

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED
BY AN INITIATED XHOSA MALE STUDENT IN A HIGH SCHOOL**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Student : Pamela Nontutuzelo Mehlo Makulu

Supervisor : J.L. Engelbrecht

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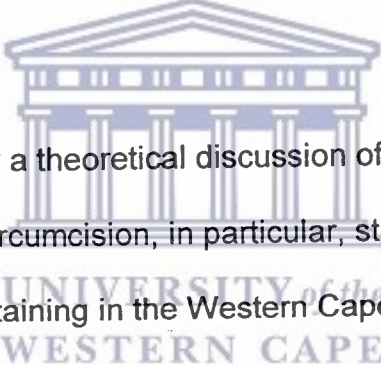
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ABSTRACT

This study set out to investigate the impact of being a circumcised Xhosa male student at a high school where the rights and privileges promised by this status are not necessarily entrenched in the school's ethos nor guarded by its rules and regulations.

To this end interviews were conducted with these students augmented by observation, fieldwork and questionnaires. These covered all the aspects of the circumcised males' life at school on the one hand, and in the community on the other, after circumcision.



The investigation is preceded by a theoretical discussion of rituals in general and the importance of Xhosa male circumcision, in particular, stress is laid on how the socio-political circumstances obtaining in the Western Cape led to the tenacity with which the Xhosas adhered to the custom not just despite such circumstances but, more importantly, because of them.


A comparison is made between the effect of circumcision on male groups other than Xhosa and the particular impact this has on them as against such impact on the Xhosa male still attending school.

A further comparison is made between the treatment meted out to circumcised males at the school as against what obtains in the community.

ABSTRAK

Die doel van hierdie studie was om ondersoek in te stel na watter voorregte besnyde manlike Xhosa leerlinge op hoerskool het, waar die regte en voorregte wat deur hierdie status (besnydenis) belowe is, nie noodwendig deel van die skool se etos is nie, en ook nie beskerm word deur die skool se reëls en regulasies nie.

Om hierdie doel te bereik is onderhoude gevoer met die leerlinge en is dit versterk deur observasie, veldwerk en vraelyste. Die insameling van die data dek al die aspekte van die besnyde man se lewe op skool, asook in die gemeenskap na sy besnydenis.



Die ondersoek is deur 'n teoretiese bespreking van rituele in die algemeen voorafgegaan, en die belangrikheid van die Xhosa man se besnydenis in besonder. Klem is veral gekop die wyse waarop die socio-politieke omstandighede in die Wes-Kaap 'n invloed het op die deursettingsvermoe waarmee die Xhosa man hierdie tradisies volhou, nie ten spyte van hierdie omstandighede nie, maar meer belangrik as gevolg daarvan.

'n Vergelyking is getref tussen die invloed van besnyding op ander groepe as die Xhosas en watter spesifieke invloed dit het op die skoolgaande Xhosa man.

'n Verdere vergelyking is getref tussen hoe die besnyde man op skool behandel word, en hoe die gemeenskap teenoor hierdie mans optree.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary is my own original work and that I have not submitted it, nor any part of it for a degree at any other university.

Ms.Pamela Mehlomakulu

Date



DEDICATED TO

I would like to dedicate this thesis to someone very special, my daughter,
Mpandekazi Maneli.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and definition of problem

The initiation rituals of Xhosas in the Western Cape take place during both the winter and summer holidays, resulting in a biannual inflow of new initiates to the school.

1.1.1 Rituals and rites of passage

There is, according to Mahdi evidence to the effect that initiation and rites of passage have been widely practised throughout human history ... because of a psychological/social need with a biological foundation ... (1987, p.25).

Allan and Dyck cite that Western civilization does practise such rites of passage even though to a minimal extent, for example, Confirmation, Army, Bar Mitzvah and graduation. He states further that because of the minimal nature of such rites most young people are left to make or discover their own challenges or rites of passage often with unpleasant consequences (1987, p. 198).

Becker holds the view that initiation among Xhosas exhibits the tripartite structure of the rites of passage directed towards social change e.g. marriage and funerals.

They take the following sequence:

1. *rites of segregation* - the person undergoing them is temporarily removed from normal social life. (Isolation to the bush in the case of Xhosa initiates).
2. *liminal rites* - period during which he is suspended between old status and new status (period of seclusion in the lodge).
3. *rites of aggregation* - the person is reincorporated into society (1975, p.25).

1.1.2 Xhosa initiation

The main ritual that marks the attainment of adult status of males among Xhosas is circumcision. Its origin is unknown. In his study Guma cites that some of the early sponsors of the school ... maintain that initiation schools were first organized as a form of historical resistance against Europeanisation of the African (1985, p.4).

Funani, on the other, hand asserts that the pride of being African is the object of the tradition (1987, p.8).

Elders who were interviewed about its origin responded thus:

First Informant

- I have no knowledge of where it all started but I know that the basis of it is that once one does not go for initiation he becomes a delinquent and continues showing anti-social behaviour throughout his life.
- I know of someone who never went in for initiation and later got married to a woman who was not a Xhosa. Three sons were born from this marriage and all three sons went for initiation. Even during the initiation rituals of his own sons he was ostracized.



Second Informant

I don't know anything about its origin, but I know that is a very important custom. If a boy does not go for initiation he becomes mentally unstable or violent, fears no one and respects no one.

While a number of rituals have fallen into disuse as a result of poverty, urbanization, religion and adopting a western way of life, circumcision has to a large extent survived. Xhosas are so uncompromising about it that an uncircumcised male past circumcision age may be overpowered by a group of men and circumcised against

his will (Mkele in his preface to Funani, *ibid.*, p.2).

Circumcision is by far the most important event in any (Xhosa) man's life (Elliott (1970, p.83). Going for initiation is for a boy the transitional stage that elevates him from being described just as an "inja" (a dog), an into (a thing) and an "inqambi" (an unclean thing) to acquiring full manhood, communal pride, and individual worth (Mkele *op cit.*, p.3).

From enduring the ordeals of circumcision the initiate emerges with a new social identity, new moral responsibilities, jural entitlements and emblems of manhood (Herdt, 1981, p.129).

1.2 The Adjustment problems of initiatives at the school

1.2.1 Personal Observation



The author's observations at school indicated that change into manhood by male students was causing tensions. The said tensions and discomfort was experienced by teachers, fellow students and the initiates themselves. These would manifest as disciplinary problems of a varying nature - such as the beating of boys and girls by initiates, aggressive behaviour and perceived arrogance of initiates, the unseemly practice of the wearing of a hat and civilian clothes by initiates while every effort was being made that all students should come to school in uniform.

1.2.2 The Conflict of two Cultures

1.2.3 Brief Background

Instability in black education during the past two decades, the social, economic and political factors resulted in students who would ideally have been engaged in tertiary education or work to still be found in high school. Because of the advanced age of such students the stage of circumcision coincides with their being still at school. This has resulted in an increased number of initiated males still at high school, some of whom are in the lower classes. This is relatively a new phenomenon.

1.2.4 Age of Circumcision



Circumcision usually takes place in the late teens or early twenties. The decision to go for circumcision may be initiated by the boy himself, by the elders of his family, or his parents, more commonly the father. The appropriate time to do so is determined by anyone of several reasons - age, availability of finance, peer pressure and sometimes, as a means to curb delinquency.

1.2.5 The number of initiates at the school

There is therefore because of the above reasons a great disparity in age of circumcised males. The number in the school that has been researched, is 120, out of a student complement of 1459 and are scattered at all levels from Std 6 to Std 10. The total number of boys over 18 years (potential initiates) is 597.

1.2.6 Position of Women

Much of the ritual transformation is expressed in terms of gender transformation i.e. a male becoming even more of a male. The role of females being very peripheral - limited to the brewing of beer and cooking food for the feast.

No married woman can approach the initiates or go anywhere near the seclusion "lodge"; the "surgeon" is male; the guardian is male; the operation is performed strictly and only in the presence of circumcised males and the initiated are not allowed to eat from bowls lest they touch an object handled by a woman (Funani 1989; p.38).

The school has 45 teachers of whom 23 are female. This number includes the principal. A possibility exists that because of the marginal status of women during the proceedings a dynamic could occur between these two sectors, i.e. circumcised

male and female teachers.

1.2.7 Expected behaviour of initiates

1.2.7.1 *Home and Community*

After circumcision the young initiates are expected to display a different behaviour from the one before initiation. They are given express instruction by the elders and the community on how to conduct themselves now that they are men and what privileges they may enjoy. They must now talk softly, walk slowly (cannot be induced to hurry), must not play with the uninitiated, must always wear a hat, they must discard their old clothes (this includes school uniform), wear only brand new clothing (uniform is not necessarily part of the new clothing).

They are also allowed privileges - they may smoke freely, drink if they so wish, may take a wife and may take part in making important decisions on matters of family and the clan. In all they are given the latitude to behave no more as minors but as fully-fledged adults.

1.2.7.2 *School*

Rules of the school demand that no student should smoke or drink. All students are expected to come to school in uniform and are forbidden

from wearing hats inside the school premises (school's code of conduct). The sheer pressure of time demands that students, particularly because of their numbers, should not saunter but rush to the next class.

1.2.8 Nature of conflict

There seems to exist a contradiction here between the school as an educational institution and Xhosa initiation as dictated by tradition, which results in conflict amongst the members of the school community.

The newly acquired manhood is accompanied by both obligations, on the part of the initiated, and expectations by him from the side of the community including the school.



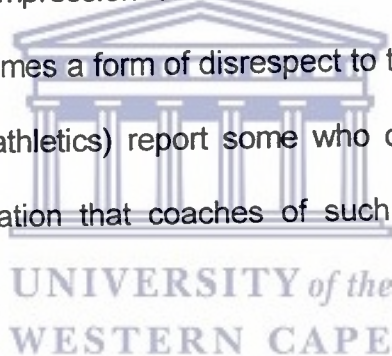
All students enjoy an equal status at school, irrespective of age, gender or social status. Therefore no special treatment is accorded the initiates even though they themselves could possibly be expecting it in view of what to them and the community is a momentous occasion.

As an initiate has now become an adult tradition demands that contact between himself and other members of the class to change. He may no more mingle freely with young girls and uninitiated males. The realities of the classroom are such that

more than 90% of the class is made up of young girls and uninitiated males. Two or three initiates in a class affect its social climate as initiates have to and do exclude themselves from the normal social interaction that takes place in class.

1.2.9 Teachers' Perspective

Teachers report the initiates reluctance to speak or even abstinence from class discussion, reluctance to answer questions, speaking too softly if or when they do answer. They talk about how the presence of one or two differently clad (initiates) students spoils the visual impression of a class. Female teachers perceive the initiates behaviour as sometimes a form of disrespect to them. Teachers involved in sports (soccer, rugby and athletics) report some who discontinue involvement in sport after initiation, a situation that coaches of such sporting codes find very exasperating.



Given the uncompromising nature of the school environment, its focus on formal education, adherence to rules and regulations, no room is left for differential/preferential treatment of initiates. Whether the respect and honour the initiates may come to expect after going through a ritual so highly held by its people does or does not take place, is an issue to be investigated by this study.

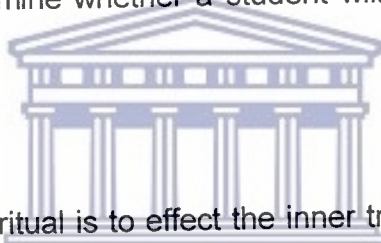
There are however, strong indications that the school has become the site of focus,

for a clash between the demands of traditional rites and the demands of western culture, and that a common ground has to be sought for the two to exist harmoniously.

1.3 Importance of the Study

1.3.1 Interpersonal relations

Interpersonal relationships have the potential of creating happiness, well-being and self-fulfillment and will determine whether a student will benefit from the teaching-learning situation or not.



One of the purposes of the ritual is to effect the inner transformation of the psyche (Hall 1987; p. 54). The initiate comes out of the whole experience a "new" person firstly on the outside (as evidenced symbolically by the new attire) and secondly on the inside (inner transformation). He conceives of himself as a better and different being from what he was previously, and possibly, comes to expect a better and different way of being dealt with at school.

However much a school's commitment may be to facilitating individual development, social cohesion and human dignity - the fact of a student wearing civilian clothes, a hat at all times, walking at a leisurely pace even when the situation demands differently, can be one of a number of aspects that cause tension and a breakdown

of interpersonal relationships.

Given that sound interpersonal relationships are essential to teaching and learning there is a need to find out the extent to which initiation of students at high school tampers with these two aspects.

1.3.2 Benefit to teachers

The entire initiation ritual affirms manhood and one way of doing this being the total exclusion of women from proceedings. Conscious of this, female teachers report how disarmed they feel in dealing with whatever problem crops up that is related to an initiated student. Over the years there has been one way of dealing with problems related to initiates - that of male teachers (only male) of the school assembling all initiated males into the school hall and having a private discussion with them. This has not proved effective or this study would not be necessary.

It is hoped that out of issues arising from this study teachers both male and female will benefit.

1.3.3 Benefit to initiates

As part of the school community and as part of the community outside the school initiates have to respond to pressing demands from both sides, these demands are

however, presently mutually exclusive. There are no mechanisms in place that they can resort to in order to find answers for some of the questions and concerns they may have.

From the outcome of this investigation it is hoped that some answers will emerge.

1.3.4 Benefit to fellow students

As fellow students, even more than teachers have closer contact with initiates in class, sport and playground and whatever benefits accrue from the study would be gainful to them as well.

1.4 **Research Methodology**



1.4.1 Qualitative Paradigm

Based on the fact that qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data, is "descriptive" concerned with process rather than outcomes or products its data analysed inductively and meaning being the essential concern - the research is of the qualitative paradigm (Bogdan and Biklem: 1992; p.29).


1.4.2 Research Design

In order to see the world through the eyes of the initiates or circumcised males at school the, Participant Observer method of research is used and is augmented by other research tools, these being interviews, fieldwork and questionnaires.

1.4.3 Keywords

All the key words were decided upon by the group of interviewees and interviewers at the commencement of the research.

