, and because the research done was on an issue/topic which was considered sensitive and secret, the researcher made use of a snowball sampling as non-probability sampling technique. The researcher's sampling method was motivated by reading Bryman (2012) who states that snowball sampling is one technique which enables access to hidden populations such as the stigmatized in society, which in this study are the gay men who may be reluctant to take part in the study.

Bryman (2012) adds that using snowball sampling may develop trust as referrals will be made by acquaintances or peers. This method of sampling was also chosen as the researcher tried to identify and negotiate access to research sites via Mosaic (an organisation that works with domestic violence and seeks to involve men in their children's life), Sonke Gender Justice (an organisation that engages women and men, girls and boys to work together to resist patriarchy, advocate for gender justice to achieve gender transformation), the Triangle Project (a non-profit human's rights organisation that offers professional services to challenge homophobia in order for communities to appreciate sexual diversity), Health4Men (A project that offer health services and aims to respond to HIV among gay, bisexual and

other men who have sex with men), UWC Gender Equity Unit (A university unit that works in promoting gender equality and promote social justice and human rights at University level) and Reslife (University of the Western Cape Residential Service Department). Through these research sites the researcher engaged with the different research sites telephonically, via email and others such as the UWC Gender Equity Unit and Mosaic via requesting a meeting with the Managers to discuss the aim and objectives of the research study and request assistance in obtaining participants for the study. To some researchers the sampling method employed by the researcher might be defined as network sampling as oppose to snowball sampling and making use of gatekeepers to gain entry to research sites and access to participants. However, the researcher strongly felt that it was more of snowball sampling as participants were more from a hidden population as ascribed by Bryman (2012). The research information sheets, consent forms and the ethical clearance were provided to be shared with potential research participants who might be interested in taking part of the research study. Those interested were then to contact the researcher via email, whatsApp or giving her a call.

This process turned out to be time-consuming and a bit of a challenge as the researcher had to keep on following up with the research site to check whether there was anyone who seemed interested in taking part in the research study. This process was also a challenge due the uncertainty of whether the information was shared with any of the potential participants or if whether the information was shared among those who might meet the selection criteria. This highlighted the disadvantages of using snowball sampling through research sites as argued by Tansey (2017:18) who states that making use of snowball sampling can be time consuming as it requires the researcher to be “heavily involved in developing and managing the initiation and progress of the sample and seek to ensure at all times that the chain of referrals remains within boundaries that are relevant to the study”

Using the snowball sampling was also a disadvantage as some of the participants referred friends without explaining to them clearly what the research was about only to have them withdraw from the study when it was explained to them what the research entailed. The researcher had about four participants who withdrew from the study due to the misconception of what the research was about and them feeling uncomfortable in talking about Ulwaluko although the researcher had gone the ethical consideration with them. The researcher also assumed the misconceptions of the research study might also be the reason why she did not find any research participants through the research sites. This response is supported by Rubin & Babbie (2010) who states that the dangers of using snowball sampling more especially for

a sample which is considered as a hidden population which requires a degree of trust to initiate contact, is that the potential participants may be reluctant to take part in the study more especially if they are already vulnerable and stigmatised in society.

Monette, Sullivan & DeJong (2011) further argue that researchers need to understand that by their nature, members of a hidden population are difficult to locate which will require the knowledge of insiders to obtain potential participants for the study. However, Rubin & Babbie (2010) add that obtaining the knowledge of insiders may not be readily available to researchers and it may be time-consuming and labour intensive. In addition, Monette, et al. (2011) maintain that in a more practical and ethical sense, research participants need to be reassured of the protection of the information they provide which can be established over time. However, through referrals of peers or the initial participants, it might be difficult in ensuring confidentiality of further participants if there are no clear explanations of confidentiality concerns raised.

The researcher then tried a different sampling strategy where she would have the opportunity to engage with the potential participants and be able to explain more about the research study and its ethical considerations to gain trust and build relationships. She then attended the Mr & Miss Gay Cape Town Pride pageant held at Sea Point Civic centre on the 25 of February 2017 to get an opportunity to engage with more potential participants and get more research sites. Engaging with the potential participants in their comfort space worked to the researcher's advantage as it enabled her to get two participants who were interested in taking part in the research study which she then got to interview two days after.

Engaging with potential research participants to gain their trust and interest in being part of the research study is supported by Horn, Edwards & Terry (2011). Horn et al. (2011) state that gaining trust and developing a relationship with research participants requires researchers to show shared interest, accountability and concern for the best interest of others which can be done through face-to-face interaction between the researcher and research participants. This engagement was also to allow participants to get to know more about the researcher as research participants also desire to know who will have access to their information, for what purpose and who will decide on those issues in an ongoing way.

The advantages of using snowball sampling were that it gave the researcher access to research participants. One of the researcher's friends who knew potential research participants created a WhatsApp group which was used to introduce the researcher. This was

also used as the platform where the researcher could get to build trust and develop a relationship with the research participants. Furthermore, the WhatsApp group platform was also used to share information on the research, address any concerns raised and ensure confidentiality. A date was then set where all research participants could meet with the researcher to conduct the interviews. At first, this was a challenge as some of the participants were a bit hesitant to take part in the research; they then needed some convincing. Furthermore, there was a challenge in getting some of the participants to agree on a day to conduct the interview. The suggestion was then made by one of the participants that they all meet on a Saturday and then we spend the whole day conducting the interviews to which everyone agreed. A convenient date was then set.

3.4.3 Sample size & selection criteria

According to Emmel (2013: 146) “there are no guidelines, test of adequacy or power calculations available to establish sample size in qualitative research”. However, Profetto-McGrath, Polit & Beck (2010) argue that a guiding principle in qualitative sampling is which is when sampling has reached a point where no new information is obtained from the research participants. Klenke (2008) adds that in qualitative research, sample size does matter but does not take the same importance as in quantitative research where large sample sizes are the drives of many statistical analyses such as factor analysis or linear structural equation modelling techniques and are needed to generalize from the sample to the underlying population. Klenke (2008) further adds that because in qualitative research, the researcher intentionally selects participants who can contribute an in-depth, information-rich understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, does not require a large sample size.

The sample size for the research study was 11 young Xhosa homosexual men living in the Cape Metropole. These young men were selected based on the following selection criteria:

- Had to be Xhosa speaking men
- Had to be homosexual
- Had to be between ages of 18-35 years old
- Had to be living in the Cape Metropole
- Had the knowledge of Ulwaluko
- Had undergone Ulwaluko

The researcher also got an opportunity to interview one insider of the Ulwaluko rite as a key informant who was accessed through the snowball sampling method where participants were asked to suggest/refer an elder who was willing and available to share his insights on the topic. The elder stays in the same street as one of the participants which made it easy for the participant to initiate contact. However, when it came to the opportunity of interviewing him, it had to come with a lot of convincing as he was hesitant in sharing insight on the topic firstly, because he had to share the information with a female and secondly, a female who is not Xhosa. Before he agreed to be interviewed by the researcher, he had many concerns and questions which he wanted clarified about the research and the researcher and her interest in the research topic. These concerns will be highlighted in more detail in the data analysis. The researcher had to go through the ethical consideration with him, in addition to providing examples in a language that he could understand which was Xhosa.

Table 2: The following table provides a summary of the participants who were selected for the study. (Note: Participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms)

Pseudonym	Age	Area	Area of circumcision	Year of circumcision
Alex	32	Khayelitsha	Eastern Cape	2002
Ben	35	Bellville	East London	1997
Bongani	31	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2001
Jake	29	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2002
John	23	Bellville	Eastern Cape	2008
Luzuko	28	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2004
Mduduzo	27	Bellville	Eastern Cape	2005
Mxolisi	23	Khayelitsha	Eastern Cape	2008
Vuyo	30	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2002
Xoli	25	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2007
Zack	25	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2006

Table 3: Key informant:

Pseudonym	Age	Area of practice	Years of experience
Qamashe	72	Khayelitsha	25years

3.5 Data collection

As highlighted earlier the researcher made use of a qualitative research approach that allows for in-depth and interactive methods between the participants and the researcher using techniques such as semi-structured, structured and formal interviews as well as focus groups among other procedures (Davies, 2007).

3.5.1 Data collection method

In collecting the data, in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews with questions contained in an interview-guide were used. According to DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2007), when using a semi-structured interviews in qualitative research, the interviewer and the interviewee are equal partners. This in turn makes it important for the researcher to gain trust from the participants to engage in a conversation with a purpose (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2007). For the researcher to gain trust from the participants in consideration of the fact that she is conducting a study on a topic which is regarded as secretive and masculine, she made use of a male research assistant who had undergone Ulwaluko. This was in line with the Xhosa cultural belief that it is forbidden for a woman and/or a man who has not undergone Ulwaluko to know or to be taught about the teachings or the process of Ulwaluko.

Another advantage of having a research assistant was that he was on standby in cases where the participants or key informants may have been reluctant to share information with her as a woman. Before signing the consent form, participants were consulted whether they were comfortable in being interviewed by a female or male, more importantly a male who is most likely to have shared the same experience and/or has the knowledge of Ulwaluko. This was done to show respect for the culture and the participants. Fortunately, there were no instances where neither the participants nor the key informant was reluctant to share information with the researcher and had requested a male to interview them. According to Marshall & Rossman (2014), when the researcher displays respect for the research participants who will

be sharing sensitive information, he/she also manifests trust from the participants making it easy to engage effectively and share information.

In qualitative research, interviews have open-ended questions which help the researcher to obtain data from the participants' meanings as to how the individual views his/her world and how he/she explains or makes sense of the important events in their lives (Halloway & Galvin, 2016). Creswell, (2014) maintains that the researcher will know the areas about which to obtain more information from the participant, but will also allow the participant the options to explore different thoughts, and feelings. The open-ended questions in the interview-guide kept both the researcher and the participants focussed in that it assisted her to draw the participants back to the topic under discussion while also allowing her to gain more insights on the participants' perception and feelings.

This is also supported by Gray (2009) who states that qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews offer the researcher access to the participants' ideas, thoughts and memories expressed in their own words, rather than in the words of the researcher. He adds that, they also allow the opportunities for researchers to get clarifications so that relevant data is captured, thereby actively involving the participants and allowing free interactions between the researcher and the participants.

3.5.2 Interview setting

The interviews were held in a setting where participants felt comfortable and most importantly, they took place in a place where there was less noise, as all the interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant (see *Appendix B: Consent Form*). The different interviews took place in the following settings:

- The House of Smile Khanyisa Centre office in Philippi
- A friend's house in Montana
- Residence assistant office in Cecil Esau Residence at the University of the Western Cape

The interview site used was through the guidance of Rubin & Rabbie (2010) who state that researchers should seek a neutral place to conduct interviews, where participants will not feel uncomfortable speaking freely about some issues in places where other people are present and might overhear the conversations. Monette et al. (2011) add that when considering the research site, researchers must examine how the power relations such as gender, ethnicity and

other dimensions of social differentiation are manifested in the cultures and places where research is conducted and how they shape the ethics and politics of knowledge construction in fieldwork.

3.5.3 Interview-guide

Questions during the interviews were asked inductively (wide-lens), proceeding from the general to the specific questions as stated by Davies (2007). This was supported by Given (2008) who states that inductive questioning is appropriate for a small sample as a small sample is analysed with greater gravity and has more scrutiny on the information about the subject matter. Making use of inductive questioning also makes it possible for depth analysis as it assumes there is plenty of time to ask open-ended questions which are more exploratory, which is usually at the beginning of the interview process.

Participants were asked questions which proceeded from the general to the specific such as:

1. From the general it was looking at their background, where they are from originally, their age etc. This was to get to know more about the participants and to make them comfortable.
2. Assessing their knowledge and understanding of masculinity.
Example: *“What is your understanding of masculinity? As a gay man, what in your opinion does it take to be a real man? Would you say in your opinion, what it takes to be a real man is influenced by society? Why do you say so? What is your understanding of gay men’s masculinity? How would you say gay men construct their masculinity? Describe how your family sees you in terms of masculinity? How do you feel about your sexuality?”*
3. Knowledge, understanding and experience of Ulwaluko and their perceptions of other rituals done
Example: *“What do you think about engaging in rituals? Do you think it helps to develop you as a person? What do you think is the purpose of Ulwaluko? What were your experiences in being part of Ulwaluko? How were you treated during the process of Ulwaluko? How did Ulwaluko influence your identity? Through the process of Ulwaluko what have you learnt about yourself? As a Xhosa gay man who has been involved in the process of Ulwaluko, would you say there are some aspects of your behaviour which society considers as normal (normative masculinity) behaviours of men? Would you describe these behaviours for me?”*

The interview guide (see *Appendix A*) was prepared before the session, and the language was negotiated with the participants so that depth responses are solicited. The interview schedule was in both English and Xhosa to accommodate all research participants. Interviews that were held in Xhosa were then translated into English for the academic requirements of the thesis. The use of the semi-structured interviews enabled the study to be a credible qualitative study as maintained by Buckingham & Saunders (2008).

3.6 Role of the researcher

According to Klenke (2008), the role which is taken by a researcher either in a group or setting under study varies according to the purpose of the research. It could differ based on the nature of the setting, the means of gaining access and/or observational method employed. In this research study as the qualitative research method was employed to conduct the study, the researcher took the role of an emic researcher. The researcher wanted to get the meaningful ideas, knowledge and experiences of the subjects under study as compared to taking her ideas and/or knowledge about the phenomenon as meaningful as employed by a researcher taking an etic research role. Willis, Jost & Nilankanta (2007:100) define emic and etic as two contrasting ways of approaching the study of culture. They define the emic approach as the study which “looks at things through the eyes of members of the culture being studied and the etic as an approach which uses structures or criteria developed outside the culture as a framework for studying the cultures”. Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao (2008) used emic to refer to the intrinsic cultural distinctions meaningful to the members of a cultural group and the etic to refer to the extrinsic ideas and categories meaningful for researchers.

During the process of data collection, the researcher also took the role of a data collection instrument where she introduced herself to her research participants including any bias and assumptions, any expectations and experiences to qualify her ability to conduct the research and most importantly to build rapport. Lewis-Beck (2008) argues that for the researcher truly to understand the social phenomena from the perspective of the research participants, he/she must immerse himself or herself in the research setting and have close contact with the participant. Davies (2007) adds that through the researcher using his/her eyes and reflection, it makes him/her the tool for data collection.

Furthermore, the researcher employed the role of a protector. The researcher had to make sure that she protects her research participants from any harm that may occur during the data

collection or in the publication of the participants' responses. In doing so the researcher made sure that pseudonyms are used and that interviews were conducted in a setting which was comfortable for the participants and which did not expose them to any harm. The researcher should make sure that the goal of the research study does not outweigh the risk of harm to the people involved (Buckingham & Saunders, 2008).

In order for the researcher successfully to take all these roles as highlighted above, she had to make sure that she made use of data gathering interviewing skills.

3.7 Interview skills

The researcher made use of the following interviewing skills during the data collection:

- *Listening skills:* the researcher gave the research participants her full attention by attentively listening to their responses. She did not fidget, she nodded and made use of responses such as “yes...uhm...okay” to indicate to the participant that she is giving him her full attention and is listening attentively. The researcher listened attentively without judging in order for her to be able to probe.
- *Probing:* the researcher made use of probing statements/questions throughout the interviews. She asked questions such as “What do mean by..., May you please tell me more about..., Why is that so? How? What happened?”
- *Observation:* during the data collection, the researcher also observed the participants' non-verbal responses. She looked at how the participants reacted to some of questions, their body language at the beginning, during and after the interviews. This was to look at cues that may lend meaning to words.
- *Flow of discussion:* as the research followed a qualitative research approach which allowed the researcher to gain new insights into the phenomenon of the study by its ability to redirect the conversations by not restricting it to the specific questions, the researcher had to be able to redirect the discussion back to the topic of interest. She did this without rushing and cutting off her research participants but by respecting and engaging them by probing and making use of the interview schedule.
- *Multi-tasking:* the researcher also had to multi-task during the data collection interviews as she had to take notes, monitor the audio recording device without losing track of her participants responses and in turn show that she is listening attentively.

