

Ukuma Njenge Ndoda: The Making of Xhosa Masculinities in Mthatha, Eastern Cape

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Dedication

For my mother, Tamie. To my dad, Dosini.

Abstract

This study examines how young men construct their masculine identities in daily life through the collection of activities that happen throughout young men's lives in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. The aim of the research is to examine how black men construct their identity as men. It seeks to examine the everyday ways in which young men speak of their masculinity, how they understand themselves in relation to women and the causes of gender-based and sexual violence in South Africa. The study conceptualises Xhosa masculinities and manhood within the framework of masculinist violence and the state. It demonstrates the intersection of manhood violence and the state within the discipline of international relations which is characterised by ideas of state security and war. Interviews with Xhosa men in Mthatha illuminated that boys are raised to be men who stand, articulated as *ukuma njenge ndoda* (standing up as a man), for themselves, family and community. *Ukuma* operates as an assertion and protection of self, a demonstration of independence and being self-sustaining. It importantly speaks to the gendered division of labour where over and above standing up for oneself, it is a man's duty and responsibility "*ukumela izinto zekhaya*" – to stand up for his home and family. This thesis shows that the different forms that *ukuma* carry with them expectations of dominance and control or at least maintain the appearance of it. Ultimately, the concept of *ukuma* serves as a way to legitimise the use of force or violence in certain instances where men feel that an act of violence constitutes *ukuzimela* (standing up for himself) or *ukumela ikhaya* (standing up for his family). The masculinising of this duty implicates not only the men it is bestowed upon the women and children who are the ones supposedly protected and provided for.

IsiXhosa terms used in the study.

Indoda (s.)/ amadoda (pl): circumcised man / men

Ubudoda: Manhood

Isidoda / Isipathulo: (Secret) Language spoken by men

Inkwenkwe (s.)/ amaKhwenkwe (pl.): boy / boys / uncircumcised males

Ikrwala (s.)/ amakrwala (pl.): newly initiated men within the probation period

Umfana (s.)/ abafana (pl.): young men

Ulwaluko: Xhosa cultural practice of initiating young boys from boyhood into manhood

Umkhwetha (s.)/Abakhwetha (pl.): initiate(s)

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

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

Ibhoma: the secluded abode for the duration the initiation period

Izilimela: man years

Isiduko (s.)/ Iziduko (pl.): Clan name(s)

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

Ukuzithutha: Reciting one's clan names.

Umgidi: post initiation celebration ceremony

Umkhuluwa (s.)/ Abakhuluwa (pl.): one who was initiated before you

Ukuwa / ukuwiswa: failing to stand up for one's self when questioned in a gathering of men

Ukubhuda: to make a mistake or inability to articulate oneself (in the secret language)

Umzi: Homestead

Ukuma: to stand up

Ukuzimela: to stand up for one's self/ to be independent

Ilali/ezilalini: Rural home

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Situating Masculinities in South African discourse

This research examines how manhood and masculinity have been theorized in post-apartheid South Africa in order to understand the nature of gender and violence in the country. This study seeks to understand the ways in which socio-cultural and political factors influence ways of constructing manhood for amaXhosa. Numerous scholars argue that it is more fruitful to consider masculinities not as a singular universal form of gender expression but as diverse and contextually specific (Uchende, 2004). Scholars also point out that masculinity as the gender expression prescribed for male bodies is laden with social, cultural, economic, and political tensions (Morrel, 2001; Moolman, 2013).

In this chapter, it is important to demonstrate the context from which studies of Black African masculinities and manhood in post-apartheid South Africa emerge. Posel (2005) notes that Manhood and Masculinities in South Africa have been primarily studied within a framework of moral panic and crisis. Indeed, the work of Hunter (2010) in *Love in the time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa*, demonstrates how the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the 1990s reconfigured gender relations in the context of intimate relationships and gender power dynamics. He further shows how HIV/AIDS was conceived as a failure of Black men to behave in a sexually responsible manner, framing it as a symptom of problematic Black African manhood or masculinity. The AIDS pandemic was a sight of the intersection of a number of issues that South Africa was grappling with such that it could be connected with sexual violence and gender-based violence in South African homes (Abraham et al, 1999), (Dunkle et al, 2004) (Strebel et al, 2006). The scourge of baby rape soon took root, partly fuelled by stereotypes about virginity being a cure for HIV/AIDS (Posel, 2005). These incidents of ‘baby rape’ caused public outrage in the early 2000s and a declaration of a “crisis of manhood” in South Africa (Posel, 2005). Similarly, with baby rape, the outrage constructed an image of the immoral sexual deviant who was a black man raping a baby (Posel, 2005:249).

As this study specifically focuses on Xhosa men in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, there are culturally and socially significant factors that contribute to the ways in which Xhosa men experience, perform, and narrate their masculinity. Much of the literature about Xhosa

manhood centres around the initiation rite of passage of *ulwaluko* - describing the process and its element as well as problems associated with the ritual like injuries and death of initiates, crimes, and gender oppression (Bogopa 2007; Kepe 2010; Mavundla et al. 2010; Peltzer and Kanta 2009; Venter 2011; Vincent 2008). *Ulwaluko*, as will be shown in this study, is central to being a Xhosa man and an enduring feature in the construction of masculinity from boyhood right through to adulthood. This is why although this research is not about *ulwaluko*, it features as a foundational point of discussion. Mavundla, Netswera, Toth, Bottoman, and Tenge (2010) as well as Mfecane (2016) explain that among amaXhosa, achieving manhood status by completing the initiation rite of passage grants men power and authority in the communities over women and [traditionally] uncircumcised men. This is discussed further in Chapter Two. For Mfecane (2016) the concept of (being) *indoda* - *a man*, is used to capture the embodied immaterial aspects of masculine personhood for amaXhosa which is different from western and other cultural conceptions of manhood and masculinity.

This introductory chapter sets the contextual frame which situates the research questions of this study. It shows that manhood in South Africa has been primarily studied under the framework of moral panic and crisis related to epochal surges of masculine violence. It further shows that the everyday experiences of Xhosa men have not received sufficient scholarly attention and theoretical conceptualizing. As such, I draw from recent works by scholars such as Langa (2020) which prioritize the long-term everyday experiences of young Black men from townships in South Africa and situate themselves within this gap of scholarship. This study examines the lives of Xhosa men in their everyday navigations and experiences of manhood in democratic South Africa and examines how they narrate their masculinity.

1.1.1 Xhosa manhood: Ritual initiation and phallocentrism

Mfecane (2016) states that “Xhosa notions of masculinity are embodied in the concept of *indoda*, meaning a traditionally circumcised person”. For amaXhosa, one must have gone through the initiation rite of passage from boyhood to manhood known as *ulwaluko* as a precondition to being recognized as *indoda* (Meintjies, 1998; Ntombana, 2011; Mfecane, 2016). Every year in June and December, boys who are of age are separated from the community for a period of three to six weeks to be initiated into manhood. The process involves getting

circumcised by a traditional surgeon - known as *ingcibi* - and being taught and prepared for life as *indoda* – a man (Ntombana, 2011). Some authors, Laidler (1922), Peltzer et al. (2010), reduce the initiation practice to a mere cutting of the foreskin (circumcision), which is only part of the ritual.

Mfecane (2016) explains that during the period of separation, the initiate – known as *umkhwetha* – has a designated guardian known as *iKhankatha* and other initiated youth known as *abafana* living with him in the initiation lodge – known as *ibhoma* – from whom he receives instruction about being a man. Other scholars and writers explain that the Chief of the area, the elder men (usually the initiates' fathers and male relatives), *amakhankatha* and *abafana* – young men who have been initiated – who participate in facilitating the initiation process -- all form part of the network of *amadoda* who are responsible for the nursing and teaching of the initiates (Ngwane, 2004; Vincent, 2008, Mgqolozana, 2010 Ntombana, 2009; Maluleke, 2018).

Ntombana (2011) points out that most publications in the early 2000s focused on investigating the role of initiation in reducing the spread of HIV and AIDS, as well as the issues related to injuries and the escalating deaths among initiates. In the wake of the devastating effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, there was intense research efforts and resources directed toward curbing the spread of the disease. Researchers as far back as the late 1980s and early 1990's have shown that the African regions mainly in sub-Saharan Africa where male circumcision is practiced had lower rates of HIV infection (Moses, Plummer, Bradley, Ndinya-Ahola, Nagelkerke and Ronal, 1994; Bongaarts, Reining, Way, Conant F, 1989; Halperin and Bailey, 1999, Bailey, Plummer, Moses, 2001). Although much of the earlier research findings were “difficult to interpret... [and] complicated by many cofounders” (Vincent, 2008:432), the suggestions did lead scientists to investigating the utility of male circumcision in reducing the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS (Bailey, 2007, De Cock, 2007; WHO, 2007, Stinson, 2008).

Scholars note that a surge of research indicated that circumcised men had a lower risk of contracting HIV from sleeping with HIV positive women, (Vincent, 2008; Ntombana, 2011). According to a research study conducted among 3200 HIV negative men from Orange Farm, a township in Johannesburg South Africa found that men who are circumcised were 60% less likely to contract HIV than those who had not been circumcised (Auvert et al. 2005). Similar studies in other parts of Africa including Uganda (Sawire et al, 2007) and Kenya (Kahn, 2006), Botswana and Lesotho have confirmed similar results.

While some applaud these findings as a breakthrough in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment (Coates, 2005) others are sceptical and maintain that disease prevention should centre around reducing infectious contact which requires altered (risky sexual) behaviour and practises rather than surgical procedures which circumcision is (Vincent, 2008:433). The findings of the protective effect of circumcision against HIV infection bolstered the public health move to encourage all South African men to get circumcised. The South African Department of Health made Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) a freely available procedure at designated clinics and hospitals. There has also been encouragement from organisations involved with gender justice and men's health (genderjustice.org, 2013).

The Xhosa initiation rite of passage – *ulwaluko* – has landed at the centre of discussions about the violent conduct of young men with the alarming rates of gender-based violence and rape in South Africa (Vincent 2008). Furthermore, over the last two decades, the practice has been characterised by death of initiates, botched circumcisions, alcohol abuse and violent misconduct of *amakrwala* – newly initiated men (Ntombana, 2011). All these have motivated investigations into the nature of Xhosa manhood which involve looking at the practice of *ulwaluko* and its involvement (if any) in the making of problematic masculine behaviour among Xhosa male youth (Vincent, 2008).

Male circumcision is a practice that has been conducted for centuries by different communities in Africa and around the world (Deacon & Thomson, 2012; Mogotlane, Ntlangulela, & Ogunbanjo, 2004). Several scholars note the difference between circumcision and initiation. Circumcision is defined as the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis (Funani, 1990; Nyaundi, 2005; Vincent, 2008). In some cultures, such as Jewish and Muslim societies circumcision is performed a day or seven days after the birth of the male child (Doyle, 2005; Mhlahlo, 2009). Circumcision practices across many cultures is also done as a matter of confirming and accessing personhood as sanctioned by religious or spiritual personhood. As scholars note among Jews it is understood that circumcision brings the nation closer to God.

Barker & Ricardo (2005) explain that initiation rites of passage are practised across Africa, particularly in parts of West Africa, East and Southern Africa, with local and regional differences. A rite of passage is defined as an act or set of rituals executed according to set social rules and customs (Ampim, 2003). In South Africa ethnic groups that practice male circumcision regard the practice as an initiation ritual which indicates the rite of passage from boyhood into manhood (Deacon & Thompson, 2012; Gwata, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Five ethnic

groups that promote the practice of traditional male initiation are the Nguni people (amaXhosa and aba Thembu), Ba Sotho (including the Tswana people), Vha Venda and the Tsonga people (Ntombana, 2011; Deacon & Thompson, 2012). In the Eastern Cape Province, the amaXhosa are the predominant ethnic group that practice TMC as part of the initiation rite of passage, *ulwaluko* (Ntombana, 2009; Vincent, 2008). Initiation usually takes place in the 'bush or mountain' an area secluded from the larger community (Mhlahlo, 2009; Vincent, 2008). The 'bush' or 'mountain' symbolises a place of isolation where the actual healing and initiation teachings are practised (Mhlahlo, 2009; Lungcuza, 2013; Ntombana, 2011 a; Vincent, 2008, Siswana, 2018). Initiation rituals are treated with a high level of secrecy and sacredness and detailed information about Traditional Male Circumcision (TMC,) specifically the similarities and differences between different ethnic groups, are generally not available in the literature (Mhlahlo, 2009; Ndangam, 2008; Ncaca, 2014; Vincent, 2008, Siswana, 2018).

For amaXhosa, initiation finds itself at the centre of much of young men's socialisation as its teachings inform much of the young men's conduct after the process is complete. Using the work of Dr de Cock (2007), Ntombana argues that male circumcision is part of ritual initiation "is heavily laden with social and cultural connotations to morality" (2011:633) therefore should not just be reduced to the scientific discourse of disease prevention. Indeed, many scholars have discussed the function and importance of initiation for establishing moral values (Pauw, 1994; Ntombana, 2009). Morality/ Morals and values is a significant marker of difference from boyhood to manhood. Cook (1999) and Mbiti (1986) explain that moral and values are an expression of what good and acceptable conduct and behaviour is expected and endorsed by groups in particular context including the demonstration of ideal manhood for amaXhosa (Ntombana, 2011).

It is common cause that when boys are misbehaving and getting involved in dangerously behaviour, this is seen as an indication that it may be time for them to be initiated into manhood. Mgqolozana (2009) in the story of his journey through initiation described the troublesome behaviour and even criminal activity he got up to as a seventeen-year-old boy which resulted in him failing Grade eleven. The response from some of his elders was to suggest that it was time for him to go to initiation school. Similarly, Qambela, (2021) referring to Yolisa Qunta's Writing What We Like, narrates that Shaka Sisulu (2016) remembers a family holiday where he and his cousins were being raucous. In response to their disorderly behaviour, Sisulu's aunt response was that they should go to *uyokoluka* (initiation school). The

belief, Sisulu (2016, 17) writes, was that “our conscription into initiation school would miraculously turn us into responsible young men.” This function of initiation as a mechanism of socialisation into responsible adulthood through manhood demonstrates why traditional male initiation remains significant in the lives of young Xhosa men as it is not only initiation that matters, but also “the attainment of social status and the fulfilment of social expectations in the years post-initiation” (Siswana 2015, 3).

According to Vincent (2008) male circumcision rites are steeped in symbolism which give and express the meaning of masculinity. The enhancement of masculine virility, the performative enactment of the separation between men and women, preparation for marriage and adult sexuality and the hardening of boys for warfare (Vincent 2008) are typical themes addressed by the initiation practice. Similarly, Siswana (2018) points out that content of the transfer of information and skills ranges from methods of hunting, strategies of treating women, how to build a house, warrior or fighting skill and historical information about the cultural group and its rituals. Thus, much of the literature confirms the common understanding of *ulwaluko* as a ‘school of manhood’ among amaXhosa. Indeed, Meintjies (1998), Stinson, (2007) and Ntombana (2011) explain that initiation school is education and the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Thus, Ntombana (2011:636) states that “it is where young men receive instruction in courtship, social responsibility and marriage practices”. The nature of initiation as an institution of learning is also part of the

The distinction between traditional male circumcision and medical male circumcision represents a central tension that exists related to regulating of initiation and the requirements for achieving real manhood status among amaXhosa. There is a direct connection between *ulwaluko*, achieving full personhood through manhood status and morality and values which supports the subaltern position that [traditionally] uncircumcised males occupy among amaXhosa. A male-bodied person who has not gone through *ulwaluko* is *inkwenkwe* – a boy and is excluded from participating in social reproduction as *indoda* (Mfecane, 2016). A traditionally circumcised individual is regarded as *indoda*, a real man, irrespective of his sexual orientation or class, and this affords him full political personhood through manhood and access to all the rights and privileges which stem from it (Mfecane, 2016; Siswana, 2018). Furthermore, *Inkwenkwe* and medically circumcised men embody “subordinate” forms of masculinity and are victims of stigma and discrimination by *indoda*. Thus, the literature on male circumcision also demonstrates a chasm between traditional ritual circumcision performed (by many African groups) as part of initiation rites of passage and what is termed

Safe Medical Circumcision (SMC) or Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) or Medical Male Circumcision by researchers and public health institutions (Stinson, 2008; Rennie, Perry, Corneli, Chilungo & Umar, 2015).

Mfecane (2016) argues that the concept of *indoda* which denotes the highest form of masculinity for amaXhosa represents an understanding of manhood which operates on two fronts. On the one hand, *ubudoda* – manhood, is a social identity conferred by initiation following which, it must be demonstrated and maintained through the fulfilment of the social responsibilities that manhood status conferred to one in the community. The standards of morality and values as well as the requirement for one to take part in the social practices of one's community described above all serve as demonstrations of social personhood expected of one who is a man. Thus, Mfecane (2016:207) states that “as soon as a Xhosa initiate is re-integrated into the community as an *indoda* after weeks of separation, his manhood status [*ubudoda*] is judged less by having a circumcised penis and more by his public conduct: dress code, responsibility, respect and avoidance of violence”. Although, it is recognised that uninitiated males may also display traits of responsible manhood and even be complemented as *indoda*, scholars point out that such does not in fact make him *indoda* (Ngwane, 2004; Mfecane 2016). It has to be preceded by circumcision in order to be regarded as a sign of being a man (Ngwane, 2004). Similarly, where the behaviour of an initiated person is contrary to his manly status, for example because of criminal acts, violence or disrespect, he does not lose his status as an *indoda*. The social fact of having undergone *ulwaluko* to completion means that he remains an *indoda*, even if he violates the expected social conduct (Mfecane, 2016). This implies that the *ubudoda* manhood status among amaXhosa is grounded primarily in the physical body (penis). Thus, we can understand *ubudoda* is an inviolable embodied identity marked by the traditionally circumcised phallus.

According to Mfecane (2016) *indoda* – a man represents a conception of manhood that recognises a male body which carries an essence of manhood that cannot be taken away once conferred by the successful completion of by initiation. The transition from boyhood to manhood which starts with [traditional] circumcision thus, “begins with a specific act of inserting a cultural mark of manhood into the body” (Mfecane. 2016). Thus, the possession of a [traditionally] circumcised penis is central to Xhosa manhood (Mavundla, 2010, Mfecane, 2016). As this study demonstrates in Chapter two and four, the traditionally circumcised penis is the ultimate evidence of one's manhood and may be required as evidence when one's

manhood status cannot be confirmed by their actions and the secret language of men learnt in the bush.

This speaks to the phallocentrism of Xhosa manhood and masculinity (Mfecane, 2016). According to Rine (2010) “phallocentrism is a term used primarily by feminist theorists to denote the pervasive privileging of the masculine within the current system of signification”. The word phallus is often used interchangeably with penis. However, a more nuanced conceptualisation of phallus reveals that the phallus is the conception of the (erect) penis as a symbol of supreme masculine power (Tiefer, 1994) and feminine lack or subordinate position (Rine, 2010). In social and academic discourse, the masculinist nature of social and political life and institution resulting from patriarchy precipitates phallocentric understandings of masculinities studies (Macleod, 2007).

In this study, the phallocentrism of Xhosa manhood is acknowledged in so far as it interrelates with the study’s wider analysis of masculinism in political theory and discourse. Furthermore, it is in the exposition of masculinism that the study engages the interrelation of gender, violence and the state.

1.1.2 Crisis of masculinities and historic everyday violence

Gqola (2016) and Motsemme (2011) argue that moments of change in society make room for the fashioning of new identities and ways of being. In the context of South Africa, the transition from apartheid to democracy through a negotiated settlement and the adoption of a new liberal constitution is a seminal point for the models of identity formation and expression present in contemporary discourse. As Walker (2005) and Moolman (2013) argue the departure from the (legal and institutional) structures that represented and maintained the old and adoption of those that facilitate the new also affects how social relations are maintained, discarded and reconfigured. For gender relations in South Africa, the adoption of The Constitution (1996) which confers extensive rights of freedom and equality to all people foregrounds the tenuous nature of gender equality and gendered violence present (Walker, 2005).

Many have pointed out that the South Africa’s relationship with violence should not be seen as a spontaneous burst of the period of transition but must be understood as part of a continuous tread from its violent past (Gqola, 2015; Motsemme, 2011; Tlabi, 2017; Suttner,

2017). Thus, current models and practices of manhood (and womanhood) are embedded in South Africa's colonial and apartheid history and so is the nature of violence.

The rape trial of former State President Jacob Zuma in 2006 while he was the deputy president of the governing party, the African National Congress (ANC), demonstrates the raptures and continuities from apartheid violence (Suttner, 2009, Hassim, 2009). Furthermore, the courts' handling of the trial and the public discourse during and after shows the fragility of gender equality, despite its extensive legal enshrinement through the constitution (Suttner, 2009). In her Book, *The kanga and the kangaroo court – reflections on the rape trial of Jacob Zuma*, Mmatshilo Motsei (2007) points out how the manipulation of African traditions and disingenuous deployment of Zulu culture on the part of Zuma served to undermine the hard-earned gains of women's rights in South Africa. Similarly, Suttner (2009) shows the intersection between masculinity (in the ANC) and cultural chauvinism operate(d) to secure an acquittal for Zuma while undermining the status of women.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and femicide have been particularly prevalent in public discourse (Moolman, 2008; Abrahams and Jewkes, 1999). There has also been a lot of activism to bring awareness and force state action to address the issue including the 2018 #TotalShutdown against gender-based violence and occupation of the Union Buildings which resulted in the presidential summit against GBV and Femicide, followed by the appointment of an Interim Gender-Based Violence and Femicide committee on women, and the launch of the sexual offences court. The levels of gender-based violence, femicide and rape have invited conversations about the role and meaning of manhood and an examination of the links between masculinity and violence.

The public conversation about GBV has largely been informed by women speaking, mostly on social media, and through many women's civil society activist movements about the everyday sexist micro-aggressions and the violent atrocities that they suffer in their lifetimes at the hands of men and patriarchal institutions (Maluleke, 2020). Femicide and rape came to the fore of public discourse following the activist movements #AllMenAreTrash, #MeToo #RURReferenceList and #AmINext which gave a platform and voice for women's accounts and descriptions of the violence they experience because of toxic masculinities groomed with misogyny and rape culture in a white supremacist, patriarchal society(s) (Maluleke, 2020).

Furthermore, the crisis of sexual violence has arguably reached epidemic proportions. Sexual Violence takes various forms which have been a consistent feature in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa (Gqola, 2015 and Tlabi, 2017) and this has implications for the gendered nature of violence. It is now widely acknowledged in many social, academic, and professional schools of thought, that rape - which is seen to be the most extreme form of sexual violence – is not about ‘the sex’ but about power (Gqola, 2015; Tlabi, 2017, Suttner). That is to argue that rape is less about the sexual act of intercourse (not limited to physical penetration) that forms the basis of sexual relations (sex) and more about the violent power relations it enforces while using the same body mechanics as sex. Thus, it is important to articulate the assertion that rape is not a form of sex and so, not only is it incorrect but misleading to speak of sex without consent because the minute consent is absent in a sexual act it ceases to be sex and is simply an act of violence – rape.

Therefore, it is important to understand ‘corrective rape’ as a form of sexual violence that is used to express and enforce heteronormative hegemony on those who do not conform to heterosexual gender norms. It is important to examine and interrogate the power dynamics and relations that perpetrators of sexual violence wield over victims and survivors of sexual violence. In ‘corrective rape’ perpetrators deploy sexual violence as a ‘disciplinary’ measure against those who transgress gender norms by not following the logic of the heterosexual gender binary with their sexuality to ‘correct’ them. Rape in this way is one of the violent tools used to enforce and maintain the reign of hegemonic masculinity in the social order of society. Indeed, scholars such as Mfecane (2016), Msibi (2012) and queer theorists argue, for example, that homophobic violence against queer individuals is an example of how social gender norms are ascribed, validated and enforced – even violently. Lesbian women, feminine presenting gay men and transgender people bear the brunt of homophobic violence including assault, rape and murder because they are the easily identifiable deviants against heteronormative gender identities (Mfecane, 2016).

The relationship between rape and power has also allowed scholars to make a case for why rape should also be understood as “a weapon of war” (Buss, 2009). Following years of feminist work, the United Nations Security Council gave formal “recognition that rape in wartime is not a simple ‘by-product’ of war but is often a planned and targeted policy” (Buss, 2009:146). In a resolution adopted in 2008, the UN Security Council affirmed that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a

constitutive act with respect to genocide” (UN Security Council, 2008). South Africa’s rape statistics being comparable to a country at war make it more pertinent to locate the nature of (sexual) violence and masculinity in political studies and international relations.

1.2 Political studies, masculinity and violence

The study of Politics (Political philosophy/theory) and discipline of International Relations are largely concerned with matters of the state; its formation, governance and security (Heywood, 2001, Dhal, 1989, Elshtain, 1985). Mainstream theories in International Relations posit the Westphalian state is the primary unit of organising human life and the most important actor in international politics. Drawing from the writings of early philosophers including Thomas Hobbes and Aristotle as well as Niccolò Machiavelli; realism and liberalism contend with questions of state sovereignty and how to achieve state security. The twentieth century, which saw a political crisis in Europe plunge the world into two world wars, saw the discipline focused on questions of war and peace because of “a passionate desire to prevent another war” (Tickner, 1992: 9).

It is widely accepted that masculinity and politics have a long and close association as it is widely accepted that characteristics associated with "manliness," such as toughness, courage, power, independence, and even physical strength, have, throughout history, been those most valued in the conduct of politics, particularly international politics (Tickner, 1992; Hooper, 2001). Tickner (1992:18) argued that the dominance of masculinity in the practice of international politics is also reflected in the academic study of international politics in that “concepts central to international relations theory and practice, such as power, sovereignty, and security have been framed in terms that we associate with masculinity” (Tickner, 1992: 18). In the book, *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (2004), Dudink, Hagemann and Tosh “demonstrate how a focus on masculinity can contribute to a rethinking of the history of politics and war in the modern world” (2004: xii). Their contention is that in the field of History of politics and war “a gender perspective which foregrounds masculinity is richly productive of empirical and theoretical insights” (2004: xii).

Christine Sylvester (1994:4) argues mainstream international relations has historically presented “men, dressed as states, statesmen, soldiers, decision makers, terrorists, despots and other characters with more powerful positions than women” (Sylvester). The contribution of

scholars such as Tickner (1992) reveal the incorrect and contradictory nature of the masculinist construction of wars as fought by men for the protection of women and children. As the empirical evidence shows, women and children make are most affected by the violence and socio-economic as well as ecological devastation of was. This gender-blind spot has allowed for patriarchal, sexist, misogynistic, and homophobic conceptions of the world and political life which facilitate the continued discrimination and disenfranchisements of many.

Therefore, it is important to analyse the historical processes by which politics and war come to be constructed as naturally and exclusively masculine realms (Sjoberg, 2010). Dudink, Hagemann, and Tosh (2004) provide a very useful analysis of the intersections between the development of modern notions of gender differences and practices of war which allows us to trace “how notions of masculinity (and femininity) produced the gendered practices of – among other things – citizenship and conscription” (2004). This allows us to see that the state is in fact a gendered entity and performs its leviathan duties in gendered ways.

1.3 Research objectives

This thesis examines how young men in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, construct their masculinity and come into their masculine identity in their daily lives. It explores how young men’s masculine identities are related to dominance and violence in everyday life.

Sub questions:

- How do young Xhosa men come to know and decide that they are men in their daily lives?
- What characteristics and expressions operate as qualifiers of their manhood?
- How does Xhosa manhood relate to women and femininity?

1.4 Chapter outline of the study

This study is organized into five chapters. In this chapter, I set the empirical context in which the study takes place and outlined the discursive context of masculinity and [Xhosa] manhood’s emergence in popular South African discourse. Thus, it sets out the local, continental, and global debates that shape the study of masculinities and violence. The study

begins with a look at *ulwaluko*, the initiation rite of passage practiced by amaXhosa. The theme of ritual initiation and phallocentrism emerges as significant in describing the ways in which [Xhosa] manhood and [state] masculism is understood. Additionally, the reality of multiple crises related to the social fabric of South Africa and the initiation rite of passage, notably gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS epidemic, provided a site from which to see how the transition into democracy shifted much of socio-political identities and allowed for a reconfiguration of gender identities. The chapter also briefly outlined the crisis of masculinity and pervasive violence to further demonstrates the interrelation between masculinity and violence in looking at the macro conception and expression masculinist violence in democratic South African. I show that the discipline of Political Science and International relations has engaged gender and masculinity through its preoccupation with questions of war and peace. Ultimately, this chapter served to provide context as to how Xhosa manhood and masculinities studies emerge in popular and academic discourse.