List of key words:

- 
1. Ibhuma - the lodge
 2. Ikwala - newly initiated / the initiate
 3. Ingcibi - the "surgeon" who conducts the circumcision
 4. Inkwenkwe - a boy
 5. Intombazana - a girl
 6. Ubhuti - prefixes the name of a circumcised male and is a sign of respect
 7. Ubhuti omtsha - recently circumcised
 8. Ubukwala - the condition of being recently circumcised
 9. Ukoluka - to go for circumcision or be circumcised

10. Ukuya ehlathini - literally means going to the bush/also used as euphemism for circumcision
11. U Ma'am - a married female teacher
12. Umfundi - a student
13. U Miss - unmarried female teacher
14. U moluko - circumcision



CHAPTER TWO

This chapter focuses on the circumcision rituals as practised by groups other than Xhosas and how such rituals impact on the males concerned. The functions of rituals are discussed with particular reference to the Lagunya area.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to discover what the prototype of the original circumcision ritual is - be it Jewish, Xhosa or Pedi - nor what prehistoric meaning was attached to the proceedings we have to content ourselves with the fact that we can merely reconstruct it. There appears to be general consensus among writers though that rituals such as circumcision promote group or community solidarity (Kenyatta, 1938; Leeuw, 1987; Marcus, 1996; Reik, 1964).

2.2 SOLIDARITY OF A GROUP AS A FACTOR

2.2.1 The Jewish Circumcision Ritual

Marcus writes "Although several Jewish rituals began as domestic or private events in the life of a particular family, they became rituals as shared moments in the life of a community. Circumcision is described in rabbinic sources as taking place in the home, but in medieval times it was done in the Synagogue" (1996, p105).

He further adds that "... as rites of passage became more public collective symbols were added to the personal ones".

This addition of the collective symbols translated to rites taking place at two levels i.e. the social and the cultural giving the individual a place as a member of his community, a "... new born became a Jew ... and the community also celebrated and affirmed its collective identity" (Ibid., p106).

2.3 INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHY AS A FACTOR

2.3.1 The Gisu Circumcision Ritual

Writing about the Gisu tribe of south-east Uganda and the Ndembu of north-west Zambia, Douglas and Kenbery cite that "although the Ndembu and Gisu belong to a single linguistic group and although both cultures have circumcision rights and reveal a common flair for the exegesis of symbols it would be hard to find two sub-Saharan African people more different even antithetical in many cultural domains". He states that this is due to the demographic factors that affect both the sitting and the symbolism of the rites. "The Ndembu seclude their lodges far from the inhabited area, and make an important distinction between the domestic and the wild domains, while the Gisu with hardly any bush to speak of seclude their novices within the lineage dwelling areas and do not make a symbolic distinction between bush and residential area" (1969, p.23).

2.4 INFLUENCE OF GOVERNANCE AS A FACTOR

2.4.1 The BaPedi Circumcision Ritual

A former black homeland of the central Transvaal, the largest part of which is known as the Sekhukuniland, is the home of the BaPedi. A rural area whose circumcision rite practices are strongly influenced by the rural nature of the area; the recognition of supremacy of the chief; season of the year and strong tribal ties.

Boys in this area provide free labour for the chief by hunting for him and cutting poles whenever there is a need. Through working for the chief they come into closer contact with members of the tribe. Once it is felt they are ready for circumcision the elders request the chief to start the initiation (Monnig, 1967; p111).

This study will show how the Western Cape Initiation ritual is also influenced by all three of these factors - solidarity of the community, demographical factors and the form of governance.

2.5 BELIEF UNDERPINNING THE MALE CIRCUMCISION RITUAL OF THE XHOSA

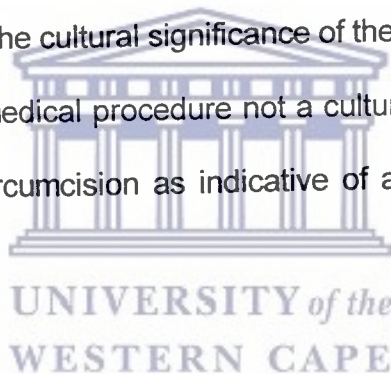
2.5.1 To be fully meaningful all rituals have to be based upon a belief system. In the case of the Xhosa initiation ritual the first belief underpinning the ritual is that it is the stage in the life of a person (male) which marks off according to Xhosa custom his legal status (Van Tromp, 1941; p2).

The idea of majority and minority as being dependent upon reaching a certain number of years is foreign to Xhosa Law. South Africa has it entrenched in its legal system that twenty-one years (and in some instances 18 years) is the age of majority, a Xhosa will still regard an uncircumcised male of this age as a child - a boy.

2.5.2 Secondly, certain procedures have to take a particular prescribed form. That the "operation" must be performed by an "ingcibi" Ca Xhosa "surgeon" who has gained skill in this, that the period of seclusion be observed in a place where the general public has no free access to, are some of the imperatives.

Westerners, who do not always understand and appreciate the culture, and rituals of peoples in Africa, often suggest that circumcision should take place in a doctor's surgery or hospital. This view focuses only on circumcision as a medical procedure and totally misunderstands the cultural significance of the ritual.

Hospital circumcision is a medical procedure not a culturally significant event and it takes away the value of circumcision as indicative of a man's worth in the group (Funani, *opcit*, p4).



2.5.3 Thirdly, that as a result of the entire experience and process the male comes out as a "new" person who abandons his former ways and adopts new behaviour befitting his new role as an adult (and indeed the motif of life and death runs through the entire process as for instance the burning of the bush lodge and all that it contained with the "new" initiates ("amakwala") given express instructions not to look back at the burning hut as they depart to rejoin the community).

This is how Schapera expressed transformation : "Even when judged from the European stand-point, Bantu schools (initiation) do achieve success in inculcating obedience, discipline and general good behaviour, qualities that make many a

European employer prefer "boys" that have been through the school to others" (1937, p107).

2.5.4 Fourthly, with the Xhosa system circumcision bestows one with political power which allows him to take part in the councils and deliberations of men (Hammond-Tooke, 1937 : p. 91).

2.6 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF RITUALS

2.6.1 There are three prevalent approaches to a theory about the nature and origin of ritual, these are:

- i) the origin approach
- ii) the history of religion - approach
- iii) the functional approach *(Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975; p.868; vol. 15)*

2.6.1.1. Rationale behind choice of approach

Even though Xhosas have practiced the ritual for decades its origin is unknown, and for this reason the first two approaches cannot be pursued. While conscious of the shortcomings related to its use the functional approach will be employed. The flaw with this approach is that explaining a ritual functionally is to explain it in relation to the needs and maintenance of society and one would remain with the very futile task of proving empirically that society does function adequately as a result of practising that ritual. The approach however, remains the one that is comparatively logical of

the three.

2.6.1.2. Functional Approach and this Study

What this study attempts to do is to use the functional approach as a heuristic device to describe the possible role of the male circumcision ritual within the context of a particular geographical area, i.e. Western Cape, which has its own particular demographic, political, economic, and social features and as observed in a high school setting.

In broad outline the Xhosa initiation ritual is the same in all areas (Elliot, 1970; Funani, 1990; Hammond-Tooke, 1956; Schapera, 1937), but each area adopts certain nuances that modify its form to correspond with or suit the dynamics prevalent in the area in which it (the ritual) is located and/or practiced. Circumstances peculiar to an area quite often dictate the when, how, why, who and the where of the ritual.

An example here would be the case of the deforestation that took place in the Lagunya* (Lagunya is the acronym for Langa, Gugulethu, Nyanga townships) townships to make way for the pressing need for houses. This necessitated creative planning with regard to the bush lodges. In the past all the lodges, were built out of poles and branches from the surrounding forest. (In fact as part of pre-initiation discipline training some families require that all the wood should be cut by the boys

about to be circumcised). The lodges themselves to be ensconced deeply in the forest so that they would not be within easy reach and/or view of the public. What the public sees as of now are dome-shaped plastic abodes in full view of the National Road (N2) to Cape Town. These lodges or housing ("abakhwetha") who in fact are supposed to be in seclusion are now visible to all. This is but one instance that indicates how the "politics" of an area can dent and erode the treasured beliefs of a group.

By the same token the function of the male initiation ritual may be re-shaped by circumstances.

Leeuw asserts that "the researcher who in view of the communal nature of ritual attempts to conceptualize, define or interpret it, is only engaged in a secondary task. The members of the community who participate in the ritual act, carry the burden of the initial task of endowing it with meaning. This is a task which brings out the uniqueness of ritual" (1987, p.240).

A case in point here would be that Xhosas will, in certain instances, send a relatively young boy for circumcision in order to curb his perceived delinquent behaviour. The community has in this case "endowed" the ritual with the ability to rehabilitate a boy and change his wayward ways.

Therefore, whether or not the Xhosa community is able to affirm the consequence of this becomes an academic question - what enjoys greater importance for them is the belief in what the ritual is meant to achieve. This is how Leeuw puts it: "The mere

communal participation in what finally comes to be known as ritual represents the absence of a struggle (in this case between function and result) in the human community where the particular ritual originates" (Ibid., p241).

2.7 POSITION OF WESTERN CAPE BLACKS IN THE PAST

Blacks in the Western Cape as a result of the socio-political ideology of the previous regime were encumbered by such a variety of restrictive laws, that they virtually suffered the status of becoming foreigners without rights in their own country of birth.

The most prominent characteristics of the previous system with regards to Blacks in the Western Cape were:

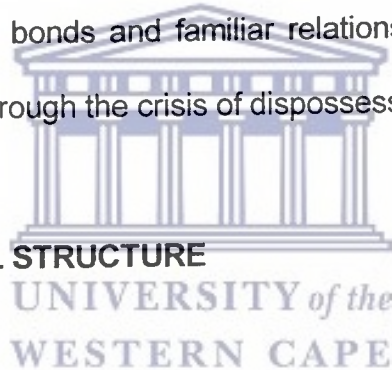


- i) separate living areas from other groups situated kilometres away from the work places;
- ii) job reservation;
- iii) control of the influx of Blacks from their areas to the so-called White areas;
- iv) control over the movement of Blacks in the White areas;
- v) non-recognition of the permanence of Blacks outside their own areas ("Homelands");
- vi) creation of political institutions with limited power and functions in Black

areas (Van Vuuren, 1985; p35).

Of the manifold repercussions of such dispossession the ones that will be dealt with here are those that have relevance to the social structure of the Western Cape Black Community. An attempt here will be made to show how the major social institutions whose function it had always been to nurture, guide and mould members of a society crumbled under the weight of the economic and socio-political forces thrust upon them and how some social structure (in this case male initiation rituals) came to be vested with some of these functions. The circumcision rituals began to provide new and stronger emphasis on kinship bonds and familiar relationships that provide a major sense of continuity through the crisis of dispossession.

2.8 THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL STRUCTURE



Family life, the cornerstone of any nation, was negatively affected by the situation in which people found themselves. Distant work places forced parents to spend much less time than would be ideal with their children. Thus transmission of values, cohesion of the family, and the sense of morality were significantly reduced. Poverty and lack of space were some of the reasons that limited the time-treasured practice of extended family life - which meant there were no aunts and cousins, nor grand parents to act as social insurances and substitute parents.

The family was then forced to surrender or invest much of this task to other social

institutions - the school and the church.

2.9 THE SCHOOL

The school once a major system for the moulding of the young became the arena for the political struggle since the 1970's until the beginning of the nineties of the country. This was accompanied by the reduction of the authority of the teacher and to a great extent to the loss of the culture of learning and teaching. Literature related to Black schools is studded with such phrases as :

- re-establish the authority of the teacher;
- the school is no more the agency for the sense of self;
- the traditional role of the school is lost;
- the teachers and pupils demoralization feed of each other;
- apartheid was the biggest theft of self-esteem. "

(Track Two; Volume 4; No. 4; 1991:pp. 4-6).

Thus an important institution whose function, amongst others, it had been to inculcate values, has been reduced to being in itself a major problem.

2.10 THE CHURCH

The church in South Africa in the past years took one of either of the ensuing stances:

- "Concentrating on "spiritual matters" and avoid political debate and thus not face up to the challenges of the day."
- "Provide the past regime with religious legitimating".
- "Critical of the status quo". (Loader, 1985; p282)

Such diversity of purposes from an institution that derives its existence from the same Christian Faith makes it difficult to access and assess the church's contribution as a support system.

It would be a gross case of irrelevance and misdemeanour to reduce as highly treasured an institution as the Xhosa male initiation into being a mere substitute for failing conventional social institutions. But, the point that is being made in this study is that, over and above the fundamental beliefs underpinning the ritual of circumcision circumstances obtaining in the Western Cape have possibly, been the driving force behind the tenacity and determination to keep it alive as it (ritual) began to serve other incidental, yet important functions. The community sensing this need

and function began to "endow" it with further meaning and function - this becomes glaring when speeches of admonition are made. Even more importantly ritual is a means of non-verbal communication and meaning. (Encyclopedia Britannica Vol. II; 1975; p866) So that, more than what is said and even more than what is done, the paramount meaning and communication lies in the non-verbal domain.

2.11 FUNCTIONS OF RITUALS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO MALE INITIATION RITUAL OF THE XHOSA IN THE WESTERN CAPE

2.11.1 Rituals serve "to provide reassurance, feelings of security in the face of psychological disturbances of everyday life" (Dubb, 1980; p144).

Mention has already been made of how the previous regime's system shaped the lives of Blacks, and the feelings of insecurity the need for reassurance and the psychological disturbances this caused in their everyday lives can never be over-emphasized.

The all-encompassing and sheltering influence of the life of a tribe in the rural areas is replaced in the townships by circumstances that tend to de-emphasize consanguinity. People with backgrounds that differ completely, commingle and set up structures, in the urban areas, without which they would be atomised.

Dubb writes, "on such occasions (rituals) ... speeches may be delivered that allude to group values in conventional statements reminding the people of their commitments ... praising people for their achievements ... praising their correct attitudes and behaviour" (Ibid., p159).

2.11.2 Validation and reinforcement of values

It has already been stated that one of the functions of the school, family and church is to inculcate values and that this has been shown as not to happen as it should. One of the many important features of the initiation school is the formal teaching that is given during the period of seclusion (Hammond, 1937; p230).



Some sex education takes place in the school. Values of the community are also instilled in this fashion.

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WESTERN CAPE

One informant mentions that instruction/discussions include a wide spectrum of issues like women; life in townships; the political situation; joylessness; poverty, etc., in ways that help them as males to vent some of their pent-up emotions and frustrations. Sharing episodes of waiting in long queues for jobs to be told that you are not the correct colour for the job". All this in a "safe"; "all-male"; "secluded"; "interference-free" environment. Swantz (1986) has this to say about the social cohesion brought about by ritual,

"Ritual has been seen as the major force in maintaining the social structure and in providing mechanisms for social reintegration where conflicts threaten to break up the existing relations" (1986; p63).