- *Interpret*: the researcher also interpreted during the data collection interviews. For the interviews that were conducted in English, the researcher had to translate some of the concepts/questions into Xhosa for the research participants to have a clear understanding of the research questions.

This was made possible by the proper preparation of the research methodology and practice to assess its feasibility and practicality which was done through the pilot study.

3.8 Pilot study

The researcher conducted a pilot study to assess the feasibility and practicability of the research study and to refine the study methodology. When an interview-guide with open-ended questions are used as an aid to guide the conversation between the researcher and the participant it is necessary to determine whether questions and directions are clear to subjects and whether they understand what is required of them, which is why it is important to conduct a pilot study (Hall, 2008). Sharma (2014:291) defines a pilot study as a “miniature trail run of the methodology planned for the major research study, which facilitates to improve the methodology of the study, can assess the feasibility of the study and may identify the problems that may be faced by the researcher in actual large research”.

The researcher conducted a pilot study with one of the research participants which was then transcribed and forwarded to the supervisor. Through the pilot study the researcher could identify errors in the questions contained in the interview-guide, such as there were some questions which were similar resulting in the interviewee being irritated by being asked similar questions. Furthermore, the researcher with the assistance of her supervisor were able to identify that there were some important aspects that needed to be covered, therefore she was requested by her supervisor to probe more and add more questions in order to validate the study design which was not covered in the research questions. More probing questions on masculinity, Ulwaluko and experiences were added and duplicated/similar questions were removed from the interview-guide which then enabled the researcher to rectify errors which also avoided having errors in the evaluation approach. The pilot study interview was not used as part of the research as the questions were adapted. According to Hall (2008), pilot studies also assist with providing advance warning about where research protocols may not be followed, where the main research project could not work or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated.

3.9 Data analysis

De Vos et al. (2011:399) believe that qualitative data analysis is a “process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing which is removed from structured, mechanical and technical procedures to make inferences from empirical data of social life”. In analysing the data, the researcher made use of a qualitative thematic analysis, which is defined by Creswell (2003) as an approach of dealing with data that involves the creation and application of codes to data. Braun & Clarke (2006:79) define a thematic analysis as a “historically conventional practice in qualitative research which involves searching through data to identify any recurrent patterns”. Making use of a qualitative thematic analysis enabled the researcher to move beyond counting obvious words or phrases but focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data which further requires a coherent and systematic approach (Creswell, 2003).

The qualitative thematic analysis proceeds through a series of well-defined steps such as category-building, coding and categorising that are useful not only for those who engage in this type of analysis, but also for the general understanding of the nature of qualitative analysis (MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2012). The researcher engaged in the following steps in analysing her data as supported by King & Horrocks, (2010).

1. *Read verbatim transcripts (familiarizing yourself with the data)*

Firstly, the researcher listened to all the audio recordings to check if whether the recordings were fluent and had no cut offs. She then transcribed all interviews verbatim and listened to audio recordings again while going through her verbatim transcripts so that she could familiarize herself with the data again.

2. *Generating initial codes*

According to King & Horrocks (2010), this stage involves the production of initial codes for the data. In this stage, the researcher manually coded the data using highlighters and some coloured pens to take notes on the verbatim transcripts for analysis. She coded as many potential codes and themes as possible and then collated all the data identified with the same codes by using the same colour highlighter or pen for the more similar ones.

3. *Searching for themes*

This stage involves sorting the different codes into potential themes (King & Horrocks, 2010). According to Mogashoa (2014:109), a theme is a “cluster of linked

categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerge through the inductive analytic process which characterises the qualitative paradigm”. Here the researcher made use of mind maps to sort relevant data extracts according to overarching themes.

4. *Reviewing the themes*

This stage involves the researcher conducting a refinement of the themes. Here the researcher decided based on the availability of the data, to support the theme. It was also to see some themes would collapse into other themes or if the other themes needed to be broken down into smaller components or discarded. This meant identifying main themes and sub themes. Braun & Clarke (2006) state that data within themes should cohere meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes. This, according to McQueen (2012), is usually done over two phases, where the themes need to be checked in relation to the coded extracts (phase 1), and then for the overall data set (phase 2).

5. *Defining and naming the themes*

After reviewing the themes, the researcher then defined and named the themes by capturing the essence of what each theme is about and what aspect of the data each theme captures by creating an overall narrative with all the data. King & Horrocks (2010) argue that at this stage a unified story of the data needs to emerge from the themes.

During this stage, the researcher also identified whether any of the themes contained sub-themes. Moreover, at this stage, the researcher officially named the themes making sure that they are concise and immediately give the reader a sense about what it is (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

6. *Producing the report*

At this stage, the researcher needs to provide an analytical narrative report providing sufficient evidence of each theme using vivid examples from your data (King & Horrocks, 2010). The report must relay the results of the analysis in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis. It must go beyond a mere description of the themes and portray an analysis supported with empirical evidence that addresses the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

With these steps in mind, the data analysis was based on transcripts and data collected from all participants. Their names during the interviews and in the transcripts, were strictly confidential and pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality.

3.10 Ethics considerations

Ethics considerations are the most critical aspects when conducting research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2014). According to Babbie (2008), these are the norms or standards for conduct which distinguish between what is right or wrong in research. In addition, Shamoo & Resnik (2014) argue that researchers must be mindful of ethical considerations to promote true knowledge as this is the primary goal of research and prevent the fabrication of data moreover, for the public to support and believe in the research. Ethical guidelines seek to work towards “protecting the individuals, communities and environments involved in the studies against any form of harm, manipulation or malpractice” (Babbie, 2008:66).

Ethical behaviour is also critical for collaborative work because it encourages an environment of trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness among researchers, which also protects intellectual property interest while encouraging collaboration (Resnik, 2015). According to Datt & Datt (2016) this can be achieved through providing the proper credentials to their contribution in the research. The handling of these ethical issues has a great influence on the reliability of the research project and can determine if whether the project receives funding or not (Kumar, 2014).

The research study was guided by the following ethical guidelines as outlined in De Vos et al. (2011):

1. Value of the study

To ensure that the study had added value to research in the area of masculinities, the researcher had first to obtain permission from the Senate Higher Degrees of the University of the Western Cape to be able to conduct the study. Furthermore, during the study the researcher had to uphold the academic ethical principles of the University of the Western Cape and the South African Council for Social Service Profession (SACSSP) which was to make sure that the study was accountable and contributed to the development of knowledge and understanding of others, further improving social welfare and individual well-being. In addition, the study also to uphold the Social Work Code of Ethics in conducting research (SACSSP) which will be not to plagiarise, and to report the research findings as accurately as possible and not fabricate or provide false information.

According to section 1 of the National Health and Medical Research Council (2014:2), research that is conducted with integrity is carried out by researchers with a commitment to:

- searching for knowledge and understanding;
- following recognised principles of research conduct;
- conducting research honestly; and
- disseminating and communicating results, whether favourable or unfavourable, in ways that permit scrutiny and contribute to public knowledge and understanding.

2. Informed consent

This means that prospective research participants must be fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in research and must give their consent to participate (Miller, Birch, Mauthner & Jessop, 2012). Shamo & Resnik (2014) add that it is through informed consent where the rights of autonomous and self-determination are incorporated, additionally preventing assaults on the integrity of the participants and protecting personal liberty and reliability.

For the purposes of this study, before the researcher could obtain informed consent from the research participants she had an open and honest communication with the research participants where she informed them about the objectives of the study, the duration, benefits, procedures, risks, confidentiality of records and the contact information if they had questions. This was also highlighted in the written consent form (see *Appendix B*) which participants had to sign before they participated in the study.

3. Confidentiality and anonymity assured

Miller et.al (2012) state that almost all research guarantees the participants' confidentiality. They argue that confidentiality is maintained through assuring participants that their identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. De Vos et al. (2011) advocate that confidentiality means that individuals are free to give and withhold as much information as they wish to the person conducting the research. Miller et al. (2012) claims that the more uncompromising the ethical standard is during the research process the more the participant will remain anonymous including gaining anonymity to the researcher.

In assuring confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher conducted the study in a way that does not infringe on the rights of the participants by guaranteeing the participants' anonymity which was attained through the use of pseudonyms and by keeping the audio recordings, documents or files that contained personal information locked in a safe space. Confidentiality

was also one of the key ethical considerations in this study, where the researcher clearly outlined the terms of confidentiality and its limitations, which was also highlighted in the research information sheet which was given to the participants to read and understand before taking part in the research.

4. Participants' withdrawal

Participation for the study was completely voluntary and no-one was forced into participating in the study. Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time or stage of the research process without facing any prejudices or consequences. This notion is supported by Seidman (2013:68) who asserts that “research participants have the right to drop out of a study at any time”. This may be due to the research participant becoming uncomfortable with the interview process, therefore the researcher needs to make it clear to the participants that he/she has the right to withdraw from the study at any time, whether it is before, during or after the research interview (Seidman, 2013).

The researcher was unfortunate to have four research participants who withdrew from the study after they had agreed to be part of the research study but before the interviews. Two of the participants had indicated that they do not think they could be of value to the research study and the other one did not wish to state his reason and one was not willing to share as he had not made his sexuality public, saying that talking about it with a person that he does not know will make him uncomfortable.

5. Respect

Respect is one of those things that emerges from the process of building and engaging in relationships. In research, the relationship must be built on mutual and ongoing respect, or the research cannot be conducted ethically (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011). In this research, the researcher showed respect to the participants' sexuality, customs and traditions by engaging with them throughout the research interview in a respectful manner which showed no discrimination or judgement.

This is supported by King & Horrocks (2010) who attain that respect for human beings is a recognition of their intrinsic value which includes abiding by the values of research merit and integrity, justice and beneficence. Respect also requires having due regard for the welfare, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of those involved in research. Further, King and Horrocks (2010) say that respect is a wide-ranging

principle which goes beyond the simplistic notions of respecting people's freedom but should further involve empowering where possible and providing for their protection as necessary.

6. Dealing with potential risks

In cases where participants were perhaps traumatized by sharing of their experiences, they were given an opportunity after the interview to work through their experiences with a counsellor through a debriefing session. Referrals however, were done in respect of the participant's right to self-determination and respect of legal right only to engage in intervention sessions at their own discretion.

No participants indicated that they were traumatized and needed debriefing, however. After the data collection, the researcher made use of the lunch breaks which she gave to them as an incentive as the reflection session where they could reflect on their experiences of being part of the research and how they felt after the interview. This was supported by Russel & Purcell (2009:27) who state that "debriefing is a procedure used at the end of a study to inform participants of the true nature of the research and to allow participants to voice out their opinions or concerns about the study". Furthermore, the aim of the debriefing is not just to provide information, but to help the participant leave the experimental situation in a similar frame of mind as when he/she entered it (King & Horrocks, 2010). These debriefing sessions should take place as soon as possible and should take reasonable steps to ensure that participants understand debriefing (Russel & Purcell, 2009).

Moreover, since the participants might have revealed aspects on Ulwaluko which are secretive among the Xhosa-speaking men, there might be negative consequences on publishing such information such as participants being rejected by their society and being labelled as 'traitors' in exposing their culture. This risk was addressed using pseudonyms during the data collection and analysis to protect their identity and avoid being subjected to negative consequences in the publications of the data findings.

7. Incentive

For this research and how the research study is structured considering that it is on a population which is considered hidden, the researcher preferred using the term 'token of appreciation' as to using the term 'incentives'.

As a token of appreciation, the researcher hosted a braai for all interested participants who confirmed their attendance in the Whatsapp group. According to Guest, Namey & Mitchell (2013), using incentives can make it easy to find willing participants, offer thanks in tangible form for the time and insights participants have contributed and can help build rapport. The token of appreciation was done in the respect of the SACSSP gift and incentive ethic that such an exchange can only be transcribed if it is not socially contra-indicated and if by doing so, the relationship is not exploitative.

3.11 Research limitations

The researcher felt like the participants were reticent in their responses to some of the research questions which could be due to her presence as a woman researching a topic that is culturally-forbidden to women. This affected the participants' responses and also affected the study, as some of participants refused and others were a bit hesitant to be interviewed by the researcher.

Moreover, having limited literature based on the research topic could possibly result in not having enough literature to compare and contrast the findings with suitable literature.

3.12 Trustworthiness

The quality of the work produced is very important in qualitative research as argued by (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). Tappen, (2011:153) defines the term 'rigor' as the word which 'describes the desirable characteristics of both the process and the product of the qualitative research, which also refers to adherence to high standards in the conduct of research'. Padgett (2008:184) defines rigor in qualitative research as "akin to self-discipline and vigilance about methods". The key issue in evaluating the rigor of qualitative research is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be described/established in four different terms namely (Phillmore & Goodson, 2004):

1. *Credibility*: this is the how confident the qualitative researcher is with his/her observations, interpretations and conclusions of the research. According to Macnee & McCabe (2008), qualitative researchers can use triangulation to show that the research study's findings are credible. The researcher made use of both explorative and descriptive research approach in order to enhance the triangulation for the research study.

2. *Transferability*: is how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research study's findings are applicable to other contexts. In this case, "other contexts" can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena meaning it can be generalized. In ensuring transferability, the researcher used previous theories/literature and thick descriptions from the data analysis to demonstrate that the researcher's findings are applicable to other contexts, circumstances and situations.
3. *Confirmability*: this is the degree of neutrality. According to Garner (2007), this means that the research finding is not based on the biased views or personal motivations of the researcher but based on the participants' responses. To establish confirmability, the researcher provided a step-by-step guide of how the data analysis was conducted with the highlighted transcript and mind map done to define themes.
4. *Finally, dependability*: this refers to the consistency of the research of the findings. This means are the research findings sufficient enough to be replicated. To establish dependability, the researcher got an external auditor to go through the research findings' report.

On the other hand, to ensure the trustworthiness, the role of triangulation must again be emphasized, in this context to reduce the effect of investigator bias. (Gunawan, 2015).

3.13 Self-reflectivity

During the course of data analysis, the researcher made use of self-reflexivity. Bless & Higson-Smith (1995) define self-reflexivity as a continuous process whereby the researcher reflects on his/her defined values and those of the participant, such as how data collected will be influenced by how the participants perceive the researcher. The self-reflexivity process also involves researchers reflecting on their own actions, feelings and conflicts which are most likely to be experienced during research (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). According to Davies (2007) self-reflexivity also involves the process whereby the researcher adopts a self-critical stance of the study and the research participants. Moreover, it applies to their role as researchers, relationship and assumptions on the research question.

CHAPTER 4:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4. Introduction

Data analysis simply refers to the inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modeling of data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making process (Creswell, 2003). Shamo & Resnik (2014) further define this data analysis as a process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. According to Shamo & Resnik (2014), various analytic procedures provide a way of drawing inductive inferences from data and distinguishing the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise - present in the data". For the purpose of this chapter, the researcher will briefly highlight the findings that she received in exploring the following research question "What are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how have they influenced their construction of masculine identity?" Furthermore, the researcher will be discussing the findings in relation to literature and the theoretical framework.

In exploring the research question and analyzing the data the researcher made use of thematic data analysis which Creswell (2003) defined as a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Furthermore, Braun & Clare (2006) define it as a method that minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. In this study it required reading the verbatim transcripts from the twelve interviews, noting the key themes and sub-themes that emanated from the transcripts that emerged as crucial in exploring the research question. It also required putting the topics in different themes and groups according to consistency. All this was done by critically conceptualizing participants' responses and contributions in exploring the research question. Moreover, to substantiate the identified themes, relevant literature was utilized to deepen the discussion. In summary, the process involved transcribing the data as the researcher familiarized herself with the data sets. The researcher also produced connections of the content in order to uncover the meaning thereof as stated by Crossley (2000).

Crossley's (2000) six steps for analyzing personal narratives were used, these are the same steps as adopted by Creswell (2003) and King & Horrocks (2010) which then involved reading and familiarizing, identifying important concepts to look for, identifying narrative

tone, identifying imagery and themes, weaving all of these together into a coherent story and finally, writing up the research report. (Onwuegbuzie, 2011:3; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007).