Chapter Two of this study will provide a theoretical framework that situates manhood within phallocentric conceptions of the state and security to show their masculinist underpinnings. The historical evolution of state theory will be used to discuss how feminist conceptions of the state challenge the phallocentrism and masculinism of mainstream conceptions that have been inadequate in demonstrating how gender identity is intertwined with the political.

Chapter Three describes the methodological underpinnings of the study. This chapter locates the study in the areas in and around Mthatha in Eastern Cape, South Africa. The study makes use of qualitative research methods, wherein semi-structured in-depth interviews with 7 young Xhosa men were conducted. In this chapter, I also make a case for the significance of the legacy of colonial and apartheid spatial geography to the meaning and making of home and belonging in democratic South Africa and the ways in which this added nuance to how I came to locate the research site and sample criteria. Thematic analysis is used to collate and examine the views expressed by the men in the study.

Chapter Fours details the findings of the study and the major themes identified from the data. These include understanding *ulwaluko* as a presupposition manhood; Xhosa manhood and sexuality; demonstrating and proving manhood; the notion of *Ukuma* (standing up) as a central act and demonstration of manhood serves as a conceptual descriptor of Xhosa

masculinity as enunciates the interrelation between Xhosa masculinity and the utility of violence.

Chapter Five of the study discusses the themes detailed in chapter four and links them with the theoretical frameworks put forth in Chapter Two. This allows for a greater understanding of where we can claim to locate (Xhosa) manhood in democratic South Africa, how Xhosa men function and navigates their lives within the 'New South Africa', and the nuanced experiences and expressions of masculinity for Xhosa men post initiation.

Chapter Six concludes the study.

Chapter Two

Violence, Manhood and the State

2.1 Introduction

Posel (2005) and Morgan (2006) explain that contemporary discourse and literature on men and masculinities is riddled with panic for societies' soul. Therefore, to fully understand the ways in which Xhosa men construct and understand their manhood, it is important to examine the literature which engages "the crisis of/in masculinity/manhood". As this chapter will show, understandings of masculinity and femininity provide insights into the ways in which gender confers identity, belonging, status and determines access to space. This chapter outlines the theoretical framework of the study which centres around the intersections between conceptions of manhood, violence, and the state. It will show that manhood, violence, and the state all implicate masculinities as a defining characteristic. Moreover, there is an inextricable link between the conception of manhood which is predicated on the performance of toxic masculinities and the nature of the state as a vehicle of politics. It is therefore in the interest of the research aims of this study and enunciating disciplinary demarcations that I engage these concepts as both individual ideas and co-constituting categories that inform each other.

Chapter One showed that in South Africa, Black African Masculinities have been theorized in the context of political struggle and social crises, particularly in the context of colonialism and apartheid, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, GBV, Rape and Femicide. This chapter will further demonstrate that the experiences of Xhosa men are mainly documented in the context of going through the initiation rite of passage, *ulwaluko* and the operation of the concepts of *indoda* (Mfecane, 2016). The next section, which looks at defining and theorising of masculinities, details the theoretical lenses that global scholars of men's and masculinities studies have used to examine masculinities in the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. The section draws a distinction between the Euro-American and Indigenous understandings of gender. This distinction is important as it allows us to engage Black African masculinities as gendered, classed and racialised bodies whose operation in contemporary societies carry legacies of colonial conquest and rule (Morrel, 1998).

Finally, the chapter demonstrates the utility of a post-colonial African feminist reading of gender and the state to make sense of masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa. The

chapter therefore aims to demonstrate the need to situate Xhosa men, within the ways in which they make claims to their manhood within their varied interactions with each other and women. The chapter will detail the ways in which men ultimately make use of cultural signifiers of hegemonic manhood to craft navigations of everyday citizenship.

2.2 Hierarchised masculinity: Hegemonic, subordinate and marginalised masculinities

The idea of Hegemonic Masculinity has been challenged for its relevance, meaning and conceptual compatibility with African masculinities (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Ratele, 2013, Mfecane, 2016). Scholars argue that it is best not to think of masculinity (and femininity) as monolithic and universal identities. Rather the notion of masculinities as plural or multiple and heterogeneous allows us to consider the diversities among masculinities as a result of race, class, ethnicity and other contextually specific identity markers (Morrell, 2002; Ratele, 2013a; Spronk, 2014; Tamale, 2011). According to Siswana (2015) creates a discourse of on-going struggle between 'traditional masculinities' and 'hegemonic masculinity' as a universal ideology.

In Western societies 'hegemonic' masculinity is connected to ideas of patriarchy, heteronormativity, racial and classed locations of Western, white males (Connell, 1995; Morell, 2002; Ratele, 2013). Furthermore, traits such as objectivity, rationality, independence and unemotive are masculine characteristics (Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon, 2002). In this framework hegemonic masculinity describes Euro- American White men who occupy middle-class socio-economic status and demonstrate these characteristics of stoic manliness thus, working class masculinities, black and gay masculinities have been thought of as 'subordinate' and 'marginal' masculinities with their own specified cultural norms of masculinity (Alsop et al., 2002; Ratele, 2013b; Tamale, 2011).

However, in the context of this study, I find Siswana's (2015) use of the notion of hegemonic masculinity which "refers not to the above-mentioned assumption of a white, Western and economically affluent dominant male ideal, but rather is used to refer to specific culturally located forms of masculinity that, through cultural practice and tradition, have come to be regarded as dominant within a specific context" convincing and useful. It is important to note that, despite cultural locations, there are often elements of these norms that are common, or shared in a global society that are still predominantly patriarchal and adjudicated based on classist ideologies (Ratele, 2013; Ratele, 2014). Thus, it can be argued that hegemonic masculinities are both context-specific, in its various forms and practices, and universal in

terms of shared social ideals across contexts that value particular forms of masculine gender roles and ideologies (Connell, 2002; Ratele, 2013; Ratele, 2014).

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

Scholars such as Gutterman (2001) argue that masculinity and femininity have been an important identity marker across many societies. This is particularly important where gender identity is concerned. The western sex/gender binary where femininity is exclusively female and denotes womanhood and masculinity is exclusively male and denotes manhood. We can then understand masculinity as the collection of actions and behaviours which constitute the degree of one's manliness (Uchende, 2008). This is compatible with the work of American scholars whose work took a look at the concept of sex roles as a practical articulation of inherently determined gender (Connell, 1994:29).

Studies show that the most praised and revered definitions of [hegemonic] masculinities include the capacity of men to be violent (Hatty, 2000; Messner, 2002; Mills, 2001). One's potential and ability to impose their will and enforce it aggressively is a trait that is commonly associated with and ascribed to boys and men (Khoja-Moolji, 2012). Additionally, that capacity of violence is withheld from and discouraged on women and girls across many societies (Uchende, 2008, Khoja-Moolji, 2012). It is assumed that violence and aggression come naturally to men and that the display of dominance is a way for men to express their masculinity (Khoja-Moolji, 2012 add more references). Women on the other hand are expected to express femininity by being 'respectful' which often implies steering away from any non-agreeable countenance lest they be perceived as behaving aggressively or even violently (References).

From this scholarship came the work of sex role theorists like Christine Heward, who showed that there is a connection between gender construction and the social structure and social relations that preside in that society a particular time (Connell, 1994). Gender socially prescribes accepted sex roles which men should and should not perform and becomes an

important part to understanding the socio-political state of a society (Connell, 1994). This can be seen in the analysis given by Kopano Ratele (2016) of how the kind of patriarchal gender order which centres masculinity that exists in South Africa contributes to a phobic reaction against bodies and beings of the “other” as a way to reprimand them and restore the socio-political status quo that sex/gender roles maintain. Ratele (2016) shows how in popular discourse and everyday life there is a sentiment among South African men that South Africa is in a state of turmoil accounted to the presence of deviant sexual/ gender relations and this is seen as a breakdown of the society and nation. As disruption of social order and cohesion.

The link between crisis and men’s sexuality and sexual behaviour seems to be a recurring theme that go together in the literature. Scholars such as Morrel (2001), Walker (2005) and Moolman (2013) show us the way in which scholarship on masculinity is intertwined with crises that have to do with other social ills. Morrel (2001) speaks about “masculinities in transition” in looking at masculinity post-apartheid. The argument is that masculinity is defined and constructed within a racialized, classed and gendered social context and social institutions that have race which masculinity is malleable to (Morrel, 200; Hunter, 2004). Hence, Moolman (2013) argues that an intersectional approach is necessary when looking at the formation of masculine identity.

These understandings of masculinity and femininity find expression and endorsement even in public and private institutions. For example, Khoja-Moolji (2012) uses Johan Galtung’s (1990) typology of violence – direct, structural and cultural – as an analytical lens to examine the ways in which schools, teachers and students draw on aspects of hegemonic masculinity to establish and endorse ‘difference’ between boys’ and girls’ capacities to be violent, and wilfully ignore performances of violent masculinities. Galtung himself a sociologist has made contributions in multiple disciplines including political science with his works and theories, such as, structural violence (1969), cultural violence (1990) theories on conflict, conflict resolution and the concept of peacebuilding (1969), (1996) the distinction between positive and negative peace (2007) which are useful in exploring how violence operates as a function and expression of institutional power.

Khoja-Moolji, (2012), Msibi (2012) and many scholars who write about experiences of queer students in South Africa and the continent show that school values and policies represented in disciplinary structures, contact sports, and curricular knowledge, as well as practices of students and teachers, to explore the ways in which they collectively code violence

in the script of masculinity. According to Qambela (2018) It is important to focus on, race, same-sex sexualities and schooling in South Africa. Based on the research, there seems to be an unstated agreement that schools are normative spaces that regulate and reinforce normative expressions of race, gender, and sexuality (Francis, 2019).

For feminist scholars such as hooks (2004, 1984) and Davis (1984) the idea of hegemonic masculinity seemed to have class and racial blind spots. The suggestion that there is a universal and uniform application masculinity is only useful to a point. One cannot speak about masculinity without paying attention to the political context informed by race and class (hook, 2004). Indeed, the South African literature on masculinity and manhood, shows how manhood is defined in relation to concepts such as being the family leader and breadwinner, building of a home and homestead (Morrel, 2005; Connell, 2004; Qambela, 2018, Hunter, 2004). All of which have a racial, cultural and class/economic connotations to them. Much of the literature shows a rapture and evolution of these traits in post-apartheid South Africa shown how men have re-conceptualized concepts such as *isoka* and *umnumzane* in relation to the socio-economic changes of post-apartheid South Africa (Hunter, 2004).

Frosh, Pheonix and Pattman (2002) note a similar evolution and re-contextualization of masculinity mainly caused by changing economic positions as a result of changing employment patterns in Britain. They argue that “changes in employment and in normative gender relations mean that boys and young men are having to forge new, more flexible masculine identities” (Frosh et al, 2002). South African literature on Xhosa masculinity and manhood almost exclusively focuses on *uLwaluko* (initiation) and interpretations of Xhosa masculinity which come out of the rite of passage. However, the work of Frosh et al (2002) and Qambela (2018) in showing how masculinities are racialized and expressed through class position require us to look outside of *uLwaluko* to get a more nuanced understanding of Xhosa manhood. These do not begin and end at initiation.

Posel’s contextualization of the baby rape in the context of national identity or a threat to the national identity of South Africa’s new democracy is very useful to understanding how masculine identity is formed, re-conceptualized (when necessary) and protect. The concept of ‘The Nation’ is understood in masculine terms and the Man is the primary constituent of the nation to the extent that the Man becomes a living metaphor of the Nation (Posel 2005; Morrel, 2001; Moolman.2013). While “the nation is home and home is mother” (Elshtain, 1981), the political identity of the nation is masculinized (Posel, 2005; Tlhabi, 2013).

2.3. Towards African centred theories of masculinities: The new South African man

Black male masculinity has long been engaged through white Euro-American lens and seen as a racial degenerate, moralistically dissolute, and materially inept but for their use as a labour source for the fulfilment of capitalist economic ends (Uchende, 2008) (Suttner, 2005). Mfecane (2018) makes a call for another conceptualisation of manhood among South African men that is African centred in its theorisation of masculinity(s). He, like Ratele (2014), Mfecane (2016) and others “argue for the development of African-centred theories of masculinity that are grounded on popular conceptions of personhood in African contexts” (Mfecane, 2018). Mfecane (2018) discusses “some African notions of personhood simply to demonstrate that there can be other ways of approaching work with men and masculinities in African settings other than simply importing theoretical framework developed in the Global North”.

Using the isiXhosa concept of *indoda* – a man Mfecane (2016) demonstrates how African conceptions of personhood express nuanced understanding of being. In this study, I use the framework of The New South African Man (NSAM) as articulated by Qambela, (2021) to explore the conception of masculinity informed by the socio-political context of a liberal political economy advanced by the Constitution (1996). Qambela, (2021) argues that little work has been done to conceptualise and theorise “new” post-apartheid Black South African Men with the same rigour as South African women as shown by the works of Gqola (2013, 2016, 2017) on the New South Africa Woman (NSAW), together with Motsemme’s (2002, 2011) work on Black women, Blackness, beauty and popular cultures.

Works such as Zegeye and Motsemme (2004) special issue of Current Sociology ask that we produce more grounded accounts of how young people have been experiencing South Africa’s democracy. In earlier work (Qambela 2018, 70) argues for explorations and understandings of post-apartheid masculinities among amaXhosa boys and men that considers Xhosa men’s fashioning of their identities in the contested post-apartheid context” (Qambela, 2021:56).

To describe the NSAM, a useful starting point is Masola’s (2015) description of the Remy Martin man where she writes.

he is educated, middle-class, well-spoken, articulate, good-looking, wealthy, or climbing the white slopes of success in the hallowed halls of the corporate industry.

The cognac-drinking man is heterosexual, suit-wearing and often has a beautiful woman at his side confirming his success. (Masola 2015)

According to Qambela (2021) in addition to the urban socio-economic condition described by Masola (2015) the NSAM is committed “the traditional”. This is true of South African you culture which is fashioned within a context of modernity while retaining traditional customs albeit reconfigured in the contemporary context (Mupotsa, 2015). Thus, Qambela (2015) argues that “even with NSAM like Mayihlome Tshwete (who is the Remy Martin Man referenced by Masola (2015)), who are “urban,” “the traditional” remains important”. He points out that Tshwete opted to have both a traditional wedding ceremony in his family home in King Williams Town and a “white” wedding which was hosted in a resort in East London. This duality in the duality, in officiating his marriage demonstrates the commitment that urban men (and women) have to the traditional which is attached to the rural space. Thus, traditional rites remain important in enacting manhood.

Qambelela (2021) goes on to demonstrate this through analysis of two South African Films (*Inxeba: The Wound* and *Kalushi*) which demonstrates the importance of *ulwaluko* to accessing political manhood and full personhood for Xhosa man. In both films, the straddling of urban and rural, traditional and moder is central to the transition from boyhood to manhood as this study will also show.

Conversation about Black African men who live in the city while maintaining an ethic of alliance to traditional practices allow us to engage the raptures and continuities from the (colonial and apartheid) past that modernity delivers us to. As Suttner (2017) points out that colonialism and accompanying Eurocentrism never could fully infiltrate and force indigenous populations to abandon their cultural practices completely. Indeed, people often practised dual systems that took elements of European life (e.g., Christianity) and melded these elements with African cultural practices” (Qambela, 2021:57).

In the edited volume, *New Men in Southern Africa*, we see that scholarship about “new men” are not new in South Africa, or globally (Morrell 1998). As we see in the sections that follow the literature that looks at “new men” in South Africa does so “in relation to social transformation, especially attitudes relating to gender-based violence and gender justice (Haysom 1998), and there is little exploration on the ways in which these “new men” are using traditions in the fashioning of their personhoods” (Qambela, 2021:57). Thus, I look at the ways

in which you Xhosa men from Mthatha Eastern Cape articulate their manhood to examine the interrelation between the self, culture, and location.

2.4 Statehood and war: Masculinism, militarism and war

The core concepts in the field of international relations – the state, the nation, sovereignty, power, balance of power – were developed and shaped by historical circumstances mainly in Europe (Mingst, 2018). The philosophical and empirical background of the contemporary international system is largely based on the European experience of social thought formation (Mingst, 2018). Thus, many scholars acknowledge and critique the Eurocentric nature of international relations theory and resultant practice. Although great civilizations thrived in other parts of the world including China, India, and Africa long before the European civilisation and the emergence of the Westphalian state system in 1648, of which much of IR theorisation is based, “the European emphasis is justified on the basis that contemporary IR, in both theory and practice, is rooted in the European experience, for better or worse” (Mingst, 2018:15).

One of the major contributions of feminist theory to the field of International Relations has been to reveal the ways in which the field as an academic discipline and its empirical practice are gendered (Hooper, 2001). The range of subjects engaged show how all of them assume a normative bias which centres male thought and experience consequently marginalizing and making invisible women’s roles and concerns in the international arena (Hooper, 2001). Scholars have shown how the boundaries of the discipline in demarcating the public domain where states engage in governance and compete for power and the private domain where the women and children make up the home is a manifestation of gendered thinking (Tickner, 1992, Enloe, 1990). Furthermore, this reveals the gendered power dynamics which place men in positions of political power such that the public sphere – the space of political decision making is made masculine. Enloe (1990) points out in her pioneering text, *Bananas, beaches and bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*, that “when observing events of international relations, we scarcely notice that governments look like men’s clubs”. Thus, the keynote concerns of states in the international arena reflect the interests and concerns of men (Grant and Newland, 1990).

This is reflected in the ways in which mainstream IR theories particularly realism and liberalism, although engaging matter from different perspectives champion phallogentric assumptions and theoretical models. As shown in the section above, both realism and (economic) liberalism project onto states and international institutions a masculine persona in the way they prize virtues such as power, autonomy, self-interest, self-reliance as well as sovereignty and hegemony (Hooper, 2001). Thus, even the practice of international relations is masculine, and male dominated with few women occupying positions as political elites and policy makers compared to men (Hooper, 2001). Tickner (1992) shows how the masculinism and misogyny operate in realist theory through its glorification of the male warrior as a persona projected on to states. Foregrounded on the philosophical standpoint of Thomas Hobbes' state of nature and later Machiavelli's *The Prince* as the model ruler. Realism presents The State as a Man in pursuit of power and his own security in self-interested ways (Tickner, 1992). Thus, wielding of violence to meet these ends becomes a masculine motif.

Indeed, mainstream Political Philosophy and International Relations theory, one of the defining features of the state is that it is the entity that holds the monopoly on the legal use of force. Social contract theorist posit that the state is entered into out of a social contract where citizens submit their power of self-reliance and use of force to the state which will act as the supreme arbiter and exclusive right to use violence as a legitimate mechanism through military and police forces. With the state being a masculinist entity on which a masculine persona is conferred as described above, it becomes a site of intersection between violence and masculinity.

2.5 Africa and colonial conquest

In Africa, the states demonstrate the intersection of violence and subordinate or marginalised masculinities. Colonial conquest facilitated the artificial imposition of modern statehood through very violent means. There is a host of literature which describes the material and immaterial brutality of colonialism of Africa which has put Africa in a destitute position (Rodney, 1972). Thus, Africa occupies an underdog position in international system where it is economically and militarily weaker than others. Schoeman (1999) says; "Africa is the least developed continent on Earth, suffering the highest levels of human insecurity, deprivation, and poverty. African women suffer the most and they are often referred to in the literature as 'the poorest of the poor'".

Although Africa has been more peaceful than in other regions in the world where interstate conflict was a defining feature until the end of WWII, we see that after the end of the cold war 1989 we see that intra-state civil wars, coup de tat and other forms of social upheaval and conflict, some of which originated during the cold war era and have persisted or intensified throughout the 1990s into the early 2000s (Schoeman, 1999). It is part of the reason why have 55 countries in the continent as of 2011.

The idea of ‘monopoly of violence’ is turned on its head when engaging the post - colonial State in Africa, particularly post the Cold War (Kaldor, 2013). As Kaldor (2013) refining her New Wars thesis, she argues that intra-state wars in Africa demonstrate a blurring of the lines between war and crime such that armed conflict operates as a mutually beneficial enterprise for all the actors at the helm of their instigation and perpetuation. This argument comes as a response to the fact that many African States in the post-cold war era operate in perpetual conflict over control of the territories and their mineral resources to the extent that some governments whether elected or installed through military coups do not exercise control over the entirety of the country as certain areas are controlled by extra state armed groups (Collier and Hoeffler, 2005).

Many scholars have made the argument that the Westphalian State system does not fit neatly into Africa’s reality and point to the history of its violent, arbitrary imposition through colonialism (Schoeman, 1999). The presence of extra-state actors and guerrilla armies create the condition in Africa where populations experience violence wielded by official and ‘unofficial’ mechanisms and actors, suggests an incompatibility of the state as conceived of for Africa by the treaty of Westphalia and African ways of being (Schoeman, 1999). Additionally, acute violence toward women, children, and gender non-conforming persons where rape is instrumentalised as “a weapon of war” necessitate an analysis of the nature of masculine violence in Africa (Gqola, 2016).

The acute condition of violence in South Africa with rape statistics comparable to those of countries at war (Parliament, 2019) necessitates an examination of the intersection of masculinity, violence and the state. It is widely argued that contemporary patterns of violence in South Africa are a continuation of colonial and apartheid era conditions of state brutality (Gqola, 2015, Suttner, 2017). Patterns and structures of gendered violence and particularly sexual violence can be identified within structures of the liberation movements as well. The work of Suttner (2017) examining masculinities in The African National Congress and Gqola’s

(2015) exposition of the violent, sexist nature of military masculinities and “war talk” demonstrate how violence is linked to masculinities even in supposedly liberatory structures.

In South Africa the colonial state cemented itself through several laws which saw the dispossession of African people of land and separation of African family structures through violent means. The creation of Native Reserves and later Bantustans/ homelands designated for African people. It is easy to see that the nature of the segregationist laws worked to discriminate against and exclude the African majority from citizenship on the one hand. On the other hand, Mamdani (1996) shows how the territorial (institutional) segregation advanced by these laws also worked as a way of re-configured African peoples’ societies so as to incorporate them into the colonial state as subjects. These laws engineered what Mamdani (1996) calls the bifurcated state in colonial Africa, which is based on the notions of direct and indirect rule. According to Mamdani (1996) indirect rule, through the existence of chieftainships did not end after independence because many of the colonial institutions (particularly the chieftainship system) were left intact. He details continuities and changes in this state under post – colonial conditions. Thus, he argues that, “the bifurcated state created with colonialism was deracialized after independence, [but] it was not democratized” (Mamdani, 1996:8). For Mamdani (1996) true democratization of the post – colonial African State requires a complete break from colonial institutions. Thus, we must begin by looking at the nature of the colonial African state, through the case of South Africa.

The segregation period during the Union of South Africa from 1910 -1948 saw the passing of a number of segregationist legislation which would further entrench into the legal and social structure of the country continued racial segregation and domination of the Black African population by the White minority (Mamdani,1996). The feeling of the time favoured a liberal tradition which was preoccupied with making the African European – like. This is why Mamdani (1996:33) says that “the British theorized the colonial state as less a territorial construct than a cultural one”. The liberal project was to civilize African people by making them more European. The agenda was to for black people to assimilate into white society and the European tradition in their manner of life. This would make sense being that part of the colonial project was the domination Africa because they were understood to be uncivilized barbarian who needed European civilization (Mamdani, 1996).

According to Tonono (2021) “British missionaries of the nineteenth century sought to fashion Black men in British codes of masculinities through their endeavours of civilizing

missions". Looking at common missionary practices in nineteenth-century Christian mission stations, particularly mission schools, Tonono (2021) identifies the dominant missionary ideology toward Black converts into Christianity, demonstrating the ways in which notions of British masculine dress codes and imperial virtues of the "industrious man" were imposed upon Black men in mission stations and mission schools. Furthermore, the imposition of British masculine dress codes which can be seen through Young Men's Guild (*amadodana*) uniforms that comprises of a three-piece suit upon Black men facilitated the project of incorporating them in the British colonial world as cheap labour while it dismembered them from their ways of being. In his examination of how Victorian dress code came to embody certain cultural values in British society, and how those values migrated across the British empire through the work of missionaries and their civilizing missions, Tonono (2021) demonstrates how the culture of African masculinities was reconfigured through dress code and manner which can be seen in today still.

What informs the period of apartheid from 1948 – 1994 that follows is a tension between assimilating African people into European culture and systems and the insistence of the white population on maintaining a position of domination over African people (Mamdani, 1996). On the one hand, white people would want to make black people whiter, accept white systems of economy and political rule and even adopt a white culture in their ontological understanding. However, the assimilation would be conditional such that black people's entry into white systems would be in terms of a relationship of domination where Black people would only occupy positions of servitude within the white system (Soske, 2013:5).

This would be the source of incoherence that underlies the form of segregation that was imposed by the colonial State which was at the centre of resistance against apartheid. On One hand, the brand of Eurocentric liberalism championed for the acceptance of black people as citizens with full rights of citizenship. Later, apartheid legislation insisted on the inferiority of black people and the maintenance of white domination over them, on the other hand. Black people were still to occupy positions that would effectively "produce a race caste system that in which the minority ruled under cover of trusteeship" (Soske, 2013:5). This would be at the centre of what came to be known as the Native question.

In her theorisation of women combatants in the liberation movement in South Africa, Magadla (2015) convincingly characterises apartheid as a war which transgresses the distinction between home front and battle front. Making the argument that in apartheid, the war

was at home she allows us to examine the ways in which the home where Black women and men exercise domain was violated. The apartheid state through police and military intervention could enact violence in Black homes. As a result, apartheid violence took away men's ability to protect their families (Suttner, 2017). It is widely held across many cultures and societies including Africans that men are entrusted with the duty to protect their families. Thus apartheid, colonial and apartheid violence as well as the infantilization of African men took away Black Men's right and ability to protect their families (Suttner, 2017). It is no wonder then that colonialism and apartheid were understood as an attack on Black African manhood.

2.6 Liberal constitutional democracy and gendered nation building

Posel (2005) conceptualizes masculinity through the lens of national identity or a threat to the national identity of South Africa's new democracy. The concept of 'The Nation' is understood in masculine terms and the Man is the primary constituent of the nation to the extent that the Man becomes a living metaphor of the Nation (Posel 2005; Morrel, 2001; Moolman, 2013). While "the nation is home and home is mother" (Elshtain, 1981), the political identity of the nation is masculinized (Posel, 2005; Tlhabi, 2013). In line with the misogynistic logic of Machiavelli where the feminine is likened to nature which is for man to conquer (Hooper, 2001).

For (South) Africa, colonialism and apartheid are a seminal experience with enduring epistemological and ontological legacies that continue to have structural impact and inform gender politics. Colonial conquest of Africa reconfigured African modes of being through Euro-American patriarchal lenses. African Feminist scholarship exposes how colonial rule imposed on African societies a western gender motif that informs the racialised, gendered, and classed polity that is the state. Amadiume (1987) and Oyewumi (1990). Post-colonial and decolonial scholars detail the ways in which colonial violence has lasting structural effects which inform the nature of violence in rural and urban communities or (South) Africa. Abrahams et al (2013) suggest that at the birth of the 'New' South Africa, the government was faced with gendered violence that can be traced and linked back to the nature of the violence promulgated during apartheid.

