

An investigation into amaXhosa new initiates' masculine identity construction, mediation and negotiation: Implications for the Life Orientation Curriculum

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Abstract

This study asked questions about dominant discourses shaping new amaXhosa initiates masculine identities. In particular, it asked questions on the interface between tradition and modern values and how the new initiates negotiate these in constructing masculine identities and the implications this has for schooling (and specifically LO classes).

This was a qualitative case study that relied on multiple sources of data including individual and focus groups interview with AmaXhosa new initiates as well as individual interviews with teachers. The study also included classroom observations of Life Orientation classes at the selected schools. Initially, informal discussions with the new initiates were held to gain insights on their perspective of initiation schools.

The findings of this study revealed three broad themes. The first was that normative masculine conceptions and manhood, with particular attention paid to constructions of manhood and masculine identity and their relation to emotional display, men as breadwinners and family providers, marriage, and heterosexuality and fatherhood. The second one was on gender space and power in the classroom which revealed masculine performance inside and outside the classroom, and the role played by sitting positions and spatial arrangements as a discursive spaces for the construction of particular masculine identities. The third related the curriculum in practice versus the stated LO curriculum and revealed a disjuncture between the two. With teachers tolerating the traditional male structures and behaviours in the classroom, despite being in conflict with the stated LO curriculum core messages on gender, patriarchy and equality, intentionally or unintentionally select a position of collusion rather than disruption of these classroom behaviours.

The study results highlight the complex social space that new initiates inhabit in order to make meaning of their masculine identities, and the challenges for teachers and schools in mediating between the traditional values and behaviours of some learners, some of which are

in conflict with the values and behaviours espoused by the LO curriculum and the modernizing project goals of SA education and the Constitution.

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study is part of a larger SANPAD (South African Netherlands Research Partnership for Alternate Development) research programme focusing on Life Orientation (LO) sexuality programmes and normative gender narratives, practices, and power relations. Its particular focus is on the mediation of masculine identities in LO classrooms. Walker (2005) argues that contemporary expressions of masculinity are embryonic, ambivalent, and characterized by the struggle between traditional male practices and the desire to be a modern respectable and responsible man.

The study posed questions on intersecting tradition and modernity discourses assumed to shape masculine identities in particular contexts in particular ways. At the core of the study were questions about ways in which amaXhosa new initiates¹ embody, mediate (and are mediated by), and negotiate tradition as expressed through participation in initiation rites of passage, and modern² masculinities as expressed in the LO curriculum and classroom.

As a Life Orientation (LO) teacher, this study was prompted by observations made over years of teaching regarding how new initiates behave in LO classrooms. For the most part, amaXhosa boys go to initiation school (colloquially termed the ‘bush’ or the ‘mountain’) between the ages of 16-18, often between Grades 10-12. My observation has been that there is a shift in attitude and behaviour upon their return. These now young ‘men’ given their new identity in the community, position themselves differently in the classroom: physically and discursively. They also relate differently to one another. New initiates seem to take up and take on specific roles in class, sit in specific places and in general, demand to be treated differently by staff and fellow learners. An example is that as a sign of respect, they demand to be called ‘bhuti’; a term which when translated means ‘brother’ but carries with it expectations of respect, seniority, and authority.

¹ New initiates in this study are defined as young men who are within/less than six months after initiation.

² Modernity and tradition are dichotomized for the purposes of arguing a case for the focus of this study. Their complex relationship is acknowledged. This study accepts that tradition is subsumed in modernity and vice versa. This study assumes that the way new initiates embody both ‘worlds’ and perspectives as they make meaning of their masculine identities, animates the complexity of this relationship, something which is at the heart of the study. I come back to this complexity in the next chapter.

I also noticed a social hierarchy wherein new initiates demand to be called ‘men’ as opposed to ‘boys’ as well as be attended to first when resources are made available to the class. The new position and concomitant privileges and practices arise from particular gendered constructions on what it means to be a ‘man’ in particular societies and are underpinned by what Chapman (2004) refers to as hegemonic masculinity of dominance; a concept I explain in detail in Chapter 2. Thus, this study was framed by concerns about factors in and out of school that shape masculine identity construction amongst amaXhosa new initiates. It arose from concerns on how new initiates mediate (and are mediated by) and negotiate different masculine discourses. At the centre, the study was concerned with the kinds of masculine identities produced by amaXhosa new initiates and the implications this has for the espousal and enactment of the Life Orientation curriculum.

1.2 Context of the study

South Africa comes from a past that was shaped by an apartheid system with a host of discriminatory laws, along race, class, and gender. The South African education system at the time thus reflected the fragmented society on which it was based and was used as a means of undemocratic social control that created individuals who were compartmentalized along gender, racial, and cultural lines (Msila, 2007). With the inception of a new democratic government in 1994, a new constitution was adopted. With it came ten fundamental values that indicate the priorities that the government has for the South African society. In keeping with the values of the Constitution³, Curriculum 2005, and later, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2003) and more recently Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (2011) is sensitive to diversity as well as to the inequities that may have resulted from amongst others, race, gender, and age. South Africa’s Constitution is regarded as one of the most progressive in the world as it holds as its central values, the ideals of human rights, freedom as the highest good, equality, and the tolerance of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences.

The best way to communicate the above was thought to be through education. Thus, the democratic government of 1994 was explicit in placing education at the heart of its transformation agenda. In all the curricula (original and revised), education is acknowledged as a tool that might root the South African values enshrined in the Constitution. Democracy,

³ The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:-Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.

social justice, non-racism, equality, and reconciliation are among those espoused in this curriculum. Jickling (1999) stresses the partiality of curricula by claiming that no curriculum is value free. Every curriculum is value laden, some openly stated, others implied through the text and others revealed through omission. In the case of South Africa, the espoused values are explicit.

Curriculum transformation in South Africa led to the development of an innovative new learning area called Life Orientation (LO). This learning area proposes to guide and prepare learners for life and its possibilities. It is geared towards equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, race, gender, physical or intellectual ability. In so doing, it proposes to equip them with knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfillment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country (Department of Education, 2002). The holistic social, personal, intellectual, emotional, and physical development of learners is the central concern of the LO curriculum; with specific emphasis on self-in-society as well as a study of the self in relation to others and to society. It is viewed as an excellent basis for equipping learners to respond positively to social demands, assume responsibilities and optimize their life chances (Prinsloo, 2007). Importantly too is the kind of learner promoted, namely one “...who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution” (NCS 2003, p. 4). The expressed ideal learner, therefore, is one who embodies modern values as espoused and expressed in the country’s constitution.

Amongst the specific aims, the LO curriculum proposes to guide and prepare learners to respond appropriately to life’s responsibilities and opportunities, expose them to their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to the rights of others and to issues of diversity. It also seeks to ensure that learners acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. According to the RNCS (DoE, 2003, p.19) “[T]he vision for Life Orientation is to facilitate individual growth so as to contribute towards the creation of democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life in the community.”

As it relates to this study, the LO curriculum creates a space for learners to interrogate concepts related to masculinity through engagement in classroom discussions, topics in text books, and other resource material. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

(CAPS, 2011), gives an outline of what is to be taught in Life Orientation by Grade 10-12 educators. A cursory analysis of curriculum highlights that teachers are expected to expose and enable learners to confront stereotypical views on gender roles and responsibilities, gender differences, analyze concepts such as power, power relations, masculinity, femininity, and gender influences on inequality in relationships and general well-being. It acknowledges that educators and learners bring different worldviews to the classroom. However, it does not go further to describe these or indicate the implications they might have for meanings ascribed to, in this case, masculine identity construction and enactment. In fact the ways in which worldviews mediate meaning making is underdeveloped in the curriculum; an issue I return to later on in the thesis.

Notwithstanding what they are exposed to in school, amaXhosa new initiates, the target population in this study, are also exposed to traditional forms of masculinity through participation in initiation rites of passage, which are the “[T]ransmission of cultural beliefs and values to the individual participating in those rites” Davis-Floyd (2004, p. 1). These mark the passing from one phase in life to the next more mature phase. Amongst amaXhosa, this marks the shift from boyhood into manhood. It is a time when boys are expected to begin displaying certain features that include but are not limited to thinking independently, carrying and shouldering the responsibilities for self and others; with the community having particular expectations of how they would carry themselves. The kind of learner produced as a result of engagement with the school curriculum not only seemed at odds with such expectations, but also seemed to be understood, experienced, and taken up in particular ways by new initiates in this study.

1.3 The problem statement

What is espoused in the South African national curriculum in relation to masculine identity construction seems at odds with what is taught in traditional institutions like initiation schools attended by amaXhosa boys. The former espouses a modernist worldview in that it aims to produce learners that are able to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking (Bredlid, 2003). This is in line with the modernist social project that has at its core democracy, human rights, and equality and both sexes accepted as equal. While the latter is underpinned by a worldview in which hierarchy is assumed in social relations. Patriarchy, which I explain in more detail in Chapter 2, underpins traditional worldviews that assume the role of men to be that of providers and protectors. Boys from an

early age are socialized into accepting sexually different roles. The traditionalist view accepts patriarchy as biologically determined and since the biological functions of men and women are different, the social roles and tasks assigned for women are specific and also different to those of men. Gwata (2009) points out that the exclusion of women from the entire initiation process in Xhosa tradition carries social and cultural significance. The denial of access and knowledge to women of the central aspect of the ritual according to Gwata (2009), affirms the inferiority of women and the separateness of sexes. This perception developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by several ideologies, social practices and institutions such as family, religion, education, media, law, state, and society. The new initiates in this study, thus, are exposed to what might be assumed to be conflicting worldviews since there seems to be a discord between the worldview of initiation schools and that expressed in the school curriculum. The curriculum strives for a culture and practice of equality which seems to contradict with the traditional view that postulates a hierarchical nature of forces. This, as the study assumed, created tension in the classroom for new initiates that wanted to claim their social position, the honour and status of being a man against school and classroom practices that encouraged equality amongst all learners.

1.4 Research goal

This study was premised on the notion that new initiates embody tradition and modern values about masculinity and what it means to be a man today. It asked questions about how new amaXhosa initiates negotiate between tradition and modern values in constructing masculine identities. The implications this has for schooling (and specifically LO classes) are that as long as learners do not see what is taught in LO classes working in their 'world', their behaviour is unlikely to change. The study is situated at the nexus of this problem in that I recognized the contradictions between the espoused aims of the curriculum, which are to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives and that of others (DoE, 2011) and the outcomes of the initiation process.

By examining ways in which different masculinity discourses are understood, negotiated, and mediated by amaXhosa new initiates, this study sought to highlight an aspect of the complex social world that young people (particularly amaXhosa males who have undergone initiation) navigate and the implications of this for the LO curriculum specifically and sexuality education more generally. By so doing, this study contributes to the emerging body of literature that seeks to understand the intersection between socio-cultural practices and

behaviour. In particular, it contributes to understanding the male youth's masculinity, beliefs, experiences, and perspectives with the view to contributing to the development of responsive sexuality programmes in and out of school.

1.5 Main research question

What factors shape masculine identities amongst amaXhosa new initiates and how do they respond to, negotiate, and mediate the LO curriculum in constructing such identities?

Sub-Questions

- What are dominant masculinity discourses in LO classrooms and out of school (by implication, initiation schools)?
- What masculine identities are being produced by amaXhosa new initiates?
- What are the influences that amaXhosa new initiates draw on to construct and negotiate masculine identities and what are the ways in which they do this?
- What forms do these masculine identities take and how do they play out in LO classes?

1.6 Outline of the study

Chapter 1 provides for a brief introduction to the purpose, aims, rationale and the structure of the study. It also discusses the context of new initiates in South African schools

Chapter 2 gives an overview of issues that pave the way towards understanding the research problem and identifying the knowledge gap this study seeks to understand. It outlines the features of structuration theory that guided the study, while exploring the concepts of identity construction

Chapter 3 gives a brief background on education reforms in South Africa after 1994 leading to the introduction of Life Orientation as a school subject. It trace the genesis and proposed progression in discussions on the concept of masculinity from Grade 10-12.

Chapter 4 begins by recapping the research problem being investigated. It describes and justifies the qualitative research methodology used to provide answers to the research questions. It highlights why qualitative research methods were appropriate to collect data from the respondents and why purposive sampling was the right way to go in terms of

selecting interviews. It further describes how data was collected and finally it describes the data analysis procedures employed in the research.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the data collection. It starts with a brief outline of the context and a synopsis of the participants. The data collected are presented within two major themes. Under each theme the different categories that have emerged highlight the main findings that provide answers to the research questions

Chapter 6 discusses and analyses the findings as presented in chapter 5. It begins with a description of positionality, and how young men at school mediate and negotiate their construction of masculinity. The chapter reflects a discord in how these young men construct their masculinity which is in contrast with the aspirations espoused in the LO curriculum.

Chapter 7 summarises the main findings of the preceding chapter and draws conclusions from the information recorded in the literature review. The conclusion establishes the conceptions and experiences of the respondents on masculinity construction at school and the dichotomy between the modern man in the curriculum and the traditional form of masculinity. Questions and ideas for further research are raised and some recommendations for addressing these issues are offered.

CHAPTER 2 IDENTITY, GENDER, MASCULINITY AND THE CURRICULUM

2.1 Introduction

The focus of this study was on amaXhosa new initiates construction of masculine identities and how this was expressed, negotiated, and enacted in the LO classroom. Masculinity thus becomes an important construct in a study of this nature. The term is closely intertwined with who we are: our identity or in the case of the sample in this study; their masculine identities. But any discussion on masculinity necessitates a discussion on discourses on identity as well as those on sex and gender for a holistic understanding of masculinity. Such a discussion ought to take into account the role of the institutionalization of gender, cultural conceptualizations of the term, and the dynamic social context in which masculinities are embedded and practiced (Connell, 2000). This study examines two of a host of other socio-cultural contexts, namely formal school and initiation schools, while acknowledging the multiplicity of discursive spaces that also have influence.

The study takes as its departure, an understanding of masculinity as “[P]erformative, situational and relational, always being reinvented and rearticulated in every setting, micro or macro, always in motion, always dynamic” (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell 2005, p. 7). This implies a focus on how masculinity is not only constituted rather than biologically determined, fluid, and context dependent. Masculinity in this instance also assumes its social embeddedness. In other words, individual forms of masculinity are understood to be mediated by collective beliefs, understandings and practices in a specific context. Such a definition draws on Giddens structuration theory which notes that social life is more than random individual acts; rather it is produced and reproduced by social forces (Giddens 1984). Structuration theory is a theory of social change focusing upon the relations between structures and individual actions. It is a constructivist theory, that foreground people as social constructs that shape and are shaped by social institutions that portray a particular image of reality (Lye, 1997, cited in Hardcastle, 2005).

There is an ongoing relationship between human agency and social structure as they are interactive and reciprocal. As Swartz puts it, “[B]eliefs, norms, and values of a society are not

generated in a social vacuum but in structured social contexts” (2002, p. 655). Social actors thus operate in social contexts that shape their actions but to which they also contribute to shaping. (Lye, 1997, cited in Hardcastle, 2005) maintains that institutions of all types are constructs sustained by how people act. This implies that how people construct who they are is influenced by social structures to which they contribute to producing and by so doing maintaining or reproducing and inevitably transforming.

This chapter situates the study conceptually by briefly embedding conceptions of masculinity in discourses on identity first, and sex and gender thereafter; constructs deemed critical to understanding the intersection between tradition and modern masculinities in this study.

2.2 Discourses on identity

Identity gives individuals a location in the world that could be in the form of nationality, ethnicity, gender, or social class. The ‘kind of person’ we are recognized as ‘being’ at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment; context to context and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable (Gee, 2000, p. 99). Duffy (2010) argues that who we grow up to be is influenced by interrelations with family, friends, peers, and the media; thus making identity a social construct; tied to a multiplicity of ideological interests and shaped by socio-political (and economic) pressures. The complex and multifaceted nature of identity is revealed by the fact that, for example, males can at the same time also be professionals, husbands, fathers, brothers and sons-in-law while females can also at the same time be mothers, sisters, or wives. Such positions invoke different aspects of our identity, depending on the context; aspects that emphasize the complexity of identity. As Gee (2001, p. 99) argues, “[W]hen any human being acts and interacts in a given context, others recognize that person as acting and interacting as a certain ‘kind of person’ or even as several different ‘kinds’ at once.” This implies that we all have multiple identities that are invoked depending on the context. Put differently, the place we are in and the particular people we communicate with at a particular time and space, have a bearing on the kind of identity (or identities) we project in that interaction. Thus, identities cannot be regarded in isolation, but are constitutive, productive, and reflexive in nature. Changing social and cultural contexts influence understandings of who we are (individually and collectively). In taking certain positions, participants in the process of interaction construct their own as well as other’s identities.

Identity is not only socially constructed, but also publicly mediated. As Altheide proposes, identity is part of the self “by which we are known to others” (2000, p. 2). Stone makes the point that identity is a public process that involves two interlinked components, namely the “identity announcement” made by the individual claiming an identity and the “identity placement” made by others who endorse the claimed identity (1981, p. 188). He proposes that identity is both personal (individual) and social and that it involves self-identification as well as being identified by others as a special kind of person (Stone, 1981).

Identities are mediated in complex contexts that either constrain or enable the kind of identity that is constructed and enacted. Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin (2008, p. 1817) put it this way, “[I]n localized face-to-face interactions, identity is constructed under a unique set of constraints.” These constraints arise from characteristics such as sex, gender, class, race, ethnicity, and social and cultural practices. The starting point for the construction of identity is our physiological differences and the concomitant meanings attributed to being male or female. While important, discussions on how class, race, and ethnicity shape identity are beyond this study and thus not explicitly dealt with.

Below, I present a discussion on Giddens's structuration theory that provides one of a host of explanations of how our identities are formed, as well as on how and what shapes such constructions. His theory is useful in that Giddens's not only explains the interaction between structure and agency, but also takes account of the context in which this interaction occurs as key ingredients in identity formation and practice.

2.2.1 Giddens theory of structuration

This study draws on Anthony Giddens theory of structuration to understand the social and cultural practices that shape young men’s masculinity. Anthony Giddens's structuration theory explains how the social system is reproduced and transformed through the routine actions of individuals. It notes that social life is more than random individual acts, but is also determined by social forces external to the individual. Agreeing with Giddens, Swartz (2002) states, “... beliefs, norms, and values of a society are not generated in a social vacuum, but in structured social contexts”, (p. 655). This theory is thus mainly concerned with how to understand and explain the interaction between “people’s practices and the contexts in which those practices take place, a delicate relationship between structure (external forces) and agency (internal motivations) in society; or macro versus micro perspectives respectively”

(Lamsal, 2012, p. 112). Giddens believed that humans act as knowledgeable subjects in conjunction with the social order to change their social reality. He emphasizes the reflexive nature of social systems, and the constructed nature of human agency.

Structuration theory is a theory of social change focusing upon the relations between structures and individual action. It is a constructivist theory, because it understands people as social constructs and maintains that institutions of all types are constructs sustained by how people act; acting according to their images of reality (Lye, 1997, cited in Hardcastle, 2005). Giddens (1984) stresses that action of agents can be change by social and structural conditions whether they are aware of it or not. Social life is constructed and reconstructed based on the meanings people attach to their actions. He proposes that people produce their social systems employing rules and resources (structures) during interaction (agency), knowingly or unknowingly reproducing these structures through routines and rituals that are often taken-for-granted or unquestioned. This theory sought to bring to the fore the equally important role played by both the social structures and human agents in bringing about social change.

Unlike earlier theories of identity, for example Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice that gives credence to structures as determining agency, Giddens argues that the role of structures can be both a constraining and an enabling element for human action. Thus, he does not privilege structures over agency, but states that practice is produced in the complex interaction between the two. In fact, Giddens believed that structures are only visible through social action as well as through the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts embodied by people, which are practiced in a particular structure in order to interact with different members of their society. Giddens & Pierson (1998) argue that people's everyday actions reinforce and reproduce a set of expectations and it is this set of other people's expectations which make up the 'social forces' and 'social structures' that sociologists talk about. As Giddens puts it, “[S]ociety only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do” (1984, p. 77).

In this study, Giddens’ account of reflexivity as the mediating power between structure and agency is applied to understand how learners use their agential power to respond to the existing structural and cultural conditions that either constrain or enable them as they

navigate complex social and cultural practices to produce self and to position themselves as men inside and outside school.

I briefly explain each construct below, acknowledging their interrelation but at the same time the need for explication of each.

Structure

Structures are properties of social setting; they refer to “rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems” (Giddens 1984, p.377). To Giddens (1984), structures are not external to the individual but exist as memory traces of human knowledge that is invoked in social action (Giddens, 1984). In other words, structure includes the rules and resources that govern society but that are only traceable as people go on in their daily lives. They reflect in what people think, believe, value, and how they act. Social structures, according to Giddens, provide the conditions for action and are being constantly recreated, renegotiated, and redefined because of what people do and how they think (in Orlikowski, 2001). This means that structures are not independent entities but rather are embodied; reflecting through human activity. In other words, structures are not visible outside social action but rather reside in the memory of people and are reproduced through their action. As Giddens puts it, “[T]he structural properties of social systems exist only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronically across time and space” (1984, p. xxi). In other words, Giddens (1984) proposes that structures have certain properties that are what people embody and carry as memory traces that they reflect on to produce human action.