The data analysis was conducted based on the data obtained from gay males in Cape Town that have gone through the process of Ulwaluko and one key informant that is well-versed in the ritual of ulwaluko. For easier representation, the profiles of the individuals are depicted below in Table 4. For the purpose of anonymity the participants real names were not used by substituting them with pseudonyms.

Table 4: Participants profile

Pseudonym	Age	Area	Area of circumcision	Year of circumcision
Alex	32	Khayelitsha	Eastern Cape	2002
Ben	35	Bellville	Eastern Cape	1997
Bongani	31	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2001
Jake	29	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2002
John	23	Bellville	Eastern Cape	2008
Luzuko	28	Philippi	Eastern Cape	2004
Mduduzo	27	Bellville	Eastern Cape	2005
Mxolisi	23	Khayelitsha	Eastern Cape	2008
Vuyo	30	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2002
Xoli	25	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2007
Zack	25	Nyanga	Eastern Cape	2006

Table 5: Key informant:

Pseudonym	Age	Area of practice	Years of experience
Qamashe	72	Khayelitsha	25 years

There were 11 gay-male participants in total interviewed within the City of Cape Town. Eight of the participants were aged between 23 years to 30 years and three were above the age of 30 years old. All the participants were males originally from the Eastern Cape who migrated to the Western Cape either for work opportunities or education reasons, mainly to pursue their tertiary education. All participants were also “self-conformed” to have gone through the process of Ulwaluko with the majority having gone through the process between the years 1997 to 2008 with the most recent having gone in the year 2008. Most research participants had undergone Ulwaluko between the ages of 14-15years with one at the age of 17 years. The researcher also had the opportunity to interview one of the traditional surgeons called ‘Ingcibi’ who has been in practice for 25 years.

Table 6: Below is a short biography of all research participants

PARTICIPANTS	SHORT BIOGRAPHY
Mduduzo:	27-year-old openly gay man originally from the Eastern Cape in a small town called Indwe. Came to Cape town to complete Grade 12 and to pursue his tertiary education in Engineering which he did not complete due to personal reasons. He then pursued a course in Hospitality. Mduduzo had undergone Ulwaluko in 2005 when he was only 15 years of age.
Alex:	Alex is a 32-year-old openly gay man also from the Eastern Cape currently residing in Khayelitsha with his aunt and two siblings. Alex came to Cape town in 2005 to pursue his tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape where he obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Arts. Alex had undergone the process of Ulwaluko in 2002 at the age of 17 years.
Mxolisi:	A 23-year-old gay man from the Eastern Cape in Grahamstown, who used to stay at eNgcobo years ago. Currently also residing in Khayelitsha with family and studying at the University of the Western Cape. Mxolisi had undergone the process of Ulwaluko at the age of 14 in 2008. His family still does not approve of his sexuality.
Ben:	A 35-year-old openly gay man from Nyanga originally from East London in Mdantsane, moved to stay in Bellville for work

	opportunities. Ben underwent Ulwaluko at the age of 15 in 1997.
Zack:	A 25-year-old gay man from the Eastern Cape in a small town called Alice, currently residing in Nyanga with siblings. Moved to Cape Town to complete his high school studies and pursue his tertiary education. Zack decided to undergo Ulwaluko at the age of 14 in 2006.
Xoli:	Xoli is a 25-year-old gay man from the Eastern Cape who is currently residing in Nyanga in the Cape Metropole. Xoli moved to Cape Town when he was doing Grade 3 with his family as his father got a job opportunity in Cape Town. It has been 10 years since he went for the traditional circumcision which was 2007.
Bongani:	A 31-year-old openly gay man from the East London staying there with parents and siblings. Bongani claims to have known his sexuality from a young age which his family learnt to accept. He then underwent to Ulwaluko at the age of 15 in 2001.
Jake:	Jake is a 29-year-old gay man currently residing in Philippi, originally from the Eastern Cape. Went for his traditional circumcision in 2002 in the Eastern Cape at the age of 15years. He moved to Cape Town with his family years back when he was still a child.
Luzuko:	Luzuko is a 28-year-old gay man currently working in Cape Town originally from the Eastern Cape township called eNgcobo. Moved to cape Town to pursue his tertiary education in Law to help support and assist with the expenses at home. Luzuko went to Ulwaluko at the age of 15 in 2004.
John:	John is a 23-year-old openly gay man residing in Bellville. John went for his traditional circumcision in 2008 when he was 14 years of age in the Eastern Cape. He grew up in Cape Town and knew he was gay from a young age. His family was not so accepting of his sexuality until a few years back when they started being open about it and started talking about it.
Qamashe	Qamashe is a 72-year-old man who has been Incibi for the past 45 years. He took over his father's role as Incibi when his father

	passed away. Qamashe was traditionally circumcised by his father when he was 18 years old in the Eastern Cape. As a Incibi, he has never been through professional training as a circumcision surgeon but has obtained his certificate from the Department of Health to practice as a traditional surgeon.
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4.1 The researcher's observations

Despite this not being an official data collection method included in the proposal, one cannot dismiss observation as a key informant to the data analysis and the outcomes obtained. Important observations were made in line with the study phenomenon. Reyes (2004) states that observation in research is the most important method of getting information especially when things are observed in their natural setting without influence from the researcher or observer. Reyes (2004) goes further to write that observation, even when not applied as a primary method of data collection should be acknowledged as a fundamental basic method as researchers are constantly aware and observing their setting while conducting their studies. This also, to a greater extent, provides context for the data collected. These observations aid the data analysis process as the researcher also relies on recollection from his observations in both the data collection process and data analysis process. A more important sterling view of why the observations are acknowledged is guided by the fact that the study made use of exploratory and descriptive research strategies which, according to Stebbins (2001), can at times rely on secondary research tools for reviewing data such as other literature and use of other approaches including observations, informal discussions and review of case studies amongst others.

Below are some of the themes that emanated from the study:

- a) Ulwaluko is a sensitive topic amongst isiXhosa people.
- b) Ulwaluko is a needed rite of passage for isiXhosa men
- c) One has to rely on snowball sampling to gain access to the gay community.
- d) IsiXhosa heterosexual men do not regard gay men as masculine.
- e) Male circumcision is significant for Xhosa people, whether gay or not.

In the following section, the themes that emanated from the interviews are discussed.

4.2 Findings and analysis

For easier presentation, the themes and sub-themes are shown in tabular form:

Table 7: Themes and sub-themes that came from the research interviews

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Gay masculinity	1. Definition of gay men masculinity in relation to heteronormative gender roles
Gay men and Ulwaluko: Challenges to hegemonic masculinity.	1. The pressure from family to undergo Ulwaluko 2. Deconstructing whether Ulwaluko can change gay sexuality 3. Agency through engaging in Ulwaluko
Gay men and Ulwaluko: Shaping identity and healthy practices	1. Mixed response to identify shaping of gay men 2. Ulwaluko as a healthy practice: true or false?
Gay men and Ulwaluko: Experiences of rejection, sexual practices and empowerment of gay men	1. Ulwaluko as exclusionary and isolationist: 'There's a kind of rejection...that happens there' 2. Subverting Ulwaluko by engaging in sexual practices 3. Ulwaluko leads to empowerment for gay men

Below is the discussion of the core themes. Where necessary, the researcher will give relevant literature that supports or challenges some of the contributions by the participants.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Gay masculinity

It emerged from the study that gay men regard masculinity as masculinity without variations of sexuality. Gay masculinity as portrayed by gay men themselves has little to do with whom one is attracted to sexually.

Alex: Let me start by saying that I am a masculine man. I am also a gay man...

This became a common phrase amongst participants highlighting that their masculinity has little to do with their sexuality. This is supported by Reeser (2010) who maintains that masculinity does not have a single meaning even for a given individual, but its definition however changes through relations to various external factors that arise. Reeser (2010)

further argues that masculinity has no meaning itself meaning that masculinity has meaning in the way it is put in dialogue with another and in the way in which it is perceived at a given moment in a given space.

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Definition of gay men masculinity in relation to heteronormative gender roles

To gain an understanding of the term ‘gay masculinity’ the researcher asked the participants what their understanding was of the term ‘gay men masculinity’. With this question, the researcher aimed at further exploring the understanding of gay men in relation to their own identified and experienced masculinity. In this, the emanated sub-theme was that the dominant cultural image of masculinity has heteronormative gender roles such as physical strengths, control of situations, family care, taking the role as the head of the household, not showing emotions, such as crying among other emotions which are seen as feminine.

According to Ravenhill & De Visser (2017), gay men may utilise stereotypically masculine attributes and behaviours in an attempt to accumulate ‘masculine capital’, a term referring to the social power afforded by the display of traits and behaviours associated with orthodox, ‘hegemonic’ masculinity. This statement by Ravenhill & De Visser (2017) is supported by five of the research participants who highlighted that they believe that gay masculinity can be non-existent or could not be defined without the aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

Luzuko for example, a 28-year-old openly gay man from Philippi with a Law Degree, goes on to say:

Luzuko: I am not sure that gay men masculinity is even a thing. I see masculinity as something inherent in men that you have the need to take care of people which in our context is complicated by being gay but if you are gay and a man I would like to think in way we talk of the top and the bottoms so gay in masculinity maybe looks at are you one taking care of the family, are you a g- getter, are you still able to fulfil manly responsibilities such as taking care of your family? That’s what to me defines gay masculinity.

In Luzuko’s definition or understanding of gay masculinity, he highlights the aspect of heteronormative gender roles which he sees as inherent in men which is also believed to be socially constructed as ascribed by Groes-Green (2009). Groes-Green (2009) states that the ideal behaviour and representation of hegemonic masculinity in most men in Africa is the

breadwinner ideal, which defines a man who can provide economically for his partner and family. Luzuko's definition is further supported by Vuyo a 30-year-old also openly gay man who argues that masculinity is masculinity, and this cannot be differentiated between gay and straight men. In his statement one can see how he keeps repeating the word 'man' when he talks about himself, that although he is gay he is still a man therefore he will attain some of hegemonic masculine traits. For example:

Vuyo: the problem I have had is that here is masculinity for gay men and here is masculinity for straight men. There is only masculinity. I am a gay man but I am still a man. When you talk of masculinity for gay men you just say masculinity so why attach titles of gay masculinity to us. There is just masculinity. The differences are technically the same cause at the end of the day, we are all men.

Vuyo's notion of masculinity is supported by Pascoe (2012:6) who maintains that "masculinity is a multiplicity of gender practices enacted by men and whose bodies are assumed to be biologically male". So much as they are gay men as clearly noted by Vuyo '*I am gay man, but I am still a man*' they are biologically male basically meaning that they possess inherent masculinity.

However, Luzuko and Vuyo's view of gay masculinity is contrary to Cooper's (2013) statement that gay men are not compatible with masculinity making them feminine and simply cannot be accommodated in hegemonic masculinity. Cooper's views on gay masculinity are supported by John who seems to be in a state of shock by the term gay masculinity and expresses it by saying

John: Wow...is there such a thing as gay masculinity?

John's response towards gay masculinity shows just how much the word 'masculinity' is seen as non-existent in the gay vocabulary as also outlined by Zack who states the following:

'The thing is masculinity never comes to our mouth as gay people because it doesn't exist. We use the terms straight acting and flamboyant we don't use masculinity'

John and Zack's views are supported by Cooper (2013) who also suggests that gay men are not compatible with masculinity making them feminine and simply cannot be accommodated in the hegemonic masculinity. However, some of the participants, such as Luzuko and Vuyo, feel that gay men can still attain masculinity although it is not clear whether they will attain hegemonic masculinity within a heterosexual world. Mduduzo, for example, supports Luzuko

and Vuyo's views, but feels that society excludes them from using the term 'masculinity' in defining gay men as they are seen as the 'other' who do not conform to the heterosexual norms. Therefore, they are seen as outsiders who do not deserve to get the same privileges as 'real men' and those within the hegemonic masculine hierarchy. This notion is described as denying gay men the privileges which are offered to 'real men' as stated by Lynch & Clayton (2016).

Mduduzo described his understanding of gay masculinity as follows:

Mduduzo: If I can clarify according because when they talk about masculinity they don't most cases they don't involve people like me like gay and transgender people and all that. They don't involve us cause they think we are not masculine enough so that we can be like men or something like that. So those are challenges of bombastic words like that, we try to fit in and it's like the community is isolating you from it.

It is interesting as to how Mduduzo describes it as a 'bombastic' word which to him is used only to exclude or discriminate against certain people who might not have a clear understanding of the term 'masculinity', but then later ironically uses the bombastic word 'masculinity' in a sentence where he now describes masculinity in gay men in relation to heterosexual norms.

Mduduzo: Like firstly I think you must be a man basically. You must go get circumcised and all those things. That is one of the contributing factors of gay man masculinity, and if you are not circumcised they do not treat you enough as being masculine.

Mduduzo's statement of 'they do not treat you enough as being masculine' further confirms the findings of Lynch and Clayton (2016:7) of how being gay risks being seen as less of a man and being 'put aside' and "rendered as socially less credible and authoritative subjectivities (in relation to heterogendered normative masculinities), similar to the social position occupied by women or boys."

A similar view to Luzuko, Vuyo and Mduduzo which emanated from the data collection is further expressed by Mxolisi as he asks:

Mxolisi: Tjooo...there is masculinity and gay masculinity?

And goes on to say:

Mxolisi: Well I will say gay masculinity will be the partner...like in heterosexual relationships there are the feminine ones and the more masculine one right? Which is the same with homosexual relationships. The gender roles exhibited by the partner who is more masculine such as those roles prescribed by society only difference will then be sexual orientation

Through this analysis, it is clearly visible that whether one believes in the existence of gay masculinity or not, heterosexual norms play a major role in the definition thereof. This is also maintained by Nardi (2000) who states that hegemonic masculinity is being redefined to include gay male identities.

Contrary to Luzuko, Vuyo & Mduduzo and in support of Zake's view, Alex defines gay masculinity without relating it to heteronormative stereotypes but uses homosexual norms in describing it.

Alex: Gay man masculinity, well in a very simple way is just being yourself and just enjoying who you are and you are gay and in a masculine way. Meaning you don't cross dress, you acting straight because you want to be called masculine or something like that. You do things which regards you as being masculine because you don't cross dress, you don't go like chomi (friend).

According to Connell (1992), masculinity of gay men only varies a little from the heterosexual man thus indicating gay men can achieve their masculinity in ways which can be slightly different from those of straight men. Alex's definition of gay masculinity also just shows how much their masculinity has been associated with 'femininity' as indicated by Plummer (2002). He highlights how it has been frequently defined as 'everything else' compared to the straight masculinity as if it were something out of this world which is different and regarded as the 'other' which is therefore subordinate. Edwards (2006) believed this to be disrespectful to masculinity, too promiscuous, too phallic or too lacking in masculinity. However, these notions are contested by Goffman (1959) who believes that gay men embrace a masculine body image so as to pass as heterosexual. This is corroborated by Nardi (2000:77) who states that "gay men are men and thus acknowledge their sexuality and masculinity".

Resser 2010 (Cited in Voorhees, Call & Whitlock, 2012) argues that looking at what masculinity means within an actual group instead of looking at it from a hegemonic culture

can highlight new ways in defining masculinity (alternative masculinity) with which gay men would identify.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Gay men and Ulwaluko: Challenges to hegemonic masculinity

One of the findings of the study is that masculinities often focus on hegemonic masculinity. The reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity as stated by the Pini & Previte (2013) can have the effect of reinforcing the privilege associated with hegemonic masculinity, as well as overlooking differences amongst boys and the plural practices individual boys engage in especially when we are considering gay masculinity. In this theme, three sub-themes emerged such as how gay men are pressured by their families to engage in the traditional circumcision with the belief that it can change their sexuality due to the non-acceptance of their sexuality. Secondly how they then used Ulwaluko to deconstruct the belief that the traditional circumcision can change their sexuality. And lastly, despite the pressure and the efforts taken to deconstruct the belief that Ulwaluko can change their masculinity it also emerged that participants took pride and agency in engaging in Ulwaluko.