According to Gqola (2016:119) "in the post-apartheid period, South African political and public discourse has been saturated with metaphors of ruptures from the past...". As shown

in chapter to, the advent of democracy was characterised as a birth of a new nation as much of political and academic discourse from the 1990s and early 2000s referred to the “New” South Africa. Indeed, many scholars agree that the end of apartheid which ushered in its praised constitutional democracy has had a rapturing effect of the gender politics and struggle for male power in the age of gender equality enshrined in the constitution (Morrel, 1998, Walker, 2005, Hassim 2009). The transition to democracy has precipitated a crisis of masculinity. Orthodox notions of masculinity are being challenged and new versions of masculinity are emerging in their place. Some men are seeking to be part of a new social order while others are defensively clinging to more familiar routines (Ratele, 2016).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter sought to provide the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this study and locate the study within the greater literature on masculinity, “new men” in South Africa as well as feminist theory in international relations. The chapter argued that in order to conceptualise claims to manhood, it is important to understand the how masculinism violence and the state combine and reinforce each other. Chapters Four and Five of the study will demonstrate even further, the arguments posited surrounding contentious claims to manhood, as well as the ways in which young Xhosa men formulate conceptions of manhood around the ideas of standing up as well as protection and provision.

Chapter Three

Ndingowase Mthatha, iiLali Zam Zise: The rural-urban duality of identity, home, and livelihood

3.1. Introduction

My mother never had a boy child. She had four girls, me being the third. As a result, my father was the only male figure in my nuclear family and immediate vicinity. However, I was not short of male relatives. Like many Black African families, I grew up among a large extended family. So, I had the experience of being socialised among boys who were my siblings and adult men who were parental figures along with my father. Between family relationships and duties (which include our extended family) as well as community, school, and church, I have always observed how one's position and movement in the world has a lot to do with whether they are a girl or a boy cum man or woman. The all – femaleness of my close posse made up of my mother and sisters did not exempt me from going through the same gendered socialisation as those who had brothers that they lived with fulltime.

Furthermore, growing up in communities which were so socially interconnected meant that extended family, neighbours, and community members all had roles and duties toward each other that they perform in the processes of reproducing life. So, while I do not have brothers in the strict western sense of the word, I have always had brothers. *Oobhuti ndinabo*. I was also aware that *oobhuti endizalana nendinazalaniyo nabo* – brothers who are my kin and those are not, despite supposedly being designated protectors, I was also supposed to keep a distance from because they were a source of potential danger to girls. Furthermore, like many girls, as I grew older, my peers who were boys stopped being just innocent playmates and I had to observe the teaching of *ukuzigada* – minding myself and keeping myself safe where they were concerned. *Ukuzigada* would become a slippery art and discipline that I would have to constantly work at for the rest of my life.

Going home to Mthatha for this research had many layers for me to navigate through. The insider/outsider dynamic that gender presents for me as a woman researching men and manhood as well as the insider/outsider dynamics that doing the research “at home” presented some ethical and methodological anxiety and insecurity for me as a researcher. Similarly, the timing of this research in terms of national and international discourse on gender gave me plenty of considerations to make or at least be mindful of as far as appealing to and connecting

with research participants. That and the effects of calendar timing which had its own effects on mine and my participants' movements as the year end period and "ii-big days" were upon us.

The methodology chapter outlines how this research was carried out and accounts for why the project is placed in the way that it is, looking at the research sites, participants and data collection process. It begins by tracing the process of my data collection and the circumstances which informed my choices to make changes from my planned research design on the field. I narrate the tensions I had to balance in the reasoning I applied in constructing a research sample based on purpose, access, and convenience on the field. The chapter details the research sites of the study; research design and the interview process; the complexities of insider-outsider research; the limitations of the research and lastly, my decision to use thematic analyses.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 *Research sites and design*

This research took place in three main areas Mthatha (City centre, and Mbuqe Extension), Qumbu (Town) and Libode (Town). Eight men were interviewed in these areas. My fieldwork was my second trip home since the last holiday period which ended in January of 2021. The country was starting to ease back to "normal" with the lifting of heavy lockdown regulations that had been a part of our lives since 2020 when the COVID 19 pandemic broke out. The lifting of COVID 19 Lockdown regulations in terms of the National State of Disaster opened the opportunity to travel long distances without restrictions. This meant that I could travel to the neighbouring towns and villages of Mthatha for my participants. Initially, I wanted my participant sample to consist of 15 men from Mthatha and surrounding areas between the ages of 18 and 35 years. I envisioned getting participants who would reside in the urban centre and those who resided in the rural peripheries and neighbouring towns. I ended up with 8 completed interviews but only 7 viable interviews because one of my participants turned out to be above the age of 35 years.

Bra Steve (his pseudonym) who is a colleague of one of my participants, Tshawe (his pseudonym) heard about my research and was so interested in it and eager to give an interview. In my desperation for participants and being drawn by his enthusiasm about what I was doing I conducted an interview with him but noticed that he was not very forthcoming about his age and avoided mentioning what year he was born. Nonetheless, he gave some incredible insights

which I used in the five interviews which followed after him. Funny enough, Bra Steve's is one of the longest interviews I conducted and even though I have it on good authority that he is indeed older than 35 years, I still have no idea how old he is exactly.

I had quite an elaborate plan of how I would recruit participants and the criteria I used which was a mix of purposive and convenience sampling. The idea was to target men who occupy the rural and urban spaces as well as religious space in the form of church. With a focus on recruiting participants from the urban centre, rural areas, and church the plan was to use the referral of a local DJ from the urban centre of Mthatha whom I am acquainted with. He has a wide social reach and could help me recruit from a wider network of people to avoid having a group of friends forming the bulk of my sample. Another friend who is a heritage activist from the rural areas would help me reach people across the rural population. Finally, members of the youth of the Methodist church whom I have access to because I too am a member of the church would be easy participants to recruit. Or so I thought. There are 5 branches of the church I intended getting participants from. Three of which are in the urban and Township centre, namely Ikhwezi Society, Ngangelizwe Society and John Wesley Society and two are in the rural peripheries of Mthatha, namely, Rev TSN Gqhubule Society and Mandela Society.

Being that the point of this research is to add qualitative depth to the area(s) of scholarship on African masculinities more than to present representative generalisation, the three areas would allow me to form a sample that will provide me with the insights I will need. However, I came to find out that *i-fieldwork iyazilawula*. Nowhere in this plan did I imagine that I would end up walking the streets of Libode in January of 2022 on foot approaching strangers, telling them who I am, what my research is about and asking them to participate in an interview.

When I returned home in November 2021, I had difficulty getting started with my interviews. None of what I had planned and the people I had lined up to assist me were available on account of "ii-big days". Not my friends whom I had lined up to help me recruit participants, not my friend who was meant to be *umkhaphi wam* and to make matters worse my sister's car which I had planned to use for my travels got into an accident shortly after my arrival and was unable to get fixed until the end of January 2022. So, I had to go back to the drawing board, re-strategize and improvise. My supervisor and my mother were a great help in this regard. My mother's support and assistance are the reason I did not give this project up at this point.

A friend of mine got me in contact with a friend of hers who is from Libode, and he was keen to participate in the research and even agreed to organise 3 of his friends to participate as well. He was promising but was very upfront and honest that it would be more realistic to make plans for January 2022 because as he put it; “*Ku busy ngoku*” – it is busy now. Indeed, the November/December period known as the festive season in South Africa is a time for parties and celebrations. Furthermore, many traditional ceremonies including the initiation rites of passage in the Eastern Cape are arranged for this time of the year. Between *imigidi*, weddings and other kinds of *imicimbi* and celebrations of the end of the year, the age group I was targeting for my research was pretty out of reach. Similarly, my friend who is a DJ told me that as a DJ, that was his busiest time but he would be more than willing and able to help me when the festive season ended.

I also travelled to Port St Johns at this time and soon realised that my plan to make this a working vacation for myself would not work for the same reasons. My friend who was meant to be *umkhaphi wam* had returned to driving a taxi. At first, I thought that this would be great because he could introduce me to other taxi drivers whom I could interview. However, the festive season is a very busy time for taxi drivers and neither him nor his friends in the business were available and we hardly saw each other because of his job. In fact, three taxi drivers I met and spoke to on my first trip to Libode also told me that they would have loved to participate but this was their busiest time and could not make time for an interview with me. One taxi driver and his conductor who I approached on my visit to Libode in January agreed to an interview and even gave me his phone number and we agreed to meet a week later, on what he told me would be his day off. However, when I tried to get a hold of him again, he became unavailable. Another, 3 gentlemen whom I had a similar arrangement with in Libode also became unavailable when I returned to meet with them. This was particularly disappointing because at this point February had begun and my sister’s car was fixed and she drove me.

My first successful interview was in Qumbu on the 14th of January. I met with an old acquaintance whom I knew from the Methodist Students Society (METHSSOC) while I was an undergraduate at Rhodes University and he at Walter Sisulu University. We would see each other on occasion at METHSSOC events where the different Universities in the Eastern Cape would gather. When I was looking for participants, I decided to reach out to him via Facebook. It had been about 5 years since we had seen or spoken to each other. Luckily, he was available

and happy to give me an interview. The other 7 interviews which I completed were done in Mthatha.

My mother was a great help in recruiting participants as 4 of the interviews I got with her assistance. She got me in contact with three of the young men whom she knew were younger than 35 years at her workplace and out of those three I was able to get an interview with one, Tshawe (pseudonym). The other two would only be available in March because they were working out of town for the January and February period. My mother also reached out to her former colleague whom she knows has two grandsons, Zibula (pseudonym) and Dumba (pseudonym) who were still home because university was not open yet.

It was interesting for me to note that Zibula and Dumba's participation in this research came out of them heeding an adult's call. Similarly, Tshawe and the two other colleagues whom I did not end up interviewing agreed to participate in this research in response to my mother's request for assistance on behalf of her daughter for "*i-research yakhe yesikolo*" - her school research which they knew nothing about. It was a stroke of good luck that they happened to find my research interesting and were happy to participate in it upon hearing about it from me when I contacted them, but their initial acquiescence was out of respect and favour for my mother as an elder colleague they respect. *Babethunyiwe*; they were sent by adults to go and help. My mother's social and cultural capital was a noteworthy asset in this regard.

3.3.2 Rural – Urban duality of Mthatha

All but one of my research participants were interviewed in Mthatha and they all state that they are from Mthatha. However, it is worth mentioning that when one says that they are from Mthatha or they grew up in Mthatha it often comes with an automatic suffix that many people from Mthatha know, which is to state *uba ilali ziphi* - where the rural home is. So, it is common for one to say that they are from Mthatha and immediately proceed to mention as a qualifier or expansion where *iilali zakhe* are. My research participants were no different. For Example, When I asked Zibula where he grew up, he answered.

Zibula: Apha e Khwezi. Apha eMthatha. Ndikhulele eKhwezi. Iilali zam zise Ngcobo eLhewini. Jah.

Zibula: Here at Ikhwezi. Here in Mthatha. I grew up eKhwezi. My rural home is in Ngcobo at eLhewini. Jah.

Zibula begins by mentioning *Ikhwezi* which is the township in Mthatha where he lives and proceeds to tell me that *iilali zakhe zise Ngcobo* which is a town 83,6km in the village of Lhewini. Similarly, Dlamini said;

Dhlamini: I grew up here. Right here in this house. Born and bred in Mthatha yeah. So, it was in between *ilali zam zise* [my rural home is in] Dutywa. So, I've always been here from birth. I was schooling here from TPS to Umtata High and then I moved to Johannesburg.

When I asked him how much time he spent between Mthatha and Dutywa and his relationship with iDutywa, Dlamini explained that growing up, every school holiday he spent the first half of the period at his parent's farm in Dutywa visiting extended family and working the farm before taking a holiday for leisure. This is a common story among my generation who grew up in Mthatha, boys and girls alike, school holidays were spent *ezilalini*, in part or in full. So, a person from Mthatha will more likely than not have both the urban and rural experience of life unlike people who grew up exclusively in cities. This makes Mthatha an ideal research sight for me because South Africa has a large rural population together with international metropolitan areas.

One participant, Bhele lives and works in Qumbu which is a rural town about 20 km away from Mthatha. The nature of his work as an attorney means that he travels regularly to Mthatha on matters related to work as the high court and Master of the High Court are in Mthatha. Furthermore, he went to tertiary in Walter Sisulu University, Nelson Mandela Drive Campus in Mthatha, and is an active member of the Methodist Church which means he travels and maintains close social ties across the Clarkbury District as a result of his involvement in Church. Tshawe, also went to tertiary in at Walter Sisulu University, Zamukulungisa campus following which he stayed in Mthatha because of employment. However, he maintains his family home and his own house in his rural Home in Qumbu.

Many people who live in Mthatha and work in the rural areas in the peripheries of Mthatha. This is the case for Dosini, who lives at Mbuqe Extension, in Mthatha but commutes every day to work in the village of Mhlakulo just outside Mthatha. The details of my participants upbringing and occupations all demonstrate the way in which being from Mthatha is a flexible geographical identity which spans across multiple urban, peri-urban and rural

locations. Figure 3.1 below details the participant's biographical information and geographical relation to Mthatha.

Figure 3.1. Table of participants

Pseudonym (Clan name)	Age	Occupation	Resident Home	Rural Home (<i>Iilali</i>)
Bhele	34	Attorney	Qumbu	Qumbu
Tshawe	28	High Court Clerk	Mthatha	Ngqeleni
Zibula/ Faku	20	student	Mthatha	Ngcobo/ Mount frere
Zibula	20	Student in East London	Mthatha	Ngcobo/ Mount Frere
Dosini	25	Data capturer Mhlakulo Clinic	Mthatha	Qumbu
Dlamini	25	Student	Mthatha	Dutywa
Dlamini	20	Student	Mthatha	Dutywa

3.5 Limitations of the study

This study was focused on a limited sample of young men. The participant sample contained a diverse group who are part of the rural and urban parts of Mthatha and surrounding areas. However, a bigger sample size would have helped get a higher quantity of diverse ages and occupational backgrounds. Furthermore, the participants I worked with are mostly from

middle- and working-class backgrounds. All of them have a background in higher education with two currently students in tertiary. The one participant who although did not graduate has been registered and completed a year in a tertiary institution. It would have added more nuance to the study to have participants who are unemployed and participants who work in the informal sector to add a diversity to occupational means and socio-economic status. However,

However, the scope of a mini thesis being limited the absence of these sample variations does not limit the study entirely. Furthermore, the sample size produces enough data that repetitive idea and themes could be identified thus, although the aim was not to extract universally applicable truths, the commonalities among the participants engagement was an indication the veracity of the content. My positionality counted as a limitation and an advantage for different purposes. I am doing this research as both an insider and outsider. I am not a man and even a change of physical anatomy from a female body to a male body would still not be enough to qualify me as a Xhosa man, therefore an insider, as that is contingent on having been initiated. However, being a Xhosa woman affords me a familiarity and a cultural shorthand with my research subjects and participants that I would otherwise not have. Furthermore, the fact that this research was an attempt to decentre *ulwaluko* from Xhosa manhood and masculinity discourse allowed *ulwaluko* as them to show up organically in the interview conversations and gave room for the participants to be articulate clearly when they were limiting their responses because of my outsider status.

Lastly, the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa and English. The participants were encouraged to speak however they were comfortable which for most was a mixture of conversational isiXhosa and English. Bhele, expressed himself mostly in English as well as Dhlamini 1 and 2 which given their schooling and academic background was not surprising. Four of the interviews were transcribed and translated in English by the interviewer and three by a transcriber and. Potentially, a limitation is that during translation meaning is often lost and that has implications for potentially losing the meaning of expressions as expressed in the original language However, I found that being a linguistic insider made up for potential loss of meaning as some expressions I opted to quote in my findings chapter in their original articulation by the participants. It is important to highlight and emphasise that, despite the limitations described above, the results are often consistent with the existing literature, as supported by detailed excerpts that suggest that they are valid and meaningful.

3.6 Thematic and narrative analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting on patterns, thus extrapolating, and reporting on themes within the data. They explain that the benefit of thematic analysis is that it is the most flexible qualitative analytic. The advantage of thematic analysis is it allows for “various manifestations of the method” (Braun and Clarke, 2006) gives room for reflexivity in analysis and application of research design and analysis. Thematic analysis is not tied to a specific theoretical or epistemological position (Braun and Clark, 2006). Thus, it can be used in conjunction with or to enunciate other methods of inquiry including narrative inquiry or life story interviews as is the case in this research (Atkins, 2007). Furthermore, the benefit of thematic analysis is its ability to describe the data set in rich detail.

This research will use narrative inquiry using life story interviews/ life narratives, narrative analysis to collect and analyse the data. The research begins from the view that masculinity and manhood are not a homogeneous concept (Brod and Kaufman, 1994:18). As Morrel, (1998) among others show, factors such as race, class, ethnicity etc all act on the constructions and expression of different masculinities. Furthermore, masculinities like all identity are actively constructed and re-constructed in daily life such that in acting ‘masculine’ men also construct what is and isn’t “masculine’ (Mills and Millany, 2011:6). For this research life stories are then useful for uncovering what is not known in the literature about men’s lives and experiences that go into the construction of their manhood throughout their lives (Qambela, 2018).

Scholars such as Clandini (2007) and Atkins (2007) show that narrative inquiry is useful in analysing the meaning made by individuals of their life experiences. According to Clandini (2007) Narrative inquiry can take two forms. On the one hand a researcher can collect and organize data to then create a story that explains what is going on with the data, this is a narrative explanation. The other form is to collect data and organises it to find common “themes, metaphors and plotlines” in meaning making come out of the life stories of participants, which is narrative analysis. This is the area of thematic analysis argued by Attridge-Sterling (2001).

Atkins (2007) shows the utility of life story interviews in narrative inquiry as it makes for good movement between individual life experiences and their social context and influences. Life stories combined with narrative analysis bridge the gap between the individual life

experience with its peculiarities and the social context and social influences on individual identity formation (Atkins, 2007). This is particularly useful for this research which seeks to find the link to political life of young men's lived experiences of masculinity and manhood.

The main aim of this project, therefore, is to explore the participants' own interpretations of their journey to and understanding of manhood. This necessitates that the data set be described as richly as possible, to avoid deductive analysis that would be driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the research area (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The purpose of Chapter Four of the study, will therefore be to privilege the views of the participants that are not usually voiced in the literature and, ultimately, letting the data speak for itself.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research participants, the research sites, and outlined some of the practical challenges that were present in conducting this research in the context of the busy nature of the December/ January period. I show the importance of engaging my positionality and applying reflexivity was necessary to enunciate the participants insights without speaking for them. Engaging the narratives of the participants using thematic analysis was useful in this regard as I could report of the findings "objectively" and be clear about when I am inserting my own interpretation and observation.

Chapter Four

Standing up as a man

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores what it means to be a man. During the semi – structured in-depth interviews conducted, I asked each of the young men the question; “what does it mean to be a man?” To which I received similar answers from all the participants. By the third interview, I noticed a common pattern and theme in the responses that the participants gave. The answers given revolved around three main ideas; standing up for oneself and on behalf of everything that is an extension of that self, protecting and providing for one’s family, and maintaining an image and reputation of strength. From the interviews I notice that young Xhosa men’s understanding of manhood and narration there of shows an interaction between responsibility, control, dominance all within the framework of navigating hardship. These ideas carry with them connotations to power and aggression. The masculine wielding of these traits and ideas is closely connected to the exercise of violence by men (Bowker 1989, Sobieraj, 1998).

The previous chapter outlined some of the methodological decisions and concerns that stemmed from the idea of doing my research at home and navigating my positionality as both an insider and outsider in relation to the topic and my participants. As was stated in the previous chapter, all the participants of the study were issued pseudonyms in the form of *iziduko* (clan names).

This chapter consists of extracts from the interviews held with the research participants, as centring their voices was a significant motivation behind the study itself. The purpose of this chapter is to report on the findings of the study, and identify the significant themes presented in the data. The commonality and repetition of ideas and concepts discussed by each of the participant across the entire sample was a good indication of the significance of the themes to the study. One of the interviewees was disqualified from my sample by age as I later came to know that he was older than 35 years. However, his interview content was consistent with that of the other participants which I took as a positive sign that validated the themes that I was noticing from the participants.

The themes present in the interviews spoke to many of the concerns, insights, and experiences of the 7 men interviewed. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the participants narrated how they understand and negotiate their gender identities and what informed their construction and practise of manhood. The themes discussed in this chapter include: *Ulwaluko* as a presupposition of (Xhosa) manhood; the idea(s) of *ukuma njenge ndoda*; the masculine duty to “protect and provide”; and the heteronormative assumptions that underscore these.

The theme of *ulwaluko* as a presupposition of manhood shows the unavoidable and inextricable ties between the cultural rite of passage, masculine identity and the social construction and practise of manhood among amaXhosa. All the participants interviewed had gone through the rite of passage albeit some more recently than others. This was not a direct criterion for recruiting my sample however, it came as no surprise. Although it would have been a noteworthy encounter to have participants who had not gone to “the mountain”. Part of the motivation for this research was to examine Xhosa masculinity outside of the context of the, *ulwaluko*. As shown in chapter one, much of the scholarship and public discourse about manhood and masculinity (particularly where Xhosa men are concerned) centres around the initiation rite of passage.

Like Qambela (2018) who makes a solid case for why an anthropology of boyhood is important in his study of Xhosa boyhood, I wanted to examine the lives of young men and their understanding and construction of masculinity outside of the moment of initiation. In essence, I wanted to mute the conversation of *ukwaluka*. However, in the process of conducting the interviews, I soon realised that there was no way of truly avoiding talking about *ulwaluko* completely. It was quite literally an unavoidable mountain that we could not just skip over or go around. Even though none of the questions and discussion points I had prepared had any direct reference to *ulwaluko* or going to the mountain, all of the participants spoke about the experience of going there as a central part to their construction and practise of their manhood post initiation.

The theme of *ukuma njenge ndoda* (standing up as a man) was significant for the participants. In this chapter I divide the concept into three explanatory categories which express the different forms that one is expected to “man up”. The different forms that *ukuma* takes carry with them connotations to dominance and control or at least maintain the appearance of it. Secondly, they are used by the participants to articulate what they understand as their masculine

duties and responsibilities as men in their homes. Interestingly, the concept of *ukuma* also serves as a way to legitimate the use of force or violence in certain instances where men feel that an act of violence constitutes *ukuzimela* or *ukumela into yakhe*.

The idea that one must “protect and provide” is the final theme which assumes the existence of a need for security and subsistence that men are responsible for fulfilling. Going through the data, I noticed that most of the participants express this idea that as men they must “protect and provide” almost as a commercial advertisement pay-off line which speaks to how far reaching and deeply rooted it is in their lives. The masculinising of this duty implicates not only the men it is bestowed upon but also the women and children who are the ones supposedly protected and provided for. Furthermore, it evokes a similar sense of responsibilities as denoted by the idea of *ukumela ikhaya*. However, its significance is in how this expression of masculine responsibility presents a sight of contestations and ruptures resulting from, modernity, class and capitalism. Where *ukuma* expresses the gendered labour relations in the traditional home, to protect and provide is a sight of masculine struggle in late capitalist society.

The themes expressed below narrate and explain the personal experiences of the men interviewed. They show the ways in which their experiences overlapped and varied. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants mainly in IsiXhosa although all the participants communicated in a mix between IsiXhosa and English. The responses have been translated into English. However, in some moments, where the IsiXhosa term signals more emotive and cultural significance, I have attempted to provide explanations that convey the meaning of the term as closely as possible in English.

4.2. *Ulwaluko* as a presupposition of manhood

When I began this study, I was clear in my articulation of it to the participants that it is not a study of *ulwaluko* although I am not precluding it from coming up at any point if it does. I was, deliberate about not preparing any questions relating to *ulwaluko*, although I later understood that manhood and masculinity and the initiation rite of passage for amaXhosa are so intricately wrapped together that sometimes even in the language, *indoda*, the word used to denote a man, for amaXhosa silently carries the assumption that the person being referred to has gone through the initiation rite of passage (Mfecane, 2016). Among amaXhosa, when one says that so – and – so is a man now, they would be communicating that the person they are

referring to has gone to the mountain and returned. Furthermore, when boys reach a certain age, usually in their late teens it would be bothersome for those who delay going through the rite of passage to because the longer the delay, the longer one is discounted as *indoda* – a man, among his peers and community Mfecane (2016). Dlamini 2 confirms this when he explains how one may be excluded from the category of being a Xhosa man based on how he went through the initiation rite of passage.

Interviewer: And do you think there are, there qualifiers to manhood, to being considered even by the social set up that you're in fact a man. We recognize him, he's a man.

Dlamini 2: Right. That is the thing. It comes down to, you know there's the way of the Christian way of initiation, you're still a baby. Then there is the Xhosa way. So, now you're a man. What kind of man are you? Are you a Xhosa man or are you just a westernized man which is looked down upon in our culture?

Notwithstanding my lack of probing into the topic of *ulwaluko*, I also expressed to my participants that we may only discuss what they are comfortable with, and they may share with me only what they wish or are able to share with me. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, as discussed in the previous chapter, and shown by the interview extract below my outsider status as a woman excluded me from parts of that conversation and it was not my interest to ask questions that I knew I would not get any answers to.

Dumba: Ngoku singathi ulwaluko wethu. Ngoku xa sihleliyo ngoku, andithi kufanba sonke solukile ne then xa sihleliyo sonke into ihambe ihambe ibuyele pha ebudodeni xa kukhona iitshomi ezingamantombazana asincokoli too much singamajita kuba incoko yonke ihmabe ihambe iphinde ibuyele pha...Asithethi yonke into nje ngoku kufuneka sizilimithe izinto esizithethayo.

Dumba: Now I can say that it is *ulwaluko*. Even now, when we are sitting together (as men) we are all supposed to have been initiated right. So, when we are all together the conversations will go back to our manhood. When there are friends who are girls around, we do not talk that much as guys because every conversation come back to that... We do not say everything because we must limit what we say.

Secondly, my pragmatic idealism led me to believe in the possibility to discuss manhood and still get the answers about issues to do with the initiation rite of passage without issuing an indictment on the tradition which questions directly about *ulwaluko* are very often perceived as (Siswana, 2018).

Although my interest and line of questions did not inquire directly about any part of the process of *ulwauko*, it seems that by virtue of asking about manhood or being a man, I was invariably going to encounter the topic of *ulwaluko* in some form or another. All the participants lead the conversation that way. They all expressed beforehand when they started referring to whatever part of the initiation process that they would not tell me everything because there are some things that they cannot discuss with people who have not gone through it. My response to this was always reassuring them that it is completely fine, and they may proceed with only what they can share.

Although, all the participants expressed that going through the rite of passage was seminal to them being able to identify as men, it was interesting to observe that some of the participants were tighter lipped about it than others. For example, Tshawe spoke very minimally of his experience of *ulwaluko* when he was describing the loving and supportive relationship that he and his sisters have with each other.

Tshawe: My sisters and I get along just fine, as a matter of fact, in my childhood when the time for me to observe my rituals such as the initiation process, I did not communicate this with them, I just communicated this with my mother, I also told my friends, I observed these rituals and they assisted me with everything along with my mother. So that when I return from the initiation school all my things have been taken care of...I have to return from the initiation school with my things sorted out just like other children, you understand, they did not say, “no he did not talk to us about going to the initiation school”, you understand... So...I get along with them very much

It seemed very important and meaningful to him that his sisters were involved and supportive in the process leading up to his going to the mountain, during his stay and upon his return regardless of then not being informed prior to his journey. Generally, it seems that the presence of family and nature of the family’s participation in a young man’s journey through the initiation process is very important part of the experience. As we can see from Tshawe’s experience, it is in this context of family support that women feature in the young men’s experiences of the process.

Moreover, Dosini’s narration of going through the initiation rite of passage demonstrated quite well the ways in which family dynamics and the kinds of considerations that preoccupy the young men’s minds and inform their experience of the initiation process. In the interview extract below Dosini explains the conflict he had to navigate given the precarious relationship that he had with his father.

Interviewer: How did you feel when both of your parents were not keen on you going to the initiation school?

Dosini: I was not stressed about how my mom felt in 2011 because I understood that “I was taking chances because I was only 15 years old”.

Interviewer: Okay...

Dosini: In 2012 I was really angry because of my father because I thought to myself, “you have been absent my entire life even when I was growing up and now you show up to tell me no”, yet in June my mother had agreed to allow me to go and said “I see no problem, you can leave because you are 16 years old”. And then now comes this person who was not in my life and tells me no and I was not even asking for his permission I was just being courteous and I said to him “man your son is going to the *lwaluko* process” and then he turned this into a lecture and told me that I was not going there and my mom ended up being convinced and changed her mind and I became really angry and then in December I then told them that “the person who prevented us from proceeding is not here” and we did what we wanted to do as planned.