2.11.3 Ritual also Serves to Unify the Group (Ibid., p150)

In many ways rituals attendant to circumcision (and funerals) bring people together. The initiation ritual from the start draws crowds of people firstly from one's clan and from the community at large. The clans people have of necessity to play a significant role in making the whole process a success. This includes several meetings, visits to the bush lodge and general activity for weeks on end. All parties enjoy a sense of openness and common purpose, the final effect of which is that of unifying the people.

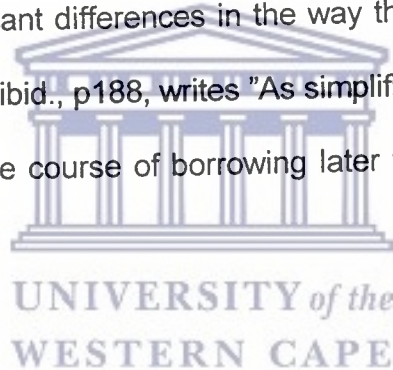
Referring to Kikuyu circumcision Kenyatta writes that "... this important socio-biological custom is found in almost every part of the continent and that it is important to note that the moral code of the tribe is bound up with this custom and that it symbolizes the unification of the whole tribal organization" (1936; p134).

One informant reports that even at the personal level the newly initiated male enjoys a great sense of achievement and fulfillment for being affirmed as a worthy being. It bolsters ones confidence he continues, and helps one feel just this once a very important and integral member of his group or clan.

2.12 THE XHOSA INITIATION RITUAL - WESTERN CAPE

2.12.1. The following is information collated from sources (informants) who were either directly involved in the male initiation ritual or participants in the deliberations and activities.

There are a few minor details that are performed differently from clan to clan, but in the main, the procedures have more similarities than differences. It should be emphasized once more that this study confines itself to the ritual as practiced in the Lagunya area as the author has reason to believe that there could be significant differences in the way the ritual is performed in a rural setting. Swantz, *ibid.*, p188, writes "As simplification of some aspects of rites takes place in the course of borrowing later they may gain again new embellishments".



2.12.2. Decision to circumcise:

The following factors may influence the decision on when to circumcise:

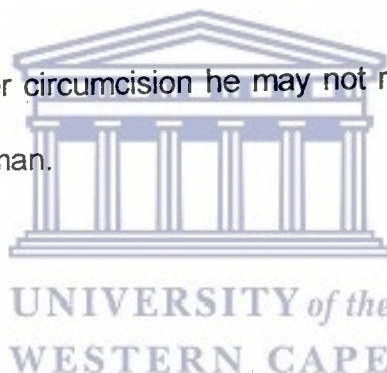
- governed by financial readiness, the boy may be circumcised at eighteen onwards.
- the boy may decide out of his own will or the father may decide.
- with the widespread occurrence of single parenthood where there is no father the mother may consult with the males of the clan.

- when the boys shows signs of delinquency.
- still some boys "steal" (ukuziba) their way into circumcision without permission from parents - an often exasperating experience, especially if the parents are not financially ready.

2.12.3 Admonition

As soon as the decision is made the elders of the family or clan the boy is called in to give him one of a series of sessions that will follow. The aim of this first meeting is to inform him of the serious nature of the step he is to embark on.

He is warned that after circumcision he may not regress, for any reason to behaviour not fit for a man.




2.12.4 Preparations

A week before the actual circumcision women begin to brew beer - this is done strictly by married females. This includes the mother or the boy's sisters or first cousins. Once such preparations begin the boy is not allowed to roam around as before. He may only leave home for strictly necessary issues, like cutting wood for all the cooking that will ensue.

2.12.5 Circumcision Day

On the evening of the Friday before the actual "operation" people gather in the home. Girls and boys spend the time singing and dancing - the theme of the songs having a strong relation to what is about to happen. Food is served during this, usually bread, samp, African-beer and liquor. The boy also partakes of this meal and sits amongst the dancers and singers. (The distance between mother and son becomes glaring on this night, they do not interact in any way).



At a chosen spot in the yard of the boys home a hut made of tree branches is erected during the Friday. At dawn on Saturday he is called out by the elders and clansman and asked to join them in the hut outside.

From a goat that had been slaughtered during the evening the boy is given the foreleg to eat in the hut. He is then stripped of all his clothing and covered from head to toe in a blanket. He is then led to the bush by a group of men who surround him all the way singing and dancing.

2.12.6 Bush Proceedings

At this stage the bush lodge has already been built by the males. A spot is chosen where the actual operation is to take place (outside the bush lodge). As soon as the "ingcibi" completes the operation he shouts : "You are a man" to which the novice responds "I am a man". The part that has been cut off is buried by the novice at a spot of his choice.

He is then smeared all over with "ingceke" an ointment which is believed to both lighten his skin and make him look attractive (and they do when they come out).

2.12.7 Crucial Eight Days



The ensuing eight days become the period of healing when the novice is not allowed to drink water or any liquid and only eats dry salt-less samp that is brought in everyday from his home. He is left under the care of "ikhankatha" - guardian. There is also usually a young boy who is assigned to be generally around in order to do errands e.g. buy candles, cigarettes or whatever it is that the "abakhwetha" require from home.

The lodge is a popular place for initiated males who visit it daily and spend hours with one another. It is also a great favourite spot for young boys and

uninitiated older boys.

2.12.8 Mojiso Feast

On the morning of the eighth day the "mojiso" feast takes place. A goat or sheep is again slaughtered - at the bush now-where again the novice is given the foreleg to eat. The rest of the meat is cooked for all present to feast. This is strictly an all-male feast, which may include bread, samp, amahewu, etc. This marks the first day of the novices' full meal. After this ceremony he may eat whatever he pleases. After the feast he is washed and covered in ointment again. The period of seclusion can take anything from 3 to 4 weeks or even a little more.

2.12.9 Returning home



At the end of the seclusion period he leaves for home cleanly shaven and washed. The bush lodge is burnt to ashes from behind him with all that it contains, blankets included. He is not allowed to look back at the burning lodge for any reason as he leaves. He is covered completely in a new blanket and is walked home by the males amidst joyous singing and dancing.

On reaching home he goes back to the hut made of branches outside the main building where he stays the whole day with males.

He is then smeared with red ochre all over and dressed in new khaki shirt and pants, given a stick to carry and a black cloth to cover his head. He may never wear any of his old clothes again. He remains in the khaki gear for two weeks.

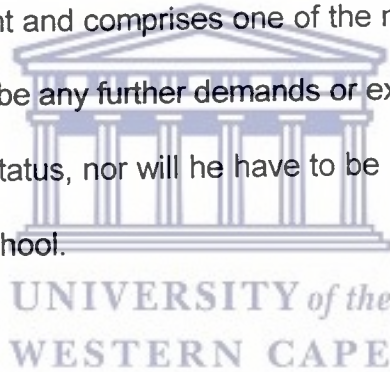
On the evening of his release from the lodge he may come out to meet the people. There usually is general activity as preparations are being made for the biggest feast since the entire process started. Sheep are slaughtered, lavish dishes and a variety of drinks are prepared. Anybody and everybody is free to attend. It is at this feast that members of the community, clansman, women as well, deliver speeches that are directed at both the "krwala" novice and the community at large.

It is at such occasions that speeches that unite, motivate and strengthen the community are made. Gifts in the form of material goods and money are given.

2.13 IMPLICATIONS OF INITIATION RITUAL - THE JEWISH MALE

2.13.1 The Jewish Male

The Jewish Male is circumcised on the eighth day of his life and by the time he becomes conscious of it, when he is grown up, it is already an accomplished fact. He will also get to know that this is the case with every other Jewish male. It thus becomes part of what and who he is. He will understand its importance and, more importantly at school this would not come up as an issue with the other members of the school community much as though it is important and comprises one of the major rituals of the Jewish people. There will not be any further demands or expectations placed on him by his acquired male status, nor will he have to be clad differently from other male students of his school.



2.13.2 The Pedi Male

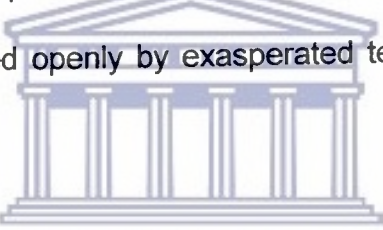
The Pedi herdboyc in rural Sekhukhumi is the pride of his tribe and as a full-fledged man joins the ranks of his tribesmen. The transmission is a smooth one without any unexpected demands from his rural tribesmen.

His status as a circumcised male is well-defined, and will not be marked by entry into an institution of learning grounded on the dictates of western

culture that by definition differ radically from his own culture.

2.13.3 The Xhosa Male

The Xhosa male student leaves school during vacations as merely a boy - one of a crowd - who is likely to have been quite often reprimanded by teachers for his wrongdoings or minor misdemeanours. He is sometimes sent back home for not being clad appropriately. He has to adhere to the disciplinary rules of the school - is expected to perform certain manual duties like cleaning the grounds or toilets (in a school with a student compliment of 1459 and teacher compliment of 45, there is only one labourer). He is sometimes also scolded openly by exasperated teachers who are, maybe, overworked.



He comes back after four or five weeks of vacation having gone through the most rigorous (and sometimes dangerous) cultural transformation (also status transformation) of his life hoping or, maybe, expecting to be treated with the kind of reverence that the community he comes from accorded him. He comes back to an institution described thus by kindred.

"Often the organizational nature of the school system tends to foster an impersonal relation between the school and the students ... students are reduced to a common denominator" (1976; p148).

One of the aims of the study is to find out the extent of mismatch between the status society endows on him and his position at school.

2.14 TEACHERS' ROLE

Earlier in this chapter mention is made of the manner in which events in township schools led to loss of the teachers authority. It is however, noteworthy that the schools do continue to be run by teachers albeit under trying circumstances. We have to assume then that there is some implicit value that students attach to teachers and also further assume that this value lies in the fact that the teacher has the knowledge. Thus, schools will continue to run.

This is how Dresden puts it, the "teacher is a power figure. The teacher can promote or fail. He can reward or humiliate. He can encourage and ignore ... he is a person of power" (1965; p163).

Much of the comfort or discomfort that the initiated male might experience will depend heavily on the manner in which the teachers regard or disregard his new status.

Nixon has the final word on this "teachers attitudes greatly influence what, and how pupils learn" (1965; p163).

2.15 EFFECTS OF CHANGE ON THE INDIVIDUAL

2.15 EFFECTS OF CHANGE ON THE INDIVIDUAL

There are a variety of ways in which the initiate may relate to the change he has gone through and this will depend on a number of issues, incidents and events. This is how Deal sees change: "Change is a loss ... change is disorientating". He further states that change requires social readjustment and that individuals, respond to it in a number of ways, i.e. "denial, anger, depression, bargaining, acceptance". This exercise will have to find out which one of this range of emotional states the circumcised student is caught up in.

2.16 INITIATES AND FELLOW STUDENTS



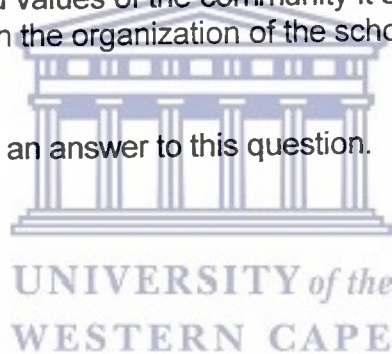
As the decision to circumcise is governed by a number of factors, not the least of which is finance, there are a number of boys who are well into their twenties who have not gone to the bush and are still at school. We can only speculate as to how a twenty-five year old is affected and responds to his having to accord respect to a nineteen year old who is circumcised. One of the things that any male who is uncircumcised and any female who is younger than or of the same age as the initiate is to call him "Bhuti" - a Xhosa term used to show respect to any older or circumcised male. Calling him by his name after circumcision is taboo. The reverse side of this is how the 19 year old feels about acting as "older" to someone six years

2.17 THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Schools form an integral part of the communities they are situated in. There seems to be no possibility in the near future that schools will be rid of initiated males, since even as early as seventeen years some clans consider it correct to perform the ritual. The schools might well have to forge a way that will amicably accommodate the existence, in their midst, of males who have to wear hats all the time and act as full males as is dictated by Xhosa Culture.

Nixon has this to say about it, "the schools in the community. How far does the school relate to the needs and values of the community it serves, how can the life of a community find expression in the organization of the school...?" (1985; p162).

The study will have to provide an answer to this question.



CHAPTER THREE

3. EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION AND PILOT STUDY

3.1 Brief background to the Pilot Study

The major reason for the pilot study was to measure the appropriateness of the research instruments (questionnaires) and to familiarise the co-researchers with the questionnaires.

3.1.1. In view of the sensitive nature of the research stemming from the secrecy that surrounds the whole issue of Xhosa circumcision, the added factor that the researcher is female, it was deemed expedient that permission to conduct the study be sought by two senior staff members from the community of circumcised males at the school i.e. "amakrwala" (the very recently circumcised) and "amadoda" (those who had the ritual a year or more behind them). The said two senior male teachers had been trained personally by the researcher. The said training included explanations of the objective of the study, the importance for the school in terms of what the study was aimed at investigating, stress was laid on the principle of confidentiality, professionalism and respect for the views of each student, and lastly the adoption of a non-judgemental attitude.

It was stated explicitly to these students that the research was an academic study and due respect would be paid to the anonymity of the respondents. Furthermore refusal to participate in the study, if the student so wished, would be fully accepted.

To further give weight to this the researcher and the two male participating teachers requested the permission of the Student Representative Council via its executive, the male sector, to conduct the research. The only concern that the students voiced was that of the use of tape recorder to record their responses. None of them felt comfortable with its use, it was therefore cancelled as part of the instruments for the research. After all parties had deliberated and express limits drawn permission was granted subsequent to which the interviews were embarked on.

3.1.2. Hypothesis

As the research is exploration in nature no formal hypotheses were formulated.