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 1: The pressure from family to undergo Ulwaluko

Despite the participants being openly gay to their families and refusing to conform to what is called 'real men' masculinity as they do not believe in the term, family dynamics can be problematic. They however, find themselves being pressured by their own family to conform to one of the heteronormative cultural beliefs within isi-Xhosa culture such as undergoing Ulwaluko. This is arguably seen as becoming a man within the culture and would be a preference of mostly heterosexual men. Bongani for example is a 31-year-old openly gay man from Philippi and originally from the Eastern Cape who mentions just how he felt being pressured by his family to take part in Ulwaluko. He says:

Bongani: Knowing my parents, they will force me to do it and if I don't do it they will either disown me. Because I am not the only boy child in that family I have two sister and 7 brothers so you can imagine the pressure.

Bongani felt pressured as his parents would disown him if not conforming to what they expected of him. Bongani's feelings are supported by Dworkin & Yi (2003) who state that most gay men fear losing their families, as in most cases their families are their support structure as some get bullied, tortured, discriminated against, criminalized amongst other forms of marginalization by the outside world. This view is supported by Mxolisi who,

similarly to Bongani, reports how painful it is to be rejected by your own family. Mxolisi expresses his feelings by saying:

Mxolisi: At first, I never wanted to speak about my family and my sexuality in one sentence. You know, abantu (people) never understand the rejection and emotions you go through as a gay man worse when the rejection comes from your family. You just feel like, like (sic) you don't belong and sometimes just feeling like hating yourself

The emotions involved by the rejection of family members as highlighted by Mxolisi are supported by Carastathis, Cohen, Kaczmarek & Chang (2017) who state that negative family attitudes which are internalized consequently make gay men have negative feelings about themselves which then creates feelings of doubt for some, confusion, alienation and/ or self-hatred. According to Goldfried & Goldfried (2001) it is believed that family support has the potential significantly to reduce the psychological stress and symptoms resulting from victimization experienced by gay men. In addition, it is also believed that gay men's self-esteem is associated with a positive relationship with both their parents (mother and father).

Mxolisi further brings a contrasting view as to how much he respects his father and how much that respect for him has forced him to undergo Ulwaluko:

Mxolisi: I never wanted to go to this stupid Ulwaluko but because of my family more especially my dad. I respect that 'nigger', I was forced to go not literally but it's like I was forced indirectly you know

For some of the research participants such as Ben and Luzuko, they had the privilege to decide when to go but did not have a choice to decide whether they would like to go or not, it was just a matter of 'your family believes in it and you will go.' For example, Ben argues:

Ben: My family wanted me to go to initiation school earlier but I refused and only went there when I was ready to go there

Luzuko states:

Luzuko: As a Xhosa person who grew up in a family that believed in Ulwaluko, I had to and the only choice I had was to decide when to go.

The acceptance to conform to the pressure of attending initiation school conveys a sense of a need to be accepted by their family. It is evident just how general family support and family acceptance of a gender-orientation plays a significant role in the psychological adjustment of

gay men. Moreover, it indicates just how much family is valued as stated by Dworkin & Yi (2003). Consequently with regards to the importance of family support in gay men, some of them are confronted with the additional challenge of not only being stigmatized by society at large but also the prospect of being an outsider in their own homes. There is the belief in most families that Ulwaluko has powers in converting gay men into being straight men hence the pressure, more especially if the family supports you but does not approve of your sexuality. Mxolisi mentions the following:

Mxolisi: Oh yes, my dad never accepted my sexuality which I'm sure he still hasn't. I think he just learnt to live with it after he realized that I'm not going to change.

This then leads to the next sub-theme which emanated from the data collected, that most gay men who undergo Ulwaluko do so to prove their sexual orientation and disregard the belief that Ulwaluko has the power to convert gay men.

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Deconstructing whether Ulwaluko can change gay sexuality

Despite the progressive Constitutional Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the Civil Union Act (Act No 17 of 2006) which was promulgated to fight against the marginalization and discrimination based on sexual orientation, there are still challenges with homophobia and hate crimes perpetrated against these minorities (Klarsfeld, 2014). The strong belief that homosexuality is a sickness which is curable is still evident in today's modern society, more especially South Africa. There have been a number of corrective rape cases reported from around the world which are aimed at trying to change a person's sexual orientation. According to Brown (2012), the term "corrective rape" stems from the prevalence of the crime in South Africa, where it is used to describe rape perpetrated by straight men against lesbian women in order to "correct" or "cure" their "unnatural" sexual orientation.

Most gay men do not usually undergo the traditional circumcision rite but are sometimes forced by their families as it is believed that those who participate in the process of Ulwaluko will revert to heterosexuality and become real men (Mtshiselwa, 2011). This sub-theme is concerned with the view that homosexuality can be converted to heterosexuality using traditional circumcision practices. All interviewed research participants indicated to have undergone Ulwaluko either to prove their sexuality to their families or society or disprove the belief that Ulwaluko can change or convert their sexual orientation to be heterosexual. For example

Mxolisi: well it was also to prove a lot of people in my family that I am who I am and nothing, even if it means going to the mountains can change that. You know sometimes they even believe that going to the mountains will somehow cure your sexual orientation. Like intoni leyo (what is that)? So I just had to prove to some people that their theory doesn't work.

Mxolisi further argued that he was not discriminated against as a gay man initiate by traditional leaders as he got the same treatment as the heterosexual initiates. However, he believes that the reason for this is that the traditional leaders aimed to convert him to heterosexuality.

Mxolisi: With the elders they just treated me like any other guy cause I think for them they believed that the process was gonna (sic) change me cause I'm sure that's what they believe in hence they treated me the way they did.

Qamashe, a 72-year old elder who is one of the traditional leaders of Ulwaluko from Khayelitsha was interviewed as an insider of Ulwaluko. He was asked whether he believes that Ulwaluko can help convert gay men to heterosexuality. He strongly argued in support of this view as he sees the Ulwaluko process as changing lamakwenkwe (these boys) into becoming real men.

Qamashe: Uyabona mtwanami...ingxaki esiyizamayo thina apha. Ndingayibeka kanjani kwakhona. Uhhm...thina apha zezama ukunceda lamakwenkwe ukuba bafunde nkobudoda. (you see my child...the problem here is. How can I put it again. Uhhm...we are here to teach boys to become real men).

It is important to identify how he uses the word 'ingxaki' (problem) to describe gay men initiates but then holds back and rephrases the sentence to say 'lamakwenkwe' (boys). This can also indicate the internalized homophobia of Qamashe by referring to the gay men as a 'problem' when he also strongly argues that Ulwaluko will cure them. According to Dworkin & Yi (2003), in most societies, gay men and transgendered males are believed to betray male gender role superiority and privilege and therefore deserve to be punished.

Qamashe goes on to say:

Qamashe: Everyone mtwanami ozayo apha (my child who comes here) leaves here as a man. Ndithi uphuma apha ayindoda nqho. (I say, he leaves here as a real man).

On the contrary to Qamashe's statement, Mduduzo and Xoli who have been under his teachings when he was still a traditional leader in the Eastern Cape, maintain that their gender still remains the same and going to the 'mountains' has not changed or influenced their sexuality.

Mduduzo: People need to start realizing that my sexuality is not something that I just woke up one morning and decided hey I'm gonna (sic) be gay from today on. It is who I am and no one or nothing can change that qha! (an expression for that's it)"

Xoli: it hasn't changed me and I am not the ideal real man in inverted comma's they expected me to become.

Larsen (2013) argued that a number of ways have been attempted to cure homosexuality. They included drugs, electric shock therapy and psychotherapy which were found to be ineffective in curing people of homosexuality. In some countries, homosexuality is even believed not to be African and illegal. According to Saner (2013), there are more than 75 countries which have laws that criminalise homosexuality with 37 African countries out of 54 which have laws that have banned homosexuality with laws that prescribe homosexual acts as criminal acts which may lead to a jail sentence of many years (Onyeani, 2014). Most of the African countries, for example, have passed laws that have banned the practices of same sex marriages as it believed that homosexuality and same-sex marriages are a form of Western culture and are unnatural and unlawful to African cultures (Onyeani, 2014).

Similar findings emerged from four research participants who argued that Ulwaluko would not cure them from their sexual orientation. For example:

Xoli: people will whisper and say 'uzo buya estraight lowa (that one will come back straight) cause kunzima pha (it's tough there), it is not for sissies hey!

Zack; Ucinga uyaphi na lo (where does he think his going) ...akhanoli yenza ixesha pha as ubhuti bae uzobuya astrongo (he will not succeed there as brother bae, he will come back strong).

All interviewed research participants had taken part in Ulwaluko after 1994, which is after South Africa had achieved its democracy. However, despite the developments of positive legislation and studies that have been made on understanding gay men, it is evident that certain practices in South Africa will continue to remain hostile to the gay community whether it be name calling or simply undermining their existence. Lynch & Clayton (2016:2)

add ‘while South Africa’s legal and policy framework includes Constitutional protection on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, this legal equality is far-removed from the lived experiences of those South Africans who do not conform to heteronormative and masculine ideals, with homophobia often manifesting itself in violence.’

4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Agency through engaging in Ulwaluko

As much as the participants took part in Ulwaluko to prove their sexuality and disregarded the belief that Ulwaluko has the power to convert gay men into straight men, it also came out that they also have pride and agency in their culture and customs as Xhosa- speaking gay men. According to Mtshiselwa (2011), tradition holds a deep value for the Xhosa community and one of these valued traditions or customs is Ulwaluko. This sub-theme highlights how most of the interviewed research participants indicated to have taken part in Ulwaluko also because of respect for their culture and custom. For example:

Mduduzo: I respect my culture.

Zack: For me nothing had changed but I had to go through it as I am a Xhosa person.

Mduduzo: I understood my culture and knew from the beginning that this was a rite of passage and I had to do this for this to go well in my life.

Bongani: Ulwaluko is just culture that we Xhosa people have valued throughout the years.

According to Gwata (2009), it is important for Xhosa males to undergo this transformation as one must complete the ritual according to traditional beliefs. This means that although they are gay men, they take pride and find agency in being Xhosa-speaking gay men and just by being Xhosa speaking they will conform to the traditional practices of Xhosa people. For example:

Zack: I would not discourage anyone though. If it’s your culture then it must be done.

Mduduzo: I am a gay man, I am still a cultural man and I still must respect my culture.

Bongani: The rituals are something we participate in because of our culture and it’s almost a done deal that you must do them you know.

Mxolisi: You cannot, I mean cannot meet a Xhosa family that does not believe in this practice. Never, this is one serious practice I tell you.

Luzuko: Well it was never a decision, it's just an expectation. Something that we have to do. It's not a decision you make. There are no two ways of saying maybe or no. It must be done and when it was done, I couldn't ask for more. It was everything I thought it would be.

This was further supported by the traditional leader, Qamashe, who stated that if you are Xhosa then there is no way in which you will say you will not undergo Ulwaluko. For example:

Qamashe: Singama Xhosa (we are Xhosa) and as umXhosa soze uthi awuno kwaluka (Xhosa you will never say you are not undergoing Ulwaluko).

He added:

Qamashe: As umXhosa (A Xhosa person) ...we take pride in our culture

As cited by Chris Ndaliso in the Daily News online newspaper article 'a proud Xhosa, respecting all' (2015) is that traditional circumcision has been admired by all Xhosa-speaking people for many years. The article shows how, as a Xhosa-speaking person one should take pride in one's culture as evident in the participants' responses that the traditional circumcision teaches respect and how to be your family and community defender, but most importantly, how it shapes the Xhosa-speaking men's identity. This view is further supported by Mavundla, Netswera, Bottoman & Toth (2009) who argue that circumcision rite of passage is intricately interwoven into the fabric of Xhosa culture and society as by tradition all Xhosa males are required to go through the initiation process which will result in a sense of community, social identity and belonging. The argument of Mavundla et al. (2009) does not differentiate between gay men or straight men but simply refers to all as Xhosa males, whether gay or straight. However, it is clear that there are challenges in terms of being identified as gay which was highlighted earlier. The next theme further illustrates the importance of Ulwaluko.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Gay men and Ulwaluko: Shaping identity and healthy practices

Two other subthemes emanated from the data collected were how Ulwaluko is seen as a necessity for other reasons and not just a Xhosa cultural practice. The first was that Ulwaluko is regarded necessary for identity shaping of all of those who take part in it and secondly that Ulwaluko is seen as a healthy practice among men.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Mixed response to identify shaping of gay men

The purpose of Ulwaluko is to acquire a new status in society as a 'real man' and carry a family name (Mtshiselwa, 2011). Mxolisi argued:

Mxolisi: None of those boys like being called latties or Inkwenkwe (little boy) and by going to the mountains they will be called indoda (a man) no matter how old they are and they love that power which comes with being called indoda (a man).

Xoli added:

Xoli: Like the experience that I've gained there is knowledge that I was clueless about and ja by being there I've learnt so many things. And they have made me strong and it has given me that courage to say what I want to say and I want people to respect me as a man and not just as a gay man because we all say we are men when we are coming from the bush so if you have a problem with me being a man then you should go back to the bush cause we have gone through the same experiences and teachings."

This theme highlights how the experiences of being through Ulwaluko helps to shape identities as mentioned by Xoli that although they are gay men they are still men who have undergone the same teachings as all the initiates who are now men. He further argued how much he also deserves the respect that all men receive as the experience has also made him the ideal strong man with courage and knowledge. This could be a recognition that identifying as a man has benefits within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) in that you are respected and taken seriously. According to Mavundla et al. (2009), Ulwaluko gives a man, according to the Xhosa culture, respect and such respect is impossible to attain if one fails to follow the Xhosa tradition.

Xoli argues how Ulwaluko is vital in teaching respect:

*Xoli: It teaches you a lot about being a Xhosa man. It changes you as a Xhosa man.
You show respect to others and others show respect to you.*

John further suggested why Ulwaluko is necessary for identity shaping as he indicates the importance of knowing your family history and morals so that it can be passed on to your children for guidance and in shaping their identity. However, it appears to be referring to children attained through heterosexual relationships and not via adoption or surrogacy as a gay man. For example

John: like for example there are guys who grew up hiding themselves and don't want to be recognized that they are actually gay and then start engaging in heterosexual sex and having children if they don't engage in these rituals how are they going to teach their kids? So you need to give your child the option to either choose also if whether they would want to go through it or not cause you would have taught them...

It is also important for your child to know who are their ancestors and know where they belong in terms of culture..."

Internalised homophobia may also be present within these gay men as they may think that they do not have a right to have children. Frost & Meyer (2009) define internalized homophobia as the negative social attitudes towards the self of a gay person and its extreme form which can lead to the rejection of one's sexual orientation. Nadal & Davids (2015) further argue that although most gay men can love themselves and be proud of their identities, fragments of internalized homophobia might always exist as Social Construction has taught that being different or gender-nonconforming is bad.

Hunter (2005) however, argues that the 'real man' ideology which the rite of passage is hoping to achieve symbolizes a masculine ideal that stands in direct contradiction of how the same-sex sexuality is viewed in many parts of South Africa and how so much of those teachings done in the traditional circumcision are unnecessary or unbeneficial for their identity shaping. This view is supported by most of the research participants who argued how their experience was of little to no value to them as gay men and their identities. For example:

Alex: they always tell you that if you came back from there without knowing nothing (sic) your luck of finding a woman is limited. Unfortunately, though it touches a lot on how to treat a woman which is a difficult thing as a gay man.

The notion is also evident in Bongani's and Jake's statements where they show how some of the teachings were aimed at getting them ready to date women with emphasis on the teachings of power over women and young men.

Bongani: They were putting it in such a way that they want you to be ready to be dating women and or to get married or whatever. And that is why I said it was just useless to me and I just knew that I wasn't going to do it.

Jake: eish...sometime they will talk about women will now have respect for you. Like they will be like you'll be a man among other men. They say uyindoda emadodeni...

In support of the statements made by the participants, Lynch & Clayton (2016) describe how masculinities, specifically in relation to traditional cultures such as Ulwaluko are only structured in ways that exclude the participation of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. They reference that these traditional practices do not necessarily diminish the importance of traditional practices or attaining idealised forms of masculinity for these men but it is negative towards shaping their identities and how they are perceived in society. The constructions which Hunter (2005) ascribes as traditional leaders of Black identities are exclusively heterosexual with public claims that homosexuality is un-African which does not benefit gay men in the knowledge and/or empowering of their identities. However, it further generates the marginalisation of same-sex attracted men in discourses about masculinity and culture.