Interviewer: Okay so what were the reasons, what were his reasons and point that he made about refusing to let you go to the initiation school?

Dosini: He said that I was too young and that I was expected to go to *ulwaluko* in Qumbu in his village in Ngxakolo and all that and I replied and said “how am I expected to go to Ngxakolo yet you do not live with us at home and I cannot just show to you in Ngxakolo and say to you that I wanted to attend the initiation school here”. I do not know anything about that place, the main person who was always present in my life is this person from Marhambeni, that is where I was going to attend the initiation school and that is how the conversation went and we got into a big verbal altercation and that is how it ended.

Interviewer: Okay, when you eventually went to the initiation school in December was your father present?

Dosini: No.

Interviewer: Did you know whether he had changed his mind or not?

Dosini: I do not know we did not talk again.

Interviewer: After that?

Dosini: No, he re-appeared 3 or 4 years later when we were discussing *umgidi* (initiation ceremony or graduation) and he said “it is time that I go to the initiation school.... when did you go to the initiation school?” Oh yes it was 2 years later when I was 18 years old, he returned and said “let us go” and I told him that “I did that a long time ago”.

Interviewer: What did he say to that?

Dosini: He realised that ...He asked about the details and said “when, how, what happened and what were the things done there” and I told him everything that was done

there and he said “no we have to take you to Ngxakolo because that is your home and perform for you Mbangashe (Pseudonym) rituals” and I said “I did everything that I was supposed to do and I want nothing to do with Mbangashe rituals” ...

Interviewer: Why?

Dosini: It was because, as I alluded to before, I do not know anything about that family and they have never been in my life so when I go there and perform something crucial to me such as *ulwaluko*, because *lwaluko* is not a small matter and they would use certain herbs such as *intelezi*, slaughter goats from their homestead and eat certain meats from that homestead, who are these people and who am I so we do not know each other and I also do not know them.

Interviewer: Okay...

Dosini: Even the so-called ancestors who would they say they are protecting or who are they welcoming and so I said to him “you better think of something else” ...

The initiation period which includes the build up to initiation, the time at the mountain and post – initiation probation period is described by many as a spiritually and emotionally tender time and can be marred by unresolved family tensions. It is also when issues of unresolved or contentious paternity come to the fore.

Tshawe: but what really usually happens is that here is an example that shows that you do not belong to the family that raised you. You will first notice that before you even leave for the initiation school that you do not belong here by noticing by their conduct at home, perhaps you eat only once a day and you understand that, “I know that I used to eat three times a day, so that shows that I do not belong here, what I heard from the outside is true because I am only given for once a day”, you see.

Similarly, Dosini’s situation with his father demonstrates the tensions that the role of patrilineage in the conferring of manhood in the context of absent fathers.

Interviewer: So, when you were having this conversation with your father and made it clear that all is well with you and that everything was done. I have read somewhere that when you go through the process you are not supposed to, I do not have the specificities of it but being a child from your father’s homestead, traditionally and I am interested in the conversation with your father as you made it clear that you are not interested in having your father involved like that because of the reasons that you mentioned. What I would like to know is did you ever consider that since you traditionally belong to your father’s family the decisions you made about *ulwaluko* not influence your decision?

Dosini: For me it goes back to what I said before that he was absent in my whole life and I have been raised by my mother so it becomes difficult for me to claim to belong to my father’s side because I grew up in my mother’s side and that has been my entire life and we have never heard a word that we are being summoned from our father’s side so I feel that it would be unfair for me personally and it would also be unfair to my

mother too if I would just randomly say that I belong to my father's side only because I want to go to the initiation school and say to my mother "mama take me to my father and then have the *ulwaluko* performed for me there".

Interviewer: Okay...

Dosini: Firstly, I do not know what those people eat, I do not know what they use to wash themselves and now I feel that when you are 16 years old you are able to reason, you are able to make decisions for yourself. Secondly, as you said before the performance of the ritual of *ulwaluko* is sentimental and very vital in a sense that some of the things done there are spiritual, so now if you say that you spent your entire life raised in a certain spiritual way and then when it is time for you to undergo the initiation process you change all that just because you have to go through the initiation process. I believe that you will be creating a gap between the spirituality you were raised with and the one you will adopt when you are at the initiation school and there might be a clash between these two spirits and when they do clash you might be opening up a gap for any other type of spirit and people die in the *bhoma*. So, on the one side I was raised into Christianity and then on the other side they will include the ancestors, so the gap that we will open would be for sorcery to make its way in and when I am in the *bhoma* I am in a dilemma not knowing whether I should pray to God or to my ancestors or what I should do and that would make me weak. If I do what is done in the *bhoma* and find people smearing a certain medicine and people would say "no pray and I would pray and they would say do this, go slaughter a sacrificial beast" but for me the Bible tells me that "as a person in life you should have something that you believe in". So, if I practice all of these three things that means that I do not believe in anything so all 3 things have access to me and what happens if I come back as one of the dead initiates or lose my mind just because I wanted to attend the initiation process from my father's side. So, I had to tell myself that "Dosini my brother you love yourself too much, God has provided for till this very moment so what will stop Him from protecting you now?" Initiation is an age old ritual so it will not change because of me so when it is time for one to go to the *bhomeni* then pray and go to the *bhomeni* so whatever is done there you must not involve yourself in it and you will not involve yourself with what your father will say because he belongs there and you do not, therefore I never thought about belonging to my father's side of the family, that was never in my mind, even as a young adult when I talk to him I do not talk to him as if I am talking to my real father I reply to him as if I am in conversation with any other man, that was it.

Dosini's differences with his father brought up an interesting tension that is often highlighted in discourse on manhood for amaXhosa which is, the exclusionary nature of the tradition where women are concerned. The issue of patrilineal traditions and the tensions and complications which it results in for young men speaks to the Mfecane (2016) call for an African centred theory of manhood that take seriously the non-material aspects of personhood.

Often discussions of manhood in public spaces are often silenced by disqualifying those speaking as outsiders. As the backlash against the film, *Inxeba – the wound showed us*, Xhosa men do not take kindly to people who have not gone through the rite of passage speaking about it in any form (Siswana 2018). Furthermore, those who have gone through it who choose to speak about it publicly are also shunned as inauthentic men and/or sell outs Siswana (2018). I wondered what informed the choice of what to share and what not to share regarding *ulwaluko*. Perhaps knowing that I was not looking to probe under their proverbial skirts gave them a sense of ease and control over what is sacred to them which inspired their generosity regarding everything else that they shared. From the narratives I received from the participants, I divided the nature of what the participants shared into three categories of information, namely, pre – initiation anticipation, hardship of the process and post – initiation socialisation.

4.2.1. The pre-initiation anticipation

As we have established, *ulwaluko* is the pre-requisite into manhood. It is unsurprising then those young boys grow up looking forward to going through the process so that they may also be counted as men. This is evident in how all the men I interviewed responded when I asked them what it means to be a man to them and if they consider themselves men. For example, during my conversation with Bhele, after speaking at length about his growing up I asked; “Now as a grown up, how do you identify with the concept of being a man? What does it mean to you?” To which he answered as follows.

Bhele: Alright. The first thing is, I would describe this as a first feeling that one gets when you actually grow towards your 14, 13/ 14, 15, you start imagining your circumcision day. Your ceremony that will be celebrated because you have seen at least 2, 3 years, boys who are older than you are going that route.

It seems that part of what inspires the anticipation and looking forward to going through the initiation rite of passage is what it will unlock for them on the other side when manhood has been attained. In the quote below, Bhele proceeded to describe what made him look forward to becoming a man.

Bhele: So, being a man meant that one, if there is a ceremony within the village, there are certain meats that are excluded from being eaten by boys. So, there are certain parts of, if it's a sheep, it's a cow, there are certain parts that the boy is not allowed to eat. So, when you want to become a man, you want to explore even that part, that the certain

part, the chest of a cow, is referred to as *isifuba* is only eaten by men. Even women are excluded.

Here we see how manhood is marked by exclusion. As a boy, one is made aware of his outsider status through the different ways that that exclusion occurs. Whether it is in the processes and protocols during traditional ceremonies and even in daily social interactions and the use of a secret language of men which I discuss further in section. The boys are always aware that they are not men yet.

4.2.2. *At the mountain*

The men did not have much to say about their time at the mountain on account of the code of secrecy that they observe. What they did communicate about it was the experience of hardship and pain that they interestingly hold with value and honour. For example, when Bhele expressed that “it is hard to be a man”, I asked him to explain what makes it hard. To which he said.

Bhele: Yeah as... First of all, you have to undergo a ritual of circumcision. That’s a starting point. It’s hard to be a Xhosa man. You have to undergo that ritual. Yeah, certain things that you perform there you feel like it’s torture although it’s also meant to discipline you and to teach you how to be a responsible man and how to carry heavy loads, heavy burden. So yeah... It’s one of the things that makes it hard...

Similarly, the Dlamini brothers both described the process of being at the mountain as “excruciating”, “painful”, and “traumatic” but like Bhele they proceeded to qualify that by describing it as “bittersweet” and spoke of a good side to the experience.

Dlamini 2: Oh gosh. It was draining. It was a drag. But it was... I don’t know when I look at it now like it was a lot hey. It was painful. It was just. Yeah. It was excruciatingly painful actually. I think saying it was just painful only is an understatement. It was excruciating, like excruciatingly painful and then... But there were good times you know when we all just gather in one *Bhoma* and we’d just start singing and dancing and whatnot. There would be that vibe that this is, you know, this is our thing... and we were the COVID babies so, if I should put it that way. So, the duration we spent there even went into Christmas. Even went into new year’s. So, it was hectic. We’re not with our families and ... because Ramaphosa he kept on closing, so you know. So, yeah. Once it opened then everyone went. So, anyways like I said it went over you know

New Year's Eve. So, even on the night of New Year's Eve there was just dancing and doing crazy things and laughing yeah it was a very bitter yet sweet experience.

4.2.3. Post-initiation - counting izilimela, seniority and hierarchies in manhood

When discussing the anticipation and looking forward to finally becoming men, I noticed that the men made a lot of reference to seeing those who went before them being part of what motivated their desire to go themselves. Part of that motivation has to do with how one comes back and holds a position of seniority and responsibility in relation to the boys who have not yet gone through initiation. This also connects to how seniority and hierarchy operates among Xhosa men. In the interview extracts below Bhele explains how one assumes different duties and responsibilities depending on where in the order of seniority they fall, he further explains what factors inform when and how one transitions from one level of seniority to another.

Bhele: And also... even those let's say you become fortunate; you get circumcised. There are two seasons of circumcision. There is June and December. So, if you become, if you go in in June and other peers should go in in the second-round season which is December you would be the one being assisting in the preparation of the... *Ukwaluka*...

He went further to explain that upon one's return, there is a duty for one to be a good role model to those who have not gone through initiation. Saying that,

Bhele: if you are ahead one step or two steps ahead of the particular age group, they look up to you and they want to be where you are. So, you are to be a good example to the generation coming after you.

So, there is an awareness that those who have not gone through initiation also wish to do so and emulate the behaviours of those who have gone. Perhaps this is because he too looked up to and emulated those who went ahead of him as younger siblings would do with their older siblings. Indeed, the culture recognises and fosters a sense of "brotherhood", respect and submission to hierarchy captures in the concepts of *Mkhuluwa* and *Mninawa*, which also articulate one's position in relation to another in terms of seniority. Furthermore, the order or hierarchy has implications for the kind of duties that one can assume and labour that they do during ceremonies and in the general reproduction of life in the community.

Bhele: Uh there is a hierarchy of respect from those junior... from a man who has just joined in or who has just been to the mountain, he falls within a category called *umfana* and, then there are those who are in between being elderly and *umfana*, they are the middle class, and then there are those ones who are old. So, if you are within this group... Okay, from a boy to this group of becoming a young man and from there in the middle age group of becoming a man and then up to the seniority which is elders; this first group of men does the labour work and the chores and can be sent...

Interviewer: *Abafana*?

Bhele: Yes, *abafana*. ...can be sent from pillar to post and do all their village work. And then the second group is the one that usually is expected to finance or to contribute financially and to do anything also that could not be done by the younger group. But the elderly group is the one that sits around and observe everything. And they will stand up and give a word of wisdom. And for you to translate for you to move from the second group in the middle group of men which is the age group usually it is between 40 to 50 to go to the next group of becoming a senior man you have to slaughter a sheep and a ritual should be done celebrated that now you have passed this little crook you are going to that group and in that group elderly group of becoming a senior men you cannot be expected to slaughter you cannot be expected to do you just watch people doing things so yeah you give instruction. So, the hierarchy of respect changes from junior men middlemen and the senior men. Myself because I'm married now, in terms of age group I'm in my 30s which is I fall within the *abafana* group but because I'm married, I qualify also to be within the middle group which is those ones whom I've allocated 40 years to 50 years. So, because of the status that I'm married then I qualify to be in the middle group. I do participate in both actually, yeah.

Similarly, the participants all explained in one way or another that as men they know that they have to volunteer their labour for whatever event or ceremony takes place in their communities. For example, when I asked Dlamini 2 if there are behavioural standards and social etiquette standards or criteria that he would have to exhibit socially he explained that being a newly initiated man he has labour duties to perform when there is a ceremony.

Dlamini 2: Right. Yeah, there are. For example, when there is a ceremony/event, obviously there are men and you need to be part of. Whether... it doesn't really matter how old you are but as long as you just went through that process (referring to initiation), you can just go be with the men when there is a ceremony or something like that. And there is... all the time when there is going to be a slaughtering of an animal, they call the younger men (*abafana*). These are just basic things that you should know that you are not going to just sit in the tent or something like that. You will have to work and yeah. So, yeah.

Scholars who explain that manhood is a social identity (Mfecane, 2016) thus, being seen to be an active participant in community affairs and giving one's labour at events and ceremonies in the community is a requirement which may result in social sanctions if not fulfilled (Ntombana,

2011, Sipungu, 2020). In the interview extract below Bhele confirms this when he explains that he manages his affairs in order to maintain good social standing with regard to attending to community affairs.

Bhele: Well for now I think I've been fortunate enough because I've not been I've been punished. I think for now I've managed to either try if I'm not physically present to make sure that there is a sort of way that I can assist so that the community can at least get a sense that I am involved with in what happens within the community.

In living up to the social standard of being a man age, financial independence and marriage came up as key criteria in determining the substance of the manhood and where in the hierarchy and nature of their social relations as men. There are two initiation seasons every year, the first in June and the second in December. As pointed out by (Ntombana, 2011), part of the symbolism of initiation that it represents a process of death, transformation and rebirth. Thus, upon completion, the newly initiated men begin a new life of *ubudoda* – manhood. For amaXhosa, the unit of measure used to denote how long one has been a man is known as *izilimela*, which one starts counting from the year that they went to initiation school. How long one has been a man is an important determinant of the seniority. Which even trumps calendar age. This also adds to the motivation and peer pressure to go to initiation school because one doesn't want their agemates to have seniority over him.

As discussed above, scholars have noted that for [South] Africans achieving “real manhood” also centres around taking a wife and building a homestead. Thus, when Bhele explained further his own positionality being a married man in his 30s.

Bhele: So, the hierarchy of respect changes from junior men middle men and the senior men my fault because I'm married now this thing, I'm in terms of age group I'm in my 30s which is I fall within the above final group but because I'm married, I qualify also to be within the middle group which is those ones whom I've allocated 40 years to 50 years so because of the status that I'm married then I qualify to be in the middle group. I do participate in both actually yeah.

Xhosa culture, as argued by many scholars is dynamic thus the descriptor of a “living culture” to explain why much of African tradition and custom is not rigidly codified and makes room for decent, adaptation and variation in practice. These variations are determined by factors that cannot be considered as static and set in stone. Thus, Bhele adds more substance to his explanation of how calendar age, *izilimela* and marital status interact in allotting seniority. In the interview extract below one can see that the relationship between how old one is in terms

of calendar age, how long they have been *indoda* in terms of *izilimela* and their marital status compound on each other and operate as indicator ones grown, experience and wisdom.

Interviewer: So, it's age and marital status are the main things that determine which group, where in the hierarchy you fall?

Bhele: Yes. For instance, you cannot if you are... they call it *izilimela*. If you have 10 years being circumcised, 15 years and so on. So, those who are 40 (years old) would be generally above 20 years being men. So, 40 and above can do what is called *ukuyala*, which is they can have a word of wisdom because they've been in this game for at least more than two decades. So, that's how things are but a young fellow than 40 cannot even if he is married, he cannot give words of wisdom because you know little about life and manhood and so on and so forth. Despite even if he had a good career and progress, has his own cars, his own house and running his own business or practice but because of age now, you're still confined to say you cannot give words of wisdom because you know little about. So, also, they measure they measure wisdom with experience and with age. So, wisdom comes in two forms in the African context with experience and with age. So, that's how they say if you're 40 and above they say you have seen it all. There's something that you can say. You have messed up or you have done good or you are in a process of changing to do good. So, there's something that you can say about life to young boys or to young men so that's general. But the elders now they would just issue one word that you would have to understand and to in fact to analyse until you understand, and they are regarded as the most senior and the wisest and they've seen it all. Those are the seniors.

True to the dynamic nature of African cultures and traditions, given the intervention of multiple historical factors including, colonialism, apartheid, and the resultant racialised economic inequality, moving through the different stages of seniority in the hierarchy of men has evolved in contemporary South Africa. Bhele painted an idealised understanding of the measure of wisdom. However, knowing how capitalism and economic disenfranchisement have had a heavy hand in reconfiguring African traditions customs and practises (Hunter, 2010, 2016) together with the complex ways in which "black tax" operates in young South African's lives, I probed further into whether how much does financial status and capability influence seniority and relations amongst peers of men.

Hunter (2005, 2010) explains the cultural importance placed on *ukwakha umuzi* - building a homestead. He (2016) explains that declining marriage rates in South Africa. Due to labour migration, segregationist apartheid policies, and the resultant economic challenges for the black majority have resulted in delaying of marriage compared to earlier generations (Hunter, 2010). Indeed, given contemporary capitalist economy where youth unemployment is rife, factors such as career and income levels have an influence in the social construction of

gender identities and roles. In the interview extract below Bhele explains the shift in how social status informed by seniority has evolved where career and economic factors are concerned. He and other participant note that in this generation where having a homestead may be delayed, becoming independent an important marker of manhood but takes a different form from earlier generations.

Bhele: Alright the, some villages have this but mine fortunately has grown to be educated and have a different perspective on this one. A man who would speak in a village community meeting is a man that has Kraal and that has a household. So, for you to have a voice you must have a household you must have a cattle kraal. That used to be the measure for you to have an impact or for your word to be taken serious within the community. And then there is this growing... we could say it's a form of transition because if you could look our history as a country from apartheid, there were few selective jobs that a black man could do. Either he becomes a policeman and nurse and teacher and very few, but now in our generation one is a lawyer, another is a doctor, another is an engineer, another is a farmer another is interested in trade, another is doing Internet whatever, IT specialist another one is doing banking law related banking and the financial some are in the private sector and others are in the public sector. So, their relation within that what we mostly appreciate is a healthy competition if I may put it. That okay so you are a teacher you are a doctor. Okay, so where is your household? The most important thing that you want to drive as this generation we want to have our... we want to break away from our parents. Which is... our parents should have their own household and equally we should have our own household because now there's that power struggle that when you don't have your own house you still with you still live with your parents you are get to be given law whilst you are supposed to be a law giver in your own household. So, we... It's a healthy competition if I may put it that way and because everything we're still in a transition so no one has really maintained for a period of time or became consistent with success in his or her career everyone is still growing so it's still early to tell but we are treating each other with respect and we are having that healthy competition but always we strive to be independent so that even those who don't believe in marriage and they can date but in their own private space and so on and so forth because even if you become a man there is one girl that you can introduce at home and you would be permitted to bring on certain exceptional occasions.

Bhele highlights that this generation of men have a wider range of career options open to them compared to the older men. The access to previously unavailable opportunities informs a competitive spirit among men of his age group where, one's occupation and resultant financial capabilities as seen through their material assets have a direct impact on his social status among men. Tshawe goes further in his explanation of how career influences social relations among men by narrating the dynamics of gift giving and how one's career and finances inform how they host guests and community members when events and ceremonies take place.

SL: In today's time, one's career does have an impact because when I give you a gift know that when you come to me, expect that I will give you the same gift that you gave, therefore you cannot gift me with water and I gift you with a drink, when you give me a drink as a gift (coughs), I will also give you a drink as a gift, if you give me water I will also give you water.

TS: Can you explain this using another example (both laugh) ...how is this so?

SL: Let me give you a simple example, I am employed and the people I went to school with are also employed, two of them are employed, one of them works at the Department of Education and the other at the Department of Social Development. When I visit one of them when they have hosted an event, let's say there is *umgidi*, I can give him a Twizza drink as a gift and then he would give me a Coke as a gift, he cannot give me a Twizza as a gift as if I am someone in the community who is unemployed, he has to give me a Coke, you understand, if he gives me a Twizza then I will also give him a Twizza.

TS: Okay...

SL: That is where it starts, you would find that when I visit him while he is hosting an event at his home, I will not be in the same place as ordinary people, there is a special room reserved for me along with my friends and they will not be served Twizza, they will be served Coke.

TS: So, what does this mean, I do not want to say discrimination, or let me put it this way, how does a person decide what type of guests she or he has?

SL: This is how it is, you cannot give a stranger or someone who cannot give you something that they will not be able to reciprocate, that is how I want to explain this to you...you cannot give a Coke to someone who won't....but this is dependent on people's hearts, but in the times we are living in, really you cannot give something to someone who cannot give you something in return, you see...

Tshawe's explanation and cool drink analogy demonstrate how one's status and standing in the community and among his peers is a result of the intersection of age – which is the sum of one's) calendar age and manhood age in terms of *izilimela*, economic status – which implicates one's employment status and type of profession, and reciprocity – which speaks to African people's economies of labour in social reproduction. How one can show up for others physically and materially is largely influenced by how they make a living, and this invariably influences the construction of one's manhood status. Furthermore, as Hunter (2005, 2016) demonstrates, in contemporary South Africa, where the traditional conception of manhood which prioritises marriage and having *umzi* still stands, economic factors have a lot to do with the delaying of marriage and limited capacity to build a homestead.

4.3 Xhosa manhood and “other” genders

4.3.1 Heteronormativity as “the centre in decision making”

The idea of *umzi* (in isiXhosa)/ *umuzi* (in isiZulu) – a homestead which is common between amaXhosa and amaZulu is a significant part of achieving the most honoured form of masculinity for these groups (Hunter, 2005, Hadebe, 2010, Mhlahlo, 2009). Hadebe, (2010:26) states that for amaZulu “the homestead was central to the Zulu worldview and ethical systems because it controlled matters of land, marriage, inheritance and seniority, and kinship relationships, which were at the centre of the homestead economy”. Thus, the building and leading of a homestead operates as a pinnacle of masculine power. Hence Hadebe (2010:26) further argues that “*umuzi* was an indicator of man’s strength among men and women who were subservient”. Hunter (2005:146) states that if the household head was successful, he would be called *indoda emadodeni* (“a man among men”) as a sign of honour and respect. Similarly, as indicated by the statements made by Bhele (see quotations above), having a homestead which implies being married, having land and cattle affords a man high esteem in the community, respected social status and seniority above his unmarried peers.

My inquiry about what it means to be a man prompted the men to describe for me the image that they grew up understanding as the manhood ideal. This image had a lot to do with how a man is perceived and what kind of duties he performed at home and in the community. From the participants, responses, I noticed that the man’s role was very closely tied to fulfilling certain responsibilities and the honour and reverence that such responsibilities entitled the man. This in turn inspired in the young men and their aspirations to adulthood which is manhood for them. In the interview extract below, Dlamini 2 describes the duties that one is expected to fulfil once they become a man. I must point out that when he states that these are expected because you’re a man he in fact means that the expectation comes into effect once the boy has gone through *ulwaluko* or these are duties expected of men i.e., those who have gone through the initiation rite of passage.

Dlamini 2: ...my experience right. From what I have observed honestly from seeing it's coming back to the thing of ... Okay now because you're a man you are expected to do certain things such as... okay taking care of your family putting a bread on the table and making sure the security and whatnot and there's order in your household if I should put it that way and obviously when you're a boy you're still gonna have to like... ndingathini? You're still obviously growing and into this man you know that will take care of his family and whatnot. So, that's basically what I've actually observed done.

That you need... a man is expected to do quite a lot so yeah. And it's got to do with yeah security and whatnot and going to find a job and basically supporting your family yeah so.

Similarly, Bhele describes the image and role of a man that was modelled for him as a young boy which he aspired to.

Bhele: So, a man was someone who is respected within the locality. If there is a problem, man would be summoned specially to a men's meeting, and they would address problem. If its crime related, if its anything that... cause even if there is a problem of drought or whatever that affects that particular society. Even if its cattle that have been stolen. Or thieves. Or whatever. So somewhere men have been getting... They are the centre in decision making within the community and they are the ones whom, even if... as I said, growing up there were households run by children and single women. So, you would be told that a sheep will not be slaughtered, go call Mr. So – And – So, so that he would be the one who officiate this. Whatever, that will be done. So, man have been given that particular role to be the face of that particular society.

Interviewer: And did you aspire to becoming that nawe at some point?

Bhele: Of course, of course. To be respected, to be reserved a seat in a ceremony or in ... even at a household when you are told as children you cannot seat there, the father of this house seats there. You cannot eat with that spoon, you cannot drink with that cup, it's the father of the house alone who is permitted to. So, you aspired because it meant that the most important person is this fellow.

Similarly, Zibula, much like all the other participants described his main role model(s) whom he aspired to be like in terms of the family and home he has built. When I asked him if there were any people (specifically men) he looked up to from his childhood and as he grew older, he had the following to say.

Zibula: Jho! In my street or in my family. Well in my family I would say, well even now I still want to be like my uncle. In the sense that, he has everything sorted out. He is married, he has a family, job you see. He's set in life. I love the situation the way he is towards his children. I'd say that's my role model at home. Then in my street, no. Not in my street. They are okay people but I've never sat down and talk to them in that way that I can say I get them.

All three of the above quotes demonstrate how the responsibilities (of providing security) of a man are premised on there being a household and family that the man has contributed to constructing materially and by being a constituting member of. Thus, (heterosexual) marriage is a common descriptor of a successful man and life. None of the

participants expressed a wish to be eternally single (remaining unmarried). It seems that career aspirations and owning property were not the only markers of masculine success. Having a wife and children that one “leads” as a man is equally important. From the literature, it seems that the idea of *umzi* implies a heterosexual relationship dynamic, where a man and woman marry and have children. Indeed, much of the arguments made by traditional leaders and many people who are against homosexuality and same-sex marriage revolve around the disruption of the heteronormative understanding of home and family building.

This poses unique tensions for homosexual men as same-sex partnerships are not envisaged in the concept of *umzi* although same-sex marriage is recognized by the South African Constitution (1996) and there is legislation which legalizes same-sex marriage (Civil Union Act (Act No. 17 of 2006)). Two of my participants, 25-year-old (at the time of interview) Dhlamini 1- and 20-year-old (at the time of interview) Dhlamini 2 are gay, and both also express that they want to have lifelong partners and they want to get married. Modern society requires a reconceptualization of many traditional concepts and practices. Same-sex marriage has been a sight of contestation across the world with many countries against same-sex relationships to the point of legislatively criminalizing same-sex romantic relationships and little hope for recognizing same-sex marriage. South Africa is an exception in this regard. With its legal recognition and protection of same-sex partnerships and marriage it provides us space to interrogate how gender and sexual orientation show up in conceptions of identity, gender roles and construction of home and belonging. The concept of *umzi* is one such idea that allows us to explore how home and family building is gendered and sexualized.