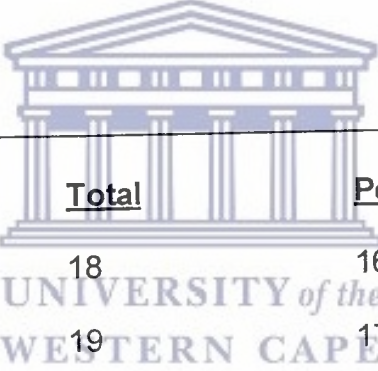


3.2 METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 The Sample

The total number of circumcised males present at the school for the duration of the study was 120. The sample, however, consists of the 106 circumcised male i.e. 87.5% of the total. The reason for such a large sample in a qualitative research will be dealt with later in this chapter under-Duration of the study (3.3.1) and in Chapter 4 (4.3).

These constituted



<u>Standard</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
6	18	16.98%
7	19	17.92%
8	21	19.81%
9	23	21.69%
10	25	23.58%

Their ages range from 18 years to 27 years. The remaining number of students not interviewed comprise those who chose not to be interviewed.

3.3 DURATION OF THE STUDY

3.3.1 The research was intended to last from the beginning to the end of the school academic year, but had to stretch for a further (6) six months. This is due to the fact that midway in the process an incident considered to be that of gross misdemeanour took place, where two teachers and the caretaker found a group of (“amakrwala”) newly initiated males in one of the classrooms chatting over a bottle of brandy. The intransigence they displayed on being confronted on the spot upset the three people concerned. The students claimed that it was the done and accepted practice for circumcised males to discuss issues related to one of them in this fashion. They further claimed that this practice had been going on for years. They had chosen to do it during a “safe” time i.e. after school. This debate resulted in both the suspension of the students from school and the volitional suspension of the research by the interviewer, as the context and atmosphere was marred by the incident. Six months elapsed before resumption of the research took place at which time it was agreed by all that the dust had settled.

3.4. THE INSTRUMENT

3.4.1 The First Questionnaire

This is a self-administered questionnaire that was, aimed at acquiring biographical and demographical data. As the items contained in this questionnaire are simple

enough to be understood by even the most junior student, they were phrased in English. However, for all respondents clear explanation were given on how to fill it in, and the latitude to ask if and when one did not understand. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

3.4.2 The Second Questionnaire

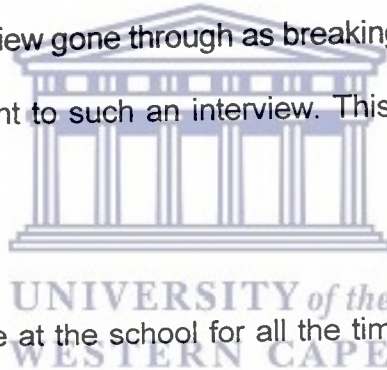
This consists of a list of items broadly covering all issues pertaining to the circumcised male student's quality of life, socially, academically, emotionally, interpersonally and developmentally at school. Also included is his life in the community after circumcision. Unlike the first questionnaire the second was not self administered, but used by the researcher to elicit responses from the interviewee concerned. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

3.5 COMPOSITION OF PILOT STUDY

3.5.1 The pilot study consisted of four students, constituting one Standard Six male, one Standard Seven male, one Standard Nine male and one Standard Ten male, which effectively meant that both junior and senior classes were equally represented. The two participating teachers conducted the pilot interviews with each teacher taking one junior and one senior student.

3.6 Setting of Dates and Administration of the pilot study

Since time is limited during the course of the school week it was decided that two interviews would be held on Friday afternoon - one for each of the participating teachers. The choice of Friday afternoon stemming from the fact that it is a short day i.e. the school ends at twelve noon (12h00). The remaining two were held on a Saturday morning. While emphasis was laid on the importance of honouring the appointments, each interviewee was given the option to cancel the interview, should any unforeseen circumstances arise. The only proviso laid down was that the choice of the day for the interview should be one when each could afford a good few hours so as to have the entire interview gone through as breaking it up would interfere with an essential dynamic pertinent to such an interview. This was complied with by all four interviewees.



The researcher was available at the school for all the time that both teachers were conducting interviews to deal with any problems that arose. None did.

After completion of all four interviews the two participating teachers and researcher met to confer. The aim of this was that the two teachers report on procedures followed and to make recommendations as to what it was that needed to be altered either by way of additions, substitutions or deletion and to give a general report on the feel of the whole exercise.

3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS BY PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

3.7.1 Manner of Address

The recommendations were that the researcher would need to strike an understanding with each interviewee, which word the student would be comfortable with, in view of the variety of names used to describe their status, with each having its particular shade of meaning depending on the length of time one has become a man. For instance a recently circumcised one would be "ikwala" or "ubhuti omtsha" (roughly translated means a new "boetie") "indoda" - a man and "umfana" - a young man.

3.7.2 Perception of the Interview



Despite prior warning that this is predominantly an academic study the participating teachers felt that there still remained among those interviewed an underlying hope that the study would bring about immediate change in the manner in which they would be treated.

This was expressed in terms of statements such as the following:

"If you could inform some of the lady teachers of how demeaning it is to be called "Kwedini" ...("kwedini" is a Xhosa word for boy and in this sense used in a derogatory sense as no man is called that).

"The school community must know that this is a cultural thing and we expect to be treated with respect."

The above misconception, it was suspected, could possibly be coming from the fact that the researcher and the participating teachers are in the management position at the school and for this reason interviewees hoped to gain some leverage. Therefore heed had to be paid in subsequent interviews to erase the notion of the study being misconstrued as principally a means of solving their problems in the immediate future.

3.7.3 Mentioning of Names

It was stated that emphasis be laid on the fact that under no circumstances should any names be it of a teacher, or that of a student be mentioned.

3.8 ANALYSIS OF PILOT STUDY

3.8.1. The Pilot Study targeted students from different academic levels i.e. from Standard 6 to Standard 10. This range is fairly representative of both varied class standard and varied ages and being circumcised has been shown to impact differently by reason of this.

The pilot study has also shown that there does exist a problem of adjustment among circumcised males at school albeit to a lesser or greater extent to some than to others.

Issues were picked up during the Pilot Study that became useful for the major intervention. One of these being that according to the participating teacher, probably because it is the first time that they would talk about the issues, the interviews gain a momentum of their own and soon the atmosphere becomes so natural that certain issues get answered before they are asked. However, this did not undermine the use of the set questions for the interviews.

3.8.2 School and Community

The level of excitement and acceptance of their state in the community appears to be much higher than what takes place at school

3.8.3 Junior Students' feelings of unease

The junior students displayed more uncertainty, skepticism and discomfort over their position as indicated in the following examples:

" I was compelled to. My father died years ago, my mother earns very little on her chars, my elder brother who helps support us is getting married next year, so my mother said if I did not do it last December I would have to wait until I started working and that would take years."

"The day before coming to school for the first time, I could not sleep, worried as to how students would react to my being a man so young."

"I'm very quiet in class now. I only speak to the boy next to me and even that is because we share rulers and rubbers and pencils or pens."

It appears that at times, the choice is not necessarily determined by age, but other reasons including finance, and that this could have its consequences such as that of a student not being entirely comfortable or happy about who he has become. This probably causes a state of unease or confusion as evident in the above statements.

3.8.4 Achievement of Student

The positive attitude and achievement of a student seems to insulate him from prevailing circumstances at the school.

"I think my position as one of the best sportsmen of this school has helped me not feel anything negative from anyone. I have always been respected for what I do in sport - this has not changed in fact it's a plus (circumcision)."

3.8.5 The Age of the Student

"An older boy who is not yet circumcised will deliberately shout my name without looking at me just to show that he has no time for me".

This is not supposed to happen regardless of age all circumcised males are to be shown respect by uncircumcised boys regardless of their higher age.

None of the questions set out in the questionnaires for the pilot proved to be inappropriate nor lent themselves to being misconstrued by the interviewees.

Furthermore in so far as the goal of the pilot study had been to investigate the quality of life of a circumcised male student at school, socially, emotionally, developmental, interpersonally, academically and life within the community it (the pilot study) answered its purpose and met its goals. For these reasons therefore no alterations were made to the questionnaires in preparation for the main study.



CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter the main research is implemented and the various methods of gathering data are discussed. Excerpts of the interviewees own responses are included and elaborated on.

4.1 DATA GATHERING METHOD

4.1.1 Interviews

As the issue of the tape recorder had already been discussed during the initial meetings with the interviewees no further discussion was engaged in regarding its use. The reasons that the students had themselves put forward i.e. that it was “cumbersome”, “artificial” and “distracting” were accepted as representing their sincere feelings and misgivings about its use. The alternative was therefore to write notes as the interviewees responded to each one of the items from the interview sheet. This was by no means an easy task, firstly because it was time-consuming and secondly, it gave rise to fatigue on the part of both the interviewee and the interviewer. The latter was circumvented by agreeing to short intervals of about 5 to 10 minutes whenever either of the two parties felt the need for a break, after which the interviews continued without any noticeable dent on the rapport that had existed prior to the break.

Non-Verbal Cues

4.1.2 This rather lengthy method of taking notes had the positive aspect of allowing details of body language and other non-verbal cues which were significant to the study to be picked up by the interviewer.

4.1.3 Language Used for Interviews

The interviews were all conducted in Xhosa. This was done so as to capture the richness of detail and feeling borne out of the ease of expressing oneself in one's own language and reveal subtleties of meaning.

4.1.4 Reasons for Not Using English



English is the student's second or third language. The student's themselves differ in their level of understanding of the language as they range from Standard 6 to Standard 10. Its enforced use would hamper the process albeit for some more than the others. However, no restrictions were set on the use of English by the interviewee, because in everyday practice anyway the two languages (Xhosa and English) are used interchangeably. And, indeed, armed with this understanding the flow of words by the interviewees and interviewer went on smoothly.

4.1.5 Field Notes

As the major focus of the research is to find out how initiated males experience themselves in a particular social context or framework, it was necessary to gather further details about their lives at school in different settings. Thus field notes were taken from observing them in all possible areas to be later reported to the researcher.

4.1.6 The Role of Participating Teachers

The same teachers requested to administer the pilot study further assisted in observing the researcher's few initial interviews. This they did after which they gave positive feedback. Their function stretched further to observing the circumcised males and make field notes and report any aspects that they noticed and deemed relevant to the enrichment of the study. This was duly complied with. Their importance also lay in the fact that they have free access to toilets used by male students, cloakrooms during sports events and various other possible venues where the female researchers, more for propriety rather than by law, custom or regulation, deemed it unfit for her to make an appearance in such quarters.

4.1.7 Observation Made Through Field Notes & What the Field Notes Revealed

Whereas it could be said that students in general would be found in loose packs all over the campus, circumcised males tend to gather together in easily identifiable groups of eight or ten. Identifiable easily because, save for a tie, they are clad formally in civilian clothing and all wear caps or hats.

While the rest of the students will be running around causing general chaos and noise, they on the contrary display a very dignified demeanor, never raise their voices and do not engage in games of any sort during the breaks. They will also cluster physically away from other school mates.

A popular spot for them being the far end of the school behind out buildings or alternatively, leave the school premises to have lunch in the township - again often as a group of three or four. This by no means suggests that they never walk singly but in the main they tend to cluster in groups.

Also noticed through observation in the field was that though under normal circumstances it is rare to see a Standard 10 male learner keeping company with a Standard 6 learner for any length of time, being circumcised breaks the barriers between senior and junior learners which means that when the common denominator is circumcision the question of age and academic seniority does not feature.

Observation of their behaviour in the field also revealed that the concealed spots on the campus, for example the back of outbuildings, toilets, etc., were spots they used for smoking, even though the cigarettes would be stubbed out at the appearance of a person in authority.

None of them was seen eating lunch anywhere but in the classroom or if outside of school premises, it was later established during the interviews that some go to the homes of other circumcised males, where they all have lunch. The host, however, only provides the venue but each one buys his own meal. The choice of eating only in the classrooms and not outside is in keeping with their shirking off boyish behaviour and like adults use a room and in their case a classroom - for eating. Eating in the classroom, it should be mentioned, is not the sole domain of circumcised males - the student body does use the classrooms the difference here being that for circumcised males it is required of them by custom to eat inside. So none of them use the school grounds as an alternative but the rest of the students do.

On many occasions they would be seen staying at the school in a classroom holding private and lengthy meetings. Again the school puts no barrier on this as long as they leave the premises at a time when it would not grossly inconvenience the caretaker. Some such meetings would last up to 18h00 or later.

4.2 SOTHO AND HLUBI CIRCUMCISED MALES

It occurred repeatedly that a few circumcised males known to the researcher and participating teachers to be circumcised were never seen to attend the meetings nor were they seen to be actively forming an integral part of the larger circumcised male population at the school. This group it was learnt, belonged to the Sotho and Hlubi clans.

It was revealed during the course of the interviews that since the ritual undergone by the Hlubi and Sotho groups differs from that of the Xhosa there are divisions occasioned by this factor among them. There was no indication of any animosity between the differing sectors. And, since this aspect was outside the aim of this study the words of one respondent sufficed ... "we don't clash openly but we (Xhosa) have the feeling that they regard themselves as better than us..."

It should be stated clearly at this point that the Hlubi and Sotho circumcised male students, do not form part of this study for the following reasons:

- 1.2. The topic specifically states Xhosa males.
- 1.3. The Hlubis and Sothos are extremely strict about the secrecy of the entire ritual and what it entails.

The gender of the researcher per se would not be the only deciding factor, as the same attitude would hold for a male - the paramount issue being that with the Hlubi and Sotho the circumcision ritual is strictly and exclusively the domain of the males of the clan.

This is supported in Guwa, where he cites, "Young men and elders in the two research areas have expressed the opinion that Sotho initiation rites are among a few ritual practices that have withstood domination by European cultural influence. They argue that initiation rites as practiced by Southern Nguni (Xhosa) are so contaminated by European cultural ideas that they have lost their Africanness. This is scorned by Basotho who regard initiation as secret accessible only to males who subscribe to African cultural traditions. Nguni have even allowed their rituals to be presented in public media films, (Ibid. p44).

4.3 REASONS FOR THE LARGE SAMPLE

It was felt by the researcher that by reason of family set-up, ordinal position of the male concerned, level of education, age, personality, classroom and playground dynamics, teacher-learner relationship the advent of full manhood at school would impact differently on each individual interviewee and as such each one's voice had to be heard. Furthermore, the circumcised male population is, at any given time, less than 10% of the student complement and the sample of this study is 6.6%.