The positions of people within a structure can both constrain and enable their actions. This happens when people “reflect on their actions (rationalize them) in an overt, strategic way (discursive consciousness)” (Ogden & Rose, 2005, p. 229). These constraints can take the form of social and/or cultural tools and mediating devices that regulate human conduct to ensure stability and predictability (Nebe 2003). People do not act haphazardly; but rather through reflexive action that produce and are reproduced in social structures. As such, people not do this consciously but because social action becomes routinized, they act to reproduce structures.

There is possibility, as already stated, for structures to either constrain or enable.

Structures operate in social discourse as a powerful device identifying some part of a complex social reality as explaining the whole. Giddens (1984, p. 25) describes the “existence of a recursive relationship between people and structures, wherein structures shape human action, which in turn constitute the structure, a relationship he terms ‘duality of structure.’” According to Giddens's notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of the social system “are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25).

There are three types of structures that operate in the social system namely, signification, legitimation, and control or domination. First, signification denotes constructions that produce meaning through shared codes, interpretive schemes and discursive practices. These mediate social reality through actions that invoke identity, ideology, and beliefs. Second, legitimation produces moral order via naturalization of societal norms, values, and standards. These are articulated as rules that govern social practices in different contexts. These rules define the normative practices in a particular social space and sanctions performances. Socialization legitimizes social performance through rites and rituals. Third, control or domination, according to Giddens, is the “capability that some actors or groups and types of actors have of influencing the circumstances of action of others” (p. 283). In order to understand the influence of agents, it is necessary to understand the social and cultural resources available to them.

Agency

In structuration theory, humans are "knowledgeable agents" operating in specific context (Giddens 1984). Human agency is a social action reproducing existing structures or producing new ones. By expressing themselves (words, behaviour, expressions and actions) social actors invoke social action. Because actors repeat action over and over again, they continually create and recreated social action (Giddens 1984). It is in and through activities that actors reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible.

In his conceptualization of the concept of agency, Giddens argues that agents consciously or unconsciously reflexively monitor their conduct and that of others. In so doing, they weigh up their action against that of others. Turner (1986) explains that such “monitoring is influenced by two levels of consciousness, discursive and practical.” Discursive consciousness refers to the capacity of agents to “give reasons” and rationalize their conduct while practical

consciousness is associated with the agent's ability to surveil and interpret the actions of others (p. 973). Giddens argues that the constant monitoring is influenced by anxiety in social relations which necessitates a need for ontological security and trust. Mitzen explains ontological security as “a psychological state that is equivalent to feeling at home with one self and the world, and is associated with the experience of low or manageable levels of anxiety” (2006, p.342). This relaxed state of mind is achieved through routinizing social relations with significant others. Familiarity with social rules allow for equanimity in the discursive space to act like ourselves. This state of predictability in social relations contributes to a state of continuity and order (Giddens, 1984).

Agency comprises three elements of action, first it's the reflexive monitoring; which is about surveillance of self and others. According to Hardcastle (2005) this is how one perceives their position is in relation to how they perceive their position to others, a position that is constantly renegotiated, thus, reconstituted across time and space. Secondly rationalization: which entails giving reasons for your action and third and last motivation of action is about internal and external motivation. People use all these elements of agency in different times and context.

This theory helped to understand the conditions that mediate or regulate construction of masculinity, but also the circumstances in which these young men, reproduce or transform behaviour and, makes meaning of themselves. Giddens asserts that we cannot adequately describe social activity “without knowing what its constituent actors know, tacitly as well as discursively” (Giddens, 1984, p. 285). This theory has helped me with the lenses of looking at the forces at play in the construction of masculinity. It allows me to look beyond the obvious and taken for granted everyday social life. It is important to view both the societal characteristics and the individual's responses to those characteristics in order to understand the processes of masculinity construction.

It has helped me to understand gender as an interactional accomplishment by looking at norms that initiate, sustain and or classify masculinity construction. Taking into account Giddens's views that gender is socially produced and reproduced by how structure, action, and power are constituted at any given time or place. This theory helped during analysis of data to see new initiates as active agents rather than passive agents, in masculinity construction and can exercise some control in their own lives.

What follows is a discussion on discourses on sex and gender.

2.2.2 Identity, sex and gender

Our biological make-up relates to our sex (World Health Organization, 2000; Pitcher & Whelahan, 2005). Pitcher & Whelahan (2005) suggest that sex specifically refers to the biological (and physical) differences between females and males. Before we assume identities that are given or entrusted to us by different social agencies in society, we are primarily male or female. Societies in which we live play a critical role in determining the different attitudes and behaviour, shown most strongly in the different expectations put on different sexes.

Not only do our biological make-up shape our identity, but also the meanings ascribed by society on what it means to be male or female. Being male or female shapes and is shaped by a complex process of how we are raised, educated, the social norms and values, stereotypes, identifications, images, and traditions (or social and cultural practices) of particular societies. Coltrane & Adams (1997, p.157) contend, “[W]hile our biological make-up is responsible for our sex, society and how it is organized, gives us gender.” Boss (2008) simplifies the distinction between sex and gender as the former being inherited and the latter learnt through socialization and interaction in and through the social world.

Males and females live in communities and societies that expect them to behave in ways that are appropriate or normalized with their sex. Thus, while sex determines who we are as male or female, gender shapes how we make meaning of who we are. According to the World Health Organization (2000), gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. It involves society’s

“constructed ideal of what it means to be a woman or man” (Coltrane, 1994 cited in Cheng, 1999, p. 157). Cheng (1999) argues that having been born into one sex or another, individuals are then socialized according to specific gender expectations and roles. Appropriate gender roles are defined according to a society's beliefs about differences between the sexes. Gender identity though, is not only about society's beliefs only, but is also concerned with an individual’s own sense of being male or female (Archakis, 2006).

A distinction is commonly drawn between male and female with the former ascribed certain attributes such as independence, toughness, emotional control, providers and leaders of families. These attributes are socially constructed and policed and any deviation casts doubt on an individual's integrity. Females on the other hand are expected to take care of domestic activities, such as cleaning the house, raising children, and being obedient and docile toward men (Kleist 2010). These different attributes create a relationship that is hierarchical and tends to advantage men. "[T]hese gender hierarchies are often accepted as natural but are socially determined relations, culturally based and are subject to change overtime" (Reeves & Baden 2000). Magodyo, Andipatin & Jackson (2017) argue that masculine hierarchies among amaXhosa are based on the fact of circumcision instead of sexual orientation. This creates room for gay man to be included in the circle of man and accorded the privileges men enjoy.

Connell (1995) challenges the homogeneity of the characteristics of masculine identity by proposing that masculinity is fluid and constructed in relation to various context-specific structures and relations, as I briefly explain below.

2.2.3 Identity and masculinity

A substantial body of literature exists on the subject of masculinity that positions it within the discourse of gender. Social factors as opposed to essentialist assumptions have been attributed to the construction of masculinity. Chitando (cited by van Klinken, 2011, p.277) argues, "[W]hile being male is a biological factor, the process of expressing manhood is informed by social, cultural, and religious factors." Whitehead (2002, p.345) points out, "[T]he masculine subject is not innately man, it can only become this through being positioned in and positioning itself within those discourses that speak of and suggest maleness or masculinity."

Whitehead and Barrett (2001, p.15) define masculinity as "those behaviours, languages and practices existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine." Masculinity is constructed differently according to the social conditions in which people find themselves. Mac & Ghail (1994), Connell (2002), Kimmel (2004) and Ampofo & Boateng (2007) emphasize that masculinities reflect social and cultural expectations of male behaviour while Kleist puts it this way, "masculinity is the enactments and articulations - as well as the negotiations and reinventions - of culturally defined ideals of manhood and male authority, intersecting with

other social positions” (2010, p. 187). Different definitions of masculinity reflect that there is no single masculinity; how the concept is defined and presented depends on the social context. Like others, Connell (2000) also maintains that masculinities vary from culture to culture, are multi-layered, dynamic and are collectively produced but individually enacted.

Traditionally, cultural and social constructions of what it means to be a man not only legitimated male authority but also provide men with a set of regulations that spell out the rights, duties, and obligations that accompany paternal authority. Craig (1992, p.3) states, “[T]raditional characteristics of masculinity are made to seem so correct and natural that men find domination not just expected, but actually demanded.” Male power and privilege thus, is made to appear natural and normal rather than socially produced and structured. Traditionally, and in order to create a positive identity of themselves, men need to feel accepted within a peer group and to belong to a group which gives them social value (Herman, 2013). Such traditional constructions of masculine gender identity is constructed and legitimized in patriarchal societies.

Modern conceptions of masculinity presuppose fluidity and multiplicity. Having said that, Connell (1993) argues that any one man may position himself in different masculinities in different relationships and contexts; that masculinity as a social construct is thus always prone to internal contradiction and historical disruption. He argues for caution against trying to box or label any one man as belonging exclusively to one masculinity type.

As a gendered concept, and to reiterate, Morrell (1998; 2007) states that masculinities are culturally constructed in relation to other social identities such as class, race, and sexuality. He states that masculinity is a collective gender identity and not a natural attribute; rather it is socially constructed and fluid. Like Connell (1993), Morrell (2007) also makes the point that it is difficult and unhelpful at the individual level to try and label a man as belonging to one or other masculinity type because there is no one universal masculinity; but rather many masculinities.

Masculinity is understood to be personally and socially constructed or as Connell proposes, “[C]onstituted in discourse” (1995, p.5), particularly in and through gender discourses. He further argues that masculinity is a product of social and cultural practices; it is shaped, expressed and negotiated differently in different social and cultural contexts. Men as social

actors in different socio-cultural contexts are socialized differently to their masculinities; pointing to different variables in the formation and shaping of masculinity.

While contexts shape masculine identities, masculinity as a dimension of gender identity cannot be assumed to be fixed. It is constructed and, therefore, open to influence. Masculinity is fluid, contextual, and situated within cultural and social norms in a given context. It is not a natural attribute, but rather a socially constructed entity (Morrell, 1998; UNAIDS, 2000). Adding to this idea, Connell (2005) and Shefer (2006) contend that this concept is complex and confusing, fluid, relational, contextual, changing, and constantly negotiated. Thus, there is no homogeneous or universal masculinity; "... but rather a wide range of masculine identities that are hierarchically structured around hegemonic understandings" (van Hoven & Horschelmann, 2005, p.8). Notwithstanding the argument by Mfecane (2016) that in most masculinity theories these hierarchical structure are derived from a Western gender order that puts gay men at the base of the hierarchical order but hierarchies amongst AmaXhosa are based on circumcision not sexual orientation

Gendered power relations create relational hierarchies amongst men as well as between men and women. Conceptions of masculinity presuppose that at any given time, in a specific space, multiple masculinities exist which emerge through a process that involves "... contestation between rival understandings of what being a man should involve" (Morrell, 2001, p.7). As Epstein (1998) maintains, masculinity must be established through constant practice of manhood.

One of the key markers of a man in the social and cultural context of new initiates in this study is that men are circumcised through participation in particular rituals. But circumcision alone seems not enough as Van der Walt (2007) contends that men continuously at a periphery level of consciousness ask the question 'am I man enough.' Part of youths struggle in developing a gendered identity includes developing or solidifying their conscious or unconscious understanding of what it means to be a man; to be masculine. Research on masculinity construction reveals that there are different ways of being a man. Therefore, within a given setting, and especially within multicultural societies such as South Africa, different versions of masculinity exist; each with their own ideological way of enacting manhood (Connell, 2002). According to Van der Walt (2007), the meanings of masculinity are not consistent over an individual's life; changing as a man grows, matures and continually

negotiates in and through multiple discourses and social and cultural contexts where manhood is enacted.

Masculinity, as explained in the earlier section on identity formation, is achieved through day to day experiences and practices which are themselves given shape by socio-cultural contexts. Men are thus subjected to a variety of ways of being masculine (Connell, 1995). Sexual identity is a part of how people constitute themselves and so a key characteristic of masculine sexuality is, by and large, that men police themselves and others; observing their performances to ensure that they are sufficiently male (Fracher & Kimmel, 1987). In more traditional environments that I describe below, part of monitoring manhood relates to the extent in which, at all costs, men have to avoid 'feminine' behaviours, interests, and personality traits, if they want to be regarded as 'real men'. The expectation is that they are also supposed to suppress any sign of emotion and vulnerability. Such constructs are underpinned by a patriarchal ideology and are thus shaped by hegemonic forms of masculinity that I briefly describe below.

2.3 Patriarchy, tradition, and masculinity

According to Rich (1995.) patriarchy is about power of the father and control of women in different aspects of life. In this system women are subsumed under men who dictate to them their role in society.

Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations which are hierarchical and unequal; where men control women's production, reproduction, and sexuality. Patriarchal control has developed historically and is institutionalized and legitimized by a complex set of power relations. Patriarchy imposes masculine and feminine character stereotypes in society, which gives rise to unequal power relations between men and women. Patriarchal ideals assume that all socio-economic and political distinctions between men and women are rooted in biology and that sexual inequality is natural and not social or political (Heywood, 2003). Within patriarchal societies, men's sexuality and sexual expression are given relatively free reign, while women's sexuality is restrained, policed, and mediated through particular structural and cultural conditions (Muehlenhard, Peterson, Karkowsky, Bryan & Lee, 2003). Heterosexuality is culturally and socially assumed to be normal and natural, with alternative forms of sexuality perceived to be deviant. Thus, alternative forms of sexuality are not only frowned

upon but also feminized, while any behaviour that meets the prescription of 'man' is masculinized.

Patriarchal societies expect women to follow rules set by man. Whitehead (2002) reports that research on men and masculinity reveals that the relationship between men and women was never an equitable one. Patriarchal societies stipulate rights that constrain women's choices while men, on the other hand, are expected to be breadwinners, heads of households and the pillar of support to the family (Mills, 2003). These are referred as traditional male roles in many societies.

Tradition is a process of transferring ideas, conventions, and practices repeatedly, which are needed by people in a social interaction. These ideas and practices are assumed to have existed for a period of time or for generations. The assumption about tradition is that it is age old and has been unchanging since its inception. Spiegel & Boonzaaier argue that tradition is assumed to be linked to "conservative thinking" (1988, p.41). It is also assumed to be an old way of doing things. Tradition changes as does everything else in society and the assumption is made that "... where there is some resemblance to earlier form, the new form still represents continuity with the past" (Spiegel and Boonzaaier, 1988, p. 47)

Many traditional⁴ societies, which are patriarchal, prescribe hierarchical significance to respectful behaviour towards males and elders (Mills, 2003). Mills (2003) states that this has roots in many social and cultural practices that are based on patriarchy, which emanates from socialization processes, which begin in the family and infiltrate to other sectors of society including to not exclusively religion, education, economy and politics.

Traditional gender roles for men in most societies documented have been that of the primary breadwinner, head of the household, protector, provider and the holder of leadership roles, not just in their families, but also in their communities (Morrell, 1998). These roles were assumed to be paralleled to typically male personality characteristics, such as assertiveness, physical strength, confidence, bravery, and independence with associated interest in sports and competition (Connell, 2000). The characteristics and the roles mentioned above accompanied by expected behaviour create an idealized type of a man typically referred to as

⁴ Traditional is a contested concept. In this context it is used as a set of customs and beliefs that have been passed from one generation to the next over a long period of time and that have been normalized over time.

the 'real' man. As it relates to this study, traditional stereotyping puts enormous pressure on young men to conform to the expectations of a 'real' man.

Social and cultural practices in any society play a role in determining the type of a man acceptable in a particular culture. In traditional societies, which are mostly patriarchal, men are expected to be the breadwinner, the head of the household, and the protector while the role of women is typically reserved for cooking, maintaining the household, and raising children. Men's actions are constrained and enabled by traditional beliefs and expectations, and influenced by cultural beliefs and social norms (Yarhouse, 2001). Ickes (1993) and Capella (2005) argue that implicit in gender role socialization traditionally, is the belief that males ought to adopt a traditionally masculine gender role and females a traditionally feminine one. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore fully gender identity, especially distinctions between feminine and masculine identity construction within traditional and patriarchal societies. Suffice to acknowledge the unequal power relations and the complex intersection in production and reproduction of both. As I explain briefly below, not all forms of masculinity are given equal privilege.

2.3.1 Idealised Xhosa man

Members of a culture construct beliefs, values institutions and customs and laws that make up their lived social reality, (Freedman & Combs 1995). As part of undergoing the ritual and being transformed into being a man one has to fulfil certain roles and responsibilities to live up to a certain standard of being a man. First amongst these expectations is that traditional circumcision is the only culturally accepted way of being a man amongst amaXhosa. Venter (2013) argues that circumcision rests on the ideology that tolerates no dissent. Edley (2005) contends that to some extent men are not free to construct themselves as they wish as it is their cultural history that determines the identities they can assume.

The ideal man is the direct result of the ritual and is expected amongst other attributes to be responsible, selfless and respectful to family, elders and society at large. Goniwe posits that "traditional beliefs serve to construct masculinity, cultivating a self-conscious attitude of identifying with the voice of authority: man is the head of the house, the decision-maker, the provider for and protector of the family, (2004, p. 5)

This perceived notion of the idealised man is not shared by all Xhosa men. Gwata's (2009) argues that even though traditionally circumcised men continued to represent hegemonic masculinity, they admitted that this was no longer the only form of masculinity among the Xhosa. Lynch, Brouard and Visser (2010) describe the construction of a normative masculinity as being both idealised and perceived as a burden, in that men continually need to engage in actions that affirm their position. Mfecane (2016, p.4) illustrates the multiple meanings of being a man by asking this question "what makes a man who he is within his culture"

2.3.2 Hegemonic masculinity

Critical men's studies have revealed that not all men have the same power. There are men who have more power and privileges than other men depending on the place and specific relationship arrangements within that space. Understanding power relations is informed by analysis of the gendered nature or character of the said settings. Hegemonic masculinity is a crucial concept in such an analysis (Beasley, 2008).

Hegemonic masculinity is not a new concept (Connell, 1982, 1983, 2000). It is a form of masculinity that gives ascendancy to men in a society (Connell, 1995). It is not a fixed character type but rather the masculinity that occupies the dominant position in a given pattern of gender relations. Hegemonic forms of masculinity present an idealized version of masculinity, of how men should behave and more importantly, how 'real men' should behave (Connell 2000). Hegemonic masculinity embodies the most honoured way of being a man and requires all other men to position themselves in relation to the idealized form. There is an argument about hegemonic masculinity as an ideal set of prescriptive social norms, which regulate day to day male activities. This is done through definition of the situation, setting terms in which events and issues are discussed and understood, and ideals formulated that have a bearing on what is considered right or wrong (Donaldson, 1993). He further argues that hegemony masculinity not only prescribes but "[I]nvolves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through media, and the organization of the social institutions in ways that appear natural, ordinary and normal" (2003, p, 627). What is prescribed becomes internalized and normalized as being natural, an example being heterosexuality, where being gay is then seen as being abnormal.

As masculinity that men look up to and by which they are judged, hegemonic masculinity possesses some form of social authority that also subordinates women, and in some instances, some men. Those who do not conform are seen as less of a man and are marginalized and subjected to ridicule. Davies & Eagle (2007) refers to non-conformists as 'other', which denotes that they do not belong to the 'acceptable' group. Saxena argues that the 'other' is regarded as being in contrast to the norm and become regarded as "negative, the lesser, the outsider, the stranger and the problem" (2009, p.168). Such constructs lead to the need for men to constantly prove that that they are men, making them go into lengths to prove this; be it different types of risk taking, physical aggression and violence, sometimes including unlawful behaviour such as murder. Kimmel (1994, p. 122) contends that masculinity "must be proved and no sooner is it proved than it is again questioned and must be proven again-constant, relentless, unachievable." As a way of continuing to prove one's manhood, van der Watt (2007, p.181) contends that men at a visceral level, continuously question their manhood. He continues that this notion of having to prove oneself "creates an uncomfortable intensity in many men's lives, seeing that they can feel endangered by a sense of incompetence, namely that they are not good enough and must prove that they are man enough" (p. 181).

Despite difficulty in its attainment, hegemonic masculinity remains an important barometer by which men judge others. Connell (1995) argues that men can never personally embody hegemonic masculinity but they support it, are regulated by it, and judge other men's conduct by it. This argument is supported by Donaldson (1993) assertion that what men who subscribe to hegemonic masculinity are in public is not necessarily who they are in private. They may maintain or present this façade because it sustains their power and benefits them.

Understanding hegemonic masculinity is relevant to this study given its focus on the amaXhosa social and cultural practices of initiation and the school's LO curriculum that of which mark what being a man constitutes; albeit differently. The argument in this thesis has been that the former are constituted around traditional and hegemonic forms of masculinity, whereas the latter, a modern form of masculinity emerges that is more fluid, unfixed, malleable, and open to males taking up positions that do not always fit the traditional norms of what it means to be a 'real' man. As explained in the first chapter, this thesis assumes an integral link between traditional and modern forms of masculinity and assumes tradition to be subsumed in modern. However, I distinguish these for analytic purposes later on and to

illustrate that while they are interlocked, in some discursive spaces, one form of masculinity remains dominant.