Both Dhlamini brothers are openly gay although Dhlamini 2 has never actually “come out” to his parents and told them directly that he is gay. I found it interesting and odd that although not closeted, he and his family have never spoken openly and directly about his sexuality apart from his older brother, Dhlamini 1 who also had to probe it out of him. In the interview extract below, Dhlamini two explains what he thinks has made him withhold from the conversation about his sexuality with his family, namely his mother, father and eldest Brother Dhlamini (Pseudonym).

IP: My reservation. Uhm yeah no I don’t think I would ever actually talk to him directly about it and say, okay this is who I am. Maybe I would probably do it I don’t know if I could get the courage. I don’t know because I know reaction, he’s probably gonna give me so... and the reaction is... I don’t know, he’s gonna take it, likely laugh off and then yeah, he’s not gonna say that he’s not accepting he’s gonna like knows I probably just be you know like. You do get comments though when he is drunk (referring to their

eldest brother Dhlamini 0). Things like “where is your girlfriend boy? Oh, I forgot you are gay” and then laughs. And the he’ll say, “no man just be you but don’t be too extra.” And I don’t know what “too extra” means.

TS: That was gonna be my next question, what is being too extra?

IP: What is being “too extra”? Then after he referred directly to Dhlamini 1. Obviously, Dhlamini 1 would come in you know to this entire thing about not being “too extra”. What is extra? “Don’t be like Dhlamini 1”. Jho! Okay, this is why I’m just like dude if you got a question, ask. Go ahead but I’m not gonna come to you. I feel like it’s not I don’t know I don’t owe you anything to actually come and explain to you, you see. So, yeah. If he’s got questions sure I will be willing to answer them, but I am not going to initiate that conversation myself. So, yeah.

Although, Dhlamini 1 has never disclosed his sexual orientation on account of “not owing anyone an explanation”, he did explain in an earlier part of the interview that he has never felt safe to disclose his sexual orientation because of seeing the judgement and backlash from heterosexual men that openly gay, particularly feminine presenting men get. This would explain his eldest brother, Dhlamini 0’s warning about not being “too extra” like Dhlamini 1. He also explained in a later part quoted below that his reservations about telling his parents have something to do with fear because he would be his parents’ second son coming out as gay.

Interviewer: So, tell me about the adults in your in your life. The adults that you grew up around. Your relationship with your parents and other adults in your life in your home.

Dhlamini 2: Alright. One thing I can tell you is that my parents have supported me with whatever that I wanted to do. They’ve... literally everything as long as it just you know they could afford it. And if they didn’t, if they couldn’t afford it, I would know and understand that it’s too expensive. But one thing I can tell you about my parents is that they’ve always been there for me and yeah. I’ve learnt a lot from them actually, regarding a lot of things. Like these general things such as you know friends and what to do when you’re in friendships and whatnot you see.. Also, yeah just general life things and stuff. And also, even the adults around me could be my... Like can I also mention like aunts and what not?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dhlamini 2: So, even my aunts have actually. One thing I know is that they will support me with anything. Seriously I can say that they’re even my second parents. Yeah. And then I do have friends who are old around 25, 26. I get great advice you know about other things and when I am in a sticky situation?

Interviewer: And your relationship with your parents, what’s that like?

Dhlamini 2: Uhm... we are... we are close nhe but obviously them being parents there is a certain barrier that one doesn’t really need to cross. We can talk and have

conversation like even with like... about just random things like when you gonna get married? Are you gonna get kids or what or something like that? And when we're just gossiping about people you know. We do that but then again you think twice... oh wait a minute, you are my parents so I can say this much and then that's it. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, did you ever like come out to your parents?

Dhlamini 2: No, not yet. That is also a process. Something that's pending.

Interviewer: Okay

Dhlamini 2: It's not gonna happen anytime soon. Reason being uhm... My parents are accepting people but uhm... I mean, the second child now right and I'm gonna be a bit vague because mom is here but anyways. Okay so, then again, the second child is also saying that they are homosexual. So, yeah... Now I have a certain fear that but at the same time, hey I'm here ndizawuthini ke (what I going to do)? But I just want to actually sort out my things. Not that I'm afraid that I might get kicked out or anything like that. No. Those thoughts just don't even come into my mind because my parents are not like that, like those people. But I just don't want to be... I don't know, I feel as if a second a second version or something like that you see. So, yeah, I just want to sort out my things in life and obviously job, place, car, my own things you know and be like; OK so, this is it. In fact, I won't even tell them I would just probably just bring whoever that I would be in a romantic relationship with then just like say okay, so this is it.

Interviewer: Do you not think they know though?

Dhlamini 2: I think they do know. I think they do have their suspicions but then again, they still, I think being naïve also got to do with this. So, it's a thing of, okay so, when you get married what kind of person are you going marry. Don't bring us a *makoti* (bride/ daughter in-law) that is a certain way. And I'll be thinking, right if only you knew. If only you knew. Even with Dhlamini 1 it happened. I mean it happens that they say things like don't bring us a bride that is such and such a way. How many kids are you going to have and so on? So, yeah. It's those things.

I found it interesting that although, Dhlamini 2 much like his older brother Dhlamini 1 is very secure and certain of his parents love and support and has no fear of being disowned or no longer being welcome in his family for being gay. However, in the same breath he expresses genuine fear about "coming out". One can rightly speculate that for Dhlamini 2 there is an understanding that being gay is somehow letting down his parents despite them being accepting. This would explain why his brother Dhlamini 1's coming out did not serve as encouragement for him to also be open about his sexual orientation.

What is even more intriguing is that although he knows that his parents would not "kick him out", he feels a strong need to be materially independent before officially making it known to his parents that he is in fact gay. The idea of being independent is a consistent theme among all the participants. It seems that demonstrating an ability to make a living and build a life independent of one's parents and family home is a significant marker of masculine

industriousness even if one is not married or have *umzi* in the sense of a marital property that a homestead represents. Indeed, Tshawe and Bhele speak to this when explaining the important being independent which I will discuss below. I wondered if by insisting on being materially independent from his parents before “coming out”, Dhlamini 2 is hoping that demonstrating his manhood in that way would “compensate” for not conforming to heterosexuality which although not a condition for *ubudoda* but is the strongly held norm.

4.3.2. Manhood, gender, and sexuality

Sexuality lands itself at the centre of a lot of gender and masculinities discourse. As shown in Chapter Two, mainstream western traditions and discourses posit sex, gender and sexual orientation to operate in a dichotomous binary which societal structures are organised around. Starting from the Euro-American nuclear family model which much of western civilisation and industrialisation has been organised around. A heterosexual male and female who identify as man and women respectively, marry, own property and raise children in that union. Furthermore, labour is divided according to gender roles that follow this binary. As discussed above, the participants in this study follow this logic while the two gay participants show the tensions that non-conformity can present one’s performance of personhood. Although Mfecane (2016) makes a strong case for why sexuality has no bearing on one’s manhood identity which is solely contingent on the completion of *ulwaluko* (see Chapter 1 and 2), the reality of heteronormativity and homophobia do affect one’s social identity and confers the status of being a lesser man Qambela (2021). In his article about the film, *Inxeba- The Wound*, Scott (2021:27) argues that the film created a conversation about the “intersection of queerness, Xhosa masculinities and Xhosa culture” and exposed “the difficulties of queer Xhosa boys and men who are navigating tradition and cultural practices, and it showed how powerfully their experiences are shaped by heteronormative and homophobic culture”. Scott (2021:27) importantly argues that the film’s centring of queer Xhosa men’s experiences, “encourage[d] viewers to think more critically about the making of Xhosa men”.

As the interview extract below show, those who do not conform to the gender and sexual orientation binary experience their gender identities differently as they are seen to be deviating from the norm. Both Bhele and Zibula in their articulation of what gender is conflate the social identity of gender with sex, the biology descriptor. Zibula goes further to identify

that sexual orientation is a significant differentiator as one can transgress gender norms by behaviour and dress and still be heterosexual.

Interviewer: Okay. So, in terms of gender, what's your understanding of the concept of gender?

Bhele: Well, the first concept is that there are two genders. There is a male and a female. That's one concept. That's the concept I grew under. Of course, by then we played with... at school, at a primary, we saw some boys who behaved like girls. Although we were only allowed on a school fun day at primary to wear as boys – girls stuff, girls wear boys stuff. But there was, there were those children whom where, we could not classify them as fully boys. They would want to play with girls, and we did not understand what, what, what, do they have their own gender or what's happening with them. Of course, we called them names but, we only underst... I only understood those two and it was explained to me that, that's the natural and... that's the natural way things are.

Interviewer: So, how does it apply to boys and girls?

Bhele: Well, it applies in two ways. Boys were at some point told to man up, to grow, not to feel too much, not to sob and stay too long feeling pain. Even if you were injured in a soccer match or whilst collecting sticks to make fire or whatever that could have injured you. But you were, you were, you were told to man up. So, that the difference. And then if you cry you will be referred to a girl you will keep on crying. So, we understood that emotionally, men or boys should be strong. They should be able to be resilient and also to, to, to avoid feeling pain or to express the feeling if they are at times injured or felling pain.

Similarly

Zibula: Okay. Gender in my view is basically sex. Which means you're a guy and I'm a girl that's it. It is gender. But i-topic topic iba pha kengoku; yes, you are a girl and yes, I'm a guy but, what's your sexuality? Now that's the topic you see.

Interviewer: Okay.

Zibula: Whereby myself as a guy, I say; no, I'm gay. You as a girl, which is your gender, you are a girl but you are a tomboy you see.

The definitions and difference between the concepts of gender, sex and sexual orientation can be slippery as scholars also challenge the long-standing understanding of biological sex as constant and immutable (see Chapter 2). Thus, I am not concerned with the technical [in]correctness of my participants articulation of what these mean as shown in the interview extracts above. What is interesting for this study is the outcome in terms of conferred masculine status that they result in for men. In the interview extract below, Zibula demonstrates very well that one's sexuality affects the status of their masculinity in his explanation of how

“girls can get away with more than guys” in relation to being physically affectionate with other girls and experimentation with same-sex intimacy.

Zibula: Like it is this way. In terms of sexuality, i-cherry can kiss another girl. It’s fine. Me kissing another guy.... Sorry. Like i-cherry can say I’m bi or I am what-what and then kiss another girl. But me being a guy and I say... and I kiss another guy and say after that I’m bisexual... No, my man, you’re gay. Very gay.

Interviewer: Why?

Zibula: Very Gay. No. Like no jho! No. So That’s why I say girls can get away with that. Then us as guys, what do we get away with?

As we can see from the interview extract above, my inquiry into the reason for this double standard which makes it less acceptable for men to express sexually fluidity was not engaged. So, I decide to probe further into this. I asked whether it is tabooer for men to be anything other than heterosexual than it is for women. The response was not a definitive yes or no which I would be able to ask the reason for. Instead Zibula continued as follows.

Zibula: I mean I don’t have a problem nhe. But! At least come out front and just say; my friend I’m gay, rather than saying I’m bi. Then you fuck more guys than girls. Ha.a. No. No, there’s something wrong kaloku.

Interviewer: Okay. What’s wrong with that? Like can’t you...

Zibula: Ha.a... (indicating no)

Interviewer: What is it about being a guy that makes it less acceptable to go both ways than we can be more accepting of girls going both ways?

Zibula: Ey I don’t know but to me, I just think... Like as much as I can.... Like I said I said, I have gay friends and I have lesbian friends. I can watch my friends if we’re in a part. My gay friend is kissing a guy. Fine. My lesbian friend is kissing a guy, that’s okay. But now how can he say to me; I am bisexual but when I count the exes umjita, the exes are more guys than ama-cherry. Ha.a mfethu. There’s something wrong.

Interviewer: something doesn’t add up about that?

Zibula: Yabo! Wena just say that you’re gay because it started out as bisexual. Which means you’re exploring. Now it’s serious because there are many guys and not so many girls. You see.

Interviewer: Okay. I get you.

Zibula: So, that’s why I say ama-cherry can get away with that. Not guys. There are fewer things that we can get away with. Even me as a guy. Even though I’m straight now, if I can wear women’s clothes people would be puzzled. If I say no guys today, I decide to wear my sister’s clothes. Then they say okay today. But if I do the same thing tomorrow it will be like; hayi kengoku ‘fethu. Tell the truth. You see. [...] So, us as

guys we cannot get away with that. Again, girls can get away with that because ama-cherry can wear men's clothes and not look weird.

Zibula's explanation indicated another factor that is often highlighted in public and academic discourse about masculinities. As shown in Chapter two, there are rigid rules about what forms of expression and behaviours one should and should not display in order to fit into the archetype of pinnacle masculinity. Indeed, expressions like "that is so gay" to express disapproval of certain behaviour and expression from men as well as "no homo" as a disclaimer when one expresses a view that would otherwise transgress masculine standards demonstrate this. All of these indicate that men have limited scope to explore and express the multifaceted dimensions of their personhood particularly in terms of how they express their sexuality as stated in the quote below.

Zibula: Jah! I can say that because if you're a guy, expressing yourself is limited to a very small box. A very small box. There're some things that you cannot do. There're some things you cannot say. There are some people you cannot talk with freely. There are some things you cannot wear. Jah! I would put it like that.

Similarly, Dhlamini 1 confirms this when he says.

SP: So, I mean yeah as a man it started as something simple as you need to keep your hair short, we need to cut your hair can't grow out your hair. You need to wear clothes that are for boys. You need to behave a certain many. You can't be overly feminine you know. So, I think as we grow older from childhood it starts as we know the little things. You're not supposed to be playing with girls, you're supposed to be playing with guys. We supposed to be playing soccer. You're supposed to be outside with the trucks and being dirty like a boy and you can't be domesticated inside. If you are, then you're a problem. So, as you're growing older you find that there's other factors that come into it as well. Now that you're old you need to first of all to be considered as a man even though you were born as a man you need to go through the whole thing of *ukwaluka* just to be considered as a man and there's certain things so in order that you can't do because you're a man [...] Oh yeah also when you were asking what are the things that boys can't do? You can't be artistic. I was so surprised. Like in the Eastern Cape they don't promote being *ungumfana* and you're artistic. If you're artistic, there's something wrong with you. If you like to sing act or just write poems or draw it's considered as being feminine 'cause those are the things ideally that women are supposed to be doing. So, for me, during primary I was that kid I was outspoken I enjoy entertaining I was drama club loved singing I was in the choir I was that person who always used to make people laugh and that made me be a target basically for like bullying and all of that and also, I had a fat bum. So juicy (laughs). So, I was always confused as like, just like you know growing up I was confused as a girl. So, when I started being teased a lot I started really pulling back from all of those things that would cause eyes on me.

It became clear that heterosexuality as a prescribe ideal for demonstrating masculinity is introduced to the men from an early age. This was confirmed by Zibula when I asked how one comes to know and decide how they should or should not interact with others and who they should and should not interact with in certain ways.

Zibula: Okay. Number one, as a guy you grow up with that thing of; I am for girls, and I will forever be for girls. So, if... If one day I would find myself thinking; I wonder how it feels being with a guy, I will immediately slap myself because why am I going to think that? No. No. No.

Interviewer: You can't even think that?

Zibula: Ke moy' omdaka sewu. (That's an evil spirit)

Scholars such as Qambela (2021) show how the heterosexual inclination toward women and girls and successfully gaining their affection is a significant part of demonstrating masculinity among Xhosa men (see Chapter two). Zibula's words when he states that as young men, they grew up with an understanding that it is important to be attracted and attractive to girls/women speaks to the overall importance of heterosexuality as a marker of pinnacle manhood. Furthermore, demonstrating eligibility is also marked by having multiple love interests which is captured in concepts such as *isoka*, player etc. which are seen as demonstrations of prized masculinity.

4.4 Demonstrating and proving manhood

It is clear from the literature, public discourse, and the views of the research participants that manhood is a social identity that one achieves and maintains through by presenting certain physical and behavioural characteristics. Furthermore, as convincingly argued by Mfecane (2016), Ntombana (2011) and others, for amaXhosa, manhood is conferred by the successful completion of *ulwaluko* before, the social demonstrations may be expected. All the research participants confirm that indeed the first demonstration of manhood is completing the initiation rite of passage which involves traditional circumcision. Dhlamini two confirms this in the quote below when he explained what the qualifiers of manhood are.

Dhlamini 2: Right. That it is the thing. It comes down to the thing of, you know there's the way of the Christian way of circumcision when, you're still a baby then there is the Xhosa way. So, now you're a man, What Kind of man are you? Are you a Xhosa man or are you just a westernized man which is looked down upon in our culture? So, if *woluke ngesiXhosa* and it comes back down to saying this story from beginning to the

end when you are asked. So, you will say it and there's certain things that a lot of people don't, well I would say women and uninitiated people don't know. Even a simple word can just confirm that you are a Xhosa man. *Uyindoda yomXhosa*. So, yeah, it depends. It depends if you did it the Xhosa way or you did it the westernized way and then they would actually pick it out that no, you went this side and obviously you will be marked you know. You will be made a joke after that. So, yeah.

Indeed, as shown in Chapters One and Two, for the attainment of *ubudoda*, the difference between Traditional Male Circumcision as performed during *ulwaluko* and Medical Male Circumcision performed in hospitals and clinics across South Africa is not merely a matter of semantics. It has socio-political and spiritual implications for Xhosa men whose attainment of full personhood is inextricably tied to becoming *indoda*. Dhlamini 1's experience of having *ubudoda bakhe* – his manhood questioned by his peers and being asked to prove that he is a traditionally circumcised man demonstrates the extent and gravity of needing and wanting to complete the initiation process traditionally.

Dhlamini 1: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. So, they do that. They have these congregations where they have to know each other. That okay, I'm a man blah blah blah and. Personally I was really not that much... I'm a very, I'm an ambivert. So, like I've got a mixture of being an extrovert and introverted but primarily my introverted side kind of takes over. You know? So, for me if it's pointless why do I need to interact with anybody else? Why do I need to prove to somebody that I'm probably not even gonna see ever again that I'm a man? Why? What you gonna do with my manhood? Are you gonna make me better? Are you gonna give me money? What? So, for me things that were pointless I was just like I'm not gonna do that. So, I did however introduce myself in school, in the school setting 'cause I primarily I spend my time in school. So, if I'm not in school I'm at home. So, did it in school everything went well and for me that was it that was my process I'm done now y'all know I don't need anything else. But now it turns out that every break then men need to go congregate. Why? I'm not your friend (laughs) and I don't want to be a part of those things. But I did them 'cause I'm like one of the older. So, there's like categories as well. It's odd. And we just go and we sit in one line. So, yeah. There were these things and apparently, uhm... So, when I started defying that they came from a different angle in terms of questioning the whole process of my manhood or my initiation into manhood. So, now when something like that happens you need to like stand up for yourself in the lingo and all of those things. And those are the things that I never... I was brought up in a very modern family. I mean, I did Afrikaans throughout my (school) years. isiXhosa, I fumble isiXhosa a lot. So, for me that thing I didn't grasp it. A lot of those things and I didn't want to grasp them. You know? So, yeah you have to go speak and blah blah blah. And then if you say something that's demeaning then *kuthiwa uwile*. So. Like when you make a mistake or fumble, *uwile*. So, like when you make a mistake, you fumbled, *uwile*. So, now when *uwile* you need to buy alcohol for everybody and then get up and assume your position again. So, they came up with this entire thing of how I... and they knew my weakness was that I can't speak the lingo. So, they're like, okay, so there's been rumors going around that you are, you went to the hospital and whatever [...] So, there's that and

then I'm just like... Okay. So, I wait for this guy to finish and then he's like, so, basically the way forward is for you to either you stand up for yourself now or we go check that they did it traditionally or not – via the hospital. And that's...

Interviewer: Would there be a difference?

Dhlamini 1: There is physically. So, that's what they wanna check. So, that process within itself is also demeaning. So, *ukuwa*, if you can't stand up for yourself, it's already demeaning. You're not a man because you couldn't speak up for yourself. And then if you allow this situation of you go prove that you're a man by them opening up your pants and looking at your penis, that's demeaning as well because why are you allowing people to look at your manhood. So, that within itself is an embarrassment and I knew that very well. So, I'm like you know what, this is actually time for me to bounce. I stood up. I was like, fuck all of you. And I said it like that. I was like, "fuck all of you. I'm not doing that bullshit". And everybody was in an uproar. Like, "How could you say that?" Blah blah blah. And then I bounced off. And then yeah. So that was it. That's when I realized in that moment that; you know what, ever since I was young I've been trying to accommodate everybody's expectations of what I should be and I've been trying to meet those expectations but it was never enough. I did everything by the book but still there's no acceptance from society. There's no whatever. I'm still being hackled. So, I'm like you know what, I'm done. I'm just gonna be me, by me, for me. Take it how you take it. You are literally not gonna have an effect on my life. You are not doing anything that is gonna benefit me, so I don't care what you think. And I was like fuck it. So, I left it like that. And then that's when I was so content in myself that I was like okay let me come out. Let me just do whatever I'm doing. However, I'm doing it.

Dhlamini 1's experience demonstrated the tension that arises when thinking about Xhosa masculinities and the attainment of personhood through *ubudoda*. If manhood is an immutable state and status that cannot be withdrawn post successful completion of initiation (Mfecane, 2016), Dhlamini 1's lived experience surely demonstrates that one's sexuality, specifically homosexuality does present significant vulnerability to marginality. As Dhlamini further explained, the questioning of his manhood was not random or an outcome of any moral transgression but an outcome of being targeted because his sexuality and feminine disposition which he had struggles with from childhood. It is interesting to see how slippery the criteria for establishing and maintaining one's status as a man can be. As we see in the following section, the different rubrics used and ways in which one's manhood is assessed and judged interconnect but present contradictions which are hard to reconcile at times.

4.4.1 Manhood code of conduct and change of behaviour

It is common cause that after initiation the newly initiated become new people. This newness requires and is marked by a discard of the old materially and behaviourally. Thus, there is a significant emphasis put on change – of behaviour, of dress, of social etiquette and so forth. Dosini explains this in the quote below.

Dosini: Very much so, as I said before, it becomes too diverse, this is a deep matter in the sense that historically, well even till this day that is how it was supposed to be. When you return from *ulwaluko* you no longer socialise with boys, everything that you used before you went to the initiation school you leave behind, you see. You put everything aside, let me say, if I used to sit with Thandokazi on this chair before I went for *ulwaluko*, I used to sleep on this bed, I used to eat with this spoon, I used to do this, that and the other, all of these things, the clothes I used to wear I leave behind, I put them aside and I come to the side of manhood and buy new things, new clothes, new behaviour, everything that is mine has to be new. Even my behaviour and way of doing things has to be new to show that I am from the initiation school. I have been educated about manhood, what a man is, so if I come back and socialize with boys while I claim to be a man that means that I am I have not yet matured, if I return and wear the same clothes that I used to wear when I was a boy, I am not yet a man. I am what I alluded to, I am a circumcised boy, ...

The first marker of this change is marked by clothing. New initiates go through a period of being *amakrwala*, which is marked by the attire that they wear. The public display of the new man is a significant marker of one's entry into manhood as it is the first signal to the public of the newly gained manhood status and provides the cue to the public about how to engage the new person. In the interview extract below Dhlamini 2 explains this public display of ones newly achieved status and the conduct which is expected in that period.

Dlamini 2: Early 2021. So, yeah. It was that. Otherwise even with the attire I did not finish the duration mos, because it's either three months or six months or *ukhululwe ibhatyi*. There are certain processes that are supposed to be done when a person *ezawukhululwa ibhatyi* and whatnot. That did not happen with me mainly because I was not interested in that process. Like, it was a matter of me coming back home safe. And then the rest; please don't talk to me about, you know. Don't even mention anything about that so yeah.

Interviewer: So, why the disinterest if I can put it that way in anything related to whatever processes after that.

Dlamini 2: I think I was... I think it was super bored with the entire... like there's certain ways of doing things like every time you need like go somewhere and all your movements. Like let's say I'm standing up. There's just a certain way that I need to stand up and also with my hat and whatnot. My hat is not supposed to be showing you know the inside and whatnot. It must not show when I'm indoors obviously. Okay that's

the normal one, that I take it off. But a simple thing just as standing up and going to the shop is going to be a large task because there are just certain ways that you need to actually walk to and there's also a certain way that you need to... there are others like when you turn a corner, you don't just turn just like that. You still need to do like... you sit then you proceed. So, I felt like... and if ke, you're advertised mos, so, if ke you are seen by *umkhuluwa wakho* or anything like that, then it will cost you such as a bottle of alcohol or something like that you see. Yeah, basically it will cost you that.

As discussed in Chapter One and Two, conferring of manhood marks a departure from “careless”, “irresponsible” and “immoral” boyhood. This is why demonstrating a change of behaviour and practicing habits that demonstrate being responsible and respectful.

Dlamini 2: ... from *ukwaluka*, yes. After I came back it was... yeah, there are certain things that I understand that I can't really do anymore you know because certain things such as ... what can I say? Okay fine, coming back to the expectations of when you come back from there. You are now a man. You are now expected to act a certain way. So now that you act this certain way, you can't do some things like that you did when you were, a boy. You were always told this. That you can't do Some things that you did as a boy such as one simple thing like coming back home late. Usually, it is said that a man should be home way before 6:00 PM if he has gone somewhere and whatnot. So, such things they say *zezozinto kuthiwa zezobu khwenkwe* – boyhood behaviours if you stay out at people's houses and not spending any time at your own home you know and make sure things at home are done. Instead, you go visiting friends. So, there are things that you notice that wait a minute, I used to this, which is just go play and come back the following day. Go stay with my friends and what not and come back and just literally sleep the entire day. And simple things such as cutting the grass, you're expected to do such things now. Maintain the garden, make sure yard at home is clean. Things at home are tip top before you disappear. So, then again coming back to your question, is that yeah, it has a lot of bearing. So, you change your lifestyle obviously not drastically because at the end of the day you are still young but yeah it's it does have. Some things you know that my parents would actually not expect me to do, you see. So, yeah.

Dosini further shows the ways in which the expectations of being responsible and accountable are absent during boyhood and only applied once one has gone through initiation.

Dosini: When you are still a boy you are still a male without...you can do anything without justifying it, things that you do as a boy...when you are a boy you can do things without justifying it, you do not need any form of justification for what you do , you just do it out of, because you can and then when you are a man, anything that you do, you have to account for. You have to be responsible. Being responsible means that you are given responsibilities when you are a man, now you have things, you are obligated to do those things and once they go your way, they are not the way they are supposed to be, you have to account for that, you do not have to justify it but you have to account for it.

The nature of this change of behaviour that is expected of young men post initiation seems to revolve around expectations regarding their contributions to the running of the home in terms of giving their labour to maintain the home. I notice that the kind of labour expected of the young men is not too different to the labour of boy before initiation. Boys primarily assist their fathers with yard maintenance and tend to the livestock which is the same in their adult years. However, as Dosini and Dhlamini 2 explains another dimension which is added upon reaching manhood, accountability and restrictions on movement. From the quotes above one can see that as children, boys are not under much adult supervision and surveillance. In fact, it is encouraged that boys explore the outdoors far and wide. Upon reaching manhood, the expectation of accountability and being responsible implies limiting one's movement and always giving an account of one's actions and choices.

This sudden shift can be hard to accomplish and maintain. Indeed, the participants confirm the inconsistency and contradictions noted in the literature between ideal manhood and the contentious reality of contemporary manhood practices among young men. In the interview extract below. Dosini, explains the challenge of maintaining responsible manhood practices for young people who go to initiation school in their teenage years like himself.

Dosini: Okay, it goes back to ancient times whereby you would through the initiation process first as you would have grown up even if you are not 18 years old, you have to mature psychologically, this is unlike how growth is measured today. [...] When we come to the part of *ulwaluko* for our generation it becomes difficult to differentiate a boy from a man because in our time once you reach 18 or 16 years, as I said before that I went to *ulwaluko* when I was 16 years old. I was still immature, my mind was still immature when I went there for the circumcision as it was just about removing the foreskin and then I would come back and say "I am a man" but the actions are still saying that I am a boy so the main point, the main difference between these things is your action and your mental state.

The idea that *indoda, yindoda ngezenzo* – a man is a man by his actions, leaves one wondering about the practical application and mechanisms of enforcement and accountability. The gap between what is understood as the ideal expected behaviour of young men and what is practiced in reality are not always consistent with each other. This is demonstrated in the way that the participants noted change of behaviour as central to the transition into manhood yet continue to explain that in practice life before and after initiation is not very different.