4.4 TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

As was indicated earlier, the language used for the interviewees was Xhosa with intermitted use of English. It was therefore necessary to transcribe the interviews into a single language i.e. English. The challenge here was to translate the information, if not exactly as was intended by the interviewee but at most, to do so in such a manner that the meaning or intention of what is said is not lost.

As much as possible this was done, however, certain things are better said in one language than in another, so that the essence of what was meant is captured.

A case in point here is the answer some interviewees gave to the question of how they were received by the members of their community after circumcision. To indicate the positive manner, warmth and acceptance in which they were received as adults they responded:

“Ndiyabuzwa ngoku impilo”.

Literally, translated this means:

“People inquire after my health”.

The immediate impression of a non-speaker of the language would be that people want to know if the initiated male has healed after the operation. Whereas the speaker does not necessarily inquire after his well-being but in so saying indicates the recognition of the circumcised male’s exalted status. People are now beginning

to pay attention, and show concern and respect because now he is a better being.

The other example is “They now do not use my name but call me by my clan name.”

This also indicates respect as being called by clan name is to many, if not all Xhosa’s, a gratifying experience.

Nevertheless, the researcher did the utmost best to give the picture as much as possible as was painted by the speaker.

4.5 THE INTERVIEWS

4.5.1 The Family

On the question of who broached the issue of one’s going for circumcision/reasons advanced/and how the male learner felt about it.

The broaching of the question of going to the bush came from a variety of significant family members, fathers, mothers (where there was no father) uncles, aunts, elder brother or sister.

“It is my mother, I don’t have a father - she felt I had reached an age when I should be a man”.

More and more mothers have become heads of families for a variety of reasons like

desertion, divorce, single parenthood or death of the husband.

“My brother... He is working, my mother is working too, but my brother gets more money than she”.

“My sister - she is the eldest... we have no parents. She is the one who looks after the three of us.”

“My uncle, he is as good as being a father to me. He is the one who is responsible for my education too. He is my mother’s brother.”

The breadwinner who is a significant member of the family enjoys the power to broach the question. However, where the boy himself requests to go for circumcision the responses indicate a different reason:

“I informed them I wanted to go for circumcision because all my peers had become men ... at my age (23) nobody wants to remain a boy.”

“... because I had reached an age when all my peers were circumcised.”

“... because I was the only boy my age in my area ... I found this embarrassing.”

“... my peers were already circumcised ... another thing... girls look down upon males who are yet uncircumcised.”

“If I had not done it at the time I did it then it would mean I would part with my dearest friends because they had told me they were going for circumcision during the next school holidays.”

The effect of a boy's peers going to the bush ahead of him is that this would effectively mean the severance of close friendship ties as after circumcision he may not form an integral part of his circle of friends.

Peer pressure seems to be a strong deciding factor and to some extent the perception of girls.

4.5.2 Circumcision Males Own Feelings about the Prospect of Circumcision

How they felt about it range from excitement, mild acceptance to anxiety:

"I was very happy".

"I was excited".

"I was not worried".

"I had seen circumcised male students at school and they did not seem unhappy".

"I was anxious because I felt I would be in the same class as younger boys".



4.5.3 Aspect of Still Being at School

The fact that they were still at school did not come as an issue both on the side of the boys about to be circumcised and on the side of their parents. The only matter of concern in relation to school was that their going to the bush should not interfere with the end of year examinations and also June examinations. Indeed the school accepts that some young males disappear from school earlier than the rest of the

student body in June and December to go for circumcision. Some do so by consent of the school others take advantage of the less stringent rules occasioned by members of the staff engaged in marking, completion of schedules and writing of reports.

4.5.4 Treatment by Family Members after Circumcision

The manner in which circumcised males are treated by family members after coming from the bush indicates a great change in the attitude of family members.

"... serious family matters are now discussed in my presence ... this never happened before".

"My opinion is respected".

"... during meal times I had to fetch my food from the kitchen now food is brought to me".

"My room gets cleaned ... they are careful with me now".

"All my relatives respect me now".

"I have been given more responsibility".



4.5.5 Personal Changes

On the question of personal changes as for instance, in their behaviour, and the way in which they relate to the world around them as a consequence of being circumcised, respondents felt that they had changed for the better.

"I used to neglect all the tasks and duties given to me. Though I have not been asked to do any duties yet I have gained a sense of willingness".

"I come home early ... I'm respectful. I don't stand in the street corner or sit in shebeens... I left all my boyhood friends".

"I don't loiter at night".

"I was very irresponsible as a boy, I am a changed man".

"I think before I leap".



Not only is the change to manhood respected by family members but the male himself regards it as a tribute to his inherent value as a being. The change from family members could indeed be regarded as drastic especially when viewed from the angle of the boy as previously being perceived as an "inja" (a dog), an "into" (a thing) and an "inqambi" (an unclean thing).

4.6. COMMUNITY

Since next to the family the immediate social group that they come into contact with i.e. his neighbourhood or larger community information was tapped with regards how one was received by members of his community. As evidenced in the statements that follow the community undergoes a change of attitude towards the circumcised male.

"They have stopped sending me to the shops now".

Only boys are sent out to do errands. It is below the dignity of a circumcised male to be sent to the shops for trivial purchases.

"I am a member of the street committee".

To combat crime and misdemeanor, to articulate the needs and aspirations of the people on the ground, townships form structures that cover agreed upon parameters, one layer of which is the street committee. This is a responsible task team that makes a valid contribution to all aspects of community life.

"They shake hands with me in the street and don't just greet and pass".

"They show their appreciation of my new status in many ways the smiles they give you, open praise ... or in just generally being nice to you".

“People don’t use my name now they use my clan name”.

As was indicated before the clan name is one way of embracing the male into the ranks of his broader clans - people.

There was the odd response that runs:

“... even before I went to the bush people used to show respect towards me ... I have always been responsible”.

By inference the last statement is taken to mean that the community appreciates the step taken by a male i.e. to become circumcised in the underlying hope that it is to bring positive change. Therefore, in the case when one already has an inherent sense of responsibility circumcision is an affirmation of this.

Not only did members of the community show circumcised males, respect and appreciation for this status, but also expect them to contribute towards the upliftment of their community and set an example. This they did by dropping hints when or if they met one.

“... look after the young ones and show them the right way”.

“You have reached a point in life where the younger one’s will look up to you as an example”.

“We won’t be on this earth forever, I am happy to see young people who will take over from us”.

There is a sense in which such words not only show respect, but also empower one with a sense of responsibility and duty towards posterity.

4.7 THE SCHOOL

The next social institution to receive circumcised males after the family and the community becomes the school since they are students. All interviewees admit that they had hinted or discussed the prospect of their going for circumcision with their very immediate friends. Some also stated that they had told their class teachers (regardless of gender) of the impending event. The responses they received were positive, encouraging and even elicited excitement.

It was then necessary to match the above with what took place at the school subsequently. The aim here being to tap their feelings, thoughts and emotions when they went to school for the first time as different “beings” in different clothes.

“I was frightened ... I thought they would tease me ... I thought boys older than I who are not circumcised would mock me. I worried as to how I would react if they did”.
(This is a Std. 6 student)

“I was frightened. I did not know what to expect. I had seen previous circumcised males being deliberately provoked by other students”.

“I felt odd and different but happy as well ... I had no fears”.

"I was a little shy because I had surprised them by coming in different clothes".
"I was not frightened at all. I was happy that they pointed at me. I found it exciting".

"Fortunately there were many in my class I knew had gone for circumcision. We had discussed it as friends... I came prepared not shy or anything. I was very proud"

"I felt different (from others) even though I had on full uniform. Everything I had on was brand new - the only way I differed was that I had a blazer and a hat on."
(Blazers don't form part of male uniforms a cardigan and a track top suffice).

"I was eager to show off my new status..." (This is a 24 year old).

"I thought I would be laughed at as it was my first day in high school".
This is from a student coming fresh from primary school.

4.7.1 What They Thought and How They Felt in Relation to What Happened

The extent to which they thought and how they felt tallies with what took place during their first few days at school is captured in the following statements:

"I have not had problems ... everything is going well for now. I have been given responsibility to take care of fellow students in class. There are no problems".

On being requested to elaborate on the use of "for now" the interviewee said he felt it was still early to judge.

"... the manner in which some relate to me is good. Many of them are respectful towards me. Older boys couldn't care less about what I am ... they don't call me "Bhuti" and can sometimes be very insulting ... they actually call me "Ntanga" to my face ... I simply ignore that".

(Ntanga is a term used to indicate equality in age - in this case used to insult and to show disrespect for his circumcised status).

“It was not as bad as I thought and anyway I had made up my mind to keep silent when faced with any provocation”.

When questioned about “not as bad” the response was “it is simply that it is not as good as before, I am not as free and as happy...”.

“They showed surprise ... but I can say I was well received”.

“I hate conflict, I came in full uniform ... that way I have no conflict with staff” I am actually okay”.

There is a recurring conflict between their happy state as males and the way in which the school would react to their new clothes and new status.



4.7.2 Circumcised Males' Choice of Company

In order to substantiate or dispute what had been observed in field notes i.e. that they tend to cluster together, they were asked about who they mingle with in order to substantiate or dispute the observation.

The responses ran as follows:

“... only with circumcised males”.

“... it is not as if we never talk or have contact with other students but most of the

time we are together”.

“... with friends who are circumcised, there is contact with other students, but much lesser than the time we spend together (as circumcised males)”.

“...we don't necessarily cluster it is just being circumcised makes it easier for us to seek the company of each other”.

“... it is expected of us to be with males who are circumcised”.

4.8 HOW THE MALE TEACHERS RESPONDED TO THEIR NEW STATUS

The response they claim to receive from male teachers both immediately after they re-entered the school as “men” and their interaction with males subsequently is without exception positive. Since not every male teacher is familiar with every male student the researcher felt it necessary to inquire about the level of contact they had with male teachers. The response was that it was so for those teachers who had contact with them as class/subject/sports or music teachers, together with those who they had absolutely no contact with at both class, and personal levels.

According to this then all male teachers derive pleasure in the fact that they have been circumcised.

This is how the circumcised males put it:

“They shook hands with me”.

“Very happy for me”.

"They were excited".

"They congratulated me".

"Some told me they were happy with the step I had taken".

4.9 HOW THE CARETAKER AND LABOURER RECEIVED THEM

The caretaker (male) is reported to have shown happiness and congratulated them and shook hands with them. The labourer is reported to have reacted just as positively congratulated and shook hands with them. According to the interviewees these two are also said to accord them "special favours" in this case they refer to the fact that they are allowed to stay after school for their meetings.

4.10 HOW THE FEMALE TEACHER RESPOND TO THEIR NEW STATUS

Contrary to the response they received from male teachers the circumcised males move from reporting the show of happiness by some female teachers to cynicism, indifference or disrespect for their status. There is a substantial number of interviewees who felt that female teachers had very little respect for what they had now become.

Joy

"... my class teacher, was very happy to see me" (female).

"... widened her eyes and smiled".

Cynicism

“I hope you have really changed”.

“... take your hat off you are not a man here”.

Undermining

“... they will give you petty chores just to show you that you are not better than others”.

“... clean the blackboard”.

“... fetch me my books from the staff room”.

It was significant that when asked to comment about lady teachers, they immediately make a comparison between lady teachers and male teachers.

“Male teachers don't expect you to stand up when giving an answer to a question but female teachers demand this”.

“... if you do something wrong male teachers won't embarrass you in front of the class”.

“... a male teacher will call you aside and reprimand you privately”.

“... I do not know of a male teacher who says some of things they say.”

The somewhat unwholesome responses of some female teachers become more poignant when looked at against the response of the male teacher - the above

statement would suggest. There is a sense of anticlimax.

4.11 HOW THE FEMALE STUDENTS RELATE TO THEM IN THEIR NEW STATUS

The message regarding female students were mixed as in the following examples:

Indifference

“I had never been one to mix with them anyway - my status has not changed that”.

Respect

“...married ones are very respectful” (There are a few married female students at school).

“... I relate better with girls because they have more respect than boys”.

Avoidance

“I keep away from them if you start conversing with them they get too familiar ... and rude”.

Disrespect

“They make you feel you are a man only in your home”

“They have no respect”.

“... one once hid my hat”.



4.12 HOW MALE STUDENTS RELATE TO THEM IN THEIR NEW STATUS

Here it is essentially a question of how the circumcised males relate to boys. The fact of the matter is that they, as much as is possible in a school context, separate themselves physically from boys so that what contact is there is only minimal.

However, they have this to say about male students:

"... some of them are naughty".

"... older boys than you like teasing".

"... I don't really mix with them in class and outside".

"I talk to them when there is a need but I am not friends with them".

4.13 DISCIPLINE



As discipline encompasses a variety of issues, i.e. uniform, smoking, late coming, drinking, fighting, the questions had to be posed in such a manner that the respondent should feel free to express his views on those that he felt touch him the most. A great number of respondents touched upon three issues namely smoking, drinking and uniform. To the question - to what extent are school rules in conflict with what you feel and believe are your rights as circumcised males -

4.13.1 With regards uniform

"I am not comfortable about the way I dress. I look different from the rest of my classmates but other circumcised males would not like me to wear uniform, I have to pay heed to that as well".

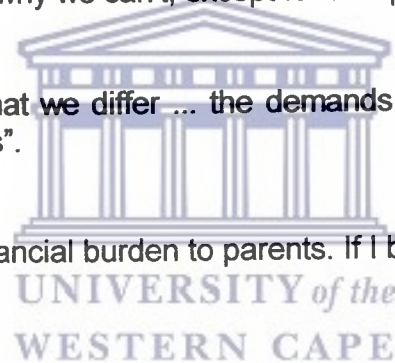
A sense of loyalty to other circumcised males seems to be a factor.

"I feel it is correct that we should differ. I also know that this clashes with the school rules. But this is a very important custom the school should come second".

"There is a limited period of time to the wearing of the kind of clothes we wear after that I don't see why we can't, except for the question of money".

"I feel it is correct that we differ ... the demands of the custom are that we should dress like this".

"It would be a big financial burden to parents. If I bought uniform what would I wear after school?"



4.13.2 Smoking

"We circumcised males should separate our rights at home from our rights at school. One should smoke at home where it is allowed and not at school where it is not allowed".

"I smoke but never in class or around the school campus. I do so in the toilets and I think that is private enough".