As with different ethnic societies in South Africa, male amaXhosa boys participate in a rite of passage that marks them as men. Such practices are usually associated with traditional ideologies, mainly patriarchal in nature. Many (but not exclusively) African societies are associated with both traditional and modern forms of masculinity (Mtuze, 2004). I discuss each briefly, highlighting their link.

2.3.3 Traditional African and modern masculinity construction

The physical make-up of men has for a long while been accorded them a superior status over women. Different versions of manhood are socially constructed and fluid over time and different settings. Numerous masculinities exist in Africa, some of which are associated with farming, cattle herding and circumcision (Barker & Ricardo, 20005).

Traditional masculine man recognizes as real man those who are heterosexual and who engage in manly activities which mark them as heterosexuals. They also need to perform activities which they can model as appropriate for the real man. Other acts which idealize 'real men' include getting married or having multiple sexual partners, having children and being in a position of authority. This idealized masculinity is constructed by the 'participants' as something that is valued and to which men need to conform and constantly seek affirmation (Connell, 2000). Dominant discourses about traditional men reveal that they use characteristics of the 'idealized man' so as to identify themselves when the context suits them. Men who are socially and culturally perceived as manifesting non-masculine qualities are considered 'abnormal' or aberrant by mainstream cultures (Boon, 2003). These men are seen as less of a man and are subjected to ridicule, teasing, and often, verbal abuse.

These hegemonic norms are maintained through socialization regardless of the economic and social realities of everyday life (Silberschmidt, 2001). Idealized masculinity is not only constructed by men; it is also affirmed by the expectation women place on men. What women expect of men is based in how they have been socialized, which might include putting men on a pedestal, where men have to demonstrate their manhood according to women's expectation. Failing to prove your manhood or not performing a particular form of masculinity that is outside the men's script might result in non-acceptance and ridicule from not only other men,

but also even from women. This is in contrast with egalitarian/modern construction of masculinity.

In modern societies, an egalitarian type household exists wherein both male and female partners have employment outside the home; often sharing household chores much more evenly, including taking care of children. But constructing masculine identities is more complex in the modern world. Modernity can be defined by belief in reason and human capacities, which when properly employed, lead to a recurring human progress (KorytovaMagstadt & Kozak, 2002). Sociological literature reveals some of the characteristics of modernity as highly individualistic, freeing each person from irrational superstitions and fictitious communities, and empowering people with distinctive personal and human rights. Individual rather than collective thought and reasoning, therefore, characterizes and shapes modern masculine identities. In modernity, Connell (1993) suggests that any one man may position himself in different masculinities in different relationships and contexts; with masculinity as a social construct is thus always prone to internal contradiction and historical disruption.

According to Walker (2005), different versions of masculinity present challenges and represent an on-going struggle between traditional masculinities and the 'modern' man today. To corroborate the earlier discussion, Kimmel (1994) argues that traditionally men were socialized into a very rigid and limiting definition of masculinity whereby they feared being ridiculed as too feminine by other men. Hunter (2008) on the other hand, animates modern perspectives and inherent tensions where men don't always subscribe to such traditional norms, but rather may be more feminine, gentler, and less aggressive and not convinced of the authority of traditional man logic. It has to be noted that not all men subscribe to these characteristics. As Brittan (1998) contends, there is no single, consistent image of manhood or masculinity, but a range of quite different, even contradictory images or constructions of manhood. Thus Edley

& Wetherell (1996) refer to manliness as a contested territory and an 'ideological battlefield'. The complex patterns of inculcation of being a man in everyday social interaction (Whitehead 1999) can be shaped by different curricular they are exposed to.

Despite modernity, there are many societies, especially in Africa, that still subscribe to traditional norms and values of being a man. Such norms are maintained through practices

that mark particular life stages. Of relevance to this study is the initiation process as a rite of passage that boys participate in to mark the shift from boyhood to manhood. The following section provides a brief overview of this practice and its relation to hegemonic masculinised discourses.

2.4 Rituals, rites of passage, initiation, and traditional and modern conceptions of masculinity

In order for one to develop a holistic understanding of masculinity, one must take into account the role of the institutionalization of gender, cultural conceptualizations of the term, and the dynamic social context in which masculinities are embedded. This study examines two, in a host of others socio-cultural contexts, namely school and initiation schools that shape masculinity. I acknowledge the role of the family in this process but assume this to be embedded in reasons why children are sent to initiation schools in the first instance.

Cultures throughout time and in different places have designed rites of passage to mark life transitions e.g. birth, adulthood, marriage, eldership, death, and ancestorship. Rituals are events that mark transition from one stage of life to another. A ritual may be defined as a traditional and methodical sequence of communal series of events with the specific purpose of inducting someone into a different phase of life. It typically has a sacred purpose; with definite practices and outcomes (Chapman, 2004). Rituals give meaning to social life and serve the purpose of contributing to social order in many if not all societies. They not only provide structure to, but also structure social action. Rituals maintain the social organization of groups into hierarchies, specifying the performance of roles by members; often linked to age and gender. They also maintain group cohesion, ensure passing on of information and values from one generation to the next (Vincent, 2008). Such a definition illuminates the role rituals play in people knowing their positions in society, what is expected and what the acceptable behaviours are in the social hierarchies.

Rituals are embedded in and encompass initiation processes. Different cultural groups around the world practice different initiation rites that relate to birth, adulthood, marriage, eldership, and ancestorship. Initiation rites take on specific meanings in various parts of the world; with those in Africa in sharp focus for the purpose of this study. Through an initiation process, members are introduced to or initiated into the next stage in their life journey. Davies says “initiation ritual is a process that accompanies the movement of people from one social status

to another” (1994, p 1). Rituals, usually referred to as rites of passage or initiation rites (Birx, 2006), include transitions from girlhood to womanhood (often marked by marriage in many societies); from boyhood to manhood; childhood to adulthood; or even from adulthood to elderhood. One form of initiation that signals transition from childhood to adulthood is circumcision. Circumcision is a surgical process that involves cutting off the foreskin of a man’s penis. It is practiced in a number of countries in Europe, Asia, America and Africa. In an African context, circumcision is often undertaken by elders or specialists earmarked in a particular community.

Masculinity is tied up in some societies, with the ritual of circumcision (Ampim, 2003). Circumcision usually is executed according to set social rules and customs. Unlike most Western cultures where adulthood is determined by age (18 or 21), most African societies practice male and female circumcision as part of a rite of passage to adulthood. In Southern Africa, male circumcision forms a significant part of the initiation process and is strongly associated with the transition from childhood to manhood (Oomen, 2002) and from boyhood into adulthood. Initiation is not determined by age only; rather by physical development, e.g. when young girls begin menstruating. Each of these rites plays an integral part of many traditional African cultures (Brett & McKay, 2008).

One such institution that facilitates a rite of passage is initiation school, a discursive space for initiation into manhood (and in some societies, womanhood). Froneman & Kaap (2017) provide many reasons for boys to embark on this ritual amongst their reasons is personal growth and development, family and peer pressure, independence and knowledge gained, a connection with ancestors and initiation into manhood. Despite publicity of the dangers of traditional circumcision and the hardships they have to endure, most young men still saw this process as necessary and worthwhile.

Initiation schools fall within what could be commonly called ‘traditional institutions.’ These schools are known to be informal because they do not have an explicit curriculum and their mode of transmission is predominantly oral. Information is usually passed from one generation to the other through narrated stories, imitative play, and a number of other activities. In the case of males, Vincent (2008) explains that initiation traditionally involves not simply the circumcision operation itself, but also an accompanying process of instruction on what it means to be a man or woman in a specific context. Stinson (2008) concurs by

stating that it is a pivotal moment in boys' lives in a particular community, an important social signifier of a change in status that positions them as men. Such a signifier grants them acceptance and respect from other community members who understand the meanings attributed to the ritual. In other words, boys are granted new status and new identity as men.

Initiation is a complex term given that the influences on many young people today is varied and complex. It is complex in the sense that young man aspire to go to the initiation school in order to be granted the status and respect accorded to anyone who has successfully completed the ritual. Success means becoming a member of an 'elite' group. As Wood & Jewkes (1998) report, the status and a seat in traditional ceremonies (e.g. being allowed 'in', seating arrangement and sharing in the kraal) accorded only to circumcised 'man' are compelling imperatives for boys to want to be circumcised. Key elements in the way traditional education in initiation schools define man has to do with respect for others and non-violence.

In the context of South Africa and pertaining to participants in this study, AmaXhosa, an ethnic group found predominantly in the Eastern Cape⁵, is one of the groups that practice initiation through circumcision for boys. Traditional 'surgeons' administer this process. The age for undergoing this ritual differs from region to region but in the Grahamstown region where the study was located, boys are not allowed to go to initiation school, usually termed the 'mountain' or 'bush' if they are less than 16 years old. This is in line with the Application of Health Standards in Traditional Circumcision Act (no 6 of 2001) as cited by Vincent (2008). For thesome Xhosa males, adulthood is marked not by age but by his journey to 'the mountain or bush.' The "transition period is intended to be an educational experience whereby boys are instructed on the dignity of manhood through sexual instruction as well as instruction in the history, traditions, and beliefs of the amaXhosa" (Vincent, 2008, p. 436).

2.4.1 Initiation school and traditional conceptions of masculinity and manhood

Initiation schools promote certain models of manhood or masculinity (Morrell, 1998). While it is acknowledged that individual men will vary according to how much they adhere to these norms, and that norms evolve or change over time as individuals and groups reconstruct them, there are characteristics that I briefly described in Chapter 1 that prescribe what it means to be a man. In the main, initiation schools are known to subscribe to hegemonic

⁵ South Africa has 9 provinces, they are Eastern Cape, Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng, Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West

masculinity expectations that prescribe what it means to be a particular kind of man. Accordingly, the curriculum that men are exposed to, seeks to inculcate the idea that men are able to withstand physical pain, have physical strength, are unemotional, and are able to provide and protect family. In some cultures, such characteristics are mediated through symbolism (Mayatula & Mavundla, 1997, p.18). With reference to Xhosa initiation rites, for example, circumcision denotes a symbolic death of the old (as boys), through pain and isolation from the community or society for a set period. This period away from community and family offers rebirth as a new being: men who have outgrown everything related to childhood into adults introduced and incorporated into society with new responsibilities as men. Once accepted, these men are expected to embody new practices, beliefs about themselves and women, values that has been inculcated at initiation school and behaviour that sets them apart from boys.

Initiates at the initiation schools are taught, albeit in an informal way, how to be men. Seloana (2011) makes the point that the circumcision schools teach young men to realize their roles within their families. They promote societal roles, which include taking up the responsibility as protectors and providers. This informal curriculum does not just prepare boys for adulthood but also for their role as men in the family and society. The core issues of this curriculum are thus social, economic and emotional aspect of manhood.

According to Seloana (2011), the aims of the traditional curriculum for new initiates are to teach them respect, dignity, and leadership qualities. They are socialized into understanding that manhood not only carries status, which boys need to be aware of, but also honour, and cultural prestige that is earned and has to be protected through particular behaviour and conduct Seloana (2011). According to Mfecane, “In cases 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. This implies that the ubudoda manhood status among amaXhosa is grounded primarily in the physical body (penis).” (2016, p 207)

According to (Mhlahlo, 2009) becoming a man signifies that one is now able to share in the full privileges and duties of the community; to acquire knowledge, respect and to be entitled to marry. Cultural expectations regarding social responsibility as men also involves

participating in social and cultural rituals, led and performed by men. Initiation schools also focus on the importance of young men to valuing their lineage, which is important in the 'communication' with the ancestors.

Gudani (2011) summarizes the curriculum by identifying the following as core to traditional curricula: the virtues of respect, dignity, honesty, faithfulness, and responsibility. Self-control, not to divulge one's problems to anyone, particularly women, and independence as man are expectations, together with the code of not divulging any rituals or information of what actually happens in initiation schools. The pain and temporary hardship that initiates undergo are part of the script to teach them perseverance, elimination of fear, strong and unflinching in the face of danger. The importance of being physically and emotionally strong prepares them for the experiences of life ahead (Ramphela, 2002).

The next section highlights conceptions of manhood within a modern space, bearing in mind that tradition is subsumed in modernity. While this might be the case, I distinguish this to highlight tensions in the results and analysis later on in the thesis.

2.4.2 Schooling and modern conceptions of masculinity and manhood

For young men today, initiation school is not the only resource they draw on to construct masculine identities. They are also confronted with messages about what it means to be a man in the media, music, and the formal school environment and in particular through the LO curriculum. Some authors argue that the role of initiation schools has changed, and new meanings attached to the rituals have been introduced, resulting in a breakdown of young male's sexual socialization (Vincent, 2008).

Schools are modern institutions said to be a microcosm of the society. They are among a number of agencies that shape young people's gender perceptions. According to (Haywood & Mac and Ghail, cited in Govender, 2006, p.305) "[S]chools do not exist on their own for the creation and contestation of masculinities, but rather in complex interrelationships with other social and cultural sites (e.g. family, labour market, media)." Morrell (1998 cited in Govender, 2006) argues that the school context is a site in which masculinities can be played out and negotiated within the social environment in which they manifest. The importance given to institutions particularly schools in socializing learners into the kinds of persons they become, suggests that schools are powerful resources for constructing social, and in the case

of this study, masculine identities (Connell 1995 cited in Moita-Lopes, 2002). This is not to deny the importance of the discursive practices that learners are exposed to in other institutions, such as the family, the church, and in the case of this study, initiation school. Some may either contradict or legitimate school meanings and, therefore, contribute to the social construction of particular masculinities (Moita-Lopes, 2002).

School accords boys a number of different opportunities to construct different masculinities that draw on the localized resources and the strategies available (Swain, 2000). (Connell 2000) notes that “gender is embedded in the institutional arrangements through which a school system functions” (p. 152). He argues that the values that a school subscribes to, the policies it institutes, and the practices it endorses or fails to disrupt all embody and construct particular definitions of masculinities and femininities.

Connell (2000) argues that schools do not simply adapt to a natural masculinity in boys, but that they are in fact active in constructing particular forms of gender and in negotiating relations between different masculinities. He further points out that while differing masculinities are being produced within a school, the masculinity a boy might ‘choose’ is in fact strongly structured by relations of power within the institution. Thus within the school, there is a contest between rival versions of masculinity for hegemony. Masculinity is organized around social power, whether in terms of academic success, sporting prowess, physical aggression or sexual conquest. (Morrell 2001) observes that masculinities in South African schools are underresearched, claiming that there has been little research focusing on masculinity appearing to have been carried out in Black schools.

Research that has been done on masculinity in schools in South Africa and abroad looks at adolescent construction of masculinity and construction of masculinity and sport. According to Swain (2002) there has been a growing body of research into the effects and impacts of masculinities in educational settings and the majority of these studies tend to focus on adolescent males in secondary schools, construction of masculinity within boys in physical education (Parker, 2010), construction of masculinity and risk taking behaviour amongst adolescent boys in the Western Cape (Jafta, 2006), construction of masculinity in young men’s narrative of violence in the home place, adolescent peer counsellors’ appreciation of changes in the construction of masculinity (Davies & Eagle, 2007).

Schools are discursive spaces where masculine identities are negotiated and mediated. One such space is the LO classroom through LO curriculum. School is a place where learners from various social backgrounds, carrying different social identities meet. It is amongst other institutional agencies that influence masculinity.

The focus of this study is how young men negotiate and mediate construction of masculinity in the LO classroom and the implications of this in the LO curriculum, hence the chapter that follows that provides an overview of the LO curriculum with particular emphasis on the areas focusing on sexuality, sexual identity, and masculinity.

CHAPTER 3 LIFE ORIENTATION CURRICULUM, SEXUALITY, MASCULINE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a theoretical framework for the study. It looked at the discourses on sex, gender and identity as important discussions in the construction of masculinity. Giddens structuration theory is used as a frame work to examine how structure and agency impact on learners' conception of whom they are.

The current chapter gives a brief background on education reforms in South Africa after 1994 leading to the introduction of Life Orientation as a school subject. It explains the kind of teacher and learner envisaged and subject content appropriate to this study, to be covered in different grades. Towards the end of the chapter a brief description of a select number of studies undertaken on the critical concepts of this study is provided.

3.2 Curriculum reform in South Africa post 1994

The history of education in South Africa is well documented (Hartshorne, 1992; Kallaway, 2002). It is beyond this thesis to provide a full account of this history. In brief, the education landscape prior to the first democratic government in South Africa in 1994 was shaped by segregationist ideologies and separatist policies along racial lines. In this regard, different education departments developed curricula for each racial group, with education seen as “an instrument of social and political control” (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 306). The South African apartheid education doctrine also focused on control, absolute understanding of the world and a very authoritarian approach to knowledge production and dissemination, the curriculum and to learning and teaching.

The advent of democracy in South Africa ushered in much needed changes to the South African education context, with far-reaching changes to the education structure and curriculum (Soudien & Baxen, 1997). Structurally, the system changed from having 18 separate education departments to a single national qualifications framework (Soudien & Baxen, 1997), with its primary aim to “create an integrated national framework for learning achievements, and to enhance access to, and mobility and quality within education and training” (RSADE, 1997, p. 14). At a curriculum level, the National Department of Education

initialized and established a new curriculum framework that has undergone a number of reforms since the first Outcomes Based Education curriculum in 1997.

Given South Africa's dark apartheid history, every policy and curriculum intervention had to be seen to be promoting and embodying social justice ideals with human rights as a key indicator. This was made possible through the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) that provided a basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. Chisholm (2005) provides a holistic and comprehensive overview of this; tracing curriculum transformations from Outcomes Based Education to the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2000-2002⁶, thereafter the National Curriculum Statement introduced in 2002. Subsequently and more recently, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement was phased in from 2012. Common in all the curriculum reforms though, is the view that education is a powerful tool to root the values enshrined in the South African Constitution of 1996. The ideals espoused in the Constitution include democracy, social justice, non-racism, equality, and reconciliation. Irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, the purpose was to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country. The Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy by the Department of Education states the following about education and values:

Values and morality give meaning to our individual and social relationships. They are the common currencies that help make life more meaningful than might otherwise have been. An education system does not exist to simply serve a market, important as that may be for economic growth and material prosperity. Its primary purpose must be to enrich the individual and, by extension, the broader society.

(2001, p. 9 – 10).

The curriculum policy documentation makes clear the kind of learner and teacher envisaged. In regards the former, the envisaged learner is one who will imbue with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the Constitution. Teachers, positioned as the key drivers in teaching and learning, are put forward as major stakeholders in curriculum reform. The National

⁶ Called C2005, the year it was adopted.

Curriculum Statement (2004, p. 4) envisions teachers “... who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000” (Government Gazette No 20844). Teachers would be expected to be mediators of learning; including sensitive topics that are proposed in the Life Orientation curriculum that I discuss below.

3.3 Life Orientation curriculum

Life Orientation (LO) is proposed as the space in which the above might be achieved. It is an innovative new learning area⁷ aimed to be the backbone to equipping learners to respond positively to social demands, assume responsibilities, and optimize their life chances (Prinsloo (2007). Life Orientation is one of the four⁸ fundamental subjects required for the National Senior Certificate, which makes it compulsory for all learners in Grades 10, 11 and 12, (CAPS, 2011 p. 8). Specifically, according to the RNCS (DoE, 2003, p.19), “the vision for Life Orientation is to facilitate individual growth so as to contribute towards the creation of democratic society, a productive economy and an improved quality of life in the community.” Embedded in LO is an assumption that the curriculum will enable learners develop tools (knowledge, skills and attitudes) positively respond to and cope with the demands of a modern society. Put differently, the ideals espoused in this learning area are that Life Orientation would guide and prepare learners for life and its possibilities and equip them for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society (Department of Education, 2002).

The LO curriculum draws on the disciplinary areas of sociology, psychology, political science, human movement studies, labour studies and industrial studies to create a learning area aimed at producing a well-rounded learner who would be capable of responding to a transformative and rapidly changing social, economic, and political environment brought about by the new democratic government as well as by globalization. The primary focus is to enhance the holistic social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners, with a focus on self -in-society, self in relation to others and self in relation to society. Life Orientation takes as its starting point the notion that human beings are the multi-faceted and that they have multiple sources of influence.

⁷ Learning areas substituted subjects in the new curriculum structure.

⁸ English, mathematics or mathematics literacy and an additional language comprised the other three.

Included in new curricula imperatives and tied to values advocated in the South African Constitution of 1996, is the principle of inclusivity; and as it relates to this study, the inclusion and recognition of the wide diversity of knowledge systems through which people make sense of and attach meaning to the world in which they live, stated as “[L]ife Orientation acknowledges that there is a wide diversity of knowledge systems through which people make meaning of the world in which they live” (South Africa. Department of Education [DoE], 2003, p. 9 - 10). Specifically, it acknowledges the various indigenous knowledge systems that exist in South Africa and recognizes the value of embracing all in order to realize the values enshrined in the Constitution. Indigenous Knowledge Systems is described in the South African Revised Curriculum Statements as "a body of knowledge embedded in African philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years" (South Africa DoE, 2002, p. 9). The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 General (2003) infuses indigenous knowledge systems into the subject statements and requires that many different “... ideological perspectives as possible have been included to assist problem solving in all fields” (South Africa DoE, 2003, p. 4). There is recognition that no knowledge system is static but that over time they evolve when in contact with other knowledge systems. In addition, one of the developmental outcomes of the curriculum requires learners to be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social experiences and ideas that might not necessarily be consonant with their own. Embedded in the LO curriculum, therefore, is recognition of the richness of indigenous knowledge systems and their contribution as one in a number of sources that might contribute to transforming the values of learners.