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Ulwaluko as a healthy practice: true or false?

According to the USAID teaching manual for Traditional Surgeons and Attendant about safe circumcision and social and sexual responsibility (2005:1) "male circumcision (MC) has been associated with lower rates of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevalence in many African countries. Through the data collection it was evident how some of the research participants believed in the statement that being circumcised limits your chances of being infected with diseases. Participants such as Luzuko and Mduduzo argue:

Luzuko: because there are so many diseases that you can get if you are not circumcised as a man

Mduduzo: if you circumcised you are a bit lucky as there are some things which will just pass through you, like these diseases nowadays

Bongani cites how the exposure to the traditional circumcision for him was a circumcision which was done in a healthy way:

Bongani: got the exposure as to circumcision in a healthy way...

However, he later contradicts himself when he mentions how scared he was when he noticed when he got there that they were using one knife for all the initiates. He mentioned the following:

Bongani: you actually get the knife there, that is one of the things which I was scared at and was like oh my word. I was just praying that the knife was only for me and no one else has used it before me or after me.

Most of the participants believe that circumcision is done for health reasons for men to reduce their chances of being infected by various sexually transmitted diseases. The question now is with the use of the same knife for all the initiates is it still circumcision in a healthy way? If this knife is being sterilized, how and what is used to sterilize it? This is substantiated by Bongani's statement and among other research participants such as Mduduzo who state:

Bongani: so in my mind I just thought, how many people have been using this knife and now it's my turn to use it

Mduduzo: they will just sterilize it, don't know how they will sterilize it or just wash it... but ja it was that one knife

Despite the concern of having to use one knife for all the initiates, only one traditional surgeon 'Ingcibi' is allowed to perform the act. However, the traditional surgeon is not even a person who is professionally trained to perform the circumcision process. According to Mavundla et.al (2009) for one to become 'Ingcibi' he must be a respected, upstanding member of the community and should meet certain cultural standards of wealth such as having cattle and land. Furthermore, this role is passed on from generation to generation where the elder teaches the next upcoming 'Ingcibi' through apprenticeship. This also raises concern for the health of the initiate as it also raises the question of whether the traditional surgeon knows what he is doing. Meissner & Buso (2007) argue that according to the most recent statistics it indicates that an average of 38 deaths and 24 mutilations occurred per year between 2001 and 2007 during the ritual seasons. This amounted to 228 deaths and 144 mutilations in just 6 years.

Furthermore, as argued by Bullock (2015), the initiates are exposed to more physical ordeals which may affect or complicate their health while undergoing Ulwaluko which is seen as preparing them for the hardships of manhood. Participants such as Mduduzo, Alex, Zack and Vuyo cite these physical ordeals such as having extreme fluid restrictions, having no access to proper medical equipment supplies such bandages for their wounds and sometimes assault.

Alex: They limit how you take water, basically you are not allowed to take any water for like a week after kukwaluka (ulwaluko).

Vuyo: I will get so thirsty wethu (man) and I will steal water mina (me) cause hai (no) it was too much. But hey they will always beat me up cause that was not allowed

Mduduzo: They use traditional medication but they don't use western medications like bandages or anything like that

As noted by Mavundla et al. (2009), during the circumcision surgery males are usually afforded the analgesia for pain. However, in the traditional circumcision, they are not afford anything for pain as part of the initiation process is to endure pain. Bullock (2015) states just how much pain and discomfort the initiates will be in after the circumcision. He mentioned that initiates are only given dry samp which leads to lethargy, and sometimes half-boiled maize with no water for seven days as indicated by Mduduzo:

Mduduzo: they give you like samp, you know samp mos (a slang word for right)...in Xhosa we call it 'umqusho'. It's dry, it doesn't have any veggies, meat or anything. You just eat that as it is the whole week.

According to Mavundla et al. (2009) initiates who are seen to be very weak will then be asked by the elders if they had any wrong doings before coming for the initiation which is usually around sexual acts and will then be asked to confess to get the bad spirit away. Any lethargy or sickness experienced by the initiates which might even be due to complications of the initiation is viewed as a bad or wrong spirit which is believed to be chased away singing the traditional initiate songs. Bullock (2015) states that this highly undesirable practice can lead to dehydration, which in turn can also lead to acute renal failure and shock. He further adds that other complications such as wound and chest infections are also most likely to occur in dehydrated initiates. These tests for endurance are supposed to make a man of initiates and this is comparable with other rituals in the global community.

In the Island of the middle of the South Pacific for example you get the Vanuatu Land Diving as discussed by McKay & McKay (2010). The Vanuatu Land Diving consists of a man tying a vine around his ankles then diving down headfirst, aiming to jump so close to the ground that his shoulders touch the ground. This is performed as a sacrifice to the Vanuatu Gods to ensure a bountiful crop and also to initiate the boys into manhood. Furthermore, you also get the Satere-Mawe Bullet Ant Glove rite of passage ceremony from the Satere-Mawe tribe from the Brazilian Amazon where the initiate will have to insert his hand several times into the glove as part of endurance to be considered a real man. One similar to Ulwaluko is the Australian Mardudjara Aborigines rite of passage where when a boy of the age of 15 or 16 will be led by the elders to a fire and have him lie down next to it. The tribal elder who is in charge of the circumcision, will lie on top of the boy's chest facing his penis while some tribal members surround the boy while singing and dancing and others crying. The only difference between Ulwaluko and the Aboriginal rite of passage is that for the Australian Mardudjara, the boy will be requested to open his mouth and eat his foreskin as the rite of passage.

Qamashe maintains that initiates get to feel weak not because the traditional surgeon does not know what he is doing as he has been doing it for years, but it is because initiates do not follow instructions and choose to not listen to their attendee's advice on how to take care of themselves. Qamashe reported:

“Soze uthi ama Ingcibi bahluleka ukwenza umsebenzi wabo (you cannot say the traditional surgeons can't do their job) which they have been doing for iminyaka (years). Sometimes mtwanami aba bafana aba mameli e-instructions. (my child these boys don't listen to instructions)”

Poulsen (2015), however, postulates that instead of focusing on encouraging young males to undergo medical circumcision, the government should put more effort into locating bogus traditional surgeons and traditional nurses as it is clear that young men are vulnerable to diseases and other complications with botched circumcisions. As in the Xhosa community or culture, those who undergo medical circumcision do not have a place in traditional celebrations as 'real men' as they will be seen to be less masculine and be put in the same position as women as subordinated within hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1998).

4.2.4 Theme 4: Gay men & Ulwaluko: Experiences of rejection, sexual practices and the empowerment of gay men.

Through the engagement of Ulwaluko as gay men three sub-themes emerged in terms of their experiences during Ulwaluko. The first theme that emerged was how most participants experienced some form of rejection while they were there, where there were also instances where they felt like they didn't belong. Secondly, some of the research participants indicated to having some sexual feelings towards the other initiates where to some it happened to be their former partners. Lastly, it also emerged that Ulwaluko also gave them some empowerment in society and family where they got to gain the same privileges obtained by the 'real men' as ascribed by the Xhosa culture. These themes are discussed in detail below.

4.2.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Ulwaluko as exclusionary and isolationist: 'There's a kind of rejection...that happens there'

As part of the process of the transition of becoming a real man, the initiates are trained to go through great ordeals which include living in the bushes alone in a small hut with limited resources and no contact to the outside world (Mhlahlo, 2009). They are also left in the cold with their freshly cut wounds which are just wrapped with traditional herbs and not given any Western medication such as painkillers to reduce the pain. The aim of Ulwaluko is to show that you are a man by being able to endure pain. Alex and Vuyo shared their feelings of seclusion and loneliness while in the mountains. For example:

Alex: You being put there in the cold all alone in your little hut, you are left to be alone in pain with your cutted (sic) foreskin, you don't get painkillers or shit like that! All in the name of being a real man! That was really torture for me shame.

Vuyo: uhmmmm, I felt a bit left out, I felt a bit odd and a certain point felt like leaving because at that time I felt like it really didn't give me something relevant or a reason to stay...

Alex describes the experience as torture as he was left alone to endure the pain without any painkillers, while Vuyo felt like he didn't belong and felt like there was no point for him to be there. Vuyo further talks about experiencing rejection and discrimination while being there which leads to frustration.

Vuyo: There's a kind of rejection or discrimination that happens there, like you will see how others look at you. Like they are not comfortable with your presence.

Like...seriously now. Ewe (yes) we were naked with just a blanket but I mean come on. Mxm

Vuyo adds on to say:

Vuyo: You do get guys coming to you and see how you guys are doing and they will start teasing you and everything like that but ja.

Mxolisi also experienced the same treatment as Vuyo, but mentioned that he was expecting rejection. He seemed to have internalized that he is subordinated within hegemonic masculinity. Hearn (2004) postulates that subordinate masculinity as presented by Vuyo, represents a form of masculinity where those subordinated will draw their identity from beyond the hegemonic hence the expectation of rejection as gay men is presumed to exhibit subordinate masculinity which is also labelled as deviant and inferior (Connell, 2005).

Mxolisi: They didn't feel comfortable being around me at all

Vuyo: I expected to be treated differently and yes I got that from the other initiates, my expectation on rejection was fully met shame.

4.2.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Subverting Ulwaluko by engaging in sexual practices

Some of the participants reported to have made sexual advances on other initiates and also suggested that some of the initiates made some sexual advances towards them. Participants' responses when they were asked if any of the initiates made moves on them replied:

Mduzozo: Yes, some people made moves.

Bongani: My dear straight guys became gay there...they kept on looking at me and whistling whenever I'll walk past and I enjoyed it sooo (sic) did them.

When they were asked if they tried to make moves on some of the initiates Ben responded:

Ben: They did and I also did shame...so it was like whenever I will see them with their bum out I'll be like wuuu baby and make jokes. They had sexy bums wuu...fit, firm sexy buttocks shame. So I definitely made sexual advances on them.

Two of their participants reported to have met their ex-boyfriends while they were there and had some time to be together. This would just be against normative practice and could be finding some agency within the ritual:

Xoli: actually, there were (laughs). I was there with two of my of my exes

Mduduzo: Oh well well well (laughing) when I saw my ex I felt that way, but I had to control myself because of the environment that I was in I had to respect the environment. But we will talk and in our last week of being there we liked taking long walks to the river and just chill there and have our two moments together. We will just swim together and have also wash our clothes together and have our blankets fresh and clean so (laughing) there was some romantic thing which was happening there. Like some romantic getaway (laughs)

According to Ntozini & Ngqangweni (2016: 1316) “normatively, it might not be expected that such an event would occur at initiation school, since bringing a boyfriend to initiation school might be perceived as bringing disgrace both to the family and the practice itself. Even if he did not have sexual relations with his boyfriend, the fact of bringing a male sexual partner to such a setting could easily be seen as a form of resistance that undermines the cultural values associated with Ulwaluko”.

Mduduzo knew that what he was doing was against his culture and customs more especially while in the mountains, as he states that he had to control himself and respect the environment. On the other hand, because he might have experienced rejection from the other initiates, he found agency and resistance being with his ex-boyfriend. According to Mavundla et al. (2009) there is a certain period during Ulwaluko when the initiates are allowed to have female visitors where it is customary for the initiate to perform a traditional dance called ‘ukutshila’ for the female visitors. It is believed that the purpose of these visits is for the initiates to learn the dances for the community ceremonies on their return, but also to give the initiates an opportunity to learn about dating through role playing and to give them a chance to meet prospective wives. This, however, does not accommodate the gay men initiates therefore for them finding agency and resistance during the process might also give the opportunity to learn about dating and meet prospective partners as the other initiates. In addition, can also be seen as rejection of the practice of Ulwaluko and hegemonic masculinity.

4.2.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Ulwaluko leads to empowerment for gay men

Through participating in Ulwaluko as gay men, they are afforded access to aspects of male privilege such as knowledge, respect and rites of passage awarded to other Xhosa men either gay or not. “Through undergoing traditional circumcision, their compromised status as ‘not man enough’ is somewhat mediated and they gain access to contexts where men are respected and have authority” (Lynch & Clayton, 2016:9). This is evident in the research participants who states:

Mduduzo: My family I don't think they have a problem of calling me masculine because there are a lot of things as I have said that I am a Xhosa guy and we have our Xhosa customs and stuff like that. So there are some of the things which are done, like traditional things can't be done if I am not there. So I got the privilege of being recognized by my family so early that without him we can't do certain things. So ja, there are a lot of things that I do at home that real man (sic) do, like what straight man do.

Mduduzo: For example when there are family rituals then you will have to go and you might even be given a task to address the people there. And that task is usually not given to anyone but only a person who has been to the mountain and who are men. Most of the time at home they always give me those tasks to address people and if maybe we are going to slaughter and they will say you need to be there and you need to be the first person there. So in the community, when I do those manly tasks, they will always say 'yes that's a real man'.

Zack: At home I am treated as the real man as I get the privilege to eat the meat which only regarded to be eaten by men such as the nice meat like the heart and so forth. I get to sit with other men and not boys so ja.

According to Hunter (2005) hegemonic masculinity mostly among Xhosa men is ruled by power and in the same sense, Ulwaluko is thought to give that power to the boys who have been initiated whether they are gay or not. In the research participants' responses, one can identify how the issue of power emerges especially with young men who have not undergone the traditional circumcision. For example, in John and Mduduzo's responses, when asked if the experience had perhaps changed the way they engage with society and other men, they said:

Mduduzo: So like when I come home I won't just be sitting anywhere with young boys there is a certain place where I must sit, the too much work is done by the youngest which you as men will not do you just send the young boys to do (sic).

John: Well, I'm not a small boy anymore...now I have the privilege to send small boys like those who didn't go to the mountains actually even older ones they have to respect me and do what I ask them to do.

This notion expressed by Mduduzo and John is further supported by Gwata (2009), who argues that once initiated, despite your sexual orientation, you then start doing what men do, which is the basis of masculinity. He adds on to say that gay men then start seeing themselves as powerful men which, according to the Xhosa culture, if one is not traditionally circumcised then one is not considered a man. This power is mostly illusory as they are still rejected as gay men within hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, other respondents such as Zack and Ben express how Ulwaluko has changed their behaviour towards the way they do things. It is clear that they feel that they have more power as men who have gone to the bush, and this might be the case, but there is a chance this power is dependent on their ability to 'take care of the family and bring food to the table'. This is supported by Groes-Green (2009), who states that the ideal behaviour and representation of the hegemonic masculinity in most men in Africa is the breadwinner ideal, which defines a man who can provide economically for his female partner and families who can earn his male authority through this practice.

The participants stated:

Zack: They know I will fulfil my duties as a son and as a man to my parents and to my partner.

Ben: You now take care of your family, respond to the needs of your family. Be a man that identifies with his social responsibility and I think I have fulfilled all if not most of those things so in my opinion.

The statements expressed by the participants indicate how they now believe that they are more masculine, but this does not mean that they have more power. This means that they are conforming actively to manage their identities as gay men while also respecting their culture and custom and/or could be just a matter of achieving citizenship status into the heteronormative world of receiving privileges as believed by the Xhosa culture as mentioned by Mduduzo who maintained the following:

Mduduzo: After the circumcision ritual, you are regarding (sic) as being a real man no matter what.

Researchers however, such as Connell (2005) attain that although at time the dominant masculinity remains intact to some. He argues that there are different masculinities that are constructed that are not necessarily in opposition to the heteronormative masculinity such as the alternative masculinities as might be expressed by these participants. Martin (2012) further supports the participants' views by stating that while these alternative masculinities might not challenge the gender structure, they provide new characteristics that might become part of the dominant masculine norm over time. Hence, argued by Connell (2005), that hegemonic masculinity is not an identity or a set of expectations but rather a dominant cultural and political force about which men and women orient themselves.