Dlamini 2: Right. Before I went to the mountain, I had this idea that okay, your lifestyle is now gonna drastically change. Your clothing. You are now gonna start wearing shirts

and you know trousers and formal shoes and whatnot. Not even nala attire go not even that but just your normal attire that you wear *yobukrwala*. Not even that. But just your normal attire. That's what I was concerned about number one. [...] I was actually concerned that okay wait, my wardrobe. I like wearing shorts and you're not supposed to. Well, you're not supposed to wear shorts in that period of being *ikrwala*. So, anyways before that, so, in my in my head I'm thinking; okay so, I'm a person who likes shorts and now I'm gonna have to be wearing long things and covering my you know certain parts of you know my arms my point my legs my feet. So, Jho! Yeah, no okay it's the dressing and then after that the lifestyle. The lifestyle obviously it's the thing of... So, I won't be able to you know like go out to go clubbing with friends and whatnot. I need to be up indoors and check if everything is in order at home and so on. And whatever is needed I need to be there and whatever function or whatever *mcimbi* that is going to happen you need to be there. You need to be working, you need to be up and about you know, speak to other many maybe. Those kinds of things. Then after that, after I went through the process, I started to realize that no man my life didn't really change here. There's not really gonna change you, see? It's just that I can't really do the things I used to do to the extreme, you see. If I do go clubbing, I need to say that okay now I'm going out. I'm gonna be back at this time and what not. Back when I didn't go to the mountain, I'd just literary just walk out and be like literally, "okay, I'm coming back" and then that's about it. Then you'll see me again the following day. But now I've realized, even with the friends that I have that have gone through this process of initiation before me, I realised after I've come back that wait a minute, they came back still doing the same thing and no one is really saying anything about it you see. So, yeah, I was like okay, I think I was just stressing about you know a few things beforehand but saw that whatever, nothing really has changed.

4.4.3 The gathering of men – manhood and accountability

The section above demonstrates how the difference between manhood and boyhood with aesthetical presentation of the body, behaviour changes and symbolic role of one's presence in society. However, as Dosini explains below, the social standard of manhood behaviour codes are not simply unpractised ideals without enforcement. It is possible for one to be identified as a deviant and disciplined by his peers. However, the practice(s) of accountability and discipline of behaviour remain arbitrary and uncoded.

Dosini: in our era this happens, you see that we indeed underwent the initiation process with the other guys and you return and went through the stage of being *ikrwala* and did all of that but your actions, he is able to leave his home while he's mother calls out to him to wash the dishes and he responds and says "yhu no mama I am a man I will not wash the dishes", and he would leave and we see that. The yard at his home is not attended to but he saw fit that he should go to the tavern, and he would return to his home with the roof requiring fixing but he thinks to himself "I am not going to do that, you see, he would decide to spend his money on other things, these are the sort of things we pay attention to and think to ourselves "this is still just a circumcised boy", you see. And now when we are in your presence, we will not want to be affiliated with you and

discuss matters the way we should as men, what will happen is that you will either be a social outcast, you will be socially sanctioned and we would say to you “man you sit there by yourself or go and buy a bottle of hard liquor and we will teach you things you are supposed to do”. As I said before, a man is a person with responsibilities that he is supposed to be accountable for. Your actions should speak louder than words, do not tell us that you are a man, show us that you are a man, that is what the entire thing is about, that is the entire notion of it.

From what the participants shared with me, men have a system of accountability in their communities to address issues of misconduct and transgressions. Dosini said the following when I asked him who he accounts to regarding his shortcomings.

Dosini: Senior men... To me it is senior men, let me say hypothetically speaking, a male that went to undergo the initiation process and returns, when he has done something wrong he comes to me, I will be the one to see that “oh this one has done something wrong there”, because his peers will not be able to see that he did something wrong, I am the one who will be able to say “mmmm you should not have ventured into this territory” and then he will come back to me again to explain himself and then I will show him the correct way, you see.

This seems contradictory from his earlier statement quoted above where he narrates how young men call each other to order for unacceptable behaviour. However, understanding the significance and function of seniority and hierarchy, sometimes one does not heed the discipline of peers but does respond to the intervention of senior men. However, this begs the question, is there a system of bringing one’s misconduct to the disciplinary jurisdiction of men. Bhele explain the following about how men’s behaviour is regulated and disciplined.

Bhele: Yes. Yes, because also as a Xhosa man there is also a gathering of men. We usually... I cannot divulge it but it’s secret place, it’s a sacred place. It’s a place within the village that can be identified where men can meet and there each man accounts to one another. So, if it happens that you... as a as a man within that particular village you have fall short to adhere to any disciplinary measure or expectation; either you were supposed to go to assist in another family which is bereaved to dig a hole or you could not perform a certain thing so you feel like you have failed that society and its either you are called in to order or you are you are a shame to a certain extent.

Interviewer: Can you divulge at least how one or some of the ways that one can be called into order.

Bhele: uh well there’s a there’s a punishment. Either it’s a form of fine or uh... oh but there is a punishment but normally it usually occurs to be a fine where you have to buy beverages for men because of bringing them into shame or whatever and paying a certain fee. So, there is a punishment for irregularity that might occur.

The concept of The Gathering of Men takes multiple forms rather than a single uniform entity. The gathering that Bhele describes in the rural areas is not to be confused with the traditional court where cases are brought before the King or chief and his council. One of my friends and academic colleague, Tshabalala, a Xhosa man himself whom I asked for advice and ran thoughts and questions by him explained to me that there are multiple gatherings of men which are peer based. Xhosa men mainly socialise in peer groups according to the seniority categories that Bhele explained earlier such that *amakrwala* constitute a gathering, *abafana*, constitute a gathering and elder men also constitute a gathering. Within these peer groups it also matters who is senior and junior in terms of *izilimela*, marital status and socio-economic capital to wield influence and power.

Furthermore, it is these gatherings that performances of masculinity and challenges to masculinity are made. For example, Dhlamini 1 have had his manhood questioned in a gathering of *amakrwala* at school which resulted in him falling short, which is referred to as *ukuwiswa* when he refused to let his peers inspect his penis. His brother, Dhlamini 2 has also had an experience of *ukuwiswa* in a gathering of young during one of his friends *umgidi* where he fumbled the narration of his story of manhood and was fined a bottle of alcohol.

The sitting of gatherings of men is not codified such that there are official dates and times with pre-arranged agendas. Furthermore, as Tshabalala explained the peer-based nature of how men socialise, there are hardly situations where a single uniform gathering of all men as the colloquially known imaginary Men's Conference spoken of on social media would imply. Perhaps the closest to that kind of setting is during the process of *ukuyala* when elder men give words of wisdom and council at traditional ceremonies. Prof Ncedile Saule explained to me in a conversation where I was asking him how gatherings of men were constituted in Xhosa societies, men gather for multiple reasons including social drinking, labour networks, ceremonies, and celebrations. It is in these spaces where they have been brought together that it also serves as a space for addressing each other on how they have been fairing as men in their individual practises of their manhood.

When I asked Bhele what sort of things people get called into order or disciplined for, he said the following.

Bhele: Uh the first one would be that; a man in the Xhosa concept belongs to the society at large. So, if there was a... or if there is ceremony a within the locality, you are

expected to avail yourself and voluntarily offer services that would seek to assist. If it's chopping off wood to make fire, you need to be there especially as young man. If you need to sit around that place and to observe and as a guest, you should be there. If you need to play any role even if as I made earlier on a reference to a bereaved family, it is a Xhosa man that is required within the society that at the early hours of the morning you should wake up go to where the grave site is and go dig a hole, assist in digging a hole. If you fail for you to honour that time that has been said or you do not pitch at all then you'll be reprimanded for that and equally if you misbehave and probably you drink alcohol and you sleep wherever you have, you were drinking and behave in an improper manner of some sort you will be called in to order even for that and equally if you abuse your wife or your family even if you miss if you if you ill treat your family, there is a complaint about you or neighbours complain about you whether it's you are being a nuisance to the neighbours playing loud music or doing that and also violating certain locality regulations or laws then you'd be punished or reprimanded.

The picture painted by Bhele allows us to ask a few important questions about The Gathering(s) of Men as an instrument of accountability and enforcing discipline. The exclusive nature of The Gathering(s) does warrants suspicion on the kinds of disciplinary measures and justice that can be accomplished particularly related to abuses committed by men against those who do not form part of this Gathering(s), namely women and children. Although Bhele mentions an extensive list of transgressions that are addressed by The Gathering(s) of Men which include violence against women.

Furthermore, the setting that Gathering(s) of men implies a rural-or peri urban communal setting. As Bhele himself speaks specifically of the rural areas. It becomes a wonder if men in suburban settings are able to constitute gatherings of men in a similar fashion. My curiosity into this is made stronger by the response Bhele gave when I asked if he has ever been disciplined in The Gathering of Men to which he responded as follows.

Bhele: Well for now I think uh I've been fortunate enough because I've not been I've not been punished. I think for now I've managed to either try if I'm not physically present to make sure that there is a sort of way that I can assist so that the community can at least get a sense that I am involved in what happens within the community.

Bhele compensates for his physical absence from his rural home in Qumbu that is a result of livelihood demands with the socio-economic capital that he gains from his career. This speaks to the dual nature of livelihood, home and belonging that people from Mthatha straddle between the rural and urban. Furthermore, it shows the dynamic and flexible ways in which rules of conduct and participation in manhood are applied.

4.5 Kufanele ume njenge ndoda (You must stand as a man)

The notion of *ukuma* – to stand up, is common in how the young men articulate their experience and understanding of manhood. *Ukuma njenge ndoda* – to stand up as a man, is a central motif among masculinities that evokes ideas about masculine behaviours and actions and what it is to do as a man should. *Ukuma* operates as an assertion and protection of self. Furthermore, it speaks to the gendered division of labour where over and above standing up for oneself, it is a man's duty and responsibility "*ukumela izinto zekhaya*" – to stand up for his home and family. The participants expressed the notion of standing up in three ways which I discuss below. The first is *ukuzimela* which is being demonstrating independence in terms of solving problems and being self-sustaining. The second is *ukuzimela* which is standing up for yourself against threat. Finally, *ukumela ikhaya* which is standing up for your family against threat and representing your family in public or in the community.

4.5.1 "*Indoda iyazimela*", a man stands for himself

Ukuzimela has multiple meanings in isiXhosa. The meanings it denotes in this context are first, to stand up for oneself and second, to be independent. Ironically, a third meaning of *ukuzimela* is to hide which is a funny antithesis to prized masculine characteristics as that has connotations to cowardice. All the participants expressed that being a man is about *ukuzimela* or as a man one need to be able to *ukuzimela*. First, I address the *ukuzimela* as standing up for oneself in defence of one's manhood and physical integrity when questioned or attacked.

Zibula's words demonstrate an intersection between performance of masculinity as a security mechanism and the use of violence. When I asked him what is mean to be a man his answer was that to be a man one needs to stand up or demonstrate an ability to stand up as a man. Upon further inquiry into what standing up mean s and why one needs to do so, his response (quoted below) was to pint a scenario where violence is enacted resulting in a need for a response. Zibula explains that the response does not need to be in the form of physical violence, but one cannot leave a situation unaddressed completely.

Zibula: Like, like... Ah let's say you're a guy and I beat up your sister. You are a guy and I come from wherever I came from and beat up your sister. You must stand up. Which means you must step up and be the bigger brother or show your masculine self;

confront me about why I beat up your sister. Even if you just speak to me at least. I always talk first before I attend because I am slow to anger. But uDumba, my brother, when I look at him or based on how I know him, he is violence first type of person then talks. So, when we are together, I know that he can stand up and I also can stand up, but we stand up in different ways you see. So, jah! That is... you have to show that. As a guy you have to show that you're a man by providing. You have to show that you are a man by fighting. A lot. By fighting. Even if; "hayi sund' nyela". You've fought. That's enough. It doesn't have to get to fists sometimes. Just being firm in your voice, you have fought. So, if you don't show me those things or you don't exhibit them as a guy and you say that you're a guy, are you a guy?

He went further to explain that the idea of standing up for oneself which centres around fighting in defence of one's integrity starts from an early age. He explains that one grows up fighting until they get to a stage where that either stops or continues to be their adult personality. Interestingly his explanation can be said to echoes the logic and sentiments among amaXhosa where the propensity for fighting and violent behaviour in the late teenage years is often taken as a sign that one needs to go to initiation school (see chapter one). I was left wondering and perhaps I should have asked if the change from being prone to fighting physically to verbal communication has anything to do with the going to initiation school.

Zibula: From when we are young, you have to prove that... Its like the animal kingdom, there's always an alpha, there's always... I don't know what you call those who come after the alpha. [...] There'll always be a hierarchy. There'll always be the top one. Then there'll always be the bottom of the food chain. [...] As a young boy in school if so-and-so takes my pen, I have to go stand up for my pen. Pen is nothing. Pen is a material thing but it's about the principle. You took my pen. So, I have to go beat you up now. If you also claim that the pen is yours, you must fight me for it. We must fight for the pen even though it's a material thing I can even get it tomorrow. It starts from when you are still a child. Then as you grow up again you find that you've been fighting from Grade R you've been fighting over things, i-pen, i-toy, i-calculator until you got to grade 12. Then you come to a stage where you learn that you should not fight using fists but fight with your words. Which means if there is something that happens, I should not start with physical aggression. [...] You can fight for your whole life being violent. Or you can fight your whole life, then it stops. Then you fight with your words. Which means you're communicating even though there is conflict but you're communicating. So, now you fight using your words. But bottom line you're still fighting. So, as a guy you fight a lot. You stand up a lot even for things that do not really matter. But you have to show that side, women will call it true colours.

Interviewer: Okay. And if you don't show that side, what's the outcome of that?

Zibula: We see you as weak.

Appearing weak is something that all the participants explained as important for men to avoid. As Bhele explains in the quote below, appearing weak extends to many forms of vulnerability that men do not want to exhibit. Indeed, it has been noted by academic researchers that men have a lower propensity to seek medical assistance as well as a reluctance to acknowledge and address emotional and mental health challenges which the face.

Bhele: And another thing that I would like to share a little bit, a man does not like to be seen weak. Even going to a clinic or health institution or consulting a psychologist or whatever, a man does not want to be seen weak because from that early boy/ child stage, you are told to man up, take things together. We are now becoming... We are now learning as we grow that, those certain brothers, elder brothers and uncles are suffering from mental issues, mental illnesses which we did not know by then because we never actually get to understand even the psychological behaviour, the change of the psychological behaviour. We just took it as if; no, it's a little bit normal.

Second, the participants expressed *ukuzimela* as denoting independence. The participants express that it is important to demonstrate that one can solve problems and provide solutions. Being able to show minimal need for assistance is seen as a marker of manhood. In the quote below, Tshawe explains that even from a young age he always strived to show that he can solve problems on his own by showing that he did not need the assistance of his older sisters with his schoolwork. He felt it was important to show his sisters how he handled challenging schoolwork by showing the end results with his marks as proof of his manhood.

Tshawe: Yes, to my sisters...so that they can see that there is a man in this household...a man, I believe in standing up for myself, a man stands up for himself...I did not want people to say that I was assisted by a woman...I did not want to be assisted by a woman. [...] If we were brothers I'd say to them, "no help me my brothers". [...] I have power over a woman, since I am a man, I have told myself that I am a father.

I found it interesting that he did chose not to use his sisters as a resource in this way and when I questioned him about that he explained the following.

Tshawe: No, the reason I am this way is because all the people I grew up with ...those who grew are with sisters are cry-babies, who report everything. I was showing them that no, there is no reason to report to your sisters, you stand up for yourself, if you are being bullied, tell your friends that you are being bullied, do not tell your sister.

His response echoed the sentiments of not appearing weak that I explained earlier. For Tshawe, needing the assistance of your sisters, whom he sees as inferior to him because of their gender is a sign of weakness which is why he saw his peers who did so as tattling cry-babies. Thus, I understood his idea of *ukuzimela*, independence as demonstrating a strength of character such that one solves their own problems including challenging schoolwork by himself or with friends or brothers rather than with the assistance of women and girls.

Ukuzimela as independence also takes the form of demonstrating an ability to sustain oneself and maintain a livelihood separate from home and without the financial input of family or parental support. Indeed, Dumba explains in the quote below that once one becomes a man marked by initiation, one has to demonstrate some independence marked by a decrease in how much you depend on your parents for sustenance.

Dumba: Ku-expecthwe ukuba since uyindoda ngoku akufunekanga ujonge ebazalini, mandithi, akufunekanga ngoku ujonge ebazalini yonke into eyenzekayo so kufuneka nawe ukhe uphume uzimele kancinci, kubekhona izinto ozenzelayo ngokwakho.

Dumba: It is expected that since you are a man now, you will not look to your parents anymore, let me say, you are not supposed to your parents for everything. You also need to leave and stand on your own a bit, and have things that you do for yourself.

Dumba went on to highlight that socio-economic factor can make it difficult to show this independence. He points out that for him, it is difficult because he has not established himself, so, he still has to ask his parents for assistance.

Dumba: Inzima iworse kuthi thina sisengaka nje. [...] Ndizokwenzela ntoni kuba andinanto? So mna ndisakhula, so andinanto.

Dumba: It is difficult, especially on us. What can I do? I have nothing. I am still growing, so, I don't have anything.

The idea of independence shows an intersection between economic and financial capabilities and demonstrating ideal manhood. As Dumba explained further,

Dumba: abantu endoluke nabo, thina besikhule sonke ne...so thina into esiyijongileyo sijonge kwifuture ngoku isince sonke siyazi ukuba for now akhonto sinoyenza kahle kahle ngoku. [...] Kaloku wonke umntu uyafunda...kahle kahle iphinde ibuyele kwi-independence sifuna sonke siphume ebazalini sizenzele izinto zethu ngokwethu, uyabona nathi ke ngoku...

Dumba: Most of the people I grew up with, we went to initiation school together, we are mainly look to the future since we know that for now, there is not much we can do really. [...] Because we are all still studying. So, it comes back to independence. We

all want to be independent of our parents and be able to do things for ourselves, you see.

Similarly, when I asked Bhele how they relate with each other as peers of men and what factors inform relations among men, he highlighted that the levels of seniority which he described in manhood, among *abafana* who have passed the stage of being newly initiated men, one's career and financial capabilities become a factor in demonstrating ideal manhood.

Bhele: What we mostly appreciate is a healthy competition if I may put it. That okay so you are a teacher you are a doctor. Okay, so where is your household? The most important thing that we want to drive as this generation we want to have our... we want to break away from our parents. Which is; our parents should have their own household and equally we should have our own household because now there's that power struggle that when you don't have your own house you still with you still live with your parents you are get to be given law whilst you are supposed to be a law giver in your own household. So, we... It's a healthy competition if I may put it that way and because everything we're still in a transition. So, no one has really maintained for a period of time or became consistent with success in his or her career everyone is still growing so it's still early to tell but we are treating each other with respect and we are having that healthy competition but always we strive to be independent so that even those who don't believe in marriage and they can date but in their own private space and so on and so forth because even if you become a man they there is one girl that you can introduce at home and you would be permitted to bring on certain exceptional occasions or circumstances that you would bring that girl who is your girlfriend at home as a young man, as *umfana* but I have not seen a woman introducing a boyfriend at home. I think that's where our society problems also lie, that a man a young man is expected to date but the woman that the girl or woman that he dates has to escape from home, sneak out of the house and see this man, but when she goes to the house of the parents of this boyfriend's home she can go in if it's a ceremony during day light and everyone would know that someone's girlfriend is here so, it become acceptable. But then for a female.... It's still new but of course education will enlighten society, we hope. And probably there will be equality or a little bit of transformation if not equality.

From the quote above, we can see that there is a stage in adulthood that men go through where they build their social status and standing as men around meeting certain material markers of success. Having one's own place to live is significant in this regard. Bhele, also explains that even in the absence of marriage such material independence from home is important for the dating relationship(s) that they will engage in.

Tshawe expressed a similar view, noting the importance of living separately from home while maintaining his duties to his home. He explained that, even though he is not married, being an adult requires one to have their own place where they can exercise authority because the family home is not such a place. In the interview extract below, Tshawe explained the

relationship between exercising authority and control over oneself and having a place of one's own separate from their home.

Tshawe: When you live in your own house...because I live in my own house, I have to responsible for my house and everything, my peers live in their homes, they are under someone's authority, I am not under anyone's authority. [...] they are controlled by someone else there is nothing you can do without asking for permission from someone else, with me everything starts and ends with me. [...]

He further explains that having his own place is demonstration of independence and being responsible as he is solely accountable for himself and his behaviour in his place. He explains that living in the family home would mean that he has others to account to and inversely his family would also bear the responsibility of accounting for his behaviour because of him being solely under their care and authority.

Tshawe: Not being under someone's authority is important for my status, it is independence, let me start there, being independent because when I am standing on my own this means that there is nothing that would fail under my control, because I know that if I fail to take of things in my house then things at home would also fail, you understand. A person who lives in their home, I am living in my own house, since I am living in my own house and the other person lives at his home, we are not the same because he does what he wants to do at his home, while I do...if I do something, that will require me to answer for it, you understand... [...] I will have to answer for it and I would have to fix it myself but he could not do what he wants to do, the one who lives in his home, so that does count because it helps me to be accountable of what I am doing in my house as the same as what I would do at home, I cannot leave my house in ruins as well as my home. [...] I will have to account for it, so that means that you may not be able to do what you want to do, the one who lives at his home, so that counts because it helps me to be responsible because it is important to look after my house and home and being able to know the difference between right and wrong.

Interestingly, foreground independence as the driver for moving out of home demonstrates the reconfiguration of adult status in the context of declining marriage rates. Both Bhele and Tshawe explain that being materially independent and having one's own place to exercise authority in is necessary even if one is not married yet as a sign of independence.

4.5.3 To protect and provide

Almost all the participants listed attributes and qualifiers of manhood which included "protect and provide" to explain what it means to be a man. For example, Dosini explained

that God created a man to have four characteristics which protection and provision are part of. I deal with matters of accountability and responsibility in other sections in this chapter.

Dosini: a man is a responsible person, accountable, protective and he is a provider, he gets up to go to work, at home he leaves everyone happy and everyone can feel that they are loved by him. He leaves for work, at work he makes everyone happy, he buys food for everyone at home, something from KFC or the likes, so he is responsible, he provides, he is caring and loving, which are the 4 basic things that God has tasked him with from creation, this is what a man is supposed to be doing, all the 4 things, that is what a man is to be.

Similarly, Bhele explains the responsibilities of a man in terms of how he takes care of his family and home. In the quote below, Bhele explains that it is the duty of a man among other things to protect his family and to provide for his family such that failure to do these means that he has failed to be a man.

Bhele: Okay. First, as I grew I. So, the concept that I had as a child was that; a man is a protector. He must be found within the family. He's a responsible person. He cares about cattle. He makes sure that everything is in order. Everyone accounts to the man of the house. But when I grew up, I had that at a face value. I thought that is something that automatically happens. But when I grew up, I discovered it is hard to be a man. It is hard to be a man. It is really hard emotionally. It is really hard all in any other sphere. In fact, I've become... I've developed to have my self - theory and theme that I usually say; a dignity of a man is measured by how he can provide for his family. I took that concept because I saw that if you are a man, you should man up and provide for your family. If you run away from that responsibility, for me, you failed to be a man because you need to provide as a man. So, it's not, it's not... The reality of it, it's not like the ideal part of it because at a level of imagining things, we thought things automatically happen. We thought things are easy and lighter.

Similarly, Zibula emphasises the duty to protect and provide as a marker of manhood. Although, like Bhele he explains that this is difficult because of the demands it places on the man to be infallible. He further highlights the financial pressure that it places on men to constantly provide sustenance.

Zibula: Jho! What does it mean to be a man? Being a man from what I've been taught and from what I see is about protecting, is about teaching, and eh... basically nje... wisdom and trying to gain a lot of it. But at the same time being a man means that you have to provide even though sometimes you cannot. Being a man means being strong even though you are unable to be strong because you've been strong for the whole past years now you want to take a time out but you cannot because you can't because you have to be strong even though you're not strong. Being a man is challenging, it's tricky. [...] Basically, what I just said. Like, as a guy something that you never stop learning about, as a guy I have to provide. Which means, you have to pop money on a date, you see. You have to provide for your family, you have to provide for your extended family

to be seen. So, it's tricky in that way. And it's also hard being a man because again, I have to be strong for you. I have to be strong for my sisters. I have to be strong for my girlfriend. I have to be strong for my brothers, Dumba. Then I have to be strong for me.

Furthermore, the participants' expressions of protection and provision also demonstrate a wide understanding of provision which is not limited to the, material and financial. In the quotes about, Dosini and Zibula explain the social and emotional provision which men are required to give as leaders which include providing counsel and psycho-social support to their families and communities.

The idea of protection and provision evokes a similar sense of responsibilities as denoted by the idea of *ukumela ikhaya*. However, its significance is in how this expression of masculine responsibility presents tensions resulting from economic status and financial capabilities. Where *ukumela izinto zekhaya* mainly expresses the gendered labour relations in the traditional home, to protect and provide is a sight of masculine struggle because of the precarious political economic status that young men occupy.

Finally, the participants speak of protection as a manly duty to provide security. As Bhele explains in the quote below, men grow up with the understanding that it is men who must deal with issues of security in the home.

Bhele: And that a man becomes a security of the house. He is the one who should jump if there is noise at night and if there's anything that is suspicious a man should take care of that. At times it is very scary because noise would arise when there's loadshedding, there's no electricity and it's actually dark the entire village and you have to at least look at the window or go out and see that what's happening in the village. Sometimes scary, sometimes gets your blood boiling in the system.

This sentiment is also closely linked to the concept of standing up as man as it implicates confrontation with violence.

4.5.4. "*Indoda yiyo emela izinto ze Khaya*" – representing and taking care of a family and homestead

Part of being a patriarch is that all family matters are done through you. This is how I understood Tshawe and Bhele when they explained that being a man is about representing your family and taking care of family affairs. In the interview extract below, Tshawe explains that everything that happens in his family needs to happen by his authority and directive as the man of his family (being that his father and later step father have passed). The women in his family

have to bring whatever issue or matter that needs to be addressed to him even if the execution of it will not rest solely on him.

Tshawe: To me, to be a man means that I can represent my home and take care of it, you understand, I can take care of my home as a man because we are the ones taking care of our homes, even if our sisters are older than us. So, what I was taught because I am a man is that whenever she sees something that has to be done in the home, she has to ask for permission from me, you understand.

Interviewer: Okay...something that has to be fixed, what sort of things are you referring to perhaps?

Tshawe: Let me say, it would be a ritual, let me say that there is a child that has to have the *imbeleko* ritual performed for them, so a woman cannot say that she wants to perform *imbeleko* for her child in the villages without talking to me...so she has to, my sister has to start by informing me and say, “there is something that I have noticed”

Interviewer: Okay...

Tshawe: ...that “I have noticed that my child has been doing strange things, they have been doing this, that and the other, what must be done”? and I would reply by saying “because your child has never had a ritual performed for her/him I think that the ritual needs to be performed for her/him that was not done”, you understand. She cannot just go to another household on the outside and leave me behind while I am on the inside, and she would say that, “I have noticed that my child has been doing strange things, an example of this is that my child urinates on her/himself, even though the child is grown”, and she would be asked by the outsider, “did you have a certain ritual performed for your child”? you understand, so my sisters cannot go and ask for assistance outside while they leave me out.

Interviewer: Okay... do all family matters have to start to you?

Tshawe: They all start to me, if I am unable to solve a matter I would ask for assistance from another person perhaps a seer, and I would say, “how do I deal with such a matter”? So that we can deal with it internally as a family?

Similarly, Bhele explains that he represents his family such that there are certain duties and speaking engagements that he has to perform regardless of the presence of family members who are older than him. In the quote below he explains that he holds seniority over other family members by being the eldest son from his grandfather’s eldest son.