Life Orientation has four focus areas or Learning Outcomes: personal well-being; citizenship education; recreation and physical activity; and careers and career choices. Personal well-being is situated as the space in which knowledge co-produced (by teachers and learners) would enable learners to fulfil their potential to engage effectively in interpersonal relationships, community life, and society. This area focuses on self-concept and seeks to deal with the realities of “... peer pressure, factors influencing quality of life, and the dynamics of relationships, as well as preparing learners for a variety of roles in society” (South Africa. DoE, 2003, p. 11). Amongst the specific aims, LO is also put forward as the space in which discussions would be held that prepare learners to respond appropriately to life’s responsibilities and opportunities, expose learners to their constitutional rights and

responsibilities, to the rights of others and to issues of diversity; with sex and sexuality education, particularly masculinity and femininity a fundamental component. Most new initiates were found to be in Grade 11. While this might be the case, it was important to trace the genesis and proposed progression in discussions on the concept of masculinity from Grade 10, the beginning of the Further Education and Training (FET) phase to Grade 12, the year learner’s complete school. I do so briefly below.

3.4 Life Orientation and sexuality education

The Curriculum 2005 (2000) and later, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2003), made explicit the need to eradicate gender stereotypes in teaching materials, classroom practice, and school experience. In regards gender stereotypes, the current Life Orientation National Curriculum Statement Policy Guidelines lists the “concepts such as ‘power’ and ‘power relations’ and their effect on relationships between and among genders, including power, power relations, masculinity, femininity and gender, stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities, influence of gender inequality on relationships and general well-being (e.g. sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS)” (2003, p. 24), as areas that need to be taught. The Life Orientation curriculum document defines gender as “... understandings about ‘appropriate’ feminine or ‘appropriate’ masculine behaviours and characteristics; these are learned. Such understandings are not innate or natural, but are negotiated, challenged, reconstructed and resisted on an individual and collective basis.” (South Africa. DoE, 2003, p. 68). Embedded in this definition is an understanding that gender is socially constructed and that understandings of what it means to be a man or woman, male or female vary across different social and cultural contexts. There is an understanding that such constructs also change over time. Table 1 below presents an overview of the specific content in each grade.

Table 1: Content Framework for Life Orientation

Learning Outcome 1: Personal Well-being The learner is able to achieve and maintain personal well-being.		
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12

<p>AS4: Describes the concepts ‘power’ and ‘power relations’ and their effect on relationships between and within genders:</p> <p>Concepts: power, power relations, gender relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define ‘power’ and ‘power relations’ • How the different genders view the roles of men and 	<p>AS4: Analyses gender roles and their effects on self, family and society:</p> <p>Concepts: gender roles; impact of gender roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain different gender roles in the family, culture and society, including how modern gender roles are 	<p>AS4: Investigates how unequal power relations between the sexes are constructed and how they influence health and well-being, and apply this understanding to work, cultural and social contexts:</p> <p>Concepts: unequal power relations; impact of unequal power relations on well-being; different contexts</p>
<p>women – impact on power relation between the two genders and status of each</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypical views of gender roles and responsibilities versus modern views – shift of power between genders and its effect on relationships • Influence of gender power inequality on relationships and general well-being (e.g. sexual abuse, physical abuse) 	<p>different and/or similar to traditional roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how different gender roles and the differing perspectives thereof impact on one, one’s family and society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the issue of power balance and power struggle between the two sexes, between family members, between friends, between colleagues and how it impacts on personal, family, cross-cultural, social and work relationships • Suggest how and why power relations emerge between the sexes in contexts such as the work setting, family context, a friendship, etc. • Describe how the abuse of power in relationship in the work setting (e.g. sexual harassment), cultural context (e.g. different mourning periods for males and females), family context (e.g. physical abuse), societal context (e.g. domestic violence, sexual violence/rape), etc. impacts on health and wellbeing • Explain how to manage power relations between the sexes in different contexts to encourage a win-win situation

(Adapted from LPG, South Africa. DoE, 2008, p. 24- 27).

In Grade 10, the content is expanded to analyse their effect on relationships of power and power relations. Learners are expected to confront gender stereotypes and inequalities (DoE, 2003). The focus in Grade 11 is on explaining that relationships can influence and are influenced by the gender roles and stereotypes prevalent in society. Emphasis is also on analysing gender roles and their effects on self, family, and society through engagement and a critical analysis of the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Attention is also paid to the role of institutions in constructing gender roles and how this is framed within society (including school) (South Africa DoE, 2003). Grade 12 places emphasis on explaining how

unequal power relations between the sexes are constructed and the influence this has on health and wellbeing. Special attention is given to aspects of abuse of power in the work setting (e.g. sexual harassment), cultural context (e.g. different mourning periods for males and females), societal context (e.g. domestic violence, sexual violence/rape), and on how to manage power relations between the sexes in different contexts. Basic human rights and gender equality underpin the curriculum, with male and female positioned as equals, unlike in traditional and patriarchal societies that I explained in the previous chapter. Breidlid (2003) makes the point that the South African curriculum is premised a western modernist values based on a human rights culture, which is on a collision course with amaXhosa children's indigenous knowledge.

According to the Learning Programme Guideline (LPG), successful teaching of Life Orientation relies heavily on the teaching approach chosen by the teacher. The greatest challenge is to ensure that learners apply the knowledge gained (South Africa. DoE, 2008, p. 14). In the context of this study, this has implications on how the concept of masculinity is mediated in a way that might enable learners to negotiate their construction of masculinity amid the different knowledge systems (mentioned above) that influence that construction. Importantly, the study poses questions on how students navigate the tradition and modern concepts

3.5 Research on masculinity and the Life Orientation curriculum

Life Orientation (LO) is a fairly new learning area in South Africa. Notwithstanding its status as a new subject in the South African curriculum there has been studies done in LO in general.

A study done by Rooth (2005) conducted in two provinces of South African among 134 educators 94 schools and 1284 learners found that the values that teachers bring into the classroom affect their teaching of value laden content like HIV and AIDS, sexuality education, human rights and gender. This study noted a disjuncture between what teachers say and what they do, indicating that many educators are aware of expectations but have difficulty with implementing those expectations.

Other studies done in LO investigated the experiences and perspectives of teachers in teaching LO. The findings were that teachers felt that their teaching does not last (Jacobs

2007). “Little evidence could be found which proves that LO achieves the aims as set forth in the National Curriculum Statement” (Jacobs 2007, p. 213). This study also revealed that influence from home, peers and society hold sway as learners forego the influence of the LO content engaged with in class as soon as they leave school or classroom. This created an impression that learners are not learning for behavioural change but to conform during school hours. In multicultural classes teachers struggled to understand and empathise with those learners whose frame of reference they were not familiar with.

The previous studies were done on the perception and status of the LO. There were studies done on the key content investigating of sexuality education practice in classrooms through the LO curriculum. Francis posits that “there has been an increase in open discussions around sex, sexuality and sexual health within health promotion programmes in schools, these discourses have been linked to the negative perceptions attached to sex, such as disease, abuse and violence” (2008, p. 114). He proposes that sex education should not blame or shame youth about their sexual feelings.

Mitchell, Walsh & Larkin (2004) argue that the conception of youth as children who are innocent influences the information made available to them. Francis argues that it is for these reasons that sexuality education in South Africa had been reduced to HIV and AIDS information (2009). He advocates the recognition of young people in schools as sexual beings.

Cultural and generational factors make it difficult for teachers to talk about sex with learners. Mukoma, Fleisher, Ahmed, Jansen, Mathews & Klepp, (2009, p. 212) explain that “Many teachers feel embarrassed and wish to keep a professional distance between themselves and the learners.” This creates a dilemma for teachers between their professional obligation and their own values, culture and beliefs. This results in failure to address issue of gender and relationship inside and outside the classroom. This indicates a disjuncture between policy and practice where policy seeks to problematize issues of gender such as gender stereotype and discrimination. Teachers’ value systems are holding them back from engaging with these issues with learners.

There is not much research that has been done on masculinity in the Life Orientation curriculum or LO classroom, per se hence the value of this study for Life Orientation

teaching and learning. Research that has been done in South Africa and internationally looked at masculinity in schools not specifically in LO. For example, Robyn-Leigh Smith (2008) looked at young black and white boy's social construction of masculinity in a private multi-racial school whereas Alethea Jeftha (2006) examined the construction of masculinity and risk-taking behaviour among adolescent boys in Western Cape schools. Fouten (2006) studied how adolescent boys negotiate regulatory conceptions of masculinity. Internationally few studies were found. Amongst them, a study by Wayne & Maria (2003) focused on the impact and effects of masculinities on the lives of boys at school. Chris Hickey (2008) studied the role of physical education, contact sport and masculinity in schools.

From the analysis of these studies what became evident was the pressure that boys experience within society and the school context to fit into dominant or hegemonic constructions of masculinity. According to Haywood, Mac & Ghail (as cited by Govender, 2006, p.146) "schools do not exist on their own for the creation and contestation of masculinities, but rather in complex interrelationships with other social and cultural sites (e.g. family, labour market, media)" Morrell (1998) contends that societal issues influence the school environment and in turn mold masculinities in particular ways. Building on this idea Msila (2005) argues that classrooms cannot be divorced from the society in which they are situated. The formation of these masculinities is influenced by the relations between the formal or official school culture, which is about the teaching and learning, the pedagogy and school policies together with the informal learner's culture (Swain, 2002).

The following chapter provides the outline of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This study moves from the premise that the education that new initiates receive from the initiation school pushes them towards a particular form of manhood that may compete or compliment dominant notions of masculinity espoused in the Life Orientation (LO) Curriculum. This study examined the school/home interface of constructions and influences on masculine identities as it played out amongst new amaXhosa initiates. Put differently the study sought to understand how new initiates negotiate tradition and modern masculinity discourses particularly in a Life Orientation class to construct masculine identities. Through the use of individual and focus group interviews, it aimed to gain insight into ways in which new amaXhosa initiates in a school context, specifically in Life Orientation classrooms, understood, negotiated, took up, and mediated school and initiation school discourses to construct masculine identities.

This chapter outlines the research path undertaken in this study. It begins by describing the research design decision made for the study and provides rationale for its appropriateness. It follows this with the research site and sample descriptions. It thereafter describes the methods used to gather data, the data analysis process, as well as aspects of reliability and validity. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study conclude this chapter.

4.2 Research methodology

A qualitative approach seemed most appropriate as it enabled me to explore and understand the questions posed in this study. Flick, (2006, p. 12) explains qualitative research as a process that "... investigates a social human problem, whereby the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a whole and complex representation by a rich description and explanation as well as a careful examination of participants' words and views." According to Polkinghorne (2005) qualitative research is inquiry aimed at describing and clarifying human experiences as they appear in people's lives. Qualitative data is gathered in the form of spoken word or written language rather than in the form of numbers. Polkinghorne (2005) refers to it as language data.

Qualitative research aims to gain insight into participants' subjective experiences of a certain phenomenon. McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig (2002) state that qualitative research is concerned with discovering meaning from the participant's perspective; in other words how people interpret their experiences, and how they use those interpretations to guide the way they live. Along the same vein, Marshall & Rossman (1999,p.21) point out, "[I]n qualitative inquiry, initial curiosity for research often comes from real-world observation, emerging from the interplay of the researcher's direct experiences, tacit theories, political commitments, interests in practice and growing scholarly interest." Qualitative research seeks to gain first hand and holistic understanding of phenomena that is carried out using flexible methods such as interviews and discussions (Strydom, 2002). Unlike the quantitative approach, which is bound by rules, qualitative research has the advantage of being flexible, as it allows researchers to respond to new theories and concepts raised by the respondents (Leyden, 2005). Gaining such information demands that researchers employ naturalistic methods like conversations and interaction with respondents in order to acquire a full picture of their experiences (De Vos,& Fouche (2002). This approach was appropriate for a study that sought to gain insight into the subjective experiences of new initiates.

Since the aim of the research was to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's point of view and experience as alluded to by Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2008), an interpretivist approach to the research seemed most appropriate. Cohen, et al (2008) state that the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human beings. They go on to argue that for a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, efforts need to be made to get 'inside the person's head' and understand from within. Interpretive research also deals with subjective data in that, the researcher focuses on data that exist in the minds of individuals and are expressed verbally and non-verbally in a variety of ways. It provides insights into the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it or experience it (Flick, 2006).

According to Merriam (2002, p.4) an interpretive qualitative approach first, is concerned with the researcher's interest in understanding meanings and interpretations for the participants at a particular point in time and in a specific context. This provides opportunity for researchers to form relationships with participants, which gradually leads to the establishment of trust and understanding (Liamputtong, 2007). As a teacher and a Xhosa man who had attended

initiation school, I needed to guard against asking questions that would lead participants to my pre-existing understanding of the phenomenon, so it was therefore important that the questions I asked were clear and unambiguous.

The phenomenon under study is the construction of masculine identities amongst new initiates and for this reason a case study was adopted. Zainal (2007) asserts that case study research enables researchers to closely examine contemporary real life phenomena within a specific context, in a small geographical area with limited number of individuals as subjects for study. Yin (2003, p.13) defines it as “[A] case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.” Case study for the purposes of this study relates to the phenomenon under scrutiny and not to the number of schools or participants, and so a qualitative interpretive case study method was adopted, in this method the researcher is directly involved in the process of data collection and analysis in order to study the case analytically and holistically, using different methods (Myers, 1999).

4.3 Sampling approach and process

Johnson & Christensen (2004, p.199) define sampling as the procedure to select a subset from the population. The types of sampling which are mostly used in research are probability (random) sampling which is mostly used in quantitative research and non-probability (purposive) sampling which is used in qualitative studies (Higginbottom, 2004, p.13).

Given the research methodology, qualitative and interpretive, that was needed to include people experiencing the phenomenon because I wanted to understand their subjective experiences, a purposive sampling strategy to identify both site and participants was most appropriate. Purposive sampling was used to identify the site and sample; in that they needed to have new initiates in grade 11 in their enrolment According to Tongco a purposive sampling technique is “a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study certain social and cultural domains with knowledgeable participants or amongst those experiencing the phenomenon within” (2007, p.107). She argues further that it is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. Ploeg (1999) argues that in this type of sampling, selection of the site and participants are done based on the judgment of the researcher as to which site and subjects best fit the criteria of the study.

4.3.1 Research site

Seven secondary schools in Grahamstown, Makana Region are schools that previously catered for Black South African⁹ learners. With the advent of the new democratic government in 1994, parents had the choice to place their children in any school if they could afford to. However, these schools still cater exclusively for isiXhosa speakers, with large proportions of new initiates found in each. Two schools in this region were selected for the study on the basis that they were in close proximity, with new initiates drawn from the same community but had gone to different initiation schools. Both schools were located in the residential area where the majority if not all learners and educators were Xhosa speaking and initiation practices a norm and valued practice in the community.

The selection of the schools was convenient because they were easily accessible and relatively close to my residence. As a Life Orientation teacher I was familiar with Life Orientation teachers whom I met regularly in district LO Cluster meetings. This notwithstanding, I had to obtain permission to conduct the study.

Permission to conduct research at the two schools was sought from the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape and permission granted (Annexure A) Consequently letters to school principals were seeking permission were also written (Annexure B and C), attached to these letters was permission and confirmation from Rhodes University that all ethical considerations had been met and that I was a student and had been granted permission to conduct the said research (Annexure D)

4.3.2 Sampling participants

The sampling included learners, teachers, and one initiation school nurse as I detail below.

Learner participants

New initiates from both urban and rural initiation schools were sought. I assumed that males who attended initiation schools in the rural areas would be more attuned to the traditional or

⁹ Under apartheid the education system was racially structured with separate national departments for whites, Coloureds, Asians, and blacks. The provision of education to South Africans in racially segregated schools was contained in the Education for Indians Act of 1969, the Education for Coloured People's Act of 1965, the Christian National Education Act of 1962 for "white" South Africans, and Bantu Education Act of 1953. The post-apartheid government merged the separate national education departments into a unified education system with no racial distinctions.

cultural notions of masculinity as opposed to those urban boys who have exposure to different influences and ideas of masculinity. Males from both social contexts I assumed, would provide richness in perspectives and ensure more holistic understanding of the complexities attendant in the phenomenon.

The criteria for choosing participants included those who (a) are Xhosa new initiates and who are not more than 6 months from the ‘bush’ circumcision school, (b) are still at school and in Grade 11, (c) are between the ages of 17-19, (d) represent different initiation schools. These different initiation schools were explained as those who went to a rural initiation schools and those who went to an initiation school close to the township where they reside. Rural in this instance is defined as area outside the city in what is commonly known as a farm or village. (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001) state that the rural-urban divides are important, particularly in the South African context, for studying different masculinities. Rural areas are attuned to embrace traditional form of masculinity compared to urban areas.

All Grade 11 new initiates who met the criteria in the two schools were approached to participate. They were asked to gather in the school hall where I was introduced to them by the school principal and the purpose of my visit to the school was explained. All those who were interested in being part of the study were asked to write down their names and classes and later I made arrangements with them to set up dates for an initial meeting. Participation was voluntary. A sample of eight participants took part in the study, four from each school.

While the status new initiates hold as ‘men’ requires that they only need agree to participate, permission was sought from parents/guardians and the participating schools (see Annexure E). Informal discussions were held with individual learners who agreed to be part of the study in order to gather information on when and where they attended initiation school, who had made that decision and why as well as their attitudes and perspectives on masculinity. The purpose of the initial informal discussions was to develop a relationship of a trusting rapport with the participants as well as to gain some insight into their perspectives on initiation school. These discussions constitute field notes and were kept as such.

Teacher participants

Teachers were selected for this study by virtue of them teaching LO in Grades 11 at the two selected schools. In both schools, responsibilities for teaching LO were given to one teacher

in respective schools. After presenting a letter seeking permission to conduct the research to the principals in both schools the principals introduced me to the LO teachers for grade 11. Teachers were briefed

Initiation school

One initiation school was selected. It was selected on the basis that it was easily accessible and was not too far from where the researcher stays. A circumcision surgeon (ingcibi) was approached and he introduced the researcher to the initiates nurse. I explained myself and the reasons for my visits; I was allowed to visit any time but not to take pictures of initiates.

4.4 Research process

The research was undertaken in three phases, observation at the initiation school kick-started the research process. The aim was to enable me to gain insight into the institution and its teachings. Next were focus group interviews for both groups followed by lesson observation which were followed by in-depth individual interviews. In the next section I elaborate on the methods applied in the research.

4.5 Methods of data collection

In qualitative studies appropriate methods of information gathering require interaction between the researcher and the informant. I used four methods of data collection, namely, focus group discussions, interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis. I also had informal conversations for which I kept field-notes. I describe each method below.

4.5.1 Focus group discussions

Grudens-Schuck, Allen and Larson Larson (2004) summarizes focus group discussions as a type of group interview, while Cameron (2005 p. 156) defines it as "...a small group of people discussing a topic or issues defined by a researcher". Grudens-Schuck et al (2004) posit that in this type of interview, the researcher listens not only for the content of focus group discussions, but for emotions, contradictions, and tensions. This enables the researcher to try and understand not just the facts but the meaning behind the facts. As researcher who was interested in the socially constructed nature of the phenomenon under study, focus groups became an ideal research method to initiate discussions and gain insight into group perspectives and experiences.

De Vos, Delport, Strydom & Fouche (2005) explain focus group interviews as a type of interview in which the researcher leads a discussion with a small group of individuals to examine in detail how the group members think and feel about a specific topic. Johnson & Christensen (2004) add on that the purpose of using focus group interviews as to obtain general background information about the topic and to learn how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest. It is called a 'focus' group because the researcher sometimes called the facilitator or moderator, keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed.

In the case of this study, focus group discussions preceded individual interviews; done to gather the views of the participants in a group context. A cursory analysis of these data enabled me to draw out general trends in perspectives and experiences, identify interesting patterns and anomalies that I was later able to probe in in-depth individual interviews.

I conducted two focus group discussions, each involving four new initiates selected from each of the participating two schools. To stimulate discussion, I used open-ended questions because they do not restrict participant's responses and allow them to respond as they see fit. I started with this in order to achieve two things, first, establish close rapport and ask questions on masculinity relating to the home, initiation school, and formal school. These were important in understanding structures that influence these young men's perspectives on masculinity.

Managing focus group discussions can pose a challenge for a novice researcher. We started by discussing ground rules in which I encouraged open discussion without name calling and judgments. An atmosphere of calm and taking the interviews as conversation was created and participants suggested calling each other by clan names. We discussed about the importance of allowing one person to speak at a time, this helped me to ask probing questions on the views of the participants. All these discussions were recorded and some of the participant's responses were followed up on individual interviews

Finding time convenient for all in the focus groups was yet another challenge because the learners were involved in various after school activities. A number of sessions had to be cancelled until all of the participants were present

The same participants were used in both individual and focus groups interviews. In both schools new initiates chose to hold focus and individual interviews after school to avoid distractions, and these were held in one of the empty classes that they chose.