4.3 Summary of data analysis

This chapter was based on reporting all the data collected from the qualitative study. In presenting the data collected the researcher, took different steps and measures to ensure that the data presented is authentic and relevant to answering the research question. In presenting the data collected, the researcher was guided by Creswell (2003), King & Horrocks (2010) and Crossely's (2010) in steps on thematic data analysis. Through the data analysis, four main themes with nine sub-themes in total emerged from the data collected from 11 research participants who have all gone through the process of Ulwaluko and have identified themselves as gay men currently residing in the Cape Metropole. Furthermore, an insider of Ulwaluko (72-year-old elder who has been in practice as a traditional surgeon for the past 25years) was interviewed as a key informant to triangulate the gathered data and to also provide an overview of the data to confirm credibility.

In this chapter the researcher indicated how the gay men, in the study defined their masculinity in relation to heteronormative gender roles clearly stipulating how they portray their masculinity as having little to do sexual orientation as further supported by previous scholars such Reeser (2010) who reported just masculinity has no meaning itself, but has meaning in the way that it is used in dialogue. In the analysis, the researcher also established how the issue of masculinity had emphasis on hegemonic masculinity. It was noticeable how the gay men were pressured from their families to undergo Ulwaluko, as she further highlighted the belief, that Ulwaluko could change gay sexuality hence the pressure from families who did not accept their sexuality. Through the analysis, it also indicated that the

gay men conformed to the family pressures of undergoing Ulwaluko, as means of deconstructing the belief that it can change their sexuality. Furthermore, it emanated that conforming to the pressure to undergo Ulwaluko was not just to deconstruct the belief that it can change their sexuality but also to show agency in respecting and valuing their Xhosa culture as Xhosa men despite their sexuality.

Other sub-themes that emanated from the data collected was how research participants saw Ulwaluko as a necessity for other reasons such as identifying the shaping where one acquires a new status or identity in society as a ‘real man’ as discussed by previous scholars such as Mtshiselwa (2011) and a healthy practice among men as ascribed by the USAID teaching manual for Traditional Surgeons and Attendant about safe circumcision and social and sexual responsibility (2005). In addition, it was noticeable how, during the initiation process, gay men experience some form of rejection from the other initiates leaving them feeling like they do not belong and lonely. However, despite the rejection the data collected indicated further highlighted how the gay men used the opportunity to engage in sexual practices with the other initiates. This was in line with the views presented by other scholars such as Ntozini & Ngqangweni (2016) who reported how most gay men who take part in Ulwaluko will act the same way they do in society during the initiation. Lastly, it was also patent how their engagement in Ulwaluko gave them some form of empowerment in society and family as they got to gain the same privileges as obtained by the ideal ‘real men’ as ascribed by the Xhosa culture of Ulwaluko.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights mainly the experiences of the researcher in conducting the study and goes further to present conclusions and recommendations that emanated from the study that aimed to explore Xhosa-speaking gay men's experiences of Ulwaluko and its influence on their constructions of masculine identity within the community Cape Town – Western Cape. The conclusion and recommendations chapter will also reflect on the aims, objectives and methodologies of the study with a focus on whether these have been attained in line with the originally set objectives formulated at the outset of the study. The researcher will also within this chapter reflect on the already presented chapters of the study which are literature review, methodology and findings of the study. The researcher will also pay special attention to identifying limitations within the study and offer suggestions for future research.

The study made use of an exploratory and descriptive research design within qualitative approach. The data collection made use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The researcher within her data analysis, found relevant themes and sub-themes and incorporated quotes from participants that described their experiences of Ulwaluko. A literature control was implemented comparing the findings to empirical studies. Furthermore, the theoretical framework was imbedded into the discussion.

The research question which had to be addressed was:

What are Xhosa-speaking gay men's experience of Ulwaluko and its influence on their constructions of masculine identity?

By answering the research question, the study achieved the following:

- By engaging and directly participating in the data collection, the study explored and described experiences of Xhosa-speaking gay men in relation to their cultural practices of Ulwaluko.

- The study also explored both the positive and negative lived experiences of gay men that have gone through the process of Ulwaluko. This was achieved through interviews with Xhosa gay men in the Cape Metropole.
- The study also focused and explored views on masculinity as shared by the gay community with special interest on individuals that have gone through Ulwaluko.

To achieve all this, the researcher conducted qualitative semi structured interviews with gay men from the Cape Metropole communities. The criteria for selection for these participants was that they had to be Xhosa speaking gay men that are self-confirmed to have gone through the traditional Xhosa process of Ulwaluko, a rite of passage for Xhosa *boys* as they transition into men.

Furthermore, to achieve all this one had to constantly review the research process and make sure that it was in line with the objectives.

5.2 Highlights of findings

Four (4) major themes of interests emanated from the study with a total of 9 sub-themes. Below is a list of the themes and sub-themes that came out of the study:

NB: *Bulleted lists represent the sub-themes per theme.*

THEME 1: Gay masculinity

- *Sub-theme:* Definition of gay men masculinity in relation to heteronormative gender roles

THEME 2: Gay men and Ulwaluko: Challenges to hegemonic masculinity.

- *Sub-theme:* The pressure from family to undergo Ulwaluko
- *Sub-theme:* Deconstructing whether Ulwaluko can change gay sexuality
- *Sub-theme:* Agency through engaging in Ulwaluko

THEME 3: Gay men and Ulwaluko: Shaping identity and healthy practices

- *Sub-theme:* Mixed response to identify shaping of gay men
- *Sub-theme:* Ulwaluko as a healthy practice: true or false?

THEME 4: Gay men and Ulwaluko: Experiences of rejection, sexual practices and empowerment of gay men

- *Sub-theme:* Ulwaluko as exclusionary and isolationist: ‘There’s a kind of rejection...that happens there’
- *Sub-theme:* Subverting Ulwaluko by engaging in sexual practices
- *Sub-theme:* Ulwaluko leads to empowerment for gay men

THEME 1: *Gay masculinity*

This became one of the most defining themes of the study in which many of the participants of the study reported some level of lucid understanding of masculinity that it is something inherent in men whether gay or not. Participants such as Alex among the other participants argued just how masculinity should not be defined based on sexuality as he went on to say ‘*I am a masculine man. I am also a gay man*’ This definition of masculinity given by the participants, appeared to suggest that most of the Xhosa speaking gay men participants regard their masculinity as a separate entity to their sexuality. It also has to be noted that the participants presented a non-academic definition of what masculinity entails for all men whether gay or not. Some said that they felt masculine, despite being gay while others did not know what gay masculine meant indicates that gay and masculinity cannot be defined as a term as others described themselves as flamboyant and not masculine.

This further indicated the gendered power as ascribed in heterosexuality as highlighted in the sub-theme, that although others felt masculine despite their sexuality others felt like that gay masculinity cannot be defined as a term. The heteronormative gender roles or the orthodox associated with hegemonic masculinity kept on appearing in their definition of gay masculinity such as the ability to provide for one’s family and the constant referral to themselves as ‘men’.

THEME 2: *Gay men and Ulwaluko: Challenges to hegemonic masculinity.*

A striking theme that also emanated from the study is the notion portrayed by many of the participants which seems to suggest their participation in Ulwaluko as a response to family demands. Families and external societal pressures such as undergoing Ulwaluko and attaining a hegemonic masculinity appeared to put added pressure on participants. The pressure in some of the feedback from participants was added as a measure to suggest that participation in Ulwaluko would *convince* and turn one from being a gay man to heterosexuality using the

traditional art of circumcision. This, to a greater extent also revealed how being gay is still culturally and/or socially regarded as a problem to be fixed and treated.

Of note was also the response that Xhosa-speaking gay men participate in Ulwaluko in retaliation to prove that they are gay but also are men who honour their culture. There was therefore a noted sense of pride from participating in Ulwaluko by the participating gay men.

THEME 3: *Gay men and Ulwaluko: Shaping identity and healthy practices*

Participating individuals also reported that Ulwaluko was a necessary practise that gives them a sense of belonging as Xhosa men which also donates to their family histories. This was therefore highlighted as a practise necessary to be practised by all Xhosa men whether gay or not. This further highlighted just how gay men are still marginalized in cultural practices that although it is necessary for identity shaping and knowing and maintaining one's family history, the new identity believed to be obtained after Ulwaluko is that of the 'real man' as ascribed by society. This eliminates the alternative identities/masculinities obtained by gay men.

Of note was also the view shared by participants that Ulwaluko is a safe and healthy practise which they would encourage anyone to participate in. However, although seen as a healthy practice among men the process or procedure of the traditional circumcision raised some health concerns for some of the participants. Others indicated just how scared they were when they had noticed that one knife was used for all the initiates with the concern of whether it was sterilized and if so how. The concern of whether the traditional surgeon knows what they are doing and the physical ordeals of extreme fluid restrictions. Having no access to proper medical equipment suppliers such bandages for their wounds was also raised as a health concern by the participants.

THEME 4: *Gay men & Ulwaluko: Experiences of rejection, sexual practices and the empowerment of gay men.*

Although Ulwaluko was seen as a necessity for identity shaping and health practice which the participants indicated that they would encourage every man to undergo, the participants reported to have felt a sense of rejection and seclusion during Ulwaluko. The participants highlighted how they sometimes felt like they do not belong there as most teachings and the entire process took a heterosexual stance. The study also indicated how some of the

participants had internalized being subordinated within hegemonic masculinity as they reported to have expected some form of rejection from the other initiates.

The participants further reported how they dealt with the rejection by subverting Ulwaluko by engaging in sexual practices. For the participants, this could also be seen as the rejection of the practice of Ulwaluko and hegemonic masculinity which could be a good thing for them in attaining alternative masculinity.

A counter to this, however, was that by living through the experience, the participants gained a sense of empowerment that saw them gaining respect of both their families and communities, a respect that surpass their sexuality. Through this notion it was also clear that they felt to have achieved more power as men who have undergone Ulwaluko but one must note that there is a chance that this power is dependent on their ability to attain heteronormative gender roles such as taking care of the family and bring food to the table.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Support services to participants and gay community

Many of the participating gay men in the study reported at the end of the study that there were not many platforms for engagements as gay men to tell and share life experiences such as Ulwaluko. It is therefore important that counselling services that accommodates gay men to be advertised and made aware in communities such as:

- The Triangle Project which offers counselling for Gay men in the Western Cape
- The University of the Western Cape Gender Equity Unit
- Gay & Lesbian Helpline: For general information & confidential telephonic counselling to the LGBT community
- The Rainbow UCT: A student society at the University of Cape Town which is runned by students and exists for all people who appreciate sexual diversity.
- The transgendered and transsexual support group
- The Health4men Ivan Tom Centre for men's health

The data collection was reported by some of the participants as a chance at a therapeutic contact where they got to engage and share their story. However, the purpose of the engagement was not to conduct a therapeutic session therefore it was also necessary for the researcher, to suggest to the participants to seek counselling.

5.3.2 Social scientists; researchers and tertiary education

While conducting the study, it became clearer that there is limited research and literature conducted on the matter of Ulwaluko, but more importantly on the experiences of gay South African men in relation to cultural practises such as Ulwaluko. Research is essential in advancing learning and bringing issues to light. The following recommendations are therefore made:

- Researchers within South Africa must conduct more research on the experiences of gay men and cultural practices
- There was also a sense of frustration by the participants at the lack of understanding of Ulwaluko by non-Xhosa speaking people. Social scientists have a responsibility of making relevant content available that will enlighten and educate other cultures on the necessities of Ulwaluko.
- Ulwaluko should also be included in social work tertiary education where social work students are educated and trained on how to counsel and provide support to gay men who are engaging in Ulwaluko, as there might be stigma and rejection. Therefore, a better understanding of cultural practices and working with marginalized communities is needed for counselling purposes.
- There should also be awareness-raising at University level on cultural practices focusing on diversity such as providing case studies which are linked to transforming the curricula by educating on the marginalized communities such as gay men which further focuses on decolonization.
- There should also be education and awareness raised on the process of Ulwaluko whether one is female, gay or not Xhosa speaking should have the knowledge of what happens during Ulwaluko, more especially when your own child is undergoing the initiation process. It vital that one knows exactly what they are getting their child or themselves into highlighting the pro's and con's and risks involved.

5.3.3 Pre-and Post-counselling

There should be pre-and post-counselling offered to all those who undergo Ulwaluko whether gay or straight. The pre-counselling might be to prepare the initiates on the physical ordeals such as the pain, the possible rejection for the gay men and the extreme fluid restriction. It is also important to have post-counselling as some initiates might experience rejections and/or

witness death or physical ordeals such as mutilation, infection or health complications of a follow initiate which might be traumatic.

5.3.4 Policies regarding cultural practices such as Ulwaluko

Health professionals enforce their policies and medical practices on the traditional circumcision which has been evident that only some traditional surgeons adhere to. A policy or Code of Ethics should be developed on the traditional circumcision practices which are linked to the constitution, health polices but also incorporating the culture as one should still respect and embrace the culture. For example, having an Ulwaluko parliamentary legislative framework which binds all traditional surgeons to be legally registered which means that they have undergone training on performing the male circumcision and treatment thereof more especially in dealing with cases of emergencies. This will perhaps reduce the death rates and/or the uncertainty of whether the traditional surgeon knows what they are doing but to also provide some ease to the initiates and parents for them to freely embrace and take pride in their culture.

5.4 Limitations of study

The study despite being well structured with a well-executed plan also was restricted to a few limitations which could have potentially derailed the implementation and outcomes of the research. The researcher noted the following as some of the limitations:

5.4.1 Biased views

As woman researcher, researching on a sensitive topic that is culturally forbidden to women, there was greater risk of omitting the critical information due to personal bias and personally driven outcomes. This affected the study as some of the participants refused and others were a bit hesitant in responding to some of the research questions.

5.4.2 Cultural context and the secrecy around Ulwaluko

Cultural context and the secrecy around matters of male circumcision in the Xhosa culture potentially delayed the entire study. The researcher being female was entering a space in Xhosa culture reserved only for men and only those that have gone through the Ulwaluko process. The greater risk was in the data collection were one anticipated that participants may

not be open to the study. This was however not the case as participants were openly engaged due to the efforts made by the researcher in establishing proper rapport with the participants.

5.4.3 Language of communication

Being a siSwati speaking female aged 27 during the time of data collection, there was greater risk of not fully understanding isiXhosa language and cultural context. All of the participants in the study were Xhosa speaking males who speak Xhosa as a first language. Language was however easily averted as the participants could easily communicate in English. A deficiency noted came however in understanding some of the cultural practices that are literally not present in the English language. Such examples included reference to the traditional surgeon as “*ingcibi*”. Where one did not understand clearly, clarity was given through consultations with the participants or colleagues.

5.4.4 Limitations of qualitative studies

In relation to the experiences of the participants as Xhosa-speaking gay men that have undergone Ulwaluko, the findings of this research cannot be taken as to prove or disprove any outstanding notions but rather as a reflection of real experiences shared by the participants as the conclusions made are tentative.

5.4.5 Use of exploratory research

Due to the nature and secrecy around the research topic, the sample size of the study was limited which further limited the findings to be generalized to the larger population.

5.5 Recommendations for future studies

The researcher recommends the following for future research:

1. Explore communities’ perceptions in relation to gay men and them participating in Ulwaluko.
2. Explore if there are any Xhosa gay men that chose to not participate in Ulwaluko and their reasons why not.
3. Explore ways of addressing the issue as raised by gay men in relation to issues of masculinity.

5.6 Self-reflexivity

A constant question held by the researcher throughout this process of self-reflection was “Am I pleased with the outcome of the study?” This question literally guided the self-reflection process as the researcher reviewed his own process and learning areas in line with reaching a desirable outcome. In attempting to answer the question, the researcher had to therefore reflect on the process and look at the self during the research process.

The process of conducting the research was unpretentious as supported by the documentation that was submitted in the research proposal where the researcher followed all necessary steps of initiating contact with the participants, obtaining permission from all relevant parties and conducting of interviews. The researcher therefore managed to conduct the research in a logical process guided by the relevant literature.

With regard to the researcher’s role in the research process, to a greater extent one can say that it was a passive role where the researcher constantly got involved with the research participants and also actively towards making sure that the research complies with ethical standards. The researcher was therefore central in every process undertaken during the study. Another point of interest is that the researcher looking back at the process takes pride in the fact that the research findings and process were amply supported by relevant literature and examples from recorded events as given by the participants.