Bhele: And as a man I think also this should be included to this conversation that you are the one who represent your family. You are the one who represent your society. If you are required to speak on behalf of your... if anyone... if a speaker is required to speak on behalf of amaBhele, I would stand up even if there is a cousin older than me or same age as me, but I will stand up. So, I become the face of the family and my word becomes final. I draw the line. So, yes so, the importance the importance of being a man and what I like in being a man, I value and treasure such ... a I don’t have the actual word now to just call it as collective but anyway it’s a good role. It’s what one

aspires. [...] So, in general the family is looking up to me. Even my aunts, if I go to a gathering and my aunts are there and one needs to speak on behalf of the family, they will say I must speak although I'm a child to them but because I'm a man I speak in front of them and represent their wishes or convey the message on behalf of the family. So, there are such expectations. And also, the most important thing is to carry the family name and to keep the family name alive. So, you carry the family name, you are the pride of the family, you must excel in what you do.

Tshawe further explains that having the responsibility of representing his family can be challenging because of the demands that it places on him. As he explains in the quote below, the demands that being the man at home place on him are different compared to his sisters. Similar to Bhele, Tshawe is the only son at home although he is not the oldest child. However, he does hold seniority and particular responsibilities by virtue of being a boy child and man. As he explains in the quote below, from the time he was in varsity, there are instances where he is called back home to fulfil duties in the community as the man who represents his home in the community.

Tshawe: There is a difference because they are not summoned to return home, I am summoned, you understand, I am called back home, let me make an example, let's say I had plans to go somewhere during the weekend, I would be told that, "aaahaa come back, you are required to attend to something", and I would not go to where I wanted to go, so my sisters would be relaxed, I can feel that I am the only man at home. If things were not like that, they too would be summoned home and I would say, "I will not be able to make it, I will be busy, let them (sisters) attend" [...] So...I get along with them very much and let me come to the part about the community, the part concerning the community is a bit tough to me because now that I am man and returned from the initiation process. I am the one who has to represent my family when it comes to matters regarding the community, they (sisters) are relaxed...so when there is an event in the community, they delegate me and would say, "you are the man in this household, go to a certain place there is an event, go to a certain place there is an occasion, there has to be a man to represent this family that is not from that homestead", you understand...

For Tshawe, his responsibilities also stem from the fact that his father is no longer alive and so, he holds the position of being the senior man in his family. As he explains in the quote below

Tshawe: we grew up in different homes in that, we were raised by different people so some people do not do things that are supposed to be done by men in their families. They do not do these things because their father is still alive so there is no need for them to do those things, their father would be there representing the family even if his son is my peer, so I am compelled to be there, you understand, I have to be there with his father, so there are those times where you would see that you are compelled to do those

things. Someone who is the same age as me or even older you find him playing pool, while we are busy slaughtering the ceremonial beasts with his father.

This is further demonstrated by how he explains that the other men in the community get along very well with him and respect him because they see him as standing in his father's place and afford him the same kindness and respect that they did his father.

4.6. Men and violence

As discussed in earlier chapters, violence is a significant feature of wielding masculine agency and masculinist conceptions of the state and societal structures. Chapter two demonstrated the intersectional nature of masculinity violence and the state in discussing the colonial, capitalist and gendered processes that inform masculinities discourses and practices in contemporary South Africa. One of the aims of this research is to understand how Xhosa men conceive of the operation and use of violence in their everyday lives and interactions with each other and with women. Thus, a section of my interview questions was dedicated to discussing issues related to violence and gender-based violence (see Appendix 1).

From the discussions all of the participants demonstrated a broad understanding of violence which is not limited to physical harm and aggression only but recognises verbal, emotional and psychological aggression and harm as constituting violence as well. For example, when I asked Dosini to explain his understanding of violence he said.

Dosini: Violence, is doing something doing something unpleasant to the other party regardless of whether it is an animal or human being, a plant for that manner, where one party is the one dominant doing the act and then the other one is on the receiving side, being the one who gets their heart broken who will get hurt, you see, and I believe if it has something to do with physical pain in the whole notion of it.

Dosini, showed an all-encompassing understanding of violence and its effect by not only limiting it to human interaction but including acts against the environment. He also recognised that the enactment of violence is not only limited to physical harm but includes emotional harm. Similarly, Dumba showed an understanding of violence that recognises verbal mechanisms of causing harm when he said.

Dumba: i-violence... i-physical violence kubekhona ezinye nezi zokuthetha.

Dumba: violence is physical violence and then there are other forms that are verbal.

He went on to explain that a person can be violent towards another without making physical contact with them. He expressed a belief that (verbal) conflict can be non-violent if people communicate calmly. However, the minute the communication is aggressive and unkind it is violent. In my inquiry about violence, I wanted to engage how violence occurs and operates among men as well as between men and women. As discussed in Chapters One and Two violence is a common feature in exclusively male interaction such that most violent crimes are committed by men against other men. Furthermore, in South Africa women are disproportionately affected by violence that is committed against them on the basis of their feminine gender identity as a result of sexist and misogynistic patriarchal cultures. Thus, I wanted to understand how man – on – man violence as well as violence against women come about.

4.6.1 Man on man violence

In my inquiry on man-on-man violence I wanted to hear from the men their observations and understandings of the reasons that lead to men acting violently towards each other, which usually leads to fighting or assaults and homicides. From the participants responses I noted two main themes that run across the narratives and explanations offered. Firstly, violence as the results out of a struggle to establishing dominance and power in a gathering with men.

Dosini: Dominance, dominance.

Interviewer: Explain.

Dosini: It is wanting to know that I am dominant, I have more power than you, there is an isiXhosa saying that says “two bulls cannot be in the same kraal, two bulls cannot be in one kraal, one has to fall.” Yes, as men since, it goes back to what I said earlier that men were meant to be dominant over everything else. God created man first and gave him dominance over the whole, everything else and then he created Eve, a woman after. He created her to be submissive to the man but still give her dominance over everything else, so when we are gathered in one house as men, I will also want to have dominance over everything else and you will also want your own dominance as another man. So when I say what must happen I will say, let us say that we are in a tavern and you say “ no, let us go and buy 8 beers,” and I say, “no let us buy 3 beers and a bottle of hard liquor” and you will notice that we do not get along, so one between us will

have to fall, he will be compelled to accept what I say that we either buy 8 beers or we buy 3 beers and a bottle of hard liquor, we will have to fight for that whether we fight using words or we fight physically, you see. So, the winner has the last word, which is the dominance I was talking about, which means I know that I am present, you do not have to ask me why, you just have to ask me how high, you are already in the air, and you do not have to ask, “how high.”

So as follow up question I probed further into why difference of opinion of preference would lead to a fight. It is common that sense that when faced with two different views people negotiate a resolution.

Dosini: Back to what I said, dominance, because, you will not agree to back down and for the mere fact you even placed it forward you did think it through in your head and you told yourself that “you know what I am thinking about is the best thing and that stands and no one can turn it down, so whoever thinks that he is smarter than me, who thinks that they are clever than me, I too have my own reasons, I will say that there must be 8 beers, you say we must buy 2 bottles of hard liquor and he has his own reasons, why should I abide by our rules, why can’t you follow my own rules?”

Dominance in the rural areas also shows up in the form of fights regarding territory. For example, Dumba and Bhele explained that where they grew up there is an understanding that as boys and young men one must not be caught (especially alone) in another village.

Dumba: Uyabona pha ezilalini eNgcobo mandithi ikhaya apha enext door then kubekho ela cala lingaphaya, yenye ilali so amakhwenkwe angapha awekho allowed ukuba angena pha so ezonto uyabona ke...

Dumba: You see in the rural areas of eNgcobo, boys from one village are not allowed to enter another village.

It seemed impractical and unrealistic to expect one to only limit their movement to his own village. Furthermore, I understand that there must be instances where this rule is transgressed successfully such that one is not detected or being found in another village does not result in a fight.

Interviewer: So, at any time there could be a fight if you are found in a village you are not from? And then in terms of movement, how do you manage because what if there is something that you need there or what if you are dating someone from the other village? What’s the dynamic then?

Dumba: Like we go even at night.

Interviewer: Oh. So, the potential of getting into a fight doesn’t stop you?

Dumba: It doesn't stop us (chuckles). Its only about the fear of getting beaten up. That's what I notice.

In the above quote, Dumba indicates that the potential threat of getting beaten functions as a deterrent by fear. Although getting beaten is not guaranteed but the threat of it happening serves a function. I inquired further about what happens when one does encounter a fight and get a beating.

Dumba: There would be a problem.

Interviewer: Okay...And then...

Dumba: It is status. You see, when word spreads that it happened that you got into such a fight, it is another thing that increases your points in your home village you see.

Interviewer: Oh okay...

Dumba: Its status.

The idea of increasing one's status by fighting speaks to the appearance of being tough as a prized masculine characteristic. As we can see from the quote below, making fun of each other and bullying escalate and translate to diminished among peers which is a sign of weakness. Thus, Dumba responded as follows when I asked what it is about fighting that "increases status".

Dumba: Uyabona enye into ezilalini kuyagezeleka kakhulu umntu ubone worse amakhwenkwe ngezinto ezenziwayo ngoku, xa bekubonile ukuba you are tough akukho mntu ozakuphinda agezele ngakuwe.

Dumba: You see another thing in the rural areas, you will be a constant victim of bullying by boys unless they see you as tough. In that case, nobody will mess with you.

Secondly, an extension of establishing hegemony through competition is the fights over women or love interests.

Tshawe: Okay, so what I have observed in my community is that in places like taverns what causes men to fight each other is women, like I said before that a woman would date two men at the same time, a woman would date 2 men simultaneously and still go and drink at the very same tavern that they all hang out in and then one person would tell both these men that they are both dating the same woman and say, "no I see that you are both drinking the same beer and you also drink the same beer at night", you see, so that is when it will dawn on both of the men that they are sharing the same woman and it is things of this nature that cause men to fight each other, what usually makes men fight each other most of the time are women...

Interviewer: Okay...

Tshawe: what causes people to stab and kill each other is women in places such as taverns, but some fights in places such as taverns or where people have fun is that people from different villages would insult each other, you seem, but the strongest factor that causes men to kill is each other is women.

Interviewer: Really?

Tshawe: Yes...

Interviewer: So, things like men fighting with each other to test each other's physical power is not one of the things that cause men to fight each other or other reasons, I cannot think of other reasons that would lead to men fighting each other, why does the fight between men always have to involve women?

Tshawe: But the strongest cause for men fights each other is a woman because if we are neighbours and we are dating the same person and we drink alcohol in the same tavern, there is no way we would ever get along with each other if we fight, know that even if the families can negotiate for reconciliation, we will never get along because you took what was mine.

Interviewer: ohhhooo....

Tshawe: You see, so that is a conflict that would never be resolved, you see...

Interviewer: This conflict will continue until...

Tshawe: ...until she gets married to someone else but not my adversary, if she married my adversary no kind words would ever pass between us, not even a greeting.

Interviewer: You will both hold on to a grudge all the time?

Tshawe: Always because I still want to be with this person that you (adversary) took away from me, because you won her over from me...

Interviewer: Okay.... So, the winner takes all in this fight?

SL: Yes (both laugh).

Finally, alcohol consumption is noted by all the participants as an exacerbating factor in violent altercations.

Dumba: Ingxaki usually abantu endibabonayo besilwa ngabantu abanxilileyo so ezo zizinto ezingangeni ndawo so ianger ininzi apho.

Dumba: The problem is that the people that I usually see fighting are people who are drunk. Those things do not need to happen but because there is a lot of anger there.

He went further to explain that alcohol increases anger, and it is hard to reason with a person who has drunk alcohol. So, minor inconveniences and transgressions like accidentally bumping into a person cannot be solved with a simple apology and escalate into physical

altercations easily. Furthermore, Tshawe reveals that when men have drunk alcohol it sometimes brings to the surface old grudges which come up and lead to fights.

Tshawe: Yes, even at this age as young as I am among my fathers, there conflicts that I have observed such as them fighting at my family home because they would fight about the ownership of the property, you understand, and this would reveal their deep-seated spite against each other and they would fight their grudges at my home, you understand. And I would be compelled to show my maturity as I would be the man would be at home at the moment.

Interviewer: Okay....

Tshawe: ...you see, I can solve that, a person must go and start a fight at his own house not at my father's house, so when I invite old people to my home as young as I am and they start to fight because they are intoxicated by alcohol which I had given to them, I have the right to escort them out of my home.

Tshawe, further explained another dynamic about fights among men. He informed me that sometimes one has to enter into a fight in defence of assistance of their brother, relative or friend who is getting attacked. Indeed, it is not uncommon for physical altercations to occur between groups of men. In such instances some of the people who are involved have not been directly offended but are involved out as a result of their allegiances. In the interview extract below, Tshawe describes some of the instances where he has felt compelled to intervene and join in a fight out of duty to someone close to him.

Tshawe: If the people who are fight are my blood relatives, I have a responsibility to intervene... [...] ...no one is permitted to assault any of my blood relatives in my presence, even if he assaults him at the tavern or anywhere else.

Interviewer: So, is the fact that you are related or linked to this person a condition for your intervention in the conflict, what happens if the person assaulted is not connected to you, do you have any responsibility to intervene in the conflict?

Tshawe: I do have the responsibility to intervene even if the person is not my relative especially if this is a good neighbour of mine... [...] Not just any neighbour. [...] If I get along with my neighbour's family then my neighbour's child cannot get attacked in my presence as they would be fighting, especially if he is being defeated because I will be asked about my silence in the matter and he would have been assaulted by a lot of people in my presence, you understand.

Interviewer: Okay...when you get involved in a conflict of this nature, do you intervene with the intention to help or do you intervene to stop the fight, how do you intervene in this conflict, do you feel touched when someone you know from your community or your relative gets into a fight and feel that you have a responsibility to intervene and say to yourself, "I cannot watch and do nothing while someone I know or care about gets into a fight" even if he is the one attacked or attacking, what is the nature of your intervention in such conflicts?

Interestingly, with all the narratives, descriptions, and examples of instances of violence among men given by the participants, all of them begin or conclude by critiquing the fight and violent acts as petty, unnecessary and avoidable. The participants recognise the propensity for violence in gatherings of men as a result of emotional immaturity at times. For example, Dumba began by saying the following.

Dumba: Growing up ke nje ngam ke ezilalini ...yhuuuu iifight iba zizinto ezincinci nje ...izinto ezingangeni ndawo izinto ezifungafuni ukuba ziyalwela kahle kahle.

Dumba: Growing up in the rural areas like me, fights start over small things that don't need to be fought over.

Similarly, Dhlamini 1 and 2 both expressed that the competitive nature of masculine interaction in the quest for showing dominance is in itself “petty” and “immature”. The idea that the lack of emotional regulation and mature communication leads to fights for dominance is echoed by Dosini when he says.

Dosini: this situation requires a good mental state, mental stability and mental growth in both parties whereby we can sit down and say “okay my guy you say that you want 8 beers and I want a bottle of hard liquor, I have no problem, I am not fighting that we have that, but I just want a bottle of hard liquor, so how do we solve this?” you see, and then we would agree that “okay let us buy 5 beers my brother and I will buy a nip of hard liquor that I will drink.” These are the types of mind sets required for such a situation.

Interestingly, he goes further to explain that this kind of resolution of differences is only possible with women, when he says the following;

Dosini: What I am saying, what I am trying to explain to you it that in order for the situation to reach to the point that you are asking about is there the situation will require mature and smart mind sets from both sides where when we would make a decision and then you come up with your own suggestion. Then you would be ruining things, you see. I do not know whether I am deviating from the question or going ahead of them but. Do you see that part where it is said that “a woman is a helper”, that is where she comes through a man when the man says “we still have bread, eggs, drink, with the money we have let us go and buy a car” and she would respond by suggesting that “no my dear husband if you say that we should buy a car, you must notice that all the money that is supposed to be used within the family will have to be used on maintain the car, this bread and drink and eggs are not going to last us the entire week, so what are we going to do, eat the car?” And then the man would agree with his wife and say “really, okay let us put the plans for the car aside, let us save money for the car, and focus on the groceries because we might not have something to eat here at home,” you see. That

is where a female has to intervene because you are the only people that can convince a man to change his mind when he has already made it up, it is only females, two men cannot convince each other to change their minds when one of them has made up his mind.

4.6.2 Violence against women

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, violence against women is a common occurrence in South Africa. It was interesting to note how much silence this part of the conversation had. The thoughtful pauses were much more than in earlier parts of the interviews. I began by asking the participants if they knew of any instances of gender-based violence in their families and communities when they were younger. Whether they had ever witnessed or knew of men that were close to them who assaulted women. All the men with the exception of Dhlamini 2 answered in the negative however did confirm that now that they are older, they do know and witness instances of gender-based violence. For example,

Dosini: Honestly speaking I would be lying, because of the society and neighbour that I live in I have never heard of such a case or seen it, and then it happened, you see that you are at school and people were having fun and then you suddenly see a guy assaulting a girl and then we know that a girl should not be assaulted and then that would be a case of GBV.

Similarly, Tshawe said the following.

Tshawe: While I was young, I would hardly see such but now I see that happening, I see it now.

Scholars in multiple social sciences disciplines have done a lot of work engaging the multiple causes of gender-based violence (see Chapter One). All these revolve around the power imbalance resultant of patriarchal gender norms precipitated by socio-economic frustrations that lead men to act out in violent ways. Interestingly, the participants in this research held very sympathetic views toward men and placed the blame on women as the ones who cause men to be violent toward them, some more subtly than others. For example,

Tshawe: sometimes men and violence, on the other side I would protect men, let me come to the side concerning relationships, when it comes to relationships men appear as if they are violent, but they are not violent. Let me give you an example of what I am talking about, you would provide for a woman with everything, you do everything for her only to find out that she also has another man who would use the things you would buy the woman, you understand, this very man brings nothing to the woman but uses what you buy for her, you understand, so I would find out about this, so after hearing about this how do you expect my heart to be?

Interviewer: How will it be?

Tshawe: So, when I assault her perhaps because I caught her and that, “maybe she is cheating on me with that person”, when I assault her, I might injure her and I would see that, “okay let me let her go”, some people are unable to do that until they recover all the things that they bought their women partners. These days there are women who have had everything taken from them even the clothes would be taken away from them, you see, our jealousy and petty levels are not the same. [...] They are not the same, hypothetically speaking I would assault you or take everything that I bought you, so it is women who make men violent, I am not saying that men are not violent at all, they are, but people’s hearts are not the same. [...] mmm that is how it is because you will trust her but she is up to something else, you understand. I said this to you before that trust a woman only when her eyes are closed once she opens them, she will see something else, you understand.

Like Tshawe, all the participants spoke about gender-based violence in the context of intimate (romantic) relationships. Indeed, the literature on gender based-violence does show that much of the violence and femicide occurs in the context of intimate partner violence (see Chapter One). In the quote above Tshawe points to untrustworthiness of women in that women sometimes have multiple romantic relationships. Indeed, the study by Katherine Woods which was conducted in Mthatha shows that ensuring “faithfulness” of romantic partner is a common cause of conflict which turns violent in the romantic relationships of young people. Similarly, in the quote below, Dosini expressed those men do not assault women “without a reason”. Furthermore, such reasons have to do with the painful emotions that he believes women induce in men by their actions and words.

Interviewer: Okay... so how do you handle those situations where, now that you are older and or you encounter a guy who would assault a girl?

Dosini: Assault a girl? Personally, honestly speaking I would not do anything, instead I would understand why he is doing it because that person would not do what without a reason. There was a reason for it and that led him to do that and the girl was powerful enough ...girls have a lot of power and there is nothing more hurtful ...you remember that I said to you men are emotional, there is nothing as painful as an emotional breakdown. You see with physical pain has nothing to do with emotional pain. So, I can assault you suffer from physical pain now or get swollen up, 2 to 3 weeks down the line, you have recovered, you are fine. The words you utter and go into my ears remain with me, each and every time, even if you said what you said in 2010 and now, we are in 2022 but I will still remember what you said and it would still break me the same way it did the day you uttered those words, you see. So, these are some of the things that are neglected when it comes to men because of the assumption that men do not have emotions, that is bullshit, a girl can insult you with every insult in the world. She would say things like, “you are useless, you are human faeces or a shitty person, you are an imbecile, you are foolish, you are this, that and the other,” all of those things she

would say and you would think to yourself that, “girl after everything that I have done for you, after everything that I have done for you, and just because of one incident you will tell me that I am a fool, I am useless, I am weak, and I am a useless man.” All of the things you said to me have placed a sticker on me, you have put stickers on me so that one way or another those things will be revealed in me, they will show up, even if do not believe them but they are stickers that live in me...[]....The talk, talk, talk, talk, even if we will not pay attention to those stickers and you would that “she was just talking for the sake of talking” but that thing breaks you because what has been spoken and makes its way to your head and it is of an emotional nature you will always think about it. Over time you keep thinking about it again and again and once you always think about something that is where it manifests, it will reveal itself whether you like it or not because it keeps popping up in your mind that is why people talk about the power of the mind, if you tell yourself that you are successful, you will be successful. If you tell yourself that you are nothing, then you will be nothing, so now that girl told you that even if you knew that you are a CEO at work, you are the boss, you are the alpha male and when you get to your place as soon as you enter the gate you are returning to that person who will tell you that “you see here you are not a boss, you are a useless person, you are nothing.” The only way you can revive your dominance out of that person is to cause them pain and then unfortunately you cannot cause them emotional pain, you can only cause them physical pain, so you opt for physical pain.

The explanations given by Tshawe and Dosini above challenge the trope that men are rational beings whose actions are not informed by emotions. Dosini’s assertion that “physical pain has nothing to do with emotional pain” demonstrates the way in which Xhosa men are socialised to withstand and endure physical pain and discomfort. He does say that his time in initiation school served to desensitise him to the discomfort of physical hardship to the extent that even hunger does not affect him in the way that it did prior to being initiated. As pointed earlier, all the participants agree that men’s propensity to violent behaviour as a reaction to situations they encounter is often unnecessary and unjustified. However, it seems that the tone shifts when related to emotional triggers that they encounter in their intimate relationships with women such that instances of gender-based violence are not unequivocally condemned. Although the men know as a matter of legal fact and social mores that inflicting physical harm on women is wrong, that is not a conviction that they hold and apply absolutely.

This is evident in the way that families handle instances of violence such that there is not a clear condemnation and penalization of men who beat their wives. As Dhlamini 2 narrated that he remembers as a child that he was uncomfortable with the way one of his uncles treated his wife although he never witnessed him physically assault her. He later observed a family meeting (although he was not prevue to it) where his aunt had asked for the family’s

intervention. Dhlamini 2 explains that he cannot say that his uncle was reprimanded by the family, but the aunt was encouraged to persevere.

4.6.3 Strategies for ending [gender-based] violence and crime

My inquiry into how the men handle instances of gender-based violence and how they think it should be dealt with showed that the men do not believe in intervention by themselves. All the men pointed to the role of police and law enforcement as necessary. Interestingly, this belief in law enforcement as necessary in dealing with gender-based violence was because of the perception that, couples who ‘fights’ tend to turn against the person intervening. In the quote below, Tshawe describes women as dishonest because of this and that in order to protect himself from being portrayed as an enemy for intervening it is best to involve the police.

Tshawe: Something of this nature, even though women are dishonest, it is not easy to handle because when you attempt to intervene and stop the man from assaulting the woman, the husband would say, “you are sleeping with my wife”, or the woman would turn against and say, “why are you intervening in matters between my husband and I”? even though you were there to intervene with the intention to stop the assault. [...] So, this is both easy and difficult, but it is easy in that when you and I are in a fight I would involve the police, if I do not wake up as a neighbour when my neighbour is under attack and the police arrive and say “your neighbour was here, why did you not go and intervene to stop the fight”, you see, and community members would also inquire about this and I respond and say, “my neighbour and I do not talk to each other” and that would be a bad thing. So, what is important is that I intervene by stopping the fight and just take the insults and accusations as they come from the husband as he would accuse me of sleeping with his wife or when the wife assaults her husband and she would say, “how does this concern you when I am assaulting my husband”? [...] ...the police must be involved, that is my strategy. [...] because having insults and accusations thrown at you is not fun.

The insistence of police involvement revealed an inability of the men to reckon with the psycho-social nature of violence and abuse in intimate relationships between men and women. For the men, the fact that women “stay” with their abusers is seen as a form of acquiescence to the abuse that they cannot intrude in. Thus, the lean towards police intervention is also an expression from the men that intervention that is beyond them is necessary. However, the men also showed an understanding of the flawed nature of law enforcement. For example, Zibula expressed that the way to ending gender-based violence requires ‘good’ police. He

explained explains that the challenge with prosecuting violence against women is that the enforcers do not have the will to do so.

Similarly, Bhele encourages the involvement of law enforcement to stop instances of violence against women. However, does express that a sustained, long term solution to the problem will come from a change of mindset and culture through education. Bhele explains that, education is the key to letting go of misogynistic culture which he believes is the reason behind why men ill-treat women. He makes a connection between education and modernity, with the view that through adoption of modern systems of constitutional democracy that enshrines equality and equal rights for men and women. Dhalmini 1, expresses a similar yet different point of view. For him, the change of perspective needs to happen at the level of a psychological commitment and conviction of the part of men to heal the traumas that trigger violent behaviour.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter documented the themes that were present and significant for this study, through the interviews conducted with the 7 participants. Through the research process, it was found that the conception of manhood for amaXhosa is inextricably linked to the initiation rite of passage, *ulwaluko*. Thus, although the study the study is not about *ulwaluko*, the themes identified demonstrate that all the stages in the life cycle of Xhosa males are linked to some part of the initiation process. This is important to note as it speaks to the link between the physiological aspect of manhood which implicates the use and function of the body as well as socio-cultural and spiritual aspect of personhood captured in the concept of *indoda* (Mfecane, 2016).

Much of what this chapter demonstrates that the core of how the participants come to conceptualise their manhood oscillates between idealised manhood based on conservative traditional values and sustaining livelihood on one hand. While on the other hand being muddled by the tensions, ruptures, continuities, and contradictions of manhood practises in modern society. Conceptions and practises of Xhosa manhood are riddled with tension between the inviolable embodiment of manhood marked by the traditionally circumcised phallus and the socio-behavioural demonstration of “good values and morals” of responsible manhood. The findings indicate that the ideals that Xhosa men identify as markers of manhood speak to

aspirational transformation from careless boyhood to virtuous manhood. However, this transformation is stunted by the utility of violence and cloak of secrecy that makes accountability mechanisms suspect and impotent.

The following chapter will further engage with the experiences put forth by the participants and make a case for further theorisation of the idea of the New South African Man as a useful descriptor of masculinity born out of South Africa's complex transition into democracy.

Chapter Five

Ukuma: Standing up as the pinnacle of masculinity

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the various themes presented in Chapter Four and will engage the ways in which these themes provide insight into [Xhosa] manhood experiences and navigations of masculine roles and personhood. During the semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted, I asked each of the young men the question; “what does it mean to be a man?” Which I received very similar answers from all the participants to the extent that by the third interview, I noticed a common pattern and theme in the responses that the participants gave. The answers given revolved around three main ideas. First, is *ukuzimela*, denoting independence and standing up for oneself and everything that is an extension of that self. Second, is representing, protecting and providing for one’s family. Lastly, maintaining an image and reputation of strength and being morally upright. These ideas carry with them connotations to power, control, dominance, and aggression. The masculine wielding of these traits and ideas is closely connected to the exercise of violence by men (Bowker 1989, Sobieraj, 1998).