4.5.2 Interviews

To gather data on subjective experience, direct interaction with participants in a form of interviews is ideal. Johnson & Christensen (2004) explain interviews as a data- collection method in which an interviewer (one conducting interviews) asks questions of an interviewee (one answering questions). Johnson (2002) and Liamputtong (2007) further explain that interviews usually promote a face-to-face and one-on-one interaction between a researcher and a respondent. Establishing rapport with interviewees is critical.

Interviews can take three forms: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey 2005). A structured interview is one that has a set of predefined questions and the questions would be asked in the same order for all respondents. According to Wisker (2008), structured interviews are usually characterized by closed questions with clearly guided responses. Given the structured nature of this type of interview, the process might not always capture participant's inner perceptions experiences and feelings.

Semi-structured interviews are more flexible than structured interviews. They are characterized by open-ended questions that allow the researcher flexibility to change the sequence of the questions based on that particular context (Wisker, 2008). In this type of interview, the researcher brings to the interview "... a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule" (De Vos et al 2003, p.302). However, these questions do not dictate to the researcher but are used as a guide. Such a process encourages participants to speak spontaneously in their own words on their experiences of the phenomenon.

Unstructured interviews are open-ended type of interviews that depend on the conversation with the participant and questions are generated based on the participant's narration. Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to unstructured interviews as more of an open interview that allows the participant to speak for him/herself rather than through a set of predetermined questions. Patton (2002) describes unstructured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation, because they often occur as part of on-going participant observation fieldwork.

She argues that unstructured interviews rely entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction.

This study used a semi-structured approach to interviewing learners. An interview guide was prepared made up of open-ended questions (see Annexure F). I conducted two rounds of semi-structured individual, face-to-face interviews with each participant. The first series of interviews focused on the participant's background, which is/are influential people in their lives, and their perspectives on masculinity, and their experiences at initiation school. The latter was a sensitive topic to bring up, given the confidentiality and secrecy surrounding discussions and practices in such spaces. First series of interviews was done in order to understand the participant's lived experiences, beliefs, and values they attach to what they learnt about being a man in the socio-cultural context outside school. Such insights enabled me to focus on their dispositions and experiences in the classroom more closely. I discuss my position as researcher later on in this chapter. Each individual interview lasted between 45 minutes to an hour.

The second series of interviews centred on the observed lessons and focused on the participant's engagement with the lesson content and interactions in the class. Here too, a semistructured approach to interviews was adopted. These were held after a lesson had been observed in order to probe what had been observed in classroom interactions.

I used what Thomas & Smith (2003, p.21) call "voluntary participation" by firstly explaining what the research was about and its objectives. Those initiates who were interested were given consent forms which informed them about the reasons for the study and that they are under no obligations to participate or answer any question that they felt uncomfortable with. They were also informed of their choice to withdraw at any stage of the study and that no names or personal information will be used.

To capture the richness of the experience in language often included the use of figurative expressions such as metaphors and narratives that are best captured in the home language of participants. To allow for richness of data all learner interviews as well informal discussions with initiates nurse from the initiation schools were conducted in isiXhosa so that all participants can fully express themselves. Informal discussions with teachers were held in English. Language is a primary access to people's lived experiences, attitudes and

perceptions (Polkinghorne (2005). I discuss the steps taken to negate the limitations of translations in a later section.

The study included informal discussions with teachers and initiates nurse even though they were not the main focus of the study. In the case of teachers, questions were established as the lesson proceeded so that issues that arose during the actual lesson could be probed. In the case of initiates nurse, I asked questions on what initiates are taught, what is expected of them in terms of conduct, his perception on medical circumcision.

4.5.3 Participant observations

Observation is used in two ways in research, it is structured and unstructured (Mulhall, 2003) Fundamentally, observations entail being present in a situation and making a record of one's impressions of what takes place rather than interpreting the meaning of observed behaviour (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008). In a structured observation the researcher knows in advance what he/she is looking for. It involves observing only defined activities that are of interest to the research. On the other hand, in the unstructured observation, the researcher monitors all aspects of the phenomenon that seem relevant to the problem at hand, records them as field notes, video or audio.

For this study I used unstructured non-participant observation, which is about the observer that simply observes people without doing anything to disturb the situation. I observed without interrupting the lesson or anything that took place in the classroom.

To help the researcher know what to observe, Dewalt & Dewalt (2002) suggest that he/she should study what is happening and why. In the case of this study, observations were Grade 11 limited to LO lessons that focused on the topics elaborated on in Chapter 3, namely personal well-being with special reference to sexuality and gender. In particular, the suggestion by Dewalt & Dewalt (2002) was used to frame my observation in order to gain insight into what teachers were teaching about masculinity and assisted me in designing questions for post observation in-depth individual interviews with learners and the informal discussions with teachers. During the observations, I paid attention to what the teacher said in order to understand how the teacher introduced the concepts, what she foregrounded in her mediation and who she privileged in her interactions. I focused particularly on how new initiates interacted with the curriculum, their dispositions and how they carried themselves in

class, and how they interacted with the teacher as well as peers. Special attention was paid to how the ‘men’ in class positioned themselves and where they sat in class.

I requested the use of a video recorder that would enable me to review lessons more than once during the analysis. Although four lessons were observed in each school, both teachers allowed the recording in only one lesson per school, citing the distraction that a video recording might have on their learners. Each observation in both schools lasted 50 minutes. Extensive fieldnotes were made during and immediately after the observation, and were shared with the teacher for corroboration and elimination of bias. Field notes are documents of research that serve to account for interaction or activity relevant to one’s study (Altheide, 2000). He goes on to explain that in qualitative research they are written in text or narrative form accounting for what took place where when, giving descriptions and summaries of observations.

4.5.4 Document analysis

Bowen states that “[D]ocument analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” (2009, p. 28). It requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to illicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss cited in Bowen, 2009). Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem.

The initial document analysis of the curriculum formed a conceptual chapter and is thus only returned to in the analysis and is therefore not presented the results. I reviewed learner books to see review the link between the curriculum and it translated in how learners made meaning of what was taught regarding masculinity in Grades 11.

4.6 Data analysis process

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont (2002) define qualitative data analysis as the means to get a sense of the whole process by first reading through all transcripts and jotting down ideas. Data can be analyse using two kinds of reasoning, deductive and inductive. The former allows the researcher to establish a hypothesis and data is collected to confirm or reject the hypotheses (Gill & Johnston, 2010). The latter according to Thomas (2003), is used to help with an understanding of meaning in complex data through the development of summary themes or categories from the raw data. Inductive approaches provide an easily used and

systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings. The primary mode of analysis is the development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework that captures key themes and processes judged to be important by the researcher.

Inductive approach was used for this study.

The isiXhosa interview transcripts were translated into English. To make sure that the English translation has the same meaning as the data collected in the tape recording, a process of back translation was followed whereby the English translations are translated back to isiXhosa. Back translation is the process of translating a document that has already been translated into a foreign language back to the original language; preferably by an independent translator. It can improve the reliability and validity of research in different languages by requiring that the quality of a translation is verified by an independent translator translating back into the original language (Wild, 2005). To observe confidentiality of data, no independent translator was sought as I felt that any third party would compromise participant's anonymity. It should be noted that because of difference in language structure and meaning between English and isiXhosa sometimes I changed the sentence structure accommodate nuance of the languages used in the interviews. Back translation as articulated was used to ensure that the essence of meaning was not lost.

The transcripts were read repeatedly making sense of them and different colours were used to identify linkages, trends and patterns and locate key words or phrases. The colour coded words were thereafter grouped or categorized provisionally around a particular concept. Units of meaning were then identified and developed into themes (Merriam, 2002).

4.7 Reliability and validity

To make the data more reliable and the quality valid, I made use of triangulation. By triangulating data, researchers attempt to provide a "... confluence of evidence collected through different methods to corroborate findings and to eliminate bias" (Eisner, 1991, p. 48). Walsh (2001) considers triangulation as using multiple methods of data collection to eliminate the weakness that exists in different methods. In this study, this was achieved through the use of focus group and individual interviews, classroom observation, and informal discussions with teachers and initiates nurse. These different sources of information

were used and compared to help me arrive at the interpretations and conclusions made in the study.

Validity of the study is very important. It emphasizes the rigour and authenticity of the data production and interpretation process. An important aspect in this regard is the role and position of the researcher, who Moos (2003) suggests, should be continuously aware of how this might play into the construction of the findings. To safeguard against misinterpretation, being selfreflexive throughout the research process is imperative. I needed to guard against my subjective knowledge of the initiation process as well as my position as an LO teacher. To this end, observation data was combined with information from conversations, observations, and interviews to provide an in-depth picture of the phenomenon. I did member checking with regards to the interpretation of my observations with the teachers whose classes I observed and reflected on the difference between my account of events and that of the teachers. Moita-Lopez (2000) notes that participant's agreement (member check) is an effective remedy for mitigating personal bias. The same procedure of member checking was followed with learner's individual interview translations.

4.8 Ethical considerations

The personal participation of learners in this study compelled me not only to acknowledge the ethical principles of research but to observe them. In gaining access to the research setting, permission was sought and granted from Department of Education in the Eastern Cape. The Head of Department at Rhodes University provided a letter seeking permission from the Department of Education in the Grahamstown District as well as the principals of targeted schools. These letters explained the aims and objectives of the study and how the study would be carried out. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2008, p.55) advise, "[S]ince the researcher's potential for intrusion and perhaps disruption is considerable, amicable relations with the class teacher in particular should be fostered as expeditiously as possible." I was allocated and introduced to the Grade 11 LO teacher whom I informed of the purpose and objectives of the study. She volunteered participation and introduced me to her class where the four selected new initiates were found. The teacher also allowed me the opportunity to explain to the classes the reasons for my presence.

In this study modern and traditional views of what it means to be man created an ethical dilemma for me in many ways. I was confronted with this dilemma as early as when I sought

consent from participants. Conducting research of this nature typically requires researchers to obtain permission when research involves minors (less than 18 years). A young man who is circumcised in a Xhosa cultural context is considered a man who is not only capable but also expected to make his own decisions; thereby not needing parental approval to participate in activities, including research. However, the South African Children's Act of 2005 (Act 38 of 2005) recognizes 18 years and above adult and lower as minor. In keeping with the principles of research for minors (as there were those participants who were less than 18 years) consent forms were made available but only three participants took them and from those only one was returned, the majority of participants signed without their parent's consent. This dilemma was obviated through permission granted by the school as *in loco parentis*.

As a Xhosa man and a LO teacher, my role as a researcher needed to be negotiated with great care, I recognized possible tensions and ethical dilemmas that needed to be carefully mediated between myself and learners. For example, not divulging what happens in initiation schools and understanding the cultural hierarchical relationships that exist outside of the research between me and new initiates needed to be confronted and addressed. First, all participants were made aware that I was there in class observation as well as in individual interviews not on my capacity as a teacher in a nearby school as some of them were aware, but that I was there in my capacity as a Rhodes student conducting research. Second, attention was drawn to them that I was a Xhosa man who had undergone the ritual but needed their honest opinions on how they dealt with being man in a school setting.

As already stated earlier on, participation was voluntary. Participants completed consent forms which informed them about the reasons for the study and that they are under no obligations to participate or answer any question that they felt uncomfortable with. They were also informed that withdrawal was possible at any stage of the study. Pseudonyms were used in the results chapter for the schools and participants. McCosker, Banard & Gerber (2001) argue that a principle concern for any data collection process, irrespective of the methodology, is that asking people questions about their views, knowledge, attitudes or life experiences.

4.9 Limitations of the study

There were a number of limitations that do not allow generalization of the study findings. First, conducting interviews in the participant's mother tongue is ideal as it gives you rich

data, but it has its shortcomings. Because the writing up of the study was done in English, the data had to be translated into English. This raised the possibility that some of the words, phrases, and expressions might lose some of their subtlety and different shades of meaning. Although back translation was used to ensure accurate translation, some Xhosa words cannot be directly translated into English. I discussed the steps taken to negate the limitations of translations earlier but acknowledge here as a limitation. Polkinghorne (2005) warns researchers on the limitations of translations and the need to understand that translation of gathered data from one language to another might distort meaning. A further limitation was that I personally conducted the translations; fearing confidentiality being breached. I did member checking for accuracy as articulated earlier.

This is a case study of only eight new initiates, making it difficult to make generalizations on their interpretations, perspectives, and experiences of the phenomenon. While purposive sampling was used to select participants who represented a variety of opinions, the full range of views and beliefs may not be reflected. I limited the concept of 'new' initiates to learners who had returned six months or sooner from initiations school. I recognize that such delimit has consequences for the nature of claims I am able to make about 'new' initiates.

In addition, my position as a teacher was known and being older than the initiates brought along its own challenges and might have caused them to hold back; owing to hierarchy of respecting the elders attendant amongst amaXhosa.

My knowledge of the ritual might have affected how I framed my questions and how I might have left questions I should have asked because they were obvious to me especially those that potentially questioned my own manhood. Although it is difficult to ascertain how the findings may have been influenced as a result, it is important to make note of this. Additionally, I was unable to pose direct questions on perspectives and experiences of the initiation school and process given the secrecy and confidentiality that shrouds such practices. Explicit questions might have compromised learner positions and created undue tension. I acknowledge this to have been a limitation.

CHAPTER 5 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated amaXhosa new initiates masculine identity construction, mediation, and negotiation and the implications for the Life Orientation Curriculum. In particular, the study sought to gain insight into the meanings new initiates attribute to content on masculinity in schools and that extracted in initiation and how this mediated masculine identity construction. In this chapter, I present the results from data collected mainly through individual and focus group interviews as well as classroom observations, as explained in the previous chapter.

Young people enter schools as sexual and gendered beings, having already experienced the formal and informal learning networks of the family environment, peer groups, and the media (Parker, 1996). As I explained in Chapter 3, a group of eight new initiates participated in the study in both individual and focus group interviews, with four new initiates drawn from each of the two participating schools. Of the four initiates in each site, two went to rural initiation and two to urban initiation schools.

I begin this chapter with a brief profile of each school and each participant in the study. The profiles are derived from observational data, individual interviews, as well as informal discussions held with participants and teachers. For schools and participants to remain anonymous, pseudonyms are used to protect their identity. While brief, the profiles locate participants in particular contexts and provide useful insight into the discursive contexts from which they make meaning of their lives. This discursive space shapes their perspectives and experience of being men in their homes, communities, and for this study, at school in Life Orientation classes.

The profiles are followed by the main findings presented in two broad themes and derived from focus group discussions, individual interviews as well as classroom observation data. Where it was appropriate, informal discussions are included. The first theme focuses on normative masculine conceptions and manhood, with particular attention paid to constructions of manhood and masculine identity and their relation to emotional display, men as bread winners and family providers, marriage, and heterosexuality and fatherhood. I follow

this as a specific focus on the classroom as a discursive space for the construction of particular masculine identities. I pay attention to gender, space, and power in the classroom,

A brief profile of both schools and all initiates is provided below.

5.2 Profiling schools

The school profiles that follow provide a contextual backdrop to situate respondents and teachers, who while not the focus of the study, are important mediators in the construction of masculine identities in a school context.

5.2.1 School profiles

I begin this section with profile of each of the participating schools, followed by profiles of the eight new initiates in this study.

Bohlaleng School

The school is a double story building with 40 classrooms, two computer laboratories, two science laboratories, a hall, and an administration block. The school's learner enrolment is 1200. It has a long history of academic excellence and success. There are 44 staff members at the school, including the principal, deputy principal, and one administrator. There are six Grade 11 classes with an average number of learners per class being 42. One teacher teaches LO in all Grade 11 classes.

Teachers stay in their classes only learners move to the teacher's class during change of periods. The classroom where observations were conducted was set up in such a way that the teacher's table was in the front and desks were in rows that allowed the teacher to move around. There were some chairs at the back of the class without tables to accommodate larger numbers of learners who also sometimes used the class. I observed in my field notes (25/04/12) that the chairs made it difficult for the teacher to get to the back of the class. Some of the chairs had learner's names on them and every time I observed (03/05/12, 17/05/12 & 04/06/12) a big argument would ensue over chairs; despite my presence as a 'visitor'. When asked in an informal discussion (17/05/12) about these chairs and the problem they caused for her, the teacher said, "[W]e arrange them today and tomorrow they are all messed up again and some would take the arranged chairs to the back particularly boys who do not get free desks when they come in to class." In the class observed, there were 45 learners, with at least ten minutes spent before learners settled down. Despite the additional chairs, extras were needed to accommodate the number.

There were no charts on the walls, a few broken windows and the door had no lock.

Mtetwa Senior Secondary

Mtetwa's school enrollment is 480. It has 24 staff members including the principal and the administrator. There are four Grade 11 classes with an average number learners being 34 per class. Like at Bohlaleng Senior Secondary, one teacher teaches the LO to all the Grade 11's. The school consisted of 27 classes. School grounds were not well kept and in some classes, windows and doors are broken. This school had a matric pass rate below 50 % for three consecutive years.

Learners move to the teacher's class during change of periods. In this school chairs were arranged such that the teacher had unhindered movement up to the back of the class. The teacher's table is at the back of the class. The classroom where observations were held had wall charts on different religions, and some parts of the wall had graffiti on it.

Common in both schools observed was that the majority of learners that sit at the back of the class were males. In both schools, teachers complained of male learners who always arrived late to class reeking of tobacco. When asked how this happened and what both were doing to address the issue, the teacher from Mtetwa said, "[W]hen the bell rings to change period, these boys do not come straight from a previous class to my class. They go to the toilets to smoke then come here. I talk to them and sometimes those who smell of tobacco stand by the door the whole period." The teacher from Bohlaleng said, "[A]lthough they move from one class to the next when they change periods, late coming between periods is a challenge, so I know late comers are mostly those who smoke, so I force them to sit in front I know they hate to sit in front."

Observations further revealed that most of the young men in both schools preferred sitting at the back, even where desks and seats were available, those who arrived late would either take a seat to the back or remove a 'boy' who already occupied a seat; often causing some disturbance to the class and the teacher. I dedicate a section in the main findings later in this chapter on reasons participants give for such behaviour.

Gender composition in both schools was that in all the classes observed there were more girls than boys/men. In an informal discussion with the Mtetwa teacher, she said "I think they reflect the student population because we have more girls than boys here at school" while the teacher from Bohlaleng had this to say, "It has been like this in this school over the years, even when I was still a student here we had more girls, but I was not aware that in all LO classes I had more girls, maybe the school is girl friendly (laughing)". Discussions with new initiates about what they think showed mixed feeling from both schools. From both schools,

others were happy and others not. Luks in a Bohlaleng focus group (17/05/12) said “[T]he more girls in class the more noise we have” while Luks was not happy about them making noise Siphiwo also in a Mtetwa focus group (18/05/12) was happy in having more girls in class he said “[I]t’s ok to have more girls in class so that we can’t be forced by teachers to sweep, we can just remove desks then they sweep.”

5.2.2 Profiling participants

The following section, drawn from individual interview data, profiles each of the eight participants in the study. These data provide insight into individual lives; highlighting influences, beliefs and values. The data also begins to show consistencies and discontinuities in the stories told about what it means to be a ‘man’ that highlights difference even when males are exposed to and inhabit similar social spaces.

Sipho is 19 years’ old who went to an initiation school in Grahamstown. He was sent there because his uncles believe this is where Sipho would learn to be a man without the influence of the initiates from the township. Sipho lives with his step-mother, who is a pensioner, and four siblings who are all females. His father and biological mother both passed away. He is the only male in this family. Part of his chores as the only male in the household, include cleaning the yard, painting the house and fixing whatever needs fixing. In this household, major decisions are linked to income as he puts it, “... my eldest sister is the only employed person in the house and makes all major decisions as she claims that decisions have financial implications.” When asked what he thought of the initiation school, he said, “I think I was a man long before I went to the initiation school because there is no man at home so I assumed all the responsibilities of a man.” He went on to say, “[I]nitiation school does not teach you new things; but reinforces one’s perception about manhood.” It is for this reason that he said, “... the behaviour of new initiates is sometimes no different to how they behaved before going to the initiation school.” Besides his age and peer pressure, he says the lack of a father figure in his family was the impetus for him to go to initiation school so that he could come back and assume the position of being the man of the house.

Thando is 17 years old and lives with his mother. He is an only child. His father passed away when he was 10 years old. He went to initiation school in the rural areas, where her mother’s parents still live. Thando made the point that his mother consulted him on most of the decisions she makes. He said, “... it’s obvious you know, we are the only two in the house so my mother checks with me before making decisions especially those that will affect me.” In terms of household chores, he does everything in the house, because most of the time, his mother is at work. In this regard, Thando cooks, cleans the house and yard.