"I don't like it that circumcised males smoke in toilets - some sneak to

shebeens during lunch - that spoils our image".
"Customary rights have nothing to do with school".

"None of us smokes in public".

4.13.3 Teetotaler

"I don't smoke or drink but custom allows this - I don't know really".

4.13.4 Private Indulgence

"We don't smoke or drink publicly, we do everything privately. It is okay as a school rule - but we don't corrupt the younger ones we do it privately".

4.13.5 Upholding of image

"Even though this is allowed (smoking and drinking) you can't display such behaviour at school. Students are supposed to look up to us as good examples. Males who do this spoil our image."

Opinions regarding adherence to school rules therefore differ very widely, from those who feel it is proper to adhere to school rules, to those who feel that according to custom they are free to behave as fully-fledged men.

However even those who do advocate acting as full-fledged males add that it should be done privately, as if to suggest that school authorities should connive with smoking. There is no deliberate attempt on their part, they suggest, to flaunt the act of smoking.

CHAPTER FIVE

In this chapter the perspectives of the circumcised males on how the various sectors of the school community respond to their presence at school are discussed.

5.1 POINTS OF UNANIMITY

While the influences to which each one of the interviewees was subjected to at school after circumcision differ sometimes to large degree, there are nevertheless points of convergence where all respondents share a common feeling. These are:

That the ritual cost the family more money than had ever been spent for any other occasion at the home

That they would have been happier and more comfortable had they gone for circumcision after completion of matric

That the male teachers and labourers show a definite positive attitude towards their having reached manhood.

That the circumcision had changed them for the better.

5.1.1 Cost of the ritual as being the highest sum of money the family has paid for any other occasion

Since the underlying intent of the researcher was to get the circumcised males own perception of how deep the family had dug into its financial resources and that this would, by implication, indicate both his value as a person and the value attached to the ritual, verification of the accuracy of the statement was considered irrelevant. The fact of the matter is that the majority of interviewee's rituals were financed by their mothers who are, in most cases, domestic workers and the low salaries paid to domestic workers are well documented in South African literature.

The financial sacrifice incurred by the family, therefore, indeed underscores the degree of importance attached to the ritual and, by the same token and also by the circumcised males' own admission, boosts the self-image of the male concerned. A common response by the circumcised males is:

"Ndaziva ndingumntu"

(I felt or realised my human worth)

Regarding the issue of parents spending on rituals more money than their salaries would ostensibly permit Bailey, as quoted by Gluckman, writing on customs that reduce the wealth of kinsman in some tribes cites "the imperative [to extravagance] is a social one and social obligations are allowed to override economic prudence". (1965, p.74)

5.1.2 Interviewees would have been happier or more comfortable had the ritual taken place after they had completed matric

Several issues emerged from this statement. One being that they would have felt more affirmed as males had they been in a position to finance their upkeep, dress themselves in the manner they desired. In the words of a 27 year of standard 10 learner :

“... ndizithengele ngokwam impahla ... ndincedise nomama”
 (“... buy my own clothes ... support my mother ...”)

In this statement as in many other, rings a sense of blame towards circumstances and self for being at once a full-fledged man and a financial liability who cannot support his mother. A great deal of such feelings and attitude would come because of what it is that Xhosa perceive as manhood, the non-fulfillment of which would make the circumcised male suffer a sense of inadequacy if and when he is still at school. In the words of Mandela (1994 p.28):

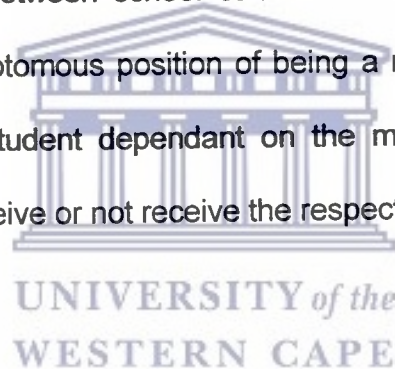
“I had now taken the essential step in the life of every Xhosa man. Now I might marry, set up my own house, and plow my own field”.

The second issue is best epitomised by a standard 6 circumcised male who said,

“Usuke uve ngathi intsuku zakho zobuntwana besikolo zidlule”.
 (“Somehow you feel that your school days are over”.)

The above statement is somewhat an extreme stance for one still left with another four years for completion of high school. Particularly so when viewed against the profile of a regular standard 6 boy of the school, boisterous, playful, noisy and part of a target group to pick papers in the yard. Called upon to do such chores he would feel insulted and yet when exempted suffers a feeling of isolation. This response contrary to the one above, indicates loss of freedom to be and act like other students.

Finally, the fact that without exception the interviewees felt that they would have felt better about their status had the ritual been performed after matric is clear confirmation of the conflict between school culture and the condition of being a circumcised male. The dichotomous position of being a man who may set up his own house but also be a student dependant on the mercies of individual staff members and students to receive or not receive the respect you believe you deserve is a source of uneasiness.



5.1.3 The male teachers showed a positive response/attitude/reaction to their status

Whereas with the other sectors of the school community the response to the advent of their full manhood ranges from fairly negative to positive, the response of male teachers towards the circumcised learners was reported as very positive. The age gap and professional distance seem not to debar male teachers from identifying with the condition or position of the circumcised male student. On a different but related

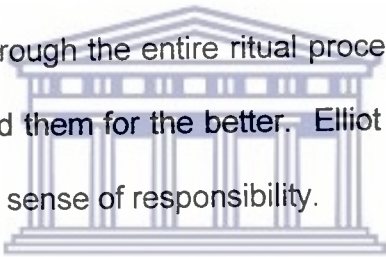
category, the circumcised male who are at senior level do not seem to discriminate against circumcised males who are at junior level. Whereas under ordinary circumstances it would be unusual to see a standard 6 learner mixing comfortably and freely with a standard 10 pupil, when circumcised the chronological and academic barriers are broken.

Turel and Jurgen have this to say about this unity:

"The underlying symbolism of initiation school is the rebirth of a whole group who become part of a brotherhood" (1983 p123).

5.1.4 That circumcision has changed them for the better

The manner in which going through the entire ritual process has impacted on them is seen by all to have changed them for the better. Elliot has this to say about the effect of the ritual in instilling a sense of responsibility.



"The interesting part about this rite is that it indisputably does have this effect. The reason is not because of any punishment or discipline that is exercised over the initiate school itself but purely, it seems because of the psychological effect the rite has". (1970 p. 83)

I would argue that the effect is born out of the interplay of both discipline exercised and the psychological power the rite has. On exploring the interviewees feelings on how they coped with some of the unpleasant encounters they had at school the response would be:

"Ndayalwa".

This term encompasses all of the following expressions - "I was admonished, "coached", "shown the way". This, without doubt, includes how one should behave in times of provocation and trial - as those who admonish, having traveled this same road, know that such possibilities do exist.

An additional aspect that further enhances their sense of responsibility and discipline is their incorporation into the adult world of decision-making and helping to arbitrate when there are conflicts. As, for example, being appointed as members of street committees.

Lastly, how people in the community relate to them also undergoes a change as evidenced by in the following statements:

"Andingxoliswa ngoku kuyathethwa nam"

("I am not shouted at now but talked to")

"... bazixoxa nam izintongoku into ababengayenzi ngaphombili."

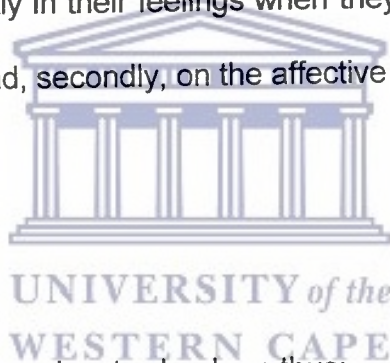
("... they discuss things with me now something they would never have done before.")

The sum total of all these, because they are part of the ritual process, create the new person.

5.2 The existence of differing degrees of confidence between senior and junior students with regards to their being circumcised

The degree of discomfort and confidence over being a circumcised male at school differs between the junior class students (6 and 7) and the senior class students (8, 9 and 10). By virtue of academic seniority; less need to engage in physical play during breaks, due partly to academic demands; the question of familiarity with the school ethos born out of their longer stay, the senior circumcised male enjoys greater insulation from incidents perceived as causing discomfort to by the junior circumcised males who are in lower standards particularly those in Std 6.

This shows at two levels: firstly in their feelings when they joined the school for the first time after circumcision and, secondly, on the affective level during the course of the year.



5.2.1 Feelings during their first few weeks at school run thus:

Std 6

"I was bashful, anxious - thinking they would not treat me as a "Buti". (elder brother)

"I was frightened particularly of boys older than I".

Std 10

"I was excited and happy. I felt proud"

"Ndandizithembile ndinebongo"

("I was confident and proud".)

5.2.2 At the affective level during the course of the year

Std 6

"I am not comfortable with the way I dress because I stick out in the class. I looked different".

("Ayindonwabisi ncam indlela endinxiba ngayo ndithe gqi ndohlukile ndodwa eklasini.

Ndibonakale ndohlukile".)



Std 10

"I am pleased with the way I look. This is my custom. I have to show people what I have become".

(Ndiyayithanda le ndlela ndinxibe ngayo. Lisiko lam. Kufuneka ndibabonise abantu into endiyiyo.)

"... being at school posed no problem. I had reached Std 10. I would have been uncomfortable if I was in the junior classes".

5.3 FEMALE TEACHER'S RESPONSE AND ATTITUDE

While some female teachers responded positively to the circumcised male's status, as evidenced by their show of pleasure and congratulating them, there, nevertheless, is evidence to the effect that contrary to the male teachers some females' manner if not insulting could be seen as mildly negative. The general feeling of those circumcised males against whom the remarks were leveled being that of confusion and disappointment. It is noteworthy that none of them professed to have been hurt and this point will be dealt with later in this chapter.

It would be sheer speculation to even attempt to explain the reasons behind the negative responses of these female teachers as interviews were confined strictly to the initiates.

However, the significance of such remarks can not but have a demeaning or deflating effect on such initiates. The added factor being that some are made even before the particular male student has even begun to do wrong.

e.g. "Ndiyathemba uzakuyeka ukugeza ngoku uyindoda".

("I hope you'll stop fooling around the school now that you are a man".)

"Take off that hat you are not a man here".

Any attempts to measure the extent to which negative remarks could be having on the initiate would be futile however Cullingham (1991, p.13) writes that in the end ...

the importance of the school lies in the individual experience of all those who are in it ... the ultimate reality is that which is experienced by each individual". The experience of an individual who is going through a phase of trying to keep balance between full manhood and being at school but receives negatives messages should be unwholesome and this should have a definite dent on his self-esteem.

5.3.1 Difference between behaviour and attitude

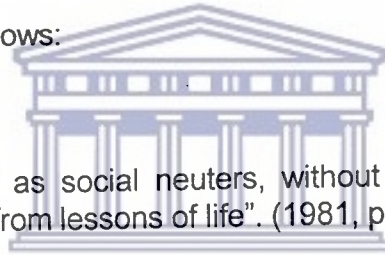
Milner quoted by Cowley (1990, p.5) writes "... reality places many demands and constraints upon our behaviour which may not operate when we are simply expressing our attitude". This statement bears relevance to the remark about the wearing of the hat and the demand that it should be taken off. When the circumcised male continues wearing this hat even in the presence of a person in authority his behaviour is misconstrued as defiance, rudeness or arrogance, all of these being attitude. His behaviour it will be shown here, does not necessarily reflect his attitude. From what has been learnt during the interviews his attitude is not that of arrogance but that of paying allegiance or respect to the dictates of the custom. The hat to him is part of the attire he has to wear in order to distinguish the man from the boy. In class the hats are taken off but are immediately put on all occasions that the student is leaving the class. Certain assumptions are made by these students, that this behaviour is understood by everybody at the school in view of the fact that the ritual is community-reverred and understood implicitly and explicitly by all its members. In the absence of a definite set out measures of protocol that address the question of

dress code of the circumcised males at school their position remains dubious and confusing. Besides statements such as the above are seen by circumcised males as challenging the pertinence of the ritual itself, whereas in fact there is never a debate among Xhosa's as to whether it should be done or not be done. This finds support from what Gluckman writes about that ritual:

“... cloaks the fundamental disharmonies of social structure by affirming major loyalties to be beyond question”. (1965, p.125)

From the point of view of the circumcised males, therefore, by reason of the fact that teachers form part of the larger community they (the teachers) owe allegiance to the custom. When teachers violate that allegiance they are seen by them to have fallen prey to what Reed puts as follows:

“Students are viewed as social neuters, without class, gender or cultural background set apart from lessons of life”. (1981, p.18)



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Said as a statement though it rather sounded like a plea, one student remarked:

“... teachers should be tolerant they should at least wait until the initial period is over”.

This refers to the period of a few months after the ritual when initiates are compelled to stick strictly to rules related to dress as dictated by the custom.

5.4 SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

5.4.1 Uniform

With regards uniform the majority (except only a few) of the responses indicated that they had to dress in the manner they did because this was demanded by custom.

This they base on the following reasons:

That parents often come to school to request leave of absence for the boys from school authority immediately after the writing of the June and November examinations: That the said permission is always granted.

This therefore, is proof enough to them that the school either tacitly accepts or connives with the fact that they will come back to school as “different people”.

While they professed to respect the wearing of uniforms as part of a mechanism to maintain discipline the general standpoint was that since circumcision is an enduring and well-respected custom the school should do the bending. They felt they owed greater loyalty to the circumcised males, not just those confined to the school, but even more importantly those who are outside the school. The latter view is shared by Kindred (1976, p.115) when he writes:

“In some communities it is essential that attention be given to the cultural background of pupils in the formulation of rules and regulations. It is easy to run counter to the deep-seated traditions and customs unless the matter is taken into consideration”.

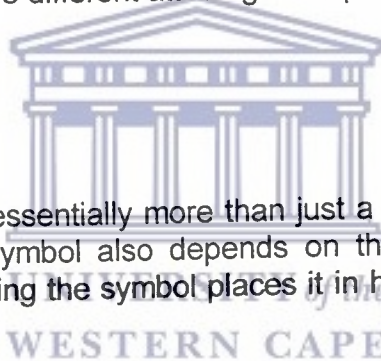
5.4.2 Dress Code

5.4.2.1. Non-wearing of uniform as part of a continuum

From the perspective of the circumcised males it would appear that their dress code that differs completely from the school uniform is part of a continuum of symbolic behaviours and actions that indicate the moving away from one state and reaching another state. Just as the shaving of the whole body, the burning of the hut at the bush with all its contents, the directive not to look at the burning hut as they leave, symbolise the shutting away of the “old life” - wearing of the different attire again separate the boy from the man.