In this chapter I examine how young Xhosa men’s understanding of manhood and narration thereof shows an interaction between responsibility, control, and dominance. As shown in Chapter Two, it is widely argued that control and domination are characteristics largely attributed to masculinity to the extent that such attributes are encouraged in boys and men while considered unbecoming of girls and women. Thus, in engaging the themes presented in Chapter Four, I first discuss the tenuous nature of manhood identity. This will be done through engaging the concept of *indoda*, the Xhosa language noun for a man. This discussion implicates the contentious nature of Xhosa manhood given the disjuncture between the ideals of manhood and current manhood practices. Secondly, a significant part of [Xhosa] manhood is the public perception of the man, particularly through the social demonstration of good moral values and noticeable change of behaviour from careless boyhood to responsible manhood as shown in Chapters Two and Four. Thirdly, the economic, labour and communal experiences of manhood will be engaged. This will be done through an examination of patriarchal gender roles and masculine hegemonic power and the ways in which Black men as subordinate/marginalised masculinities demonstrate new understandings of social reproduction. Lastly, I will demonstrate that Xhosa men use their identities as *amadoda*, in how they wield, legitimise, and delegitimise the use of violence. Through an engagement with the

theoretical underpinnings of standing up for oneself and the social utility of *The Gathering of Men*, to engage the silence and defensive engagement with men's use of violence against women. The main aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the state and national interests manifest in the gender identities of Xhosa men as seen from the everyday navigations of their masculinity through gender roles and performance as well as how it interacts with femininities.

5.2 Idealised Xhosa Manhood and Contentious Contemporary Masculinities

Before the initiation practice, a boy lives a careless life of his own with no responsibilities; after initiation, he becomes a man with moral expectations bestowed upon him. These expectations involve getting a job and supporting his family. In cases where the boy's father is deceased, this boy must now take over the father's role in protecting his mother and the whole family that his father previously took responsibility for. (Ntombana, 2011: 635).

I open this section with this quote from Ntombana, where he succinctly describes the difference between boyhood and manhood for amaXhosa. This quote summarises the different points made in the literature on Xhosa manhood and masculinities and around what purpose initiation serves. Furthermore, it is a clear articulation of what ideally ought to be thus providing a starting point to engage and contrast contemporary practices of manhood. Ntombana (2011) among others (Vincent, 2008; Mcotheli, 2006 and Myemana, 2004), goes on to detail the various ways in which the initiation rite of passage is marred by irregularities and initiates as well as newly initiated men engage in behaviour that is contrary to the ethos expressed in the quote above post initiation.

This study situates itself in the recent efforts to use traditions such as *ulwaluko* and localised concepts of *ubudoda* to understand Black masculinities in the post-apartheid context (Mfecane 2016). This speaks to the need to engage the tensions and contradictions presented by the interaction between living African cultures and traditions and the socio-economic realities created by the precarity of post-colonial/apartheid political economies. This is shown by the ruptures that we find demonstrated by the difference and even contradictions between the ideal manhood described by the participants in this study and the imperfect everyday performances of masculinity that young Xhosa men engage in.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, there is a disjuncture between understandings of how manhood ought to be defined, practiced, and demonstrated with contemporary realities of the state of masculinity in modern societies. Chapter Four demonstrates an attachment to conservative notions of manhood which is foregrounded on gender differentiation based on

crude sex-cum-gender roles. The traditional patriarch captured in the concepts of *umnumzane*, demonstrates the significance and strong attachment to a manhood that is difficult to reconcile with the socio-economic precarities of the rural-urban young men today. Although, the isiZulu concept, *umnumzane* describes the construction of manhood and pinnacle masculinity foregrounded on the building of *umzi* (Hunter, 2010).

Raptures in contemporary South African that affect the socio-economic status and stability of Black livelihoods precipitates a reconfiguration of this concept and ideal it expresses due to the decline of heterosexual marriage rate. This has also influenced a conception of ideal manhood away from marriage and building a homestead toward sexual virility and access to women as romantic interests (Hunter, 2010). The idea of having multiple partners or being popular with women as a marker of masculinity among amaXhosa (Qambela, 2021) and amongst men in general has been linked to violence against women in romantic relationship in Mthatha (Woods and Jewkes, 1998).

The fashioning of “new” identities that the transition from the racist, sexist, and homophobic apartheid state to the inclusive constitutional democratic state requires new, more inclusive, and liberated ways of conceiving manhood. Indeed, the heteronormative and consequently heterosexist nature of constructing pinnacle manhood is limiting in its inability to recognise homosexual men as men without defect (Siswana, 2018). The emphasis on building a homestead assumes heterosexual partnership. Indeed, the insights shared by Dhlamini 1 and Dhlamini 2, who are homosexual, where their parents often speak to them about marriage as if they are heterosexual demonstrates this. Furthermore, in Chapter four Dhlamini 2 narrates a conversation with their older brother Dhlamini 0 who upon finding out that Dhlamini 2 is also gay, told him it’s okay if he is gay, he must just “not be” extra, meaning not overtly hold a feminine disposition.

Scholars of queer lived experience show how marriage is a historically heteronormative institution (Scott, 2019) and for amaXhosa this is no different. Scott (2019) shows how in marriage same-sex couple’s wrestle with systemic heteronormativity, in the practise and process of officiating their relationships and the kinds of partnership [gender power] dynamics they foster in the process. Thus, he argues that the process of “coming out” as couples and making relationships “official” with family, same-sex couples create political possibilities as they relate to legitimising their existence and personhood through claiming marriage (Scott, 2019).

5.3 [Traditional] Masculine ideals and the “new” South African man

The expanded definition of The New South African Man (NSAM) offered by Qambela (2021) is very useful for discussing and understanding contemporary masculinities produced in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. As Masola (2015) demonstrates in her definition, the NSAM is not every man holding South African citizenship in as not all South African men fit the category. This is important as it allows us to unpack the nature of the South African state as a social community and how it excludes some of its citizens from enjoying full personhood and citizenship. Between Masola (2015) and Qambela (2021) one can argue that the NSAM is defined by three characteristics. First, he holds a heteronormative world view and practice of social reproduction. In this way we can say that “he is heterosexual presenting, although this does not preclude sexual exploration, experimentation and relationships with other men” (Qambela, 2021). Second, he is [aspiring] middle-class although his economic status and financial capabilities is tenuous. Finally, he straddles as rural-urban/peri-urban life demonstrated by how “he prides himself in being culturally rooted, and he shows this through various choices he makes, which include occasional returns to rural contexts and homestead for various cultural and traditional practices, such as the initiation of boys” (Qambela, 2021)

These three characteristics I use to define the NSAM serve as a useful discursive tool to make sense of the findings presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Four demonstrated the significance of the initiation rite of passage, *ulwaluko* in defining and practicing manhood. This not only demonstrates the importance of ritual access to political manhood but also shows the rural-urban duality of social reproduction of identity and by extension gendered personhood and livelihood for amaXhosa. Siswana (2015) demonstrates that the location of one’s initiation carries sentimental significance as participants in his study of Xhosa initiation explained their decision making process about where to undergo initiation school. Some felt that there is a difference between being initiated in more urban areas like Kwa Sonti in Makhanda nee Grahamstown where Siswana did his study versus going to rural area like the former Transkei.

Initiation is performed differently in rural areas compared to urban areas (Kepe, 2010; Lungcuzo, 2013; Venter, 2011; Vincent, 2008). There is an understanding held by some, that there are differences in the ways 'initiation' is practiced that informs the behaviour and embodiment of respect by newly initiated men between the rural and urban areas (Kepe, 2010; Ntombana, 2011). Siswana (2015) shows that even though *ulwaluko* is practiced across the Eastern Cape there are specific nuances of how it is done in rural areas such as in Mpondoland

compared to Mthatha and other rural areas such as King Williams Town. Furthermore, the insights shared in his study show that the young men who held the view that location of one's initiation influenced how they embodied the ethos of responsible manhood in their conduct post initiation. However, they also note that in reality the matter of one's conduct and practise of manhood is subjective and has to do with individual personality and temperament (Siswana, 2015).

Similarly, in the film *Inxeba*, Qambela notes that "leaving the city in order to participate in traditional initiation is portrayed as central to cleansing the ways of the city in men and boys – by traditionally initiating them into ritualised manhood" (2015:55). In the case of the character of Kwanda this cleansing had to do with the unmanliness of his disposition because of his urban upbringing and sexuality. Qambela (2021) argues that the city is shown as limited in its ability to provide access to full personhood and manhood without a return to the rural and "traditional." This may be the reason why some who question the manhood status of queer men often hold the belief that queer people have either not gone through initiation or when proven wrong simply dismiss it as impossible. This was the case when Dhlamini 2 got into an altercation with a 'straight' man at a popular drinking spot in Mthatha who approached him thinking that he was a woman. Upon realising that Dhlamini 2 was in fact a man he resorted to verbally assaulting him, saying that he probably is not even a real man, meaning he has not gone through initiation. When Dhlamini 2 responded with his own insult and told him that he did in fact go through initiation using the language of the bush, the man dismissed him in disbelief saying that was not possible. In that exchange the man held the belief that even if Dhlamini 2 was gay before initiation he should not still be after. As if something about going through initiation would change his sexuality.

According to Woubshet (2015; 23–24) many parts of the world have enjoyed the era of "gay liberalism," characterised by the integration of gay people into the mainstream. South Africa is one such country where Queer people are afforded constitutional recognition and protection against discrimination. Despite the gains made through the Civil Unions Act in South Africa, which permits same-sex unions, the status of sexual and gender minorities remains extremely volatile (Collins-Buthelezi and Higginbotham 2015). As Scholars such as Pierre De Vos (2015) and Msibi (2015) demonstrate, there is a gap between the legal status and lived experience of sexual minorities in the country. Although manhood for amaXhosa is only predicated on *ulwaluko* as the only qualifier because even behavioural transgressions cannot

result in stripping one of the titles of *indoda* (Mfecane, 2016), I find that it is still an over reach to say that Xhosa manhood does not assume and encourage heterosexuality to the point of marginalizing homosexual men. As Mfecane (2016) and Sipunga (2021) explain, manhood is marked and carried by the [male] body. It should come to reason that the manner, conduct and symbolism of that body as masculine or feminine has consequences for its manly status or lack thereof.

According to Qambela (2021:55) “cityness” [...] open[s] conflicts about the new identities that relate to the city for “it’s not just the scene[s] of a place that is the ‘city’” that matters, but also the ways in which the city is marked “in the forms of [sexualities,] masculinity and femininity that are practiced”. This reading of the relationship between political location marked by the difference’s permissible personhood between the rural space and urban space is evident in Dhlamini 2’s experience of Johannesburg versus Mthatha and Dutywa. Dhlamini 2 explained that he spends very little time in Dutywa where his rural home is. Explained that he feels more comfortable when he is in Johannesburg because his queer identity is not a transgression of norms in the way that it is in Mthatha and even worse in Dutywa. He explained that the more rural one goes the more you see and experience queerness as a problem.

In public, new initiates – *amakrwala* are made visible by their attire which as discussed in Chapter Two borrows from the 19th and 20th century English Gentlemen aesthetic much like the Methodist Church Young Men’s Guild (*amadodana*) uniform and a lot of “traditional” African clothing and aesthetics that demonstrate pinnacle masculinity and femininity including *makoti* attire and *manyano* uniforms (Tonono, 2021). The way one dresses is clearly a significant part of the demonstration of honourable masculinity and serves to communicate this in different settings. For example, when Dhlamini 2 did not wear the new initiates’ attire for the full duration of three to six months, he was met with disapproval and backlash from some of his family for “disgracing” the family after their tireless labour toward his initiation celebration. Similarly, the rules of decorum relating to how one should cover up during ceremonies or when addressing elders and so on, all speak to how the presentation of the male body in style of dress and mannerisms plays a role in demonstrating a respectable Xhosa masculinity (Siphunga, 2021).

5.4 The gathering of men - Gender politics, men's spaces and accountability

The 'traditional' Gathering(s) of Men as expressed by the participants in this study are mostly unengaged by scholarship as sites of knowledge and social reproduction. Scholars have pointed out that part of the outcome of the colonial and apartheid dehumanisation and infantilization Black African men was to leave spaces of Black Manhood production and acknowledged (Suttner, 2005). Thus, account the sustained practice of the initiation rite of passage survived colonial erasure and reconfiguration unlike many African rituals and customs (Suttner, 2005). Thus, Qambela (2021:57) argues that "the anthropological canon shows us that colonialism and accompanying Eurocentrism never could fully infiltrate and force indigenous populations to abandon their cultural practices completely. Among amaXhosa for instance, people often practised dual systems that took elements of European life (e.g., Christianity) and melded these elements with African cultural practices" (Qambela, 2021:57).

This is particularly evident in the external presentations of masculinity that are understood as the ideal demonstrations of pinnacle manhood discussed in earlier sections. Furthermore, we can see the interrelation between hierarchised gender power dynamic that informs Euro-American patriarchy and reconfigured African gender norms through colonialism and apartheid in the new ways that Black African Masculinities conceptualise manhood. In response to Mfecane's (2016, 2018) African centred theories of masculinity, the section below presents *ukuma* as a concept of articulating the behavioural ethic and *modus operandi* that denotes pinnacle Manhood for amaXhosa.

5.5 *Ukuma*: Standing up as the pinnacle of masculinity

As we have established in Chapter Two, it is common cause that the main theories on gender (specifically hegemonic Masculinity) on which research on men and masculinities in South Africa, and the related intervention programmes, largely depends is foregrounded on western epistemological notions of personhood (Mfecane, 2018; 2016). The understanding of "masculinity as socially constructed and accomplished relationally in social action" (Mfecane 218) by patriarchy confers hegemonic power and status to men generally over women and specific men who display ideal masculine traits. As shown in chapter Two, western gender theories offer inadequate accounts of African masculinities because of their being embedded in western epistemologies although, I retain the concept of hegemonic masculinity for its utility

in articulating the gender power that men generally hold over women in patriarchal societies. Furthermore, I argue along Siswana, (2015) that the practice of initiation into manhood with its teachings and socialisation as well as the social interconnection and accountability fostered by The Gatherings of Men serve to instil a hegemonic Xhosa Masculinities.

However, equally convincing is the argument that the complex lives of (South) African men, require the development of theories of masculinity based on African conceptions of reality and consider the historical and contemporary context in which the masculinities are practiced. I draw from Mfecane's (2016) conceptualisation of *indoda* in articulating the epistemological specificities of manhood for amaXhosa to show that Xhosa masculinity has with it an essence that is culturally inscribed on the male body (specifically the phallus) through Traditional Male Circumcision. In this study, *ukuma*, to stand, is used to express Xhosa notions of masculinity expected of *indoda*. Chapter four explained the nuanced meanings of *ukuma* and its application to the broader social relations in which it operates, namely, self-actualisation through independence, and a demonstration of socially responsible manhood through standing up for one's family and home.

Ukuma operates as an assertion and protection of self, demonstrating independence and being self-sustaining. The participants in this study all demonstrate the importance of *ukuma noku zimela*, standing up for oneself (in self-defence) and being independent as central to being a man and having that outwardly recognisable. As an act of defence against threats to one's physical integrity and a matter of principle, one must be able to deal with threats to their person or property. Failing which their manhood and masculinity will be undermined. This is best articulated by Zibula as quoted in Chapter 4 where he explains that standing up is learnt from childhood. One learns early in their life that they need to not allow themselves to gain a reputation for being a push over. As one grows older and into manhood, standing up in defence of also extends to one's family particularly the women in one's life. As Zibula explains, it is unbecoming of a man to offer no intervention (whether in words or physical acts) when a threat is posed against themselves or the women in his life.

Ukuzimela, also means to be independent and self-sustaining. The participants in the study all explained that it is part of becoming man that one no longer depends on their parents to sustain themselves. In his Master's Dissertation titled *ULWALUKO KWA XHOSA: Young Xhosa Men's Lived Experiences in the Context of Traditional Male Initiation* Siswana (2015) demonstrates that being independent and autonomous is a central principle of Xhosa manhood

as his research participants emphasised the importance of *ukuzimela geqe*, to being a man. As Dumba explains, post initiation, one is expected to show more industriousness and ask less for financial assistance from their parents. However, the socio-economic reality of many makes this challenging and can create interpersonal conflict and frustration which has been linked to outbursts of violence (see Chapter one and two).

This is particularly evident in the context of the home as gender-based violence occurs in intimate relationships and family dynamics characterised by marriage or cohabitation. The home and homestead are important to the conception of Xhosa manhood and a sight of articulation of the concept of *ukuma*. As discussed in chapter 4, marriage and building a homestead are part of the expectations of what I describe as Idealised manhood. It importantly speaks to the gendered division of labour where over and above standing up for oneself, it is a man's duty and responsibility "*ukumela izinto zekhaya*" – to stand up for his home and family. It is common cause that gender roles largely inform how individuals perform their gender identity. The idea that one has a role to play 'as a boy/man' or 'as a girl/woman' is informed by the social construction of masculinity and femininity that is attached to the sex dichotomy used to classify human beings as either male or female come men or women respectively. The idea that boys and men have a duty to "protect and provide" for their families is a common theme among many people(s) including young Xhosa men as shown by all the participants in this research. Interviews with Xhosa men in Mthatha illuminated that boys are raised to be men who stand, articulated as *ukuma njenge ndoda* (standing up as a man), for themselves, family and community.

The different forms that *ukuma* carry with them expectations of dominance and control or at least maintain the appearance of it. As explained above, standing up for oneself may not always equate to physical fighting, although it often does, but as the participants explained even the appearance of an aggressive demeanour and verbal threat of violence may suffice. Thus, the concept of *ukuma* serves as a way to legitimise the use of force or violence in certain instances where men feel that an act of violence constitutes *ukuzimela* (standing up for himself) or *ukumela ikhaya* (standing up for his family).

The use of force or violence a legitimate act manhood where it constitutes standing up for oneself or family speaks to the masculinist duty to protect and provide where it is largely understood across many cultures and societies that men have a responsibility to protect and provide for their families. This masculinist duty of protection has also found expression in

international politics where wars are justified and legitimised as being fought for the protection of women and children (Tickner, 1992). Phallogocentrism articulates masculine superiority simultaneously presenting femininity as lack and subservience. Thus, Mcloed (2007) explains that to feminise someone or something is to subordinate it. Masculinism and militarism have often legitimated the devastation caused by the gendered violence of wars and conquest by maintaining themselves as a necessary virtue that serves to protect women and children who lack the valorous traits to stand up for themselves against threats. Similarly, standing up against threat as conceived of in the concept of *ukuzimela* and *ukumela ikhaya* draw on a similar logic where women and children are understood as needing protection from physical threats and harsh material conditions. Thus, men must provide physical protection and material sustenance for themselves and their families.

In the context of youth unemployment, and a precarious political economy, young men find themselves at pains to be able to be materially independent and not depend on assistance from parents. Qambela, (2018) in the final chapter of his dissertation on Xhosa boyhood, discusses the men's lives in adulthood. His findings are also echoed by the participants in this research, mainly that in manhood they can no longer rely on other people to look after them as they did in boyhood. As Zibula explained, when one is still a boy everything is done for them, parents think of and make provision for all the child's needs but that stops when one becomes a man.

According to Barker and Ricardo (2005) in Africa manhood comes at a price and holds a particular mandate with expectations to fulfil. As Bhele, states in chapter four the social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa is tied to achievement of financial independence, employment, or income, and subsequently starting a family. Similarly, among AmaZulu manhood is tied to one's marital status and building *umuzi*, a homestead (Hunter, 2010). Ratele (2014) notes that most black youth particularly young African men are measured based on global standards subjected to factors such as capitalism, racism and patriarchy. Theoretically, this places young African men in the category of subordinate and marginal masculinities (Ratele, 2014).

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I unpacked the major themes presented in the previous chapter and sought to understand how they impact the ways in which Xhosa men come to conceive of their lives after *ulawluko*. I argue that while it can be said that there is a “crisis of masculinities” in South Africa owing to the precarious political economy within which traditional idealised notions of manhood log heads with the liberal democratic principles of gender equality and right to dignity for all enshrined in the Constitution (1996), this tension provides a site to think about [Xhosa] manhood as a contestable identity that can be reimagined. With the unyielding commitment of amaXhosa to the traditional rite of passage from boyhood to manhood, there is also an opportunity to put to test the agility and dynamic nature of African custom by showing how modern conceptions of Xhosa manhood demonstrate a reconfiguring of masculinity for better or worse.

In this chapter I attempt to move beyond the dependency on western gender theories to articulate African gender experiences which offer a limited understanding of Xhosa masculinities through an exploration of the concept of *ukuma* and its operation as an articulation of fortified and responsible manhood and interrelation with the utility of violence. The discussion reveals that *ukuma* is an expression of honourable manhood as it speaks to the protection and provision for a family. Such protection and provision are also linked to the industriousness and social contribution the community that Xhosa men are expected to show. A traditionally circumcised individual is regarded as *indoda*, a real man, regardless of his sexual orientation or class, and this affords him certain rights and privileges. Thus, as this chapter demonstrates, *ukuzimela* and *ukumela into zekhaya* are expected of all Xhosa men who.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

South Africa's transition to democracy has catalysed profound societal shifts, reshaping long-held conceptions of masculinity and manhood within the nation's evolving cultural landscape. Traditionally, masculine ideals in South Africa have been closely tied to militaristic and aggressive notions, forged through the country's protracted struggle against apartheid. However, in the post-conflict era, there is a growing recognition of the need to redefine and transform these entrenched masculine norms to align with the democratic values of equality, non-violence, and inclusivity. This study explores the changing constructs of masculinity in modern South African society, analysing the factors that have contributed to this evolution and the implications for individual and collective identities of Xhosa men in Mthatha, Eastern Cape.

Through tracing the ways in which the discipline of Political Studies and International Relations has positioned Black African masculinity/manhood in literature, the study argued that much of where Black African men are positioned within the public imagination emanates from moments of crisis and violence in contemporary society. This was particularly the case in the South African context with the HIV/AIDS crisis, the rape crisis as well as intimate partner violence, femicide and the legacies of Apartheid violence. Furthermore, Colonialism and Apartheid emasculated and infantilised Black African men. Thus, for Black African men of the liberation movement, the struggle against apartheid was articulated as a struggle for their manhood.

Furthermore, during the anti-apartheid movement, a distinct militarized form of masculinity was cultivated and valorised among urban youth involved in resistance activities. The prevailing social and political conditions of the time, marked by the violent struggle against apartheid, fostered an environment where young combatants were expected to embody hyper-masculine traits, such as physical strength, fearlessness, an aggressive disposition, and a willingness to engage in violence. This militarized masculine ideal was further reinforced through the recruitment and training of these young activists into self-defence units, solidifying its position as the dominant form of manhood.

The emergence of the "new" South African man, as described in Chapter 5 reflects a growing societal reconfiguration of the traditional, militarised masculine ideals that dominated

during the apartheid era. This shift is influenced by the democratic values and principles enshrined in South Africa's post-apartheid constitution, which emphasize the ideals of equality, non-violence, and human rights. Importantly, the transformation of masculinities in post-conflict South Africa has not been without its challenges. This transition's rapid and abrupt nature posed significant difficulties for former combatants, who were expected to discard their previous militarised identities without the necessary support and guidance and marginalised youth who find themselves on the peripheries of modern capitalist society.

While manhood for amaXhosa is unequivocally tied to *ulwaluko* as a seminal and unchanging requirement for becoming *indoda* – the pinnacle masculinity – the importance placed on attaining a “good life” through career and marriage and performance of “traditional” gender roles is one that persisted throughout the insights shared by the research participants. The insights shared in the previous chapter demonstrate that the nature of *ubudoda* – manhood is a continuous process marked by stages and achievement that present many tensions and chasms contestation. The presentation of a circumcised phallus, change of behaviour, participation in social reproduction and as this research has demonstrated, socio-economic status is some of the markers of a “real” man.

New, and older men need to have a respectable and respectful demeanour by way of demonstrating a responsible character through achieving of socio-economic milestones that serve as markers of one’s industriousness and success as a man. In the socio-economic context of the post-colonial and post-apartheid capitalism industriousness and success take on specific material nature which reconfigures the traditional concept of building *umzi* and attaching modern consumerist character to it. Furthermore, the advent of South Africa’s liberal constitutional democracy allows space and freedom of expression of multiple identities which are other to the phallogentric norm of masculinity. However, the legal gains of queer equality and same sex marriage, do not automatically translate into socio-political equality.

Although Xhosa masculinity and manhood as conceived of in the concept of *indoda* and *ubudoda* do not exclude gay men from the category of *indoda*, the differential treatment and experiences of marginalisation of gay men together with the significance placed on access to women romantic partners as a sign of prized masculinity are enough to suggest heterosexuality or the display of it as a marker of pinnacle masculinity.

Xhosa men in their gatherings operate as a peer review mechanism that socialises and disciplines men into maintaining a hegemonic behavioural status quo among Xhosa men. However, owing to the infantilization of Black African men and disinterest in their practises of manhood in the colonial and apartheid era much remains unknown about how Xhosa men organise to address issues related to their practise of manhood. The gathering of men demonstrates a gap in knowledge which is worth looking at for further study.

This study demonstrates the utility and operation of violence to assert one's dominance and defence against domination from others. The findings of this study show that men often resort to physical violence among each other as a result of conflict arising out of assertions of dominance. The study further shows that violence against women is viewed as a legitimate response to emotional pain felt by men. While the participants acknowledge that it is wrong to physically harm women, that is qualified by the women's (perceived) culpability in instances of gender-based violence. It is a commonly held sentiment among all the participants that men do not physically harm women without cause. Thus, whenever a man behaves violently towards a woman there must be a reason and the existence of a reason tacitly implies legitimacy to the violence enacted.

The transformation of masculinity in modern South African society is a multifaceted and ongoing process, reflecting the country's broader social, political, and cultural evolution in the post-apartheid era. While the rejection of the traditional militarized masculine ideal is evident, the path towards redefining manhood remains complex, marked by both challenges and opportunities. Addressing the deeply entrenched and often contradictory discourses that shape masculine identities and behaviours is crucial for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and non-violent conception of manhood in South Africa. The emergence of the "new" South African man present both challenges and opportunities for individuals and communities. Addressing the complexities of this transition requires a comprehensive and sustained approach that considers the deeply rooted cultural, social, and institutional factors that have historically shaped masculine ideals in South Africa. By embracing the democratic values of equality, non-violence, and human rights, South Africa can continue redefining and reimagining masculinity, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured one on one interview questions

Background – home and community

1. Please tell me about yourself: what is your name, surname, clan name?
2. Where did you grow up?
3. Who did you grow up with at home? Immediate family, extended family?
4. Tell me about the household you grew up in: your relationship with parents and/or other adults in the home, your relationship with siblings.
5. Please describe to me the neighbourhood you grew up in.
6. Are there any people from your childhood who are not in your family whom you think were influential in your upbringing? Please tell me more about them and your relationship with them.

Conceptions of Gender and Manhood

7. Did you grow up with sisters or relatives of the same age that were girls?
8. When you were growing up, were you and them raised in the same way?
9. How do you understand the concept of gender?
10. How does it apply to boys and men?
11. How is this different or similar to how it applies to girls and women?
12. What does it mean to be a man?
13. Describe how your thoughts and beliefs about what it means to be a man have changed and evolved as you have grown.
14. What are some of the things you thought of, about being a man, that you now know are not true?

15. What are some of the things you did not know about being a man but discovered later?

Manhood, self and social Identity

16. How important is your identity as a man to you?

17. What do you think qualifies you as a man?

18. How important is it to fit in with your peers as a man?

19. What are some of the things that you think society expects of you as a man?

20. Do you think there are societal standards that one has to meet to be recognized as a man?

21. What do you think about these standards and expectations?

22. Among your peers, what are some of the standards of manhood does one have to meet to be recognized as a man?

23. How different are these from societal standards and expectations?

Manhood, Women and 'Other' Genders

24. How do you think men relate with women; in the family and outside the family?

25. How similar and differently do you view and relate with women in your family and outside your family.

26. What are some of the things you thought about women that you now have changed your mind about?

27. What do you think are gender roles?

28. Describe some of the gender roles (for men and women) you subscribe to and why.

29. Describe some of the gender roles (for men and women) you disagree with and why.

Manhood and Violence

30. What is your understanding of violence?
31. Describe some of the reasons you think cause men to act violently towards each other?
32. What is your understanding of gender-based violence?
33. Describe some of the reasons why men act violently towards women?
34. When you were younger, did you know of cases of men (in your family or community) who were violent towards their partners?
35. How did the families/friends/community of the partners involved react to the violence?
36. What was your view of their reaction at the time?
37. Do you still have that view or have your views changed?
38. Describe some of the reasons why men act violently towards women?
39. Do you think we will ever live in a world where gender-based violence against women does not exist? If so, what do you think will need to happen/change for us to end gender-based violence?