His experience of initiation school is that he was taught to guard and protect manhood through his behaviour. He says, “[T]here must be a difference in how you behave as a man. People, even those who do not know you, must be able to distinguish you from boys through your behaviour.” He also stated that he did not believe in some of what is taught in the ‘bush’ as he thought it to be sexist and outdated. He said “[T]o be told we need to respect women but as man we should never allow women to control us is confusing to me”. His belief is that circumcision does not completely change who you are whether it’s done in the clinic or at a traditional circumcision school. Having said that, he made the point that he went to the traditional one due to pressure from his uncles and because he wanted to be accepted as a man amongst men. He said, “[M]y mother was afraid of stories about the deaths of initiates so she wanted to take me to the clinic for circumcision; but my uncles from both my mother’s and my father’s side said they would not accept me as a man if I am circumcised at the clinic”. He mentioned that growing up, he yearned to have a father but now realizes that his mother fulfilled both roles adequately. He puts it like this, “I am raised by a single parent and sometimes when we chat with my friends who are raised by both parents and I hear guys saying ‘my father would do this or if you do this, I will tell my father’, I seriously wished I had one. But now that I am grown up, I can see that my mother is both my father and my mother at the same time and I think she is doing that well for me”.

Sidwell is 19 years old from a village near East London. He came to Grahamstown to study and lives with his elder brother, who is a soldier. He went to the initiation school in a rural area outside East London, where his parents live. During the time of data collection, he was living alone as his brother was part of the South African troops deployed in Burundi, and would be away for eighteen months. He believes that staying alone has fasttracked him into the role of a man as he claims he can now ‘hassle’ like any man to survive. He said, “[S]taying alone taught me to be independent, disciplined and self-reliant, doing everything for myself; cooking, cleaning, and ironing.” He is convinced that staying alone before going to the bush prepared him well to make his own decisions, not be easily influenced by friends, and taking responsibility of his actions. Sidwell said, “[E]ven our landlord once commented about how well I look after the house and the yard, as if I am a man.” He took this comment as a compliment that characterized him as a man. He said such compliments made him feel like a man long before he went to the bush in terms of how he carried himself; because, “I knew before going to the bush what is expected of me as a man; that I have to provide when I have a family, look after the yard like I did, behave well and just do the right things.”

David is a 17 years’ old who went to the initiation school in Grahamstown. He lives with both parents; with his father making most of the decisions within the household. His parents are devout Christians and he said, “[A]s Christians, we do not believe in some of the prevailing cultural practices prevalent in our community.” The contradiction with this is that although they do not believe in cultural practices, he was sent to a traditional circumcision school. When he came back from the initiation school, no alcohol was served, not even traditional beer that is usually prepared as is customary on such

occasions. When asked why he went to a traditional circumcision school he said, “[F]irstly I am Xhosa and the transition from being regarded as a child to being accepted as an adult is through circumcision. Secondly, my parents told me it’s also for hygienic reasons and men know what I am talking about.” While growing up, all children in David’s family were expected to perform chores such as cleaning the house, cooking, and washing dishes, irrespective of their gender. This he said changed since he became a ‘man’; he is no longer obligated to do chores but can optionally help when he wanted to or when his mother or sister were not around. He was taught by his parents that circumcision does not make one a man; it is but part of lot of other things that make one a man. When asked to explain, David said, “[Y]ou can be circumcised and be a useless man. As a man, you have to look after your family, protect and educate your kids, provide for them and your wife, teach them responsibilities in life and to fear God.”

Luks, a 19-year-old, was born in Grahamstown but went to the initiation school in a rural area. He lives with his parents and two siblings; an older brother and younger sister. Both his parents are unemployed and rely on his elder brother who is working. He shares a room outside the main house with his brother. He says his brother never went to school after circumcision since he had to look for work. Luks was brought up to believe that a man should be independent and that a man fends for himself. The only reason that made his parents to continue buying things for him was because he was still at school. As soon as he leaves school, he would need to fend for himself. Luks said, “[O]nce you are circumcised, you are old enough to be on your own”; something he was told. His family believes that cultural practices are the cornerstone of any Xhosa family. His beliefs about manhood are that a man should be strong, physically, and remain steadfast in his decisions, should lead by example within his family or his community. He said, “I don’t know whether it was explained to the other guys that right now as a new initiate, if somebody behind calls out my name, I don’t look back. My dad said this was to teach me not to change what I decided on; I am young but life is difficult, so a man needs to be strong both physically and in his decisions and not just be easily influenced.”

Vuyo, is 17 years old. He was born, raised and went to the initiation school in Grahamstown. He stays with his parents, three sisters and two brothers. He is the last born in the family. His father is considered the head of the household and all decisions made by his mother have to be approved by his father. Vuyo said, “[M]y father always says he is the head of the house and nothing should be done in his house without his knowledge and approval.” He considers his family to be a traditional Xhosa family that believes in the ancestors and practices Xhosa customs. Vuyo’s mother is unemployed, in fact he said, “I do not remember my mother working.” He says his father believes that it is the responsibility of a man to look after his wife by providing her with all that she needs so that she can concentrate on raising the children and making a house a home or making a house warm. His father had set the rules for the family and it was the duty of the father as the head of the house to discipline those who stepped out of the line he has set for the family. In this regard Vuyo said, “[W]e all know the rules and the consequences of breaking them [rules] in so much that my brothers and sisters cover up

for each other to avoid punishment.” Vuyo said he did not completely agree with some of the ways his father uses in raising them but has to endure them while still living at home.

Sandile is 18 years’ old who went to the initiation school in Grahamstown. He lives with his parents, aunt, two uncles, and two older brothers. In attributes his status as a man to circumcision. He says, “[C]ircumcision has made my family to regard me as an adult, and now I am no longer chased out when my father and my uncles discuss family issues.” Sandile claims that circumcision has afforded him respect within the family because he now enjoyed privileges within his family of sitting when decisions are made by his father and uncles, because he is a man. He said his family, particularly his father, places traditional values of amaXhosa in high regard and claims that these are the roots of whom we are as a nation and that is what characterizes an individual man. Sandile said although circumcision school taught him about being a man, he felt it was a continuous process to learn about family lineage, customs, and traditions. He stated, “[M]y uncles taught me before I went to the initiation school what is expected of me when I became a man.” He believed this knowledge is vital for any man as he would be expected to take over the responsibilities of the family one day.

Siphiwo is 18 years old and lives with both parents. They are from a nearby farm and came to Grahamstown three years ago. He says, “[A]t home, my father makes decisions and we are not allowed to question them. He even decided on where and when I must go to the initiation school.” He wanted to go to a local initiation school because most of his friends were going there even though his father sent him to a rural initiation school. Siphiwo has four siblings, two older sisters and two younger brothers. His family keeps a few cattle. His work within the family is to look after the cattle, fetch them from the fields, and milk them when there are calves. His father believes that boys should not involve themselves with women’s work, like cleaning the house and cooking as they become ‘soft’ by spending too much time in the kitchen. Duties and responsibilities in his family are allocated on the basis of their gender, so chores are divided between boys and girls. Siphiwo proposed that he had no problem with such an arrangement because he believes there are things he cannot do as a man that her sisters are better able to do such as ironing and washing his clothes, saying “[I] grew up with my mother doing the washing at home, now my sisters are also doing washing for all of us even when I get married I will expect my wife to wash my clothes, it’s a woman’s job.”

For Siphiwo, being a man is about being in charge or being in control; whether it’s in relationships or in relation to one’s emotions. He put like this, “[B]ush taught me to be in control as you know it’s hard there; you show no pain and if you take a decision, you do not waiver or be easily influenced ... you stick to it.” He said that he looked up to his father whom he saw as epitomizing what men should be; putting it like this, “[Y]ou know, Sir, I look up to my father. He is like my role model because, one day when I have my own house, I think I would like to be like him ... for my kids, you know, providing, protecting, you know ... hard working for them. For me that is what a man should do for his family.”

The brief participant profiles reveal diverse family backgrounds and influences that shape sexual identity in general and manhood and masculinity in particular. Five of the eight participants were raised by traditional Xhosa families; three indicated that the father assumed a prominent role, not only of being a decision maker in the family but also in being regarded as the head of the household. Male role models were prominent in discussions about being a man, with normative constructions already traceable in the above.

The profiles above also illustrate a gendered construction of masculinity centred on chores as some duties and responsibilities allocated along gender lines. Four of the participants indicated that they were expected to clean the yard because that was viewed as the responsibility of a man. David indicated that while growing up, chores were not delineated along gender lines, a practice that changed when one became a 'man'. Although some participants indicated that they performed duties like cleaning the house and washing dishes, it was noticed by the researcher that those who performed such duties came from families where there was no father figure.

Profiles of participants also indicated the role of fathers within the family, with three participants indicating that most decisions in their families were taken by their fathers. It also appeared that decisions that were taken by their mothers had to be approved by their fathers. Two participants who were raised without fathers being present indicated that fathers assume certain positions in the family and their absence created a void in their lives, which needed the existence of a father figure. As Sipho indicated, he was compelled to go to the initiation school so that he could come back to assume the position of the 'man' of the house.

To some of the participants, fathers influenced their perception on chores by indicating that certain jobs are reserved for women, which men should not be involved with. It was also evident that fathers allocated chores on the basis of gender, thereby intensifying gender role socialization and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Hierarchy played an important role in constructions of identity amongst this group. This was also along gender lines, with the father assuming the position of the decision maker and the mother, a support and compliant role. Males who lived with both parents reported that women (mothers) had to seek approval from males (fathers) in any decision that affected the

family. The family though, was not the only influence on masculine identity construction as I show in the following section.

Drawn primarily but not exclusively from focus group interviews, the following section outlines perspectives and beliefs that circulate in the social and cultural context in which participants make meaning of their masculinity.

5.3 Normative masculine conceptions and manhood

The Xhosa nation has a history of a deep rooted patriarchal tradition (Mtuze, 2004). This tradition influences the norms and values of the community. These social norms and values become scripts or templates in the construction of masculinity as I highlight in the following sections. The following data shows how participants conform and others deviate from the normative masculinity displayed in the community. One of the most widely shared ideas was concerned with how men dealt with how they felt and how they were supposed to respond emotionally.

5.3.1 Being a man and emotional display

The expectation that men are physically and emotionally strong was a prevailing sentiment shared by participants when asked how 'man' is defined in the community. These expectations are deeply rooted in traditional, patriarchal societies and seemed reinforced in the daily lives of participants in this study. Walton, Coyle & Lyons (2004) contend that even though traditional masculine behaviour is said to involve the concealment of emotions that might imply vulnerability or dependency, it nevertheless permits the expression of emotions such as anger that are assumed to be justifiable. Discussions in focus groups about displaying or showing of emotions by men, revealed that only three emotions were prominent, crying, anger, and fear. Of these, anger was the only emotion that participants claimed men could overtly display. All participants conceded that men are not expected to show pain particularly crying because showing pain, be it physical or emotional, and was regarded as a sign of weakness. How a man dealt with pain as part of the preparation for manhood was something new initiates agreed was part of what they learnt in initiation school.

Data revealed a number of elements that were attached to crying; such as crying and respect, crying and discursive space, crying and anger, the use of metaphors to invoke animal strength.

Animal metaphors, crying, control and being a 'man'

The majority of participants agreed that it was unacceptable in their community for a man to openly show emotions particularly crying. They used metaphors to invoke animals to show strength, endurance, stoicism, and ability to withstand demonstrating 'feeble' emotions. A comparison of the ability not to show emotions equated to strength was raised when **Luks** said, "*tigers don't cry*" (28/05/12). This metaphor used by the participant reflected the expected strength of a man and the concealment of emotions. Crying was associated with a loss of control. Invoking another animal metaphor, **David** said, "*I am a man not a mouse*" (29/05/12). Participants were emphatic in contending that the display of emotion was feminine behaviour that renders a man weak. This is evidenced by their responses when asked to comment about men who openly cry. **Sandile** said, "*No, no, no! I don't believe in men who cry, that's sissy stuff.*" **Vuyo**, supporting this claim, went on to say, "*[C]rying is like too girly; can you imagine a guy crying and sobbing. Does he use his normal deep voice or girls squeaky voices? Honestly crying does not suit men*" (07/06/12).

Inhibition of emotional expression was also attributed to cultural practices of amaXhosa, when **Siphiwo** said, "*I will speak as a Xhosa man. You see, when you are about to go to the mountain, your father, brother or uncle who has been circumcised will tell you that when you are cut you don't cry; you don't wince; you must boldly pronounce that you are a man. From there on you are expected to withstand any pain.*" **Vuyo**, speaking with a tone that drew everyone's attention in the room said, "*[U]s, as amaXhosa circumcised man, we have been brought up and taught at the bush that a man does not cry; so some of us who still hold to those teachings don't cry no matter what*" (10/06/12). **Sidwell** went on to say, "*[F]or me, a man who cries in public, I can say two things, it's an act to get sympathy or the guy is just weak emotionally.*"

Such conceptions of manhood were juxtaposed by a lesson on gender stereotypes observed at Bohlaleng High School (28/05/12). In this particular class discussion on gender stereotypes, the following comments were made by males when the teacher specifically asked them what they think about men showing emotions particularly crying.

- "I think for the sake that we are men, we are scared to cry like openly, we cry inside."
- "Only weak men express their feelings."
- "There are things that girls cry over that men can't cry over."

The comments above are congruent with the statements that the initiates had made during the focus group discussions. The responses above suggest that the concealment of emotions by men is not a natural, but a socially constructed one where social and cultural context they live in controls and dictates what is and is not acceptable behaviour amongst 'men'. What also emerged from the data was not that crying by men was unacceptable; but rather its public display. The social and cultural context, therefore, also dictated the discursive space and conditions a 'crying man' might be condoned. The reasons also needed to be sanctioned if the interpretation was to be acceptable. I describe this in more detail below.

Crying, space, and respect

There was an emergent perspective that men *do* cry but that the reason, space, and the conditions needed to be permissible. Crying in secret or out of the public eye, especially not in front of females, was permissible. There were also certain things for which crying would be an 'inappropriate' response.

A prevailing reason for men not crying was that they did not want to lose respect. Some participants felt that a man who cried loses respect amongst his peers and those are watching. In a focus group discussion, **Sidwell** summed it up this way, "[W]ell it depends, Sir. A guy who shows emotion is very weak somehow from my side. It's not too wise to show your emotions with someone who hurts you; otherwise if there are people watching, they will not respect you anymore." **Luks** said, "[A]s a man, you have to keep your emotions to yourself as especially in front of somebody who hurt you, you can't show him or her that you are hurting; otherwise you can forget about gaining respect from those people." **David** said, "[N]ever cry in front of a girl, if you don't want to lose respect." Loss of respect and demonstration of emotional strength seemed reasons for not openly displaying an emotional or 'soft' side to a man. Pressure from peers who are 'men' as well as community members thus mediated constructions of masculinity in regards permissible and non-permissible behaviour in regards open display of emotions.

The claim of an appropriate space and time for a man to cry when no one was watching was given credence by the following responses **Sidwell** said, "I believe if ever you keep your emotions to yourself and then spread it when you are alone and not spread it while you with that person cause that person is gonna take advantage of what they've done to you." **David**

proposed that there were very few circumstances under which men ought to show emotions, saying “... *no matter how bad the situation you are in is; if you feel overwhelmed, just move away from everyone and do your thing in private.*” **Luks**, who gave an example of an open display of emotions said, “*I have been told that a man keeps his emotions and shows them when the time and place is right.*” Such statements reveal that participants were aware of forces that influence their behaviour and how their masculinity construction was policed both by peers and extended community members, especially males who had been circumcised.

There was a contradiction in that at some point crying was seen as appropriate, and some participants admitted to crying but for different reasons as expressed by **Sidwell** in individual interviews. He had this to say, “*I think the reason that you cry is because of anger... now we talking about crying like just crying. It depends on how are you cry cause when I’m angry tears just roll down my face. But then in terms of relationships, I can feel the pain; if she hurts me okay let’s pass that. But if a girl hurts me then I start crying...then I say ‘hayi’ (meaning ‘no’) ... not me*”. In an individual interview, **Luks** stated, “[*I*ts crying in front of people. For example, when I got home the other day and was told that my dad has passed on, I cried... but my uncle (dad’s younger brother) took me to the room and told me that a man does not do this in front of people.” Such statements provided insight into the extent to which males also selfpoliced behaviour and in so doing, practices were reproduced and preserved. Put differently, sanctioning normative and hegemonic stereotypes of the meanings attributed to traditional men is maintained.

Crying and space was not only limited to physical space. I observed that the focus group space was also a space where participants did not openly feel comfortable to say they cried lest they were perceived to be weak. Some participants only admitted to crying during individual interviews; reflecting difficulty in expressing feelings for fear of being considered as weak and vulnerable. Despite the concern around being labeled for taking soft positions, the emergence of a new generation of emotional men, who claim to be aware of the importance of emotional expression, was acknowledged by **David** when he said, “[*W*]e’ve dealt with this in class when we were taught, like how to deal with problems. One of the professors that came to school to talk to us said you should cry. ‘If you feel like crying, its fine ... CRY! It will take every pain that you got out’... and I believe him.” A different perspective was shared by **Thando** in individual interviews when he said, “... *as much as I am a Xhosa man brought up and told not to cry, I believe that a man who cry is brave,*

because it takes guts to cry, knowing that you are going to be judged.” These data suggest an emerging trend about men who cry perceived as a sign of bravery rather than vulnerability. This group of participants is shaped by competing discourses that influences how they make meaning of their masculine identity, showing the confluence of modern and traditional influences. Such a coming together highlights the complexity of the spaces where young men make meaning of masculine identities.

The notion that men ought to be providers was yet another construct that shaped participant perceptions on what it means to be a man.

5.3.2 Being a man and men as providers

Barker and Ricardo argue that a key requirement to attain manhood in many Africa social contexts is “achieving some level of financial independence, employment or income, and subsequently starting a family”, (2005 p, 1). In South Africa there is evidence that many young men hold the hegemonic opinion it is incumbent upon the male partner to fill the role of family breadwinner (Walker, 2005). These are traditional roles of being a man which the school curriculum problematizes as stereotype as reflected in the following observation on 28/05/12 at Bohlaleng. The teacher brought learners’ attention to a case in a LO textbook that focused on stereotyping in families. She started the discussion by stating that men are expected to pay bills in a family and asked the class why that is so. Responses ranged from, “... *they earn more than women*” to “... *they are breadwinners.*” One of the girls pointed out that that has changed, stating that most breadwinners are now women. The debate then went to who should pay the bill when a guy and a girl go out on a date. One opinion was that whoever asked the other on a date should pay, but one of the boys in the class objected to that saying, “... *because of the pride of guys, they can’t allow the girl to pay. A girl can’t pay for me; I have my pride – I will not allow that.*”

The hegemonic discourse that for a man to qualify as a ‘man’ he must possess certain demonstrable characteristics of which providing for the family is one, was evident in perspectives by participants. Working men not only provide, but work or employment improves the status of a man in a house, a man becomes the decision maker and the head of the household. The feeling amongst participants was that if you are unemployed, your ‘powers’ within the household are curtailed. **Sandile** said, “*You see, Meneer (meaning ‘Sir’), this thing called a man is expected to go look for work because you can’t get a wife if you are*

not working... you can't have children if you are not working because you won't be able to provide for them. And what kind of a man are you, because it is said, to be a man you must work to provide for your children." The sentiment that men needed to be the head of their households was pervasive amongst the perspectives by participants. For the most part, this meant that providing financial stability and going out to work. In this regard, **Sandile** said, *"[A]s a man, it is your responsibility that your family does not sleep without eating. You have to look for a job and bring money home."* In an individual interview **Sipho** intimated that being a provider is part of the socialization process of manhood. He said, *"[W]e are raised to believe that a man who cannot financially support his wife and family is not a real man."* Participants highlighted the pressure the society puts on them as 'men' as well as on those who cannot fulfill this notion of a man as provider; the consequence of which is loss of status within their families highlighted by **Vuyo** who stated, *"[F]irst of all, when you are a man not working or unemployed and you have your younger brother who is working, you lose respect in the family as a man. You get taken lightly; you get sent on errands instead of your younger brother."* **Thando** suggested ways in which men can augment the expectation of a provider saying, *"[T]here are those requirements that may make you lose your dignity like being unemployed while your younger brother is going to get respect more than you. If you are not working but if you can clean the yard and do some work around the house, at least you can gain some dignity."* Even though an alternative was proposed in the narrative above, participants were aware of the pressure to adhere to the norm and what was at stake were they unable to fulfil such a role.

Although there was a strong promotion by some participants of the traditional gendered responsibility of being a particular kind of man, there were also contradictory voices that such practices are eroded in the current context of high unemployment in South Africa. Some participants held alternative views to the general expectation by society about being a man; acknowledging that there were challenges to these dominant gender roles. **Thando** raised such an issue by stating, *"[T]his thing that to be a man you have to be employed and provide for your family is a problem to me because in South Africa there are many men who are not employed; some of us are raised by single parents who did all these things for us with no man in sight. I think this thing that a man must provide for their families is outdated; it just puts pressure on us."* **Simphiwe** said, *"[Y]ou see Meneer (Sir) this thing goes like this. If I am a man at home and staying with my girlfriend and I am unemployed and she is working, I am forced to change my child's nappy because my girlfriend can't waste money by hiring a*

nanny because I don't want to change nappies. It's working together with my girlfriend in raising our child, because she works so that we can all eat." **Sipho** put it this way, "[T]hings have changed, you know. The realities of South Africa are that there are things that were not done by men in the olden days such as cooking and cleaning, but today we do those things. Circumstances sometimes force us to do them. Like me, I was taught to cook and clean and even now I still do and will continue even when I get married because now I enjoy cooking."