Swantz writes:

“A symbol in ritual is essentially more than just a sign The interpretation of the symbol also depends on the context in which one of those using the symbol places it in his own each time” (1986, p.68).



5.4.2.2. New Uniform as financial burden

The other point that was made in connection with uniform is that of the extra financial burden it would be for the parent. Parents who have already spent an enormous amount of money for the ritual, they felt, should not be expected to, immediately after the expenses incurred, buy new uniform.

Senior students, (Std 10) carry the point further by advancing the reason that their school days are numbered and therefore it would only be fair of the school to waive the matter of new uniform with them.

5.4.2.3. The Exceptions

The few circumcised students who felt they had no problem with the wearing of new uniform fall into two categories:

- (1) Come from relatively well-to-do backgrounds and as such the parents could afford to both affirm the custom with new civilian clothing and accord the school's demands by buying new uniform.
- (2) Very confident academically superior students and very successful sports personality. Both these categories of students have always enjoyed the respect and admiration of fellow students. Possibly because of this they are not likely to be treated negatively with or without uniform.

5.5 IN DEFENCE OF THE SCHOOL REGARDING UNIFORM

Even though the clothes worn by circumcised males (especially the newly circumcised ones) differ radically from school uniform it should be stated that they are clearly discernible in attire from what could be called township gangsters. That being so still this specific school's strictness about the wearing of full uniform is

driven by a reason quite different from just as a means of conforming to school rules.

The area where the school is situated is crime-ridden. The sporadic gunfights that take place around the school are a constant menace to the safety and mental well-being of the school community. Often gangsters find their way into schools by simply mingling with a group of students in order to cause trouble when inside. The adamant stance taken regarding the wearing of uniform and the strictness in controlling it is another one of the safety measures a school finding itself in such a situation adopts.

5.6 SMOKING

Smoking and drinking are part of the privileges allowed to circumcised male in honour of his having reached manhood. It however, does not logically follow or mean that one is compelled to do either - just that he now may. Students who are circumcised and have taken advantage of this privilege at school feel that for as long as they smoke at a place where no one in authority can see them they can enjoy this privilege. The notion here is that one cannot be hurt by what one cannot see. None of the researchers saw any of the smokers in the act during the course of this study, although whiffs of cigarette are smelt from time to time. It is also "known" that they hide themselves in the toilets or behind outbuildings in order to do so.

The opinions of the interviewees differ according to the personal habits of each of them regarding the appropriateness of their smoking in the school premises. Those who profess to be smokers feel that to do so surreptitiously or stealthily cannot be regarded as defiance of school rules. Some of those who do not smoke feel it is improper to do so while at school, but that they have no problems should they do so outside school.

5.7 DRINKING

Prior to the incident in Chapter 3 of the group of circumcised males caught drinking in the school premises the unanimous response of interviewees at that stage was that it was completely incorrect for any circumcised male to partake of liquor at school. Many responded vehemently against such action as in the following:

“That we are allowed to drink does not mean we should behave like drunkards”.

“What the elders mean is that on occasions like rituals and ceremonies we may take liquor with the rest of the men”.

“That is completely bad behaviour”.

After the incident of the circumcised male who were caught drinking and the proceedings that followed as the schools reaction to such behaviour responses tended to be coloured by reluctance and embarrassment shown by responses such as the following:

“I would not like to discuss that”.

“I am glad I was not part of that”.

“I don’t drink I would not know”.

As testimony to the fact that the concerned students had abused a prerogative and made it a right the governing body, and disciplinary committee that meted out the suspension penalty comprised of eight males and three females thus on moral issues “brotherhood” does not take precedence. (This is a reference to chapter 3)

5.8 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

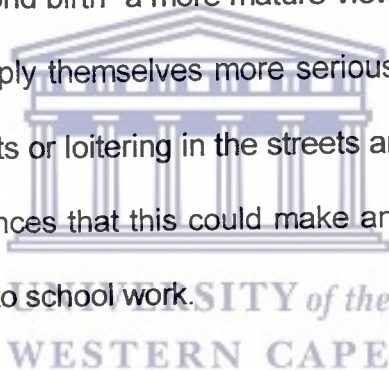
In keeping with the invocation after circumcision that the initiates should behave like men lies the implicit message that they should be exemplary in manner and deed. This, according to this study, is understood by them to also have to be reflected in their academic performance. Also that their general demeanor should in all instances be beyond reproach.

The general understanding of many is that change in demeanor should translate to applying oneself to school work which in turn would lead to better academic performance. For this reason they claim that there has been an improvement in their schoolwork. There are a few who differ from this opinion as an interviewee put it:

“...ukoluka akuko kongeza ubuchopho”.

(“... being circumcised does not give us more brains”.)

This study, unfortunately does not include verification via school records of the claim to improved academic work. The words of the interviewees were taken to be an honest opinion of the individuals own perception of his performance. It is possible however, that after their “second birth” a more mature view of school work and life is adopted and makes them apply themselves more seriously. Viewed also from the angle of some foregoing sports or loitering in the streets and then investing that time in schoolwork, there are chances that this could make an appreciable difference in the amount of time allocated to school work.



5.9 CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF EXPECTED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY BY TEACHERS FROM CIRCUMCISED MALES

The interviewees considered it as a logical expectation by the teachers that the circumcised behaviour should be above reproach in class. The point of contention arising from the fact that they claim that, over and above the example they believe to be setting, teachers expect them to take responsibility for the class discipline. The

argument that came up from many of them being that in a context where leaders of the class are democratically elected it stands to reason that such leaders be responsible for the maintaining of discipline. They feel they are not obliged to maintain discipline and also that this would cause open confrontation with boys and girls in the class - a situation they want to avoid at all costs. In a sense they are not only building respect for themselves but show a need to preserve it.

5.10 REACTIONS OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS TO CIRCUMCISED MALES

5.10.1. Female Students

One of the issues stated to have prompted this research were reports of incidents of circumcised male who had hit female students. However, none of the students who availed themselves for the interviews professed to have ever hit a female. Nevertheless even without such extreme reactions to provocation indications are that conflicts do still exist between these males and female students. The incident where a circumcised male's hat was hidden is a case in point (previous chapter). The way in which the situation is dealt with by the circumcised males takes the following direction:

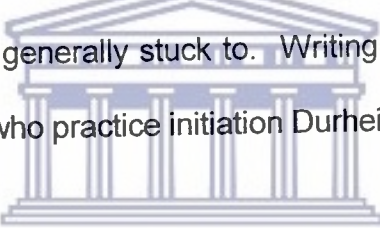
“...the best thing is to avoid them”.

“...I don't allow them to get too familiar with me”.

There are problems brought about by the presence of both uncircumcised males and circumcised males in the school, that in many ways do not differ from those caused by the girls. Of these the one that causes more concern among them is that of younger circumcised males often faced by mockery and disrespect from older but uncircumcised males.

Incidents of open contempt abound, these are shown by their refusal to call them "Bhuti" or even calling them "ntanga". These the initiates find not only degrading to them but also that it undermines the importance of their status.

Prefixing the name of a male circumcised with "Bhuti" is a revered manner of addressing him and is generally stuck to. Writing about a belief universally diffused among tribes who practice initiation Durheim cites:

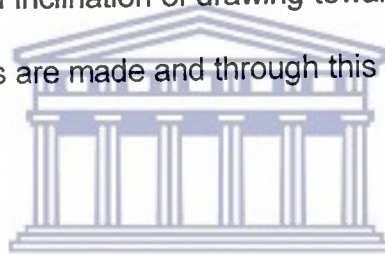


"... the initiate by the fact of initiation has become an entirely new man: he changes his personality, he takes another name, and we know that the name was not then considered as a simple verbal sign, but as an essential element of the person" (1971, p.80).

It is testimony to the appropriateness of the description by Mandela (ibid p.27) that circumcision is "the trial of bravery and stoicism" that none of the interviewees ever used the word "hurt" to describe their feelings as caused by situations such as the above. It was more in the body language that the researcher picked up that such incidents did hurt. The mechanism that they professed to employ being that of avoiding, detachment or indifference.

Schoolmates and classmates form an important part of anyone's school life. Being detached from, indifferent to and avoiding in order to minimize contact with fellow students, possibly slices of a large segment of what would constitute one's social life at school. Entering into manhood is change, and change is described by Deal as "a loss... change is disorientating" (1990, p134). The deduction that can be drawn here is that at exactly this point in the circumcised male's life more than at any other time he has to contend with who he is and who he has become. The additional task of having to ward off pranks and insults constitutes one of many dimensions of the problems of adjustment at school.

Human beings have a natural inclination of drawing towards one another and out of this friendships and memories are made and through this one's life is enriched. Deal (ibid. p.134) puts it this way:



"Attachment is a fundamental human tendency.... We form attachments for a number of reasons. Attachments bring happiness and fellowship ... they head off loneliness".

Avoidance and indifference as a means of insulating oneself from hurt while at school robs the circumcised male of "fellowship".

5.11 SCHOOL VERSUS COMMUNITY

Female teachers and circumcised males

5.11.1 Issue of the hat

The hat here is not going to be discussed because of its inherent importance but rather because of its symbolic importance. The hat is not the only item that the circumcised male puts on but it is merely a part of new, but different, attire from the uniform prescribed.

In many of the interviews indications are that females object openly to the wearing of hats when, for instance, the initiates are in the administration block or staff room. Female teachers having been exposed for a longer period than the students to Western practices and principles of etiquette through reading, social contact, academic study, media, cultural clubs - the list is endless, have gained certain perceptions. It is not unreasonable to assume that their social perceptions are greatly informed by all these contacts and thus their cultural views are deflowered by them.

The wearing of a hat inside a room is not acceptable in western culture, neither is it acceptable to do so in the presence of a lady. They (the female teachers) therefore may assume that initiates should know about this.

On the other hand the initiate with firstly comparatively limited exposure to western culture and secondly armed with stern instructions from his male elders not to part with a hat at all times especially a few months after circumcision is, culturally, behaving in the correct manner. This is one of the many indications that the schools and the community owe each other a dialogue.

5.11.2 Male Teachers and Circumcised Males

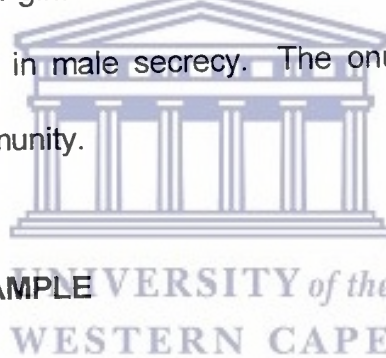
Male teachers, familiar with all the procedures and processes that take place, having personally experienced the circumcision are able to connect mentally and emotionally with circumcised males at school, despite their own exposure to western etiquette. The sense of “brotherhood” and togetherness comes from their appreciation of “having been there” and overrides school expectations, making way for comfortable male discourse. This gives further weight to the gender-linked secrecy of the circumcision ritual.

5.11.3 Female students and circumcised males

Schooling forms part of the growing up experience of every learner. In the process of growing up boys and girls will interact, within reasonable limits, and in a manner befitting the age group they belong in. The not-so-well-defined distance between girls and their circumcised male counterpart results

to this distance being constantly trespassed, then conflict takes place between the two sectors.

To give the above better perspective, after only a few weeks have elapsed after a school holiday the boy who “was” a mere classmate or schoolmate with whom she could relate with great ease, mock, tease, annoy all these categorized as mere frivolity earlier, suddenly became cause for conflict. This is because the boy has now taken “the giant leap”. He has entered into the world of manhood and seniority. Culturally the schism between them is great and significant, but the depth of its significance may not be very apparent to the school girl. Even more so because the entire circumcision process is so clothed in male secrecy. The onus of addressing this lies within the school community.



5.12

POWER OF THE EXAMPLE

Cullingford cites:

“Part of the mythology that surrounds school derives from the realisation that teachers have an expertise beyond their communities” (1991 p.18).

The above statement bears relevance to some of the unpleasant remarks and actions coming from the side of members of staff directed to circumcised males in the presence of fellow learners. In the eyes of these learners what

the teacher does not accord respect does not deserve respect. If the circumcised male is exempted from minor or petty chores in his home and community, the instruction that he should clean the blackboard in class despite the presence of not-yet-circumcised males, the teacher then with “an expertise beyond his community” is charting the way to the undermining of the circumcised male’s status by fellow learners.

Cullingford substantiates this by stating further that:

“... there is a tension between the personality of the individual teacher and the impersonal authority of the position. Schools are understood as embodiments of the teacher’s will” (Ibid. p.82).

5.13

Functions of school

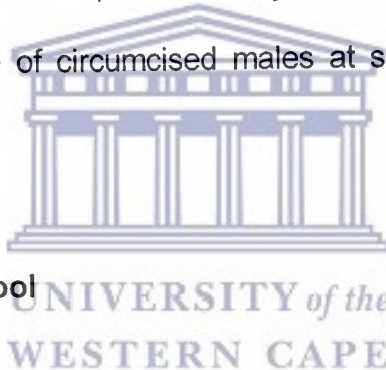
Schools are by definition institutions of learning but the function of the school is more multi-faceted than the mere transmission of knowledge. Rex as quoted by Adam views schools as follows:



“Schools are in part the instruments of the larger society in the public domain. They are concerned with the transmission of skills and the broad political values of our society. They are concerned with the process of selection whereby individuals are allocated to different destinies in life” (1991, p.67).

These three major functions of school namely transmission of skills, transmission of the broad political values of society and the allocation of individuals to different destinies in life are so broad in nature and so time-consuming that, without careful scrutiny of the school ethos and situation the needs of the community the school serves are likely to be marginalized or completely disregarded. In Rex's own words schools are "likely to be corrosive of communal values of any kind" (ibid., p.67).

This study has shown the various areas in which the school community has corroded the revered custom of circumcision overtly by certain utterances made and behaviours shown, and covertly, by not addressing properly the issue of the presence of circumcised males at school thus giving them a nebulous status.



5.14

Self-esteem and school

Self-esteem is an important personality attribute and the school's contribution to the building of self-esteem is quite possibly much greater than many other social institutions. Gammage (1982, p.188) cites:

"... the biggest thing that schools do is to communicate social judgement ... pupils are weighed, evaluated, compared, praised, ridiculed and ignored. Small wonder that one's self-esteem is bound to be a critical factor in education".