Furthermore, as a Swati, non-gay researcher, researching on Xhosa cultural practice the researcher believes and is thankful that the participants gave her an opportunity to learn and embrace the culture. She also got an opportunity to learn about the theories of masculinity. Although this was to provide educational knowledge about Ulwaluko, Xhosa speaking gay men and masculinity, it was also a learning curve for the researcher into the culture, masculinity and gay men.

5.7 Summary of chapter

The objectives of the study were extremely satisfactory for the researcher. The study also established Xhosa-speaking gay men experiences at most as having positive implications associated with their attendance to Ulwaluko. The study also provided some knowledge on Ulwaluko and its influence on gay men and their masculinity, therefore the researcher feels the need to get the thesis published and shared among other scholars/researchers for knowledge and to persuade further research in engaging gay men in cultural practices.

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This interview schedule is to address the following research question: ‘What are the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men and how has it influenced their construction of a masculine identity?’ The objectives of the study will be to:

- 1) To explore and describe the experiences of Ulwaluko of Xhosa-speaking gay men in the in the Cape Metropole
- 2) To explore and describe the influence of Ulwaluko on Xhosa-speaking gay men construction of masculine identity in the Cape Metropole

Please make sure that you have given your written consent before taking part in this research study, also note that everything that will be shared during this interview will only be used for the research project and pseudonyms will be used to insure anonymity.

Pseudonym: Age:

Questions
Introductory question: 1. Can you tell me more about yourself? (Age, where you originally from and interests)
Questions on masculinity: 2. What is your understanding of masculinity? 3. What is your understanding of gay men masculinity? 4. How would you say gay men construct their masculinity? 5. Describe how your family sees you in terms of masculinity? 6. How do you feel about your sexuality? 7. As a gay man, what in your opinion does it take to be a real man? 8. Would you say that your opinion of what it takes to be a real man is influenced by society? Why do you say so?
Questions on Ulwaluko: 9. What is your opinion on the engagements in rituals? 10. Do you think these rituals helps in developing you as a person? And why? 11. What do you think is the purpose of Ulwaluko? 12. Have you been to Ulwaluko if so when did you go, for how long were you there and what made you decide to go?

13. What were your expectations during the process of Ulwaluko and were these expectations met? Why do you say so?

14. What were your experiences in being part of Ulwaluko? (can you take me through the process of Ulwaluko?) (comments received)

15. How were you treated during the process of Ulwaluko?

Follow-up questions to question 15

- While you were at the bush are there other men who tried to make sexual advances or come onto you?
- Did you perhaps feel sexually attracted to the other men?
- Did anyone verbally or physically abuse you? If yes, how did you respond?

16. During Ulwaluko you are taught ways of being a real man, can you describe to me these teachings?

Follow-up question to question 16

- How did it make you feel being told that you had to please women?

17. Would you say that being involved in Ulwaluko has influenced the kind of person you are today? If so, in what ways?

18. Has your involvement in Ulwaluko influenced/changed your engagement with society? In what ways?

19. Has your involvement in Ulwaluko changed/influenced the way Xhosa men address you? What is different?

20. Looking at your life today would you say being involved in Ulwaluko was worth it? Why do you say so?

21. Would you say your involvement in the process of Ulwaluko has made you the ideal man that you were taught to be during the process? Why?

22. As a Xhosa gay man who has been involved in the process of Ulwaluko, would you say there are some aspects of your behavior which society consider as normal (normative masculinity) behaviors of men? Would you describe these behaviors for me?

23. What would you say this process has taught you about yourself?

Concluding questions:

24. Would you like to add anything else that you think might be beneficial for the research project?

25. Do you have any other question or concerns?

Thank you

ULANDELELWANO LODLIWANO-NDLEBE

Olu landelelwano lodliwano-ndlebe lolokuphendula lo mbuzo walo msebenzi ulandelayo:
“Ayintoni amava olwaluko lwendoda yomXhosa ethandana namanye amadoda kwaye kube nagalelo lini ekwakhiweni kweempawu zobudoda emntwini? Linjongo zesifundo iyakuba ku:

- 1) Kukuveza nokucacisa amava olwaluko lwamadoda antetho isisiXhosa athandana namanye amadoda kummandla weKapa.
- 2) Kukuveza nokucacisa amagalelo olwaluko kumadoda antetho isisiXhosa athandana namanye amadoda ekwakhiweni kweempawu zobudoda emntwini kummandla weKapa.

Nceda uqinisekise ukuba usinikezele isikhululi sakho phambi kokuba uthabathe inxaxheba kwesi sifundo sophando, kwakhona phawula ukuba yonke into ekuya kwabelwana ngayo ngeli xesha lodliwano-ndlebe iyakusetyenziselwa lo msebenzi wophando u’Sgebenga’ uyakusetyenziswa ukuqinisekisa ukungaziwa.

Umhla wodliwano-ndlebe: Sgebenga: Ubudala:

Imibuzo
Umbuzo wokuhlahl’indela: 1. Ungandichazela ngobubanzi ngawe? (ubudala, apho usuka khona nezinto onomdla kuzo)
Imibuzo malunga nokuba neempawu zobudoda: 2. Wazi ntoni ngokuba neempawu zobudoda? 3. Njengendoda ethandana namaye amadoda, ngokwezakho izimvo ukuba yindoda yokwenemer kuthabatha ntoni? 4. Uqonda ntoni ngokuba neempawu zobudoda kumadoda athandana namanye amadoda? 5. Cacisa ukuba usaphi lwakho lukubona njani ngokumalunga nokuba neempawu zobudoda? 6. Uziva njani ngobuni bakho?
Imibuzo ngolwaluko: 7. Ucing’ukuba ziyintoni iinjongo zolwaluko? 8. Walukile? Ukuba walukile, waluke nine kwaye iyintoni eyakwenza ukuba

mawuthabathe isigqibo sokwaluka?

9. Mava mani owazuzileyo ngokuba yinxalenye yolwaluko?
10. Ubulindele kufunda ntoni ngexesha lolwaluko kwaye ezo njongo zafezekiswa?
11. Ubunphetheke njani ngexesha lenkqubo yolwaluko?
12. Ngexesha lolwaluko kufundiswa ngeendlela zokuba yindoda yokwenene, ungandicacisela ngezi mfundiso?
13. Ungatsho ukuthi ukwaluka kube negalelo kwisimo somntu onguye namhlanje? Ngaziphi iindlela?
14. Ulwaluko lube nagalelo lini kulwaluko lwakho?
15. Ingaba ukuzibandakanya kwakho kulwaluko kube notshintsho okanye negalelo kuthabatho-nxaxheba kwakho eluNtwini? Ngaziphi iindlela?
16. Ingaba ukuzibandakanya kwakho kulwaluko kube notshintsho okanye negalelo kwindlela obizwa ngalo ngamadoda angamaXhosa? Uyintoni umahluko?
17. Xa ujonge ubomi bakho namhlanje, ungatsho ukuthi ukuzibandakanya kwako kulwaluko kube yinzuzo okanye ulutho? Kutheni usitsho?
18. Kule nkqubo yolwaluko ufunde ntoni ngawe?
19. Ungatsho ukuthi ukuzibandakanya kwakho kwinkqubo yolwaluko kukwenze wayindoda egqibeleleyo njengoko ubufundiswa ngexesha lenkqubo yolwaluko? Kutheni usitsho?
20. Njengendoda yomXhosa, kukho amasiko ahlukileyo ozakubandakanyeka kuwo njengelaziwa ngokuba 'ngumphumulo' phakathi kwamanye. Ukwaze njani wena ukuthabatha inxaxheba kula masiko?

Imibuzo yokuvalelisa:

21. Unganomdla wokongeza nayiphina into ocin'ukuba ingalulutho kulp msebenzi wolu phando?
22. Ungaba unayo eminye imibuzo okanye izinto ezinokuwalaselwa?

Enkosi!



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CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Xhosa-speaking gay men's experience of Ulwaluko and its influence on their constructions of masculine identity.

- The study has been described to me in a language I understand.
- I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate.
- My questions about the study have been answered.
- I understand that 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.
- I have been made aware of the fact that audio recording devices will be used during all interview sessions with the researcher.

Participant's name.....

Participants 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:

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UXWEBHU LOKUKUNIKA ISIVUMELWANO SOPHANDO

ISIHLOKO: Amava olwaluko lwendoda yomXhosa ethandana namanye amadoda kwaye kube nagalelo lini ekwaxhiweni kweempawu zobudoda emntwini

- Oluphando luchaziwe kum ngolwimi endiluvayo.
- Ndiyayazi kwaye ndivumile ngokwam ukubayinxalenye yoluphando.
- Imibuzo yam ngoluphando iphenduliwe
- Ndiyayazi ukuba igama lam lokwenyani alizukudizwa kwaye ndingaziguzula koluphando na nini na ndifuna ukwenza oko ndinganikanga sizathu. Lonto ayinakundichaphazela kakubi.
- Ndiye ndaxelelwa malunga nesixhobo soku shicilela xa sizenza udliwano ndlebe xa ndine seshoni nomphandi.

Igama lomthandi nxaxheba

Utyikityo lomthathi nxaxheba.....

Inggina.....

Umhla.....

Ukuba ufuna inkcaza ethe vetshe okanye unemibuzo ngoluphando okanye ufuna

ukumangala malunga nengxaki othe wabanazo malunga noluphando, nceda,

qhakamshelana nomphathi phando:

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INFORMATION SHEET

RESEARCH TITLE: Xhosa-speaking gay men's experience of Ulwaluko and its influence on their constructions of masculine identity.

1. What the study is about

Despite the progressive Constitutional Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the Civil Union Act of 2006 which is to fight against the marginalization and discriminations based on sexual orientation there are still challenges with homophobia and hate crimes perpetrated against these minorities (Klarsfeld, 2014). Most gay men do not usually undergo the traditional circumcision rite but are sometimes forced by their families as it is believed that those who partake in the process of Ulwaluko will revert to heterosexuality and become real men (Mtshiselwa, 2011). There is also pressure from the wider society and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) to embrace heteronormativity.

This study aims to explore and describe Xhosa speaking gay men's experience of Ulwaluko such as how are they accommodated throughout the cultural practice and how has this influenced their construction of a masculine identity.

2. Participants for the study

For the purpose of this study participants should be young Xhosa speaking gay men between the ages of 18-30 years old who have the knowledge and undergone Ulwaluko and currently residing in the Cape Metropole.

3. Requirements from the participants

As a participant you will be requested to:

- Engage in an in-depth semi structured face to face interview with the researcher. Questions during the interview will be asked inductively (wide-lens), proceeding from the general to the specific questions
- Give informed consent for the interview to be recorded and the information to be used for the study.
- The interview schedule will be in both English and Xhosa to accommodate all research participants. Interviews that are held in Xhosa will then be translated into English for the requirements of the study.

4. Withdrawal from the study

Participation in the study is completely on a voluntary basis and no-one will be forced into participating in the study. Therefore, as a participant you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time or stage of the research process without facing any prejudices or consequences.

5. Confidentiality and anonymity

I will conduct the study in a way that does not infringe on your rights as participant by guaranteeing anonymity which will be attained through the use of pseudonyms and by keeping the audio recordings, documents or files that might contain personal information locked in a safe space. Confidentiality will also be one of the key ethical considerations in this study, where I will clearly outline the terms of confidentiality and its limitations to you as a participant before taking part in the research study.

6. Dealing with potential risks

- As a participant if you are traumatized by sharing your experiences, you will be given an opportunity to work through your experiences with a counsellor through a debriefing session.
- Referrals however, will be done in respect of your right to self-determination and respect of legal right to only engage in intervention sessions at your own discretion.
- As a participant who might be also revealing aspects on Ulwaluko which is secretive among the Xhosa-speaking men, there might be negative consequences on publishing such information such as being rejected by their society and might be labelled as 'traitors' in exposing their culture. As a

participant you will be debriefed on the matter and be ensured that your identity will not be revealed.

7. Benefits of the study

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the researcher learn more about your experiences of Ulwaluko and its influence on your construction of masculine identity. This will further not educate not only the researcher but also communities at large by raising awareness on fighting against the marginalization and discriminations based on sexual orientation.

8. What if I have questions?

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Bridgetti Mashabane at: mbridgetti@gmail.com or 0793704311.

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 the study coordinator:

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

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Pseudonym: Mduduzo

Age:27

Researcher :Hi Mduduzo, Firstly I would just like to say just how much appreciate you agreeing to be part this study. I've been struggling to participants for the study. But anyway, the researcher question is basically about the experiences of ulwaluko of Xhosa speaking gay men and how it influences their construction of masculinity. So basically the objectives of the study is to explore and describe the experiences of ulwaluko of Xhosa speaking gay men in the Cape Metropole and also to explore and describe the influences of Ulwaluko on Xhosa speaking gay men construction of masculine identity also in the Cape Metrople. So you have signed the consent form, but for the purpose of this study, because I know that some of the issues which we will discuss might be sensitive I will therefore make use pseudonyms meaning false name and also if you are not comfortable in answering the question you can just let me know that you are not comfortable in answering then we can skip it. So are you okay with me using a different name for you and not using your actual name?

Mduduzo: Yes, I am okay with that.

Researcher: So, before we go into the questions, can you just tell me about yourself, like your age, where you are originally from.

Mduduzo: Uhhh...okay. (clears throat) I am 27years of age, originally from the Eastern Cape in a small town called Indwe, that is where I grew up, I studied there my lower primary and high school but I then came to Cape Town to finish my matric and stuff then started my varsity this side and started working here. So I'll say most of the things I started doing here in Cape Town rather than back home.

Researcher: Okay...so what have you been studying?

Mduduzo: Oh okay, I've been doing lots of, I'm doing lots of fields actually, I've been in two fields. I started doing engineering which I had to cut before because of

some problems. I couldn't get much funds to continue, the passing of my parents and ja, I struggled a lot so I had to break out of the engineering field because I couldn't get any bursaries and stuff so ja. And then after that I went to the hospitality industry which was in a college here in Cape Town. So that is what I have been doing, hospitality and the rest is a bit confidential (laughs) so ja.

Researcher: (laughs) nah that is okay. I totally understand. So now we are actually gonna (sic) get into it. As to the whole purpose as to why we are actually here. So, what is your understanding of emascularity (masculinity)?

Mduduzo: Masculinity nhe?

Researcher: Yes, masculinity like manhood, ubudoda (manhood).

Mduduzo: uhmm...if I go (sic) if I can clarify according because when they talk about masculinity they don't, most cases they don't involve people like me like gay and transgender people and all that. They don't involve us cause they think we are not masculine enough so that we can be like men or something like that. So those are the challenges of bombastic words that like, we try to fit in and it's like the community is isolating you from it.

Researcher: So you feel like gay people are being isolated from using or inheriting the term masculinity.

Mduduzo: yes, definitely

Researcher: alright, so basically your understanding of masculinity is just being heterosexual.

Mduduzo: Yes, heterosexual

Researcher: Like the normal way which society views men. Like which they regard you as being indoda (a man) based on that.

Mduduzo: Yes, the norm which society regards as being man.

Researcher: alright, so what is your understanding of gay man masculinity?

Mduduzo: Okay, gay man masculinity is like (laughs), wow, well I can say gay masculinity is being the more masculine on a gay relationship. Others will just

say being a man, being who you are, not being feminine wearing female clothes and all that. (laugh) oh well ja, that's my understanding.

Researcher: so basically your understanding is gay men masculinity is that even though you are gay, you act in a certain way to be approved by society?

Mduduzo: Ja, you are gay but you do things which regards you as being masculine because you don't cross dress, you don't go like "chomi" (hand signal) (laughing)

Researcher: (laughing) okay...how would you say gay men actually construct their masculinity?

Mduduzo: There are so many different ways that gay men can construct their masculinity. From the way you act, the way you dress and the way you do things. Uhm...like firstly I think you must be a man basically. You must go get circumcised and all those things. That is one of the contributing factors of gay man masculinity, and if you are not circumcised they do not treat enough as being masculine. But as gay guys we know each other, the way we act, uhm you not a drag queen, but you are just a straight acting gay man then ja we then say that one is masculine.