Participants constructed alternate ways of being which draw on other forms of masculinity through the recognition and acknowledgement of changing times, cultures and societies. This notwithstanding, most participants expressed support for the idea that the role of breadwinner was invested with more power than when you are unemployed and thus acknowledged the tension between old (traditional) and newer (modern) forms of masculinity. **Luks** said, "[W]hen you work, especially if you earn more than your wife, you are consulted because you bring in the money so you make decisions as the head of the house. When you have no job, you become nothing. Women even shout at you; you seriously lose respect as a man." Maintaining hegemony was referenced to the Bible as a way to defend the position of the man in the family; unemployment notwithstanding. **Simphiwe** said, "[E]ven if the man is unemployed, he remains the head of the house. It is written somewhere in the Bible that the man is the head of the wife and that women must submit and obey their husbands as Adam was created before Eve. So there is nowhere in the Bible where it says 'if you earn more or your husband is unemployed' the woman must push him around."

It emerged in a classroom discussion on 28/05/12 that it is not only that men have to work and provide, but also the type of work that a man does that had an influence on how he is judged as a man. The issue on which careers are appropriate for men also came up during class discussions. One of the comments from one of the males in the class was that, "hairdressing is not a career for men." One of the new initiates in class argued that as a Xhosa man, a man cannot work in a saloon but that if he does he should stick to haircuts and shaving men and not to do women's hair styling. He said, "[M]en are breadwinners so must find jobs but even if a guy works at the saloon he can't be doing braids, hairstyling or boy cuts it's okay if he does shaving and haircuts, like brush cut but not to do the girly stuff there."

Positions taken by some participants revealed that their understanding of who they are as man was linked to what they can do and what is expected from them by their families and community. In a post observation interview discussing the conception of manhood as a provider as a gender stereotype, some of them conceded that it is a stereotype as things have changed; yet they were not ready to change their perceptions that to provide is the duty of a man. **Siphiwo** said, “[O]k, we accept that the way we do things is stereotypical, but that is how we are taught growing up. Until we became a man, that is how you are judged in the community. There they don’t talk about stereotypes; you are just **expected** [his emphasis] to do your job as a man.” Agreeing, **Sipho** said, “[W]e cannot abandon our responsibilities as men because here at school they say its stereotype; otherwise we will be seen as failures.” Such responses indicate yet another contradiction between what new initiates are taught through social and cultural expectations and practices in the community as well as through participation in the initiation process and that which they confront in LO classes in school. The pressure to conform to hegemonic practices in the social and cultural contexts they find themselves is juxtaposed and paralleled with the need to confront such practices as stereotypical gender roles that go against the rightest discourse of equality espoused in the Constitution and embodied (and taught) in the LO curriculum.

That participants experienced the effect of such a tension between traditional and modern ideals was obvious in their comments. **Vuyo** raised it by stating, “[M]eneer (Sir), there is this idea amongst other people that circumcision by going to the bush is backward and not necessary. For us who went there it’s very important. Now in class we are taught that some of the things we were told to do as men are stereotypes. Then as young people, we are confused ... so others stick to what is taught at school and others what they learned from home. It’s just so confusing.” This response is indicative of how new initiates struggle with the often contradictory messages that emanate from the different spaces they inhabit that shapes their masculine identities.

Yet another perspective that shaped constructions of what it means to be a man had to do with marriage and heterosexuality.

5.3.3 Being a man, marriage, and heterosexuality

Kilmartin (1994) makes the point that heterosexuality is culturally and socially assumed to be normal and natural, with alternative forms of sexuality perceived to be deviant. In its

historical development and traditionally (as shown in Chapter 2), heterosexuality is tied with the institutions of patriarchy and masculinity, which give social and cultural meaning to biological male anatomy, associating it with power and control over women, aggressiveness, and an "active" sexuality between a man and women.

It emerged from the data that if you are at a marriageable stage and were not married, you were considered an 'incomplete' man. In the context of the study, marriage was not associated with age but with being a 'man' signaled by circumcision. **Vuyo** said, "*[W]hen we come from the bush and are instructed about manhood, most of us have been told by the elders that now that we have been made men, we need to complete our manhood and have to get married.*" **Sidwell** added that hierarchy was associated with one's marriage status highlighting that circumcision did not always guarantee inclusion in all the practices available to men in the community. He stated, "*[E]ven as a man, there are certain cultural gatherings where you are not allowed to speak if you are not married.*" **Siphiwo**, indicating hierarchical structures of manhood, said "*[W]e can all be men but in our culture, a married man has a higher status than a man who is not married. In fact, you get teased for being "isoka" a (bachelor) which somehow lowers your status as a man.*"

What came out from participants was that having a wife completes a man. **Siphiwo** subscribed to this idea when he said, "*[A]fter circumcision, what is expected of me is to work and have a wife.*" **Vuyo** concurred that "*[Y]ou are considered a man when you own a house and a wife.*" **David**, in an individual interview, brought up the notion of independency and responsibility; distinguishing between being a man and one's responsibility to imbibe particular characteristics. He said, "*[B]y virtue of being circumcised you are a man... but a **real** [his emphasis] man is the one who is no longer dependent on the parents; he is employed; has his own house, is married and has children.*" In an individual interview, **Siphiwo** also intimated that one is only regarded as 'man' when one is independent and lives on one's own. He said, "*[W]hen I get married and have my own children, I have to move out of my parents' house and have my own that is when I would be regarded as a man. For instance, our parents tell us that while we are still staying under their roof, we are not men in their houses. We will be men only when we have our own houses.*" Similarly, in an individual interview, **Vuyo** said, "*[W]hat I have noticed is that you can have money, like being rich, have nice cars, a big house; but there are times when you will be told that 'okay you have all these things, all you need is a wife' to make your house a home.*" a comment that

distinguishes financial from familial independence. Such a distinction highlights a further complexity that shapes new initiate masculine identity construction in the context where they meaning of their lives.

The responses above suggest hierarchy in constructions of being a man in the communities where initiates made meaning of their masculine identity. There was a distinction between being a man and being a 'real' or 'complete' man. Such distinctions regulated the social space that new initiates inhabited and mediated their participation in rituals and practices considered manly. Not only was it sufficient to be married; 'real' or 'complete' men were self-reliant, independent, and providers. An important feature in being a 'real' or 'complete' man, was the ability to show one's virility by having children. The pressure to prove your fertility to peers seemed to override the notion of a man as a provider. **Vuyo** summed it up by saying, "*[E]xpectations are made at birth, as soon as parents find out that they have a baby boy, there is joy that the family name will continue.*" The pressure to prove one's manhood by having children was therefore not only from your peers but from your parents as well; an important feature that shaped constructions of masculine identities in the context participants found themselves, as I expand on below.

Masculinity, manhood, marriage, and child bearing

Respondents discussed marriage, particularly bearing children as an important signifier of manhood. The majority in both individual and group interviews agreed with such a sentiment. **Vuyo** said, "*[B]y fathering a child, you gain respect amongst your peers.*" It would seem that there was pressure amongst young men to have children. As **Sipho** put it, "*[I]f you don't have a child, you get teased for shooting blanks (having ineffective' sperm) and that puts pressure on you to prove them wrong. You go and impregnate your girlfriend, in most cases, even though you know you are unemployed. Like me, I had a child last year and my friends are now off my case.*" The pressure experienced by males to prove their virility with the aim of producing a child took precedence over all other issues that needed to be considered before having a child.

Vuyo said, "*[Y]ou walk with pride and you get respected when you are somebody's father. Having a child, whether a male or a female, fulfils you; it is an achievement.*" Even though marriage bore a high price in proving one's masculinity, **Sipho** maintained that having a child was even more important than being married. He said, "*[S]ome men have children and never marry, yet they are respected.*"

Another dynamic emerged that it was not only about having a child; but the sex of the child was important in signalling one's manhood and display of masculinity. **Thando** pointed out in a group discussion how in some families, the birth of boys was more valued than that of girls. He said, "*[W]e also need to understand that in some families, it not just about the child; but about the sex of the child. A boy child becomes more important in keeping the family name by having children of his own; because girls get married and assume the surnames of their husbands.*" Besides the continuation of the family name, **Luks** pointed out customary duties of a boy child in the family that made having a male child important. He said, "*[E]very Xhosa man who believes in the customs and traditions of amaXhosa would like to have a boy child who will continue with the family customs so that when you die or old you can hand over the spear to your son to continue with the customs like slaughtering ... because girls can't do that.*"

Respondents acknowledged that not having a child or children was a possible source of ridicule in the community. **David** intimated, "*[W]here I live we call parents by their children's names like Vuyo's dad or Lebo's dad. Now if you don't have kids, like the couple in our area, people call them by their dog's name like Spot's house. They don't like that but they don't have children so we can't call them by their name because they are older; so they are a laughing stock.*" This response reinforces the notion of a man with children and their social standing in a particular community.

The importance of having children and bearing a male child was reinforced by the teacher, a Xhosa woman, in Mtetwa when she concluded a lesson on the role of power in a relationship by telling learners about societal expectations placed on women by her culture (she is a Xhosa woman). She said, "*[I]n our culture, there is an expectation that a first born child must be male. If a woman bears a child who is not male that woman is in danger of being chased out of the household*".

Dominant discourses of masculinity in families and in the community had an influence on participant perspectives, beliefs, and values about the features, dispositions, and practices displayed by 'men'. The picture that emerged was consistent across responses, with new initiates very clear about what was expected of them in the social and cultural space they inhabited. The convergence in perspectives often precluded a different voice to emerge

during group discussions even though in individual interviews, some respondents acknowledged that they did not always agree with the dominant expectations. Peers, older males in the community, and even women complied to police and regulate behaviour to maintain normative masculine gender norms.

The focus in the following theme is on the classroom as a discursive space where masculinity is constructed and practiced in particular ways. I use observational data, post-observation formal and informal interview data to highlight aspects that enable an analysis of masculine identity construction in schools, with particular reference to the LO curriculum.

5.4 Gender, space, and power in the classroom

Everyday school life illustrates the ways in which both normative institutional practices and human agency produce and regulate identities, with the production and reproduction of gendered identities being no different. This was observed in both what was said in class as well as the physical spatial arrangements of the classroom. What emerges therefore is that the classroom space is a contested space. This space, both physical and discursive, carried connotations of masculinity construction and its hierarchical structure; implicitly and explicitly.

5.4.1 Spatial arrangements, positionality, and masculine performance in the classroom

What emerged from the data was that sitting arrangements were not neutral or innocent positions in class. Rather, as I indicate in the section that follows, decisions about where to sit in class was intimately linked to masculine performance in the public space of the classroom. Male domination of space is noted by Paechter (1998). In the instance of this study, it was more than dominance over females but also over those not yet considered 'men'. Data revealed a high level of consistency and agreement amongst participants in terms of the meanings ascribed where men sat and who had authority to dictate sitting positions in class.

Physical space and masculine performance

All lessons observed in both schools showed similar patterns in the use of physical space by males. The rear of the classroom was populated by males only. In this regard, it was difficult for me to differentiate between boys and men except through identifying those participating in this study. It became clear as lessons proceeded and through the nature of responses that it was not just males who occupied rear positions in class but 'men'. Seating arrangements as

Sipho proposes, are taken for granted and have been normalized to an extent that no one questions but complies with the practice. **Sipho** had this to say about males occupying rear seats, *“I have never given it much thought because that has been the place I have sat in the classroom since primary school.”* Agreeing and distinguishing boys from men, **Luks** said, *“[I]t has been like that; front... girls, back ... boys at primary. But here at high school and in Grades 8 & 9, okay you get boys at the back. In Grades 10 up to 12, then us men take that position.”* The normalization of the practice was stark in responses by participants. In the focus group discussion at Mtetwa Secondary School **Siphiwo** alluded to the point that, *“... it [sitting at the rear] is a normal place for men to sit in any classroom.”* **Sidwell** supported this notion by saying, *“[Y]ou can go to any school, and you will find that guys sit at the back. Even if I am new in a school, I go straight and sit at the back that is where you get to meet the men in your class. At the front... it’s girls.”* The perception of girls and the gendered and masculinized seating arrangements was supported by **Luks** who added that young boys also belonged to the front seats. He said, *“I agree with him ... it’s a guy thing Sir. We enjoy sitting at the back. In front it’s the laaities (young boys and also denoted uncircumcised) and girls.”* **Sandile** puts it this way, *“[W]henver I go to class, I just go straight to the back. I don’t want to lower my dignity by these boys and girls by sitting among them.”*

Learners seemed active in the construction of sexual identities in general and masculine identities in particular and in so doing, produced a hierarchized feminized and masculinized classroom space. The front space of the classroom seemed reserved for females. It was feminized by this group of participants who also depicted it as a space for ‘less accepted’ versions of masculinity, such as those identified as homosexuals. In the focus group at Bohlaleng Secondary School, **Sipho** said, *“[H]ere in this school, what I have noticed is that normal guys like ‘ibras’ (a slang term for brother or guy) sit at the back. Then you find these boys and gays there in front because we have a lot of these gays here so you notice them. They all sit in front.”* **Vuyo** added that, *“... because they know where they belong; they are siesies (a slang term for ‘weaklings’,) so they sit with cherries (a term for girls) there.”*

Two aspects are worth noting in the responses thus far. First, males took for granted the spatial arrangements and positions they occupied in class; tied as they suggested to respect and their dignity as men. It seemed to be reinforced by girls and boys who had not yet been circumcised who not only always occupied front seats but also sometimes gave up rear seats

to those who identified themselves as 'men'. The consequence was the reproduction of a dominant practice that regimented and reinforced hegemonic masculine identities of unequal power relations. Second, and in not questioning the seating arrangements, females in the class as well as those identified as boys, complied and reproduced unequal power relations that reinforced hegemonic and traditional masculine identities.

The prevailing sentiment not only was that back seats were masculinized, but younger boys or those who were not identified as men, were placed in the same position as girls. **David**, in the focus group discussion at Mtwetwa though, defended those who sat in front from ridicule when he said, "... *although I enjoy sitting at the back, I would not agree that those guys who sit in front we should call them names or that in front you lose respect, no, it depends on how you carry yourself, if you behave like a boy then those boys wont respect you.*" In an individual interview on 12/06/12, **Thando** also cast doubts on the assertion that the front seats were demeaning for him as a man. He said, "[W]here you sit sometimes, just show the kind of person that you are. For me depending on the size of the class, if its big no I don't sit at the back because of the noise and the disruptive nature of the guys who take that position, most of the time." **Thando** also privileged the need to pay attention to size of the classroom as an aspect that determined where he sat in class. Objecting to the prevailing sentiments expressed by peers, he said, "[O]k, I agree that, ja (meaning yes), most guys here at school sit at the back, but what I don't agree with is that all those who chose to sit in front are sieses or gays not all."

I also observed that the control of space was one of claimed entitlement where girls or boys who sat at the back were firstly politely asked to move and where there was resistance, were physically removed and threatened with violence. In individual interviews, **Sipho** reported that, "*back seat are ours*" while **Luks** putting it bluntly said that, "... *whether they like it or not we will remove them every day; the back seats are for men.*" **Siphiwo** was also forthright in his response that if a learner refused to vacate the seat, he would, "... *politely ask them to move and if they refuse, then it's obvious that they want to be physically removed, so I will physically remove them.*" Such threats of violence can be linked to what Connell (1995) refers to as two patterns of violence against women (and in this case, boys who are considered weak or gay), which are violence as a means of sustaining dominance and violence as a way of claiming or asserting masculinity. What was also observed in both classes was the men asserting authority through being loud, forceful, and domineering in

contrast to girls who were quite, polite compliant and co-operative. It was observed in Mtetwa how boys would drown girls whose point of view they do not agree with in class discussions.

The treatment of girls and boys arises from an assumption amongst participants that girls, homosexual men, and boys know and accept backseats as reserved for men. Participants took for granted, therefore, that they had the power to ask, and if not successful, force them to vacate seats. In the focus group at Mtetwa Secondary School, **Sandile** said, “[T]hese girls know that their place is in front”, with **Vuyo** adding that this is not a new phenomenon. He said, “[T]hey know from primary school that its girls in front and boys at the back.” So normalized were classroom spatial practices amongst respondents in this study that any questioning was seen as obscene, and as Skelton proposes, the use of physical space is one of the most highly gendered aspects of schooling (Skelton, 2001).

5. 4.2 Physical space and classroom discourse

There were different reasons why certain positions were taken up in class, especially the practice of initiates occupying rear seats. One reason had to do with control by respondents over their participation in classroom discourse. In an individual interview responding to a question why new initiate preferred sitting at the back **David** said, “[A]t the back, we get time to fool around but in front the teacher is close so you have no chance.” Taking up back seats was also strategic that allowed initiates enough time to think about their responses to questions posed by the teacher. **Sidwell** put it this way, “... and during questions if you sit in front, you don’t get the chance to think about the answer, at least at the back you have time.” Speaking on behalf of others assuming that they share the same sentiments, **Luks** said “[W]e also don’t want to be crowded by our teachers so that whatever starts, starts in front and that gives us enough time to think and react.” This tone of speaking in plural form seemed to suggest a common understanding of where these young men stand with regards to why they sit at the back.

Some respondents felt that girls who sat at the back not only drew attention and distracted them from paying attention, but also drew the attention of the teacher. **Siphiwo** was forthright stating, “[W]e don’t want them at the back; there is nothing they want there. They just bring us unnecessary attention from the teachers.”

Not only was there a normalized discourse amongst respondents about physical and discursive spaces but also to access to available resources in the classroom as I show below.

5.4.3 Constructions of manhood, power, status, and resources

To be credited as a man, any male needs to display compelling masculine performances (Schwalbe, 2005). When new initiates come from initiation school, they assume and acquire adult status which comes with respect and privileges as the revered above those who are not circumcised. By virtue of being a man, a position of superiority is assumed irrespective of the age of peers who may not be circumcised. Such superiority is also gendered in that males assume power as a right because they are male. According to Connell (1996), the construction of masculinities involves the creation and use of power relations.

I observed that whenever there was a dispute in class, be it a claim to a chair or resources, new initiates would say that girls must respect them by virtue of their status as 'men'. I noticed a hierarchical relationship in the classroom with the new initiates assuming seniority over boys (who are yet to be circumcised) and girls. One example of such a display was that new initiates sent boys to bring them water to drink or fetch their books from the teacher. There seemed to be a paradox with the physical position that these young men took up in class and the distribution of resources. Although they occupied the back seats of the classroom, they expected to be first in line when resources were distributed in class. This included textbooks or photocopied notes. In an individual interview, **Vuyo** alluded to this assertion when he said, "*[W]e all come from the township and most of them know that from their own families that you serve the men first.*" This statement revealed an assumption that all families subscribe to the idea of serving men first, which is an amaXhosa custom of serving in order of seniority and with men usually served first. There was also an assumption that everyone in class was Xhosa, and that they not only subscribed but knew the practice.

Further, the assumption was that it was natural for females to be 'unequal' to males. The manner in which initiates described such practices not only assumed the extent to which this was a taken for granted norm, but also that it was expected by males and females. **Sandile** highlighted this point further when he said, "*[W]e are not equal to girls and they know that. This has got nothing to do with age. Men are just not equal with girls. Okay we hear rights, and equality or what, what. Okay, here we will obey but in my private life my sisters at home bring me food and my girlfriend knows I take decisions so I am superior to them by nature.*"

Siphiwo also invoked traditional practices in referring to the right to resources. He said, “[I]t is an amaXhosa tradition to start with men when distributing things.” Not only did they the initiates want to be served first; they expected resources to be brought to them while they sat and chatted. **David** puts it this way, “I don’t like standing in the queue, so I always ask one of the boys or a girl to take a pack for me.” Invoking an animal metaphor, **Sipho** said, “[M]ale lions do not hunt but they eat first. So, we will not run around for notes; we wait for them to bring them to us. If they are finished before we get, then they need to sacrifice for us even if it means they have to share.”

Relationships between teacher and learner and amongst learners, for the most part, also showed displays of hegemonic constructions of masculinity as I outline below.

5.4.4 Relationships in the classroom

Schools are sites that provide a social context in the process of identity formation with their daily practices, subtly or overtly contributing to particular beliefs and values about what it means to be male or female. Teachers are placed at an influential position through formal and informal or hidden curricula to introduce changes in social perceptions or continue to reproduce traditional values, beliefs, and attitudes. How teachers construct new initiates was important to understand. It was also important to observe how fellow learners related to this group. I observed that teachers in both schools treated new initiates much the same way as the rest of the learners.