In various ways the self-esteem of the circumcised male is, according to this study, lowered.

5.15 Issues the school should take cognizance of

5.15.1 School's indebtedness to community

The circumcised male has without doubt enjoyed his moments of glory within his community and, in so doing, the community instilled and invested a certain worthiness or value in him. It would be a fallacy to expect the school to behave in the same manner as did his clansmen and community. However, the indistinct status that the circumcised males find themselves in at school gives them a sense of bathos. The way things stand with regards to policy on circumcised males adds substance to what Reed asserts, that

“The prevailing socialization process seeks to prevent awareness of how learners individually and collectively relate to the social fabric in which they live” (1981, p.8).

Given that one of the function of a school is to fulfill the needs of the society it is serving then community values should find expression in the school so that no circumcised student should have to nurture the feeling that his “school days are over”.

5.15.2. School's indebtedness to all of its students

One of the tools of empowerment that each student is supposed to leave school owning is coping with change. The value of owning such a tool lies in that it helps the students in their social participation both in and outside school. This study has shown - that no common strategy is in place at the school that addresses the question of the presence of circumcised males at the school. Such a strategy would familiarize all parties with coping with change. In the absence of such a strategy the school community does not present a common front (as did the community) to the advent of manhood. What does exist are sporadic reactions that are sometimes unpleasant. Without a conscious effort to sensitize all parties concerned through open discussion of what parameters are to be set to accommodate the inevitable inflow of "men" at school their needs remain unaddressed.

Kindred (Ibid, p.115) writes:

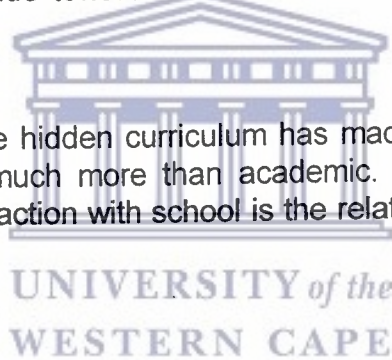
"Within limits permitted under law, adjustments should be made out of respect for pupils who are required to observe religious holidays, dietary regulations, customs of dress and the like. Such pupils are most appreciative of whatever the school does to make allowance for their particular interests and practices".

5.15.3 Teacher's indebtedness to community

Dissatisfaction with the treatment circumcised male receive from some sections of the school community is a transgression of the values of the larger community.

A greater indictment to the school is when such transgressions are committed by persons who are in authority, as such unpleasant experiences have a far-reaching effect on the students concerned. This is because the social relations between teacher and student are an important factor in promoting a student's healthy attitude towards school. Buber as quoted by Sadker has this to say on this:

"Our exploration of the hidden curriculum has made it clear that the school experience includes much more than academic. The one most important factor to student satisfaction with school is the relationship with the teacher". (1991, p.236).



5.15.4 Revisiting of school rules

Some of the responses from the interviewees give a clear indication of the need for the school to revisit its rules. Responses such as:

"... this is my custom..."

“The school should bear with us at least for the initial period” indicate that there would be far less or no tension amongst members of the school community if and when space is allowed for the issue to be thrashed out. This would not only help in giving clear guidelines but would eliminate misconceptions and misunderstanding Cullingford (1991, p.29) writes:

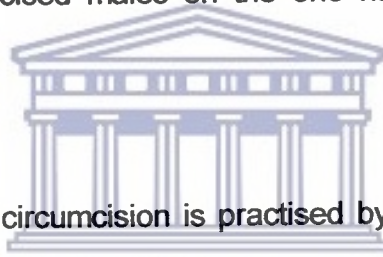
“Many of the practices and rules and most of the curriculum, are taken for granted, as if their purpose needed no spelling out. This means that schools might be arcane...”.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in order to explore the adjustment problems experienced by circumcised males students in a township high school in Cape Town. Circumcision is, by definition, a ritual that endows the male with full-fledged manhood which state is accompanied by rights and privileges. At high school however, the situation is such that in the drawing up of rules and regulations for the school. The presence of circumcised males with “rights and privileges” is not taken into consideration. This results in a conflict between the school culture and the initiation custom, manifesting itself in verbal clashes and misunderstanding between circumcised males on the one hand, and the various other sectors of the school community.



Literature shows that the ritual of circumcision is practised by various groups other than Xhosas. Even though generally the circumcision ritual as practised by Xhosas in various other regions may show some marginal differences there are still more similarities even in the midst of variations. This study confines itself to the ritual as practised in the Lagunya area. Functions of rituals in general are discussed and the possible function of the ritual of circumcision as practised by Xhosas in the Western Cape. Out of this emerges the fact that the ritual has come to function also as the possible answer to the Xhosas loss of identity in the area. A synopsis of the ritual itself is included as collated from information gathered from experienced practitioners of the ritual.

The methodology used for gathering data includes intensive interviews, fieldwork, observation and a self-administered questionnaire. The help of two senior male teachers was solicited by the researcher to firstly negotiate for permission to conduct the study from all the circumcised males of the school and secondly, to set up procedures to be followed, conduct the pilot study and make recommendations.

Results

The study has revealed that there do exist problems of adjustment for circumcised males. The said problems arise from the fact that the rules of the school were never designed to cater for the presence of circumcised males, particularly in the light of the numbers that they have become in recent years and their varied levels of classes, and ages, The right and privileges accorded them by the custom do not tally with the mode of maintaining discipline at school.

A great deal of discontent exists on the part of the circumcised males with regards the way in which they are tackled over issues that they themselves feel are within their rights. Most important of these are the fact that they have to be clad in new clothes after circumcision but these new clothes differ from the prescribed school uniform thus rendering the attire a source of conflict. Their general demeanor is at times also perceived as that of arrogance.

The study shows that circumcision is seen by the majority of circumcised males to have changed them for the better. It is also seen as having helped them stop their wayward ways. The community has been revealed as showing a very positive attitude towards their new status. This they communicate to the circumcised males through praise and also by appointing them to positions of responsibility related to affairs of the community.

The majority of the interviewees feel that they would have been happier or more comfortable had they undergone circumcision after they had completed matric. This is a clear indication of the fact that being circumcised and still be at school does create problems for them. They also claimed to have been warmly received by all the male teachers who showed pleasure over the advent of their manhood. A different response was displayed by the female teachers that ranged from acceptance to cynicism.

All the interviewees professed that the ritual cost their families more money than had ever been spent at their homes for any other occasion. This to them meant that not only is the custom held highly by their families but also is an indication of the family's appreciation of them and value attached to them, as human beings.

They further professed that there are various situations occurring at school that undermine their new status. The two poignant ones being the unpleasant treatment they receive from some lady teachers and the treatment that young circumcised males receive from older uncircumcised male students. The said treatment being that of defiance by older uncircumcised male students and unpleasant remarks and commands on the part of the female teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Western Cape Education Department (WCDE)

Circumcised males at school are, like everyone else, valuable citizens of the country and are entitled to dignity and respect. In viewing their presence at school the aspect that should be taken into consideration is that this is another one of the legacies of apartheid. Had the history of this country been different all the children of the country would have had a right to education. The presence of a twenty-seven year old in high school is testimony to barriers to education, that existed in the past, as for instance lack of funds, that were placed on the historically disadvantaged sector. It therefore behoves the department to recognize this and pay due regard by making concessions particularly on the aspect of uniform, as against the attire that is worn by initiates.

I would also strongly suggest that in a multi-cultural society like South Africa, the customs (including circumcision in the case of Xhosas) of different culture groups should be dealt with during Life Orientation. This should, hopefully, positively contribute to a better understanding of the different cultures.

School

In celebration of the multi-cultural society that we are, recognition of the status of circumcised males should be the way in which the school contributes towards the upholding and the acceptance of the Xhosa culture. Within reasonable limits concessions could be

made, with the Governing Body playing a crucial role as the mouthpiece of the parents, and the community in general. Within reasonable limits and without being overindulgent space should be created that allows affirmation of their new status at school as any contrary attitude or behaviour nullifies the main significance and function of this custom.

On completion of this study a copy of the mini-thesis shall be contributed to the school's library in order for the school community to receive access to the findings. It is hoped that this will be an eye-opener to all concerned and out of it a debate may generate where the school begins to perceive the aspect of the circumcised males in a different light.

Further Studies

Further studies on the presence of circumcised males in high school would enhance the understanding of their position. It would be useful to get information from all sectors of the school i.e. male and female teachers, female students and not-yet-circumcised male students as this study only focused on circumcised males. The global perspective that would be gained with interviews from these other sectors would prove useful and would provide a balanced view.

Further studies could also indicate whether circumcision directly leads to an increase in academic performance.

Research design

It was agreed upon at the negotiation stage that the tape recorder would not be used. In deference to the circumcised males wishes it was not used. Writing out of responses proved to not only to be a cumbersome method but also extremely time-consuming.

Among many reasons and also in an attempt not to make the sample a biased one, all circumcised males who had agreed to be interviewed and availed themselves form part of the sample resulting in a total of 106 interviews. This large number for a qualitative research also proved to be time consuming. For a future study a smaller sample that is representative of the different standard levels is recommended.



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Subjectivity

The limitation of this kind of research for me is that as a principal of the said school at the time I had a stake in the system and therefore not a totally disinterested party.

KEY WORDS

1. Ikrwala - newly initiated/initiate
2. Ubukrwala - the condition of being recently circumcised
3. Umoluko - circumcision
4. Ukoluka - to go for circumcision
5. Ukuya ehlatini - literally means going to the bush also used as euphemism for circumcision
6. Ingcibi - the “surgeon” who conducts the circumcision.
7. Ibhuma - the lodge
8. Ubhuti -omtsha - recently initiated
9. Inkwenkwe - a boy
10. Intombazana - a girl
11. Umfundi - a student
12. Utitshalakazi - a lady teacher
11. uMiss - unmarried female teacher
12. uMa’am - married female teacher
13. uBhuti - prefixes the name of a circumcised male and is a sign of respect
14. Ta - prefixes the name of a circumcised male and is a sign of respect
15. Ntanga - equal (used as a derogatory term to despise manhood as gained through circumcision- in context of this study)

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APPENDIX A

1. The Family

1. Who broached the question of your going to the bush?
2. How did you feel about it?
3. What reasons were advanced?
4. Was the fact that you are still at school ever an issue? If it was, how?
5. After circumcision were you treated differently by members of the family?
Elaborate.
6. On your part in what way has going to the bush changed you?

2. Personal

1. Before going to the bush did you discuss this with anyone of your mates at school?
 - i) Why?
 - ii) What was their response?
2. How did you perceive circumcised males at school before now?
3. How do you feel about them now?

3. Community

1. Did you notice any changes in the manner in which the people in your community related to you after you had gone to the bush?
2. What changes are these?
3. What is expected of you by the community/neighborhood?

4. How much responsibility has being a full-fledged man entailed for you in your neighborhood?
5. What restrictions were imposed on you?
 - what are your obligations?
 - what are your rewards?
 - what are your expectations?
6. To what extent are all these fulfilled?

4. The School

1. What went on in your mind the first day you joined the school after you had been circumcised?
2. How did you feel?
3. To what extent, did what you thought and how you felt correspond to what really took place at the school.
4. How were you received by:
 - male teachers
 - female teachers
 - male students
 - female students
 - classmates
 - class teacher
 - caretaker
 - labourer



5. Did the behaviour of each of the above differ from what it had been before circumcision? How?
6. Is there a difference between the manner in which you are treated by
 - male as against female students?
 - male as against female teachers?
 If there is how does this manifest itself?
7. How often do you feel the rules of the school are in conflict with what you believe are your rights as a male?
8. Do you feel the general atmosphere is oppressive / suppressive to you at school? If yes, how?
9. Who do you mingle with during breaks?
10. What decides the above choice?
11. Are these the same people you mingled with prior to your going to the bush?



5. Discipline

1. How do you reconcile the fact that the school demands the wearing of uniform with the kind of clothes that you wear.
2. The custom requires that new clothes are to be worn but it is not stipulated which clothes must be worn, why is it then that you did not buy new uniform.
3. You are now allowed to smoke according to custom but the school does not allow this. What do you perceive as the solution to this and why?
4. You are now allowed to drink according to custom but the school does not allow this. What do you perceive as the solution to this and why?

5. Have you ever had occasion to hit
 - a male student?
 - before or after circumcision?
 - why did you hit him?
6. Have you ever had occasion to hit?
 - a female student?
 - before or after circumcision?
 - why did you hit her?
7. What are you prepared to do given a chance to meet the school half way in maintaining discipline.

6. **Academic Work**

1. Has there been any difference in your manner of participation in class.
2. If yes (i) how? And
(ii) why
3. Do you feel pressured to perform better in your school work?
If yes (i) why?
(ii) how?
4. Do you feel pressured to behave in a disciplined manner in class?
If yes (i) why?
(ii) how?
5. Do you feel that you are getting more attention or less attention from teachers ?
Why do you think so?



6. How do you feel about this?
7. Have you become more passive or more active in class. Elaborate.
8. Would you have been (i) less or (ii) more comfortable or happier if you had left being circumcised until after matric? why?

7. **General**

1. Is there anything that is not covered here regarding your status at school that you would like to share?
2. Given the opportunity to change anything in your school life since you became a man, what would it be?



APPENDIX B

HIGH SCHOOL CIRCUMCISION

1. The name of the respondent will not be required. Use the number supplied

Number :

2. Present Age :

3. Age at which circumcised :

4. Present Std :

5. First year at school : Std. :

6. Number of circumcised males in class :

7. Put a cross where appropriate :

The ritual was held in :

a. Cape Town ?

b. Rural Area ?

c. Hospital ?

d. Bush ?



8. Do you have an older brother who has undergone circumcision ?

Tick where appropriate : YES ? NO ?

9. Where do you live? Mention only the township ?

Type of house: Informal Settlement ? / Informal Settlement ?

10. Are both your parents working ? Tick where appropriate. YES ? / NO ?

11. If not, who is the breadwinner ? Tick where appropriate.

Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Uncle	Aunt
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12. Please give a rough estimation of how much was spent on the entire ritual.
13. Can you think of any other occasion which an amount of money like that was spent at your home? What was it?
14. Occupation of the person who sponsored the ritual?