Researcher: oh okay, so you are saying you can be gay but they way you dress and if you acting in the more feminine side then they will say you are not masculine.

Mduduzo: Yes, the more feminine you are as a gay man then we know that you are the as they will put it the girl. But if you are gay but act more manly and tend to do the manly things then you are masculine.

Researcher: okay...so can you describe for me how your family actually sees you in terms of your masculinity?

Mduduzo: ahhhh... my family. I don't think they have a problem of calling me masculine because there are a lot of things as I have said that I am a Xhosa guy and we have our Xhosa customs and stuff like that. So there are some of the things which are done, like traditional things can't be done if I am not there. So I got the privilege of being recognized by my family so early that without him we

can't do certain things. So ja, there are a lot of things that I do at home that real man do, like what straight man do.

Researcher: So you also take part in other rituals as well that are considered to be done by what society regard as real man?

Mduduzo: yes, a lot. After the circumcision ritual, you are regarding as being a real man no matter what.

Researcher: so, it doesn't matter even if they know that you are gay at home, but they then still regard you as the masculine person whenever they need to make decisions such as maybe rituals they consider you?

Mduduzo: Yes, but it is not that easy because uhm...if I can say it like the people who know that I am gay is my close family, parents and my sisters and brothers, my siblings but the rest will go out like to an extended side like uncles, aunt, cousins something like that. When they come and they know that you are gay but they don't treat you in a way that you would like to be treated. But I don't give them that chance. I know exactly what I want and I've done what they want, like I've gone to the bush, I am the man that they wanted me to be so what? Ja

Researcher: okay, so you have that attitude of saying this is who I am and it's either you accept me or not.

Mduduzo: Absolutely, I love who I am. I love men and ulwaluko will never change that. I'm gay and proud.

Researcher: So would you say that is how you feel about your sexuality?

Mduduzo: uhm...at some point. Well I can say I'm always comfortable with my sexuality. I had never had a problem with it and I enjoy it in each and every moment. But there are times when you go to certain communities or places where you will get discriminated just on the basis that you love men. For example people calling you names or something like that. It makes me feel like I'm something else or I'm leaving from another planet. It's not good and I don't accept it or let it get to me but ja. That's the world we live in hey, there is a lot of stigma out there about being gay.

Researcher: Ja, hey. It's a pity that we say we are leaving in a free country yet we are still experiencing and witnessing such behavior. Anyway despite that you do feel good about your sexuality?

Mduduzo: yes, I feel really good about my sexuality shame.

Researcher: so as a gay man what does it take in your opinion to be a real man?

Mduduzo: uhhmm...okay (laughs). Well according to me firstly it has to be about going into the mountains and doing everything that has to be done there and coming back and following your customs and everything. There is nothing else but that is what makes you to be a real man.

Researcher: So that what makes you a real man you say?

Mduduzo: yes, definitely.

Researcher: so would you say in your opinion being a real man is influenced by society?

Mduduzo: sometimes society does play a certain role in influencing one into being a real man. But I also think it is all up to you in accepting what the society represent to you. Because there are two things. Society will feed you something which you won't use it all and society will also give you options of what you think is good and what you'll use. As for me I don't take everything I just take what I think is most relevant to me and is going to help me at the end of the day.

Researcher: so society can influence you into becoming a real man but you are saying it is also up to you to decide what you think is valuable to you.

Mduduzo: yes, that's right

Researcher: what in your opinion do you think about the engagements of rituals?

Mduduzo: for me I grew up in a family where we do those rituals and at the second time I grew up in a Christian valued family but our parents never took that away from us cause they also went through that stage where they did all those rituals and they will always explain to us and say "guys this is the good way to do things". But according to me at some point there are things which you will see as important to you and you'll know that you need to do them and some point

there are things which you will see as useless. But for instead the ulwaluko ritual it just feels like you have to do it whether you like it or not. So ja.

Researcher: so these rituals is something which is there and if your family values doing those rituals you will just need to do it.

Mduduzo: oh yes.

Researcher: do you think these rituals help in developing you as a person?

Mduduzo: they do help, a lot than you'll think actually

Researcher: why would you say that?

Mduduzo: uhm, for example, if you don't get involved in these rituals that you family do, firstly you will not get an understanding of the history of your family and you will never get to understand what your family wants to happen and what is supposed to be done and not in certain things. Like for example, if there is a funeral at your place. If you are a man whether you are gay or not you must know that in our culture we don't hire people to go dig holes for us. You must go with other men and dig at the graveyard.

Researcher: so in your customs you don't get undertakers to do that for you?

Mduduzo: we do get some undertakers but traditionally in our customs the young men in the family are the ones who are supposed to do that.

Researcher: so you say they do develop you as they teach you how things should be done and how things should be not done.

Mduduzo: ja ja...like of cause...I am who I am today because of my culture. I am a gay man, I am still a cultural man and I still must respect my culture so I will dig at the graveyard for my family anytime.

Researcher: so what do you think is the purpose of Ulwaluko?

Mduduzo: well, back then I never took it seriously until I got exposed to it and got to learn what exactly ulwaluko is all about. After that I never then saw a reason as to way I shouldn't go through with it. It is a healthy thing for men to do you mos (laughs) and if you circumcised you are a bit lucky as there are some things which will just pass through you.

Researcher: so you are saying it also gives you some luck?

Mduduzo: yes!!!

Researcher: so for how long were you in the mountains?

Mduduzo: it took me about 3-4 weeks. I will actually say 3 weeks

Researcher: and what made you decide to go there?

Mduduzo: firstly I am coming from a very big family, a xhosa family who is really well respected and who do (sic) some of the rituals and customs in the family. I just thought of it because uhm. how can I put this? Like okay. I need to respect my family and yes, I respect my culture. I wouldn't want my family to turn their backs on me just because of culture. I came out to my mother about my sexual orientation and she just said yes I know that cause I've been seeing it like she could notice me and all but she was more worried about my father but then said it was up to me to inform my dad about it. I went to the mountains because I just wanted to show them that they mustn't judge me just because I am gay and think that I won't do certain things. I just wanted to correct their minds and that is the reason why I went there. And you know they had that thing more especially my dad that if I went to the bush I will come back as a straight man or something like that so I just wanted to correct them that I can go there and come back but I will still be gay.

Researcher: So... (interrupted)

Mduduzo: Like nhe...people need to start realizing that my sexuality is not something that I just woke up one morning and decided hey I'm gonna (sic) be gay from today on. It is who I am and no one or nothing can change that qha!

Researcher: like it doesn't change you

Mduduzo: doesn't change me at all.

Researcher: what were your expectations for going to ulwaluko and were these expectations met?

mduduzo; my expectations for ulwaluko were very lean as I did not know very much about the process regardless of hearing people say that you are going to have

your foreskin cut and so forth and you don't know how they do that cause people also don't go deep talking about it. But as me going there with blank I think it was the better way as I went there with not expecting much but I knew that I am going to be circumcised and whatever happens I will see when it happens there. And like a lot of the things that I was thinking of they just happened while I was there but oh ja

researcher: what were your experiences of being there?

Mduduzo: a lot of experience (laughs) like for example the first week when I was there was like I could only eat one type of food for a week and also limit my water as you were not allowed to drink too much water while you were there.

Researcher: wow...what was that?

Mduduzo: they give you like samp, you know samp mos...in Xhosa we call it umqusho. It's dry it doesn't have any veggies, meat or anything. You just eat that as it is the whole week.

Researcher: so was that also like part of the teaching of being a real man?

Mduduzo: yes, apparently it was to teach you to respect and appreciate what you have. And after a week then you can now start eating the other things like ama veggies, cravy and stuff. But they still limit how you take water because they will say it was to help you heal better and faster and that is way they were monitoring what you eat because they didn't want you to eat or drink something which you must not eat. Like no fizzy drinks or anything. Just like one glass of water a day

Researcher: but wouldn't you get thirsty

Mduduzo: I will always get thirsty but I will still water (laughing) it was like a venture for me. I will still water and they will always beat me but ja wethu.

Researcher: so they will beat you guys up

Mduduzo: yes, if they caught you stealing water, ja they will beat you up. But now the department has tried to change all that. Because I went the mountains in like, I think it was 2002 when I went there. But at least now things are being improved and all that which is a very good way because there was this thing of

people dying when they went to the bush but during our time that thing was not happening.

Researcher: so for the circumcision what do they really use for it?

Mduduzo: they normally use what they call...I don't know if whether you know this. But it's a calabash. It's a very sharp knife which is not used for anything but only used for circumcision. We call it an error but it's not like an error, it is sharp in both sides and other people call the uhm...what is it called again. I forgot this other name but ja that's the one. It's very sharp and during that process you only get one person to do it who knows what they are doing. You just don't take anyone from that area to cut of the foreskin, it has to be person who has been practicing this for some time.

Researcher: so do you come with your own knife or do you get the knife there?

Mduduzo: It differs so they say with the place that you go to. For me the knife was there, and everyone will be using that knife. Hai...this people kodwa. Come to think of it what was I doing allowing that same knife (laughing)

Researcher: so are you saying people use the same knife, like everyone was using that very same knife?

Mduduzo: yes, and wow...I just hope things have changed hey. Cause back then they will use the knife and when the next person comes they will just sterilize it, don't know how they will sterilize it or just wash it but ja it was just that one knife.

Researcher: do they use some medication after the circumcision for the healing process?

Mduduzo: ahhhh...okay. They do have traditional medication but they don't use western medications. They use like herbs and so forth.

Researcher: so where do you guys sleep while you are there? Do you have like those small little huts.

Mduduzo: yes, we have like huts and in my hut I was with my brother and there are some people who are like in a group of four or five but for me it was just me and brother.

Researcher: so how were you treated during the whole process like when you were in the mountains. Like did the other know that you are gay then or no one knew.

Mduduzo: a few people know (sic) but some they didn't know. Hence I was spending most of time here in Cape town and the only thing that I notice is that there they were calling me Cape town or mkwenta Cape Town or something like that, that was my nickname and I was like whatever. But I really enjoyed my time there but you do get guys coming to you and see how you guys are doing and they will start teasing you and everything like that but ja. I will just look at them and I will not take that into my mind and just didn't pay attention to them. And at the end of the week you could go anywhere you want as long as you are in the mountain and go see other people. And then people will start calling you names and see maybe the way I walk, the way I dressed. I think my gayness started showing there, cause it was so hot and I had this very heavy and big blanket and I was tired of this blanket and the heat...it was just too hot for me. But lucky for me I had two blankets. I had one which I had cutten (sic) to make a very nice design outfit like a skirt or something, I designed that for myself. So they will always make fun of me, like wuuu this one is designing (laughs) but yeah.

Researcher: so do think there were other men who actually tried to make sexual advances on you when they noticed that you were actually gay?

Mduduzo: actually, there were (laughs). My ex was there hey...wuu honeymoon (laughs). He knows exactly that I am gay and I knew that he was gay as well although hide (sic) it. And then there were those who were still asking questions, I guess they heard stories about me. You'll also find some of the guys who will come visit us from our hut, you'll find that some of them knew me from the township and they know that I am gay and they will try and act funny but ja they do that.

Researcher: so they did try they luck (laughing)

Mduduzo: Oh yes, some people made moves and they try (sic) their luck (laughing)

Researcher: so did you also feel some sexual attraction towards them?

Mduduzo: Oh well well well (laughing) when I saw my ex I felt that way, but I had to control myself because of the environment that I was in I had to respect the environment. But we will talk and in our last week of being there we liked taking long walks to the river and just chill there and have our two moments together. We will just swim together and have also wash our clothes together and have our blankets fresh and clean so (laughing) there was some romantic thing which was happening there. Like some romantic gateway (laughs)

Researcher: so during the process of ulwaluko I believe there are different like various teaching which they teach you guys there about being a real man. Can you just describe these teachings for me? I know not a lot of people like talking about these teachings but if you are comfortable with it may you please just share a few.

Mduduzo: well I'm not going to go into it deep as you know we shouldn't really be talking about these teachings with someone who has never been to the mountain. But the first thing which you are taught is to respect yourself, how does a man respect himself, how you should act after coming from the mountains and the way you do things, the way you talk so there is a lot of things that they teach you there. And also the way you dress. Secondly you are taught to respect your family and not just your family but everyone who is elder (sic) than you, respect women. That is the biggest one I was supposed to start with that because they always tell you about women, how to care for your women and all that. And I was like okay I don't want a woman anyway (laughs). It was nice, you will get all these brothers who will come and you make a bomb fire at night and maybe they will slaughter a sheep and we will eat and through that process that will be giving us those teachings. Like what is happening outside and what is the community expecting from us when we come back.

Researcher: how did it make you feel being taught that you need to respect women knowing that you are actually not even looking for a woman in your life.

Mduduzo: for some of the teachings it was just a waste of time to me, yes I respect women and I've been respecting women I don't want to lie. Like I've been looking up to them like my mother and my sisters. They are my best friends I

don't want to lie. So what they were telling me it wasn't anything knew that they were telling me.

Researcher: so would you say that being involved in the process of ulwaluko has influenced the kind of person that you are today?

Mduduzo: it is, it did ja in a very good way because back then I never knew what I could've got up there. Sometime I would look to people and think why is this person so aggressive, just because that person went to the bush or whatever. But now I understand because some it is because of the way you are treated up there, some people they get tortured and something like that but ja I now know where that anger is coming from. Like when they are being spoken too they like being respected cause they will be like I have been to the mountain and I'm older now and you can't just talk in any manner with me.

Researcher: has it also perhaps changed the way you also engage with society?

Mduduzo: yes and no. but because after the first two months after I came back, I had to act in a certain way, I had to dress up in a certain way and I was so tired and I just wanted to get over with it so that I can just be myself again. Like you can't leave your house with just wearing shorts, you can't leave without wearing a jacket and a cap on your head for like six months. So I got tired of it before the six months but my parents just said don't do that hear but maybe do it when you are back in cape town. So it is like whenever I go back home I know I have to act in a certain way now and sometimes I just got tired of it. It also motivated me, like I always tell people that after I came back I got so self-motivated, I know what is write and what is wrong, it made me fit as a man so ja.

Researcher: has it made you the ideal man that you were taught to be while there although it did not change you?

Mduduzo: I learnt a lot, I don't want to lie, I learnt some things which I still feel they are portable but the rest of the things which they taught me I am not even practicing them cause they are just useless to me as a gay guy.

Researcher: As a Xhosa gay man who has been part of ulwaluko, do you think there are some aspects of your behavior which society regards as being normal?

Mduduzo: I think they have been saying a lot of things, for example when there are family rituals then you will have to go and you might even be given a task to address the people there. And that task is usually not given to anyone but only a person who has been to the mountain and who are men. Most of the time at home they always give me those tasks to address people and if maybe we are going to slaughter and they will say you need to be there and you need to be the first person there. So, in the community when I do those manly tasks they will always say ‘yes that’s a real man’.

Researcher: So they would respect you?

Mduduzo: yes, they will respect you. Although they know that you are gay they will respect you.

Researcher: Has it perhaps also changed the way Xhosa man address you?

Mduduzo: yes, it has changed when they address you. For example when it comes to respect it changes you totally cause you know now that you are a man, you have certain things like having to respect, there are certain ways of taking to people.

Researcher: So you basically saying that the men now address you with respect.

Mduduzo: yes, they even call you with respect and they don’t use certain names. Although there are few of those who don’t know who you are and they will call you those names but those that know you they won’t. and those who know will tell them not to ever call me by those words because I went to the bush and should be respected.

Researcher: would you say it has taught you something about yourself?

Mduduzo: yes, it has taught me something. It has taught me that there are levels of men like there are young mens such as there are middle age and there is a certain age. So like when I come home I wont just be sitting anywhere with young boys there is a certain place where I must sit, the too much work is done by the youngest which you as men will not do you just send the young boys to do. But now the problem is, the older you get the more they expect you to get a wife.

Researcher: That is quite interesting. Thank you so much dear. Are there any concerns or anything else that you would like to add which you think is valuable to for the study?

Mduduzo: can (sic) you share the research please after you are done.

Researcher: Most definitely. Thank you once again, your contributions are very much appreciated.

Mduduzo: You welcome hun.