Both teacher espoused the values of equality amongst learners with the teacher in Bohlaleng stating, “[A]ll learners in my class are equal.” Her colleague from Mtetwa said, “... they know that I do not have men in my class; they are all learners to me.” This assertion of equality amongst learners was found to contradict the teacher practices observed in the classroom. I observed at Mtetwa Secondary School that the teacher inadvertently reproducing the norm by a female learner to give up her desk for one of the initiates. I noticed the female learner exercising assertiveness by refusing to move from the desk when one of the male learners in the class asked her to. She reluctantly conceded though, when asked by the teacher who said she should do so in order for the lesson to continue. The female learner protested loudly and explained that she occupied the seat before the male learner who thought of himself as a ‘man’. The teacher became aware of such perpetuation of male dominance when

this was pointed out to her in the post-observation informal discussion. Her reason for asking the girl was that, *“I wanted the lesson to continue without hindrance.”*

Observation of teacher-learner relationship in Bohlaleng revealed how the teacher struggled in an overcrowded classroom to move around and establish a relationship of trust and mutual respect amongst her and learners. She spent a few minutes at the beginning of the lesson establishing order, particularly among those at the rear of the classroom. The teacher said that her relationship with new initiates was one of mutual respect. She said, *“I believe that we have a relationship based on respect. They respect me and I treat them like all other learners.”* She insisted in referring to them as learners and not ‘men’. In Mtetwa, the teacher has this to say about the relationship with the new initiates, *“I think I have a good relationship with them.”* She went on to say that she does not treat them as initiates, stating, *“I do not have obhuti (meaning brother or older brother) in my class.”*

What I observed was contrary to this statement as learners kept ignoring her calls for order and continued chatting amongst themselves showing disrespect to the teacher. Contrary to what the teacher in Bohlaleng said, my observations showed that new initiates often ignored calls for attention by the teacher. They regularly sat talking, disturbing and frequently scolded the girls for making a noise. When asked how she addressed disruptive behaviour by initiates at the back of the class, she said, *“[T]here are different characters amongst those students at the back. Others are just attention seekers and they are not necessarily disrespectful, so sometimes I ignore them. But when they get out of hand, I bring them to sit in front. I know they don’t want to sit in front.”* The teacher positioned the front seats as a form of punishment for new initiates since they associated these with female and weakness.

Describing the relationship with their teacher at the school above, new initiates used the words such as ‘she is ok’ or ‘she is alright’. **Luks** described it this way, *“It depends, I think it depends on her mood because sometimes she just lets us do our thing at the back and sometimes she wants order and moves noise makers to sit next to her in front.”*

In both schools, the language the teachers used seemed to privilege the ‘learner’ identity whereas the initiates foregrounded their new status as ‘men’. This non- recognition of their status brought a dimension of powerlessness to new initiates who were not satisfied with the sameness this rendered to their identities. They showed dis-ease in different ways and

amongst those ways was how they participated in group discussions and group work. **Vuyo** said, “[W]hat I don’t like in class is when we are told to work in groups particularly when the teacher is the one who form those groups. You see, we have been told at the bush not to associate with boys but in group work we are forced, and there is nothing we can do.”; a sentiment that showed that certain situations that framed them as learners and that were created by teachers rendered initiates helpless and powerless. Class groups forced upon initiates may not yield the intention of working together, co-operation and sharing ideas, given the reluctance to participate by initiates. Alluding to this assertion **David** said, “... if I know the topic, I make sure I chair so that I can control the group and if I don’t know, I keep quiet, because I don’t want to look stupid in front of those boys or girls.” Part of the initiation school curriculum is disassociation with boys, and how these young men negotiate being forced by teachers is to take positions of control as alluded to in the response by David. Acknowledging the challenge of group work, **Siphiwo** said, “[W]orking in groups is problematic especially for us because sitting in a group that is controlled by a boy because he happens to know what is done or is clever. Sometimes they just speak like showing no respect.” While the foregoing was a general sentiment shared by the majority of initiates, **Sipho** shared sentiments that proposed a slight variation on the issue. He said, “I don’t mind working with any of my classmates as long as they are respectful towards me, I will also respect them.” Respect and control, therefore, seemed to be important to respondents especially in group work situations.

A different perspective in the new initiate’s relationship with boys and teachers was raised when **Thando** said, “[M]anhood is in me and by associating with boys; that is not going to take my manhood away and at school we are here to learn, and so, basically we are all learners.” Such a statement revealed how in a classroom some new initiates were able to bracket and put aside the teachings by the initiation school by not over-reading situations they confronted in school. It showed that although new initiates went to the same initiation school, what was taught is subject to different interpretations and might lead to a different uptake of the same issue.

Some of the new initiates in a focus group from Mtetwa also did not share the same sentiments of mis-recognition as described earlier. **Vuyo** said, “[T]hat is exactly why other learners do not respect us; it would be better if ma’am does not say this in front of everyone but keeps it to herself.” **Sipho** saw it this way, “[S]chools have their own rules and we are

here to learn so maybe ma'am is practicing what she teaches us about equality. So what I think; we can do is to know where and when to demand recognition and from whom because we cannot demand recognition from her she is like our mother."

Gender is a social construct and as such "... involves or includes an unequal power relation, such that, while there are differences within genders, it is mainly males who have access to, enact and embody power" (Paechter, 1998, p.55). In order to preserve a sense of gender identity, individuals have to perpetuate and regulate their performances of gender roles as deemed appropriate by society.

In a class observed discussing where gender stereotypes come from, responses from learners were varied but highlighted the socialization that happens in life to make one act and be what one is expected to be. This is reflected in the learner's responses to the teacher's questions. A learner at Bohlaleng said, "*[O]lder people tell you how you should behave, what is right and what is wrong*" while another said, "*[I]t starts early in life. It's said that females are expected to wear pink clothes and male blue.*" Another learner stated, "*[G]irls are expected to do house chores and boys are expected to work outside.*" while another stated, "*[B]oys are taught to be rough and girls to be tender.*"

In a lesson on gender roles at Mtetwa Secondary School, groups presented the following as common stereotypes:

- Household chores are done by girls
- Most people believe men do not cry
- A man is the head of the house
- Girls do house cleaning not boys
- Most people believe that boys can't babysit
- Many people believe that men do not do house chores
- Many people believe that women cannot work in the garden
- Men should not change baby nappies
- We believe that boys cannot clean or cook

These responses are quite similar to the responses the new initiates had given in terms of gender roles and how in their households, men seemed to make all the decisions and that

certain chores had to be done by a certain gender. These chores and expectations from society are instrumental in the conceptualization of gender and how it is enacted in schools.

In schools, young adults (re)produce the social relations of male dominance over females (Francis, 2010). The relationship between new initiates and girls in both schools was neither reciprocal nor equal. What was observed was that, although learners were almost of the same age group, a sense of girls being subordinates of men was prevalent. This was noticed by how these young men referred to the girls as ‘abantwana’ which literally means babies. In Xhosa culture boys and girls are raised differently, with boys given a higher status than girls. Growing up boys are being socialized into this superiority complex. This hierarchical structure sometimes affects the relationship in the classroom. **Vuyo**, when talking about relationships with girls in his class, said, *“It’s okay to be friends with them (referring to girls) as our classmates but as long as they do not overstep their boundaries.”* These imaginary boundaries that he described were explained as respect and how they need to know how to talk to men. **Sandile** said, *“I prefer not to mix too much with them (girls), just to make sure they don’t get used to me, because the problem is that once they get used to you they forget that we are not equal.”* This performance of inequality of gender becomes the re-enactment of meanings already socially established.

David raised a dimension of academic excellence as a form of power over girls *“You see if you want them to respect you more you have to beat them in class, beat them in school work then you know physically and academically you are better than them.”* This revealed a concerted effort of control over girls in one way or the other. **Sipho** pointed out that *“It’s difficult to openly have very friendly relationship with a girl at school if you are not dating her because guys will begin to doubt you and things will be said about you being Senzo.”* Senzo is a gay character on a popular TV drama, Generations. It was clear from the participants that although they had relationship with their classmates these relationships were watched, and those seen to be too close to girls were labelled. **Thando** sees the relationship as resembling siblings when he says *“...girls in my class are like my younger sisters.”* This perception placed him as an older brother in this relationship. The position girls reproduced compliance and rather than question, seemed to reproduce subservience in relation to the hegemonic masculinity performed in classrooms.

Learners gave different responses in what is happening in the classroom in discussion in both individual and focus group discussion.

5.4.5 New initiates responses to classroom discourse and practice

In response to a discussion on power relations, new initiates were less willing to assume a modern identity espoused in the way the curriculum expected. In other words, they were less inclined to give up their power and subscribe to norms that privileged equal status between male and female. **Siphiwo** said “[T]here are times when I sit and think that why is the school changing or trying to change what our father’s taught us instead of working with them to make what we learnt from them stronger. Like what we learnt in class about traditional powers in a relationship, for me there is nothing wrong there. Everyone has his or her role, but m’am says things have changed, we can’t live in the past.” **Sandile** not only highlighted the cultural distinction between what is taught in the LO class and what they learnt in initiation school but also how new initiates are treated in and out of school. He said, “[T]here are things that we are taught here that I think are against our culture and customs, Like. I am a man; I went to the bush okay. Yes, I am still a learner so why am I not recognized as a man when outside school I am. That is my confusion. If there is a ceremony, I sit with other man [whereas] here I sit with boys. Now I am expected not to be a man at school and be a man in the location [a word used to denote township] then what am I at school; when I am not a man.” **Sipho** brought up a religious perspective and said, “[I]n my church they say God created man before creating a woman so that a man should be in control. Now at school we are told about equality. So it’s the school versus what I am taught at home and in church; surely I don’t live at school so whatever I learn here I will use here because I want to pass.” Such statements revealed that there was likely to be little if any internalization of what was taught in class that might effect change in behaviour. Instead, there was a feeling amongst some participants that what they learnt at school had little value outside school walls in their material lives.

Vuyo raised another point that highlighted the distinction between what they learnt in LO classes and outside school about being a man. He said, “[W]e are taught at the bush about manhood. We are taught to be respectful, to be humble while here at school, we are taught about the same things but we are disrespected so we also disrespect. We are disrespected by teachers and learners.” **Luks** highlighted the tension between what was learnt in class and the reality outside the classroom when he said, “[S]ome of the things we learn from home we

will never change from. For instance, we grow up knowing babies are raised by women and other stuff. Now we learnt about gender, equality power in class but to me, I am not gonna change. I think I am comfortable the way things are.” This statement questions the relevance of parts

LO content in the lives of these young men. Referring to a class discussion on gender stereotypes and equality, Sidwell summed it up with this statement, “[T]here are things I can’t understand why we are taught because outside school they don’t work.”

David emphasized that there were some synergies between what was learnt in and outside LO classes when he said, “[T]here are things that we learn that open our minds in LO; things we take for granted and think they are natural. Like what we learnt about gender stereotype, you know that we are expected to behave in a certain way because of our gender. I have always thought that is natural.” **Thando** underscored that there was some synergy between the informal of what is taught in the initiation school and what is taught at the formal school in LO classes, made the point that they can work together to complement each other when he described a lesson on perseverance. He said, “I can say that, like what I do in every lesson. I take what I can do to make me happy and my life better, so I think a lot that we learn in LO will make our lives easier. What I can link for sure is that in LO we are taught to persevere, never give up. In the bush we are taught the same that if you set your aims on something don’t just change your mind so to me those two work together so I can say that there is a link between bush and LO.” This though did not relate to masculine identity where the majority still saw a distinction between school and initiation norms and values.

What emerged was that there is little or no internalization of what is taught in school to effect change in behaviour. There was a feeling amongst some participants that what they learnt in school had little value outside school walls. As a researcher, I was at first frustrated that participants were not talking about the exact content taught during observations but upon reflection realized that this laid at the heart of what frustrated them generally about the LO curriculum. They had little to discuss because they saw no value.

5.5 Masculine performances outside the classroom

Observed outside the classroom during lunch breaks in both schools was that new initiates sat, ate, and walked in groups as peers. Another perspective emerged that revealed that initiates who went during the same initiation season create a bond that lasts a very long time.

When asked why they sit at the back as a group **David** says “*New initiates are always together, we eat together, walk together so even in class we sit together, even if sometime you were not a person who like sitting at the back, the unity of new initiates draws you.*” **Sidwell** adds that “*What also needs to be understood is that as new initiates we have this comradeship that was created by the hardship and pain of the initiation school, so we continue to stick together.*”; men who have gone through traditional circumcision are bound together by the experience of having gone through this ritual. **Thando** who also went through the same ritual brought in a different view that “*... in some instances fear of being labelled or judged or having your manhood questioned also, in some way forces you to sit with other new initiates.*” These statements added a dimension of the sitting position as maintenance of (forced) unity or coercion amongst new initiates. This revealed that the position at the back of the classroom also served to police masculinity amongst themselves.

5.6 Chapter summary

In sum, the overall results in this study highlight the complex social space that these new initiates inhabit and make meaning of their masculine identities. The results point to them having to adopt dual identities of being a learner at school and a man outside school. While I expected some dissonance, new initiates themselves did not observe the discontinuity as problematic. They were not only strategic in the kind of masculine identity they privileged at a given time, but also when and how they performed such identities. For the most part, new initiate foregrounded their identity as ‘men’; sustaining this through the performances that included where they sat, how they obtained resources, and their treatment of girls and teachers. Most classroom performances by them were filtered through their identity as men rather than as learners. Even though some young men imagined a different way of being, they too, for the most part, adhered to the dominant identity; choosing to reproduce rather than disrupt hegemonic identity constructions prevalent in the context of the study.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken in order to investigate and understand amaXhosa's new initiates masculine identity construction, mediation, and negotiation and the role played by the Life Orientation Curriculum in the process. It posed questions on intersecting tradition and modern discourses assumed to shape masculine identities in particular contexts in particular ways. At the core of the study were questions about ways in which amaXhosa new initiates embody, mediate (and are mediated by), and negotiate tradition as expressed through participation in initiation rites of passage, and modern masculinities as expressed in the LO curriculum and classroom.

Negotiating being a young man in South Africa at this time seems to require young men to find a way of dealing with conflicting values, beliefs, feelings around societal and personal views on what it means to be a man and for those still in school, with views espoused and embedded in contents of the curriculum. Learners are therefore faced with different structures such as family and community, initiation school and formal school from which they draw on to establish masculine identities. Connell (2002) argues that young men negotiating their construction of masculinity in a school context means they have to adjust to the school patterns, rebel against them or modify them, a pattern that was evident in this study.

I drew on Giddens's theory of structuration, particularly the relationship between structure and agency to understand how the participant's masculine and sexual identities were constructed, negotiated, and mediated in a complex social environment. The theory helped me to understand how structures have enduring qualities that are difficult to penetrate and change, even when actors see the benefit or do not agree with the dominant ways of being. As will be evident below, the enduring traditional structures in the community of what it means to be a man, were reproduced and sustained by new initiates despite what was taught in LO classrooms. In fact, the LO classroom became a dominant space for reproduction and performance of a hegemonic masculine identity, sustained as it were, by both male and female.

Findings of the study reflect that generally, participants constructed their masculinity in ways that are consistent with an overarching patriarchal, hegemonic gender discourse despite aspirations espoused in the LO curriculum that are specifically geared towards (a) equality, equity and fairness, (b) exposing and enabling learners to confront stereotypical views and practices on gender roles and responsibilities, gender differences, and (c) analysing concepts such as power, power relations, masculinity, femininity, and gender influences on inequality in relationships and general well-being.

6.2 Dominant emergent discourses shaping AmaXhosa new initiates' masculine identities

What follows are the dominant emergent discourses shaping AmaXhosa new initiates' masculine identities arising from this study.

6.2.1 Hegemonic masculine performance and othering

The study findings reflect that the participant's conception of being a man is based on traditional, patriarchal and hegemonic forms or models of masculinity. Even though this group acknowledged alternative forms of masculinity, those that were perceived as not adhering to the 'prescribed' or 'expected' norm, were othered and positioned as deviant and not 'real' men. For them, being a man meant having the ability to make good decisions, willingness to assume adult responsibilities that include providing, protecting and being the decision maker. Even though the LO curriculum provided an alternative to this, new initiates were caught up and for the most part subscribed to traditional forms of masculinity. Adherence to the dominant script meant that they not only othered those who did not subscribe, but upheld and reproduced performances that reinforced hegemonic inscriptions of masculinity. New initiates were keenly aware of the 'expected' as well as the consequences of not complying to community expectations. While some questioned the stereotypes of manhood prevalent in the community and even though they recognised that an alternative masculine identity was possible, the majority remained caught up in a traditional form that left few options for those who desired a different form.

The way the majority of the participants constructed their masculinity reflected an existence of some form of 'blue print' that guided them on the ways of being a man in their community. Giddens's (1991) refers to this blue print as structure which sets the rules of social order.

These rules are internalised and embodied by members (or actors) and said not to have any formal force to back them yet people live by them (Gauntlet, 2001). . They become embedded in the taken for granted everyday social life. The new initiates in this study drew on the routines, normalised practices prevalent in the initiation school and in the community to establish an identity, which they sometimes questioned yet nonetheless subscribed to. It was routines and practices that reinforce the social structure of manhood or masculinity such that they reproduced hegemonic to the exclusion of other forms (Giddens 1991). Even though the LO curriculum promoted a masculinity premised on equality and equity, new initiate performed identities in and outside the class that showed limited effect of the curriculum on their material lives. The framework of structuration theory illuminates how the masculinity is both enabled and constrained by structures, resistance, and local agency.

Participants draw on the ‘rules’ of masculinity in order to participate, enact and sustain the structure and in the process begin to reproduce the structure. Institutions such as the initiation school can enable or constrain their identity construction through cultural prescriptions which enables them the privileged position amongst amaXhosa. The new initiates demonstrate agency as they negotiate and put the general structural rules of masculinity into action but adapt them into versions that suit their contexts.

Patriarchy was a structure participants clung to, invoking ‘cultural’ roots as the reason for adherence to dominant practices that reinforced a hegemonic masculine identity. when trying to explain their role within the society as man. In the traditional Xhosa society men are given socially privileged positions over women by fulfilling the gender-based roles of conducting rituals and providing resources. Bhana (2005) state that “[T]he context and the available cultural resources set the limits in the making of masculinities (p.207). These traditional roles are considered as man’s forte which clearly and openly subordinates the role of women and enforces authority, male supremacy and dominance. Connell (1987) speaks of interconnectedness of power and gender by arguing that men enjoy the benefits patriarchy affords them. He terms this the “patriarchal dividend”, which is “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (Connell 1995, p.79). These are structures set up by man and participant’s behaviour are then not as result of free will but a product of such factors. Their actions therefore respond to the structures of one kind or another, in which they are situated.

The participants stated that the status of manhood is conferred by having gained employment being married, have a house and children so that in turn a man would be respected within the family and by his peers. While a man is still unemployed, not married and staying with his parents, he is not regarded as a complete man. In a study on images of men within cultural contexts done by Van der Watt (2007, p.107) he found out that “traditional man stereotype has been found to include three main factors: *status* (the need to achieve success and others respect) *toughness* (strength and self-reliance) and *anti-femininity* (avoidance of stereotypically feminine activities)”. Discussion with the participants gave the impression that manhood was an achieved state. Men’s social recognition, and their sense of manhood, suffers when they are unemployed.

The role of social structure is to shape, enable and constrain the actions of individuals, “[I]t exists only as memory traces” Giddens 1984, p. 21). It is these memory traces that make the participants feel pressured and admitting that they feel pressured to live up to these expectations. This pressure is also derived from the initiates knowledge of social rules, it is the “very core of that ‘knowledgeability’ which specifically characterizes human agents” (Giddens 1984, p.21). Participants are aware that deviation from social expectation is met with disgust and horror, this leads to reproduction of actions as expected by society.

Gauntlett (2008) argues that a process of constant negotiation and reflexivity for people to begin to replace rules with new one thus forming a new structure. Some of the expectations of being a man that was characteristic of hegemonic masculinity were challenged and seen to be outdated, this revealed that participants were prepared to look beyond hegemony and think of embracing alternative ways of being a man. Social structures are constituted by human agency and at the same time it is human agency that constitute social structures (Giddens 1984)

South Africa currently experiences a high unemployment rate, and participants revealed the pressure young men are subjected to if they cannot fulfil the expectation of society. These participants demonstrate agency when responding to the question on what happened to men/a man who cannot fulfil the expectations of society. A man who cannot fulfil the expectations of society such as being employed and supporting his family and getting married having children, are not regarded as man enough. This reflect an existence of power struggle or

competition for position in the hierarchical structure of hegemonic masculinity and how new initiates negotiate their masculinity by engaging in other alternative activities to regain their positions within the structure. These men mediate their masculinity by cleaning the yard as expected of a man. Men particularly those who subscribe to hegemonic form of masculinity attached high value to their dominant societal position, and would do anything in order to retain and preserve their privileged hierarchical positions.

Connell (1990) argues that being a man involves, to a large extent, the negotiation of hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is one that dominates other masculinities and which succeeds in creating prescriptions of masculinity which are binding, and which create cultural images of what it means to be a 'real' man. Being called a real man is not just a natural development, man need to earn that right by conforming to the prescriptive of the society. (Silberschmidt, 2001; Cornwall, 2003; Hunter, 2005) speak of a hegemonic masculinity that stands out as the ideal male found in Sub-Saharan Africa and referred to it as the 'breadwinner' ideal, which defines men who can provide economically for their female partners and families and who earn their male authority through this practice. Many of the respondents although they were not ready to establish a family or ready to get married were very influenced by the breadwinner ideal, (section 5.3.2). Participants drew on traditional and cultural discourses to construct their masculinity.

6.2.2 Masculinity in public and private realms

Layder (1994, p. 133) argues that "[P]eople are condemned to repeat and reinforce the very conditions that restrict their freedom in the first place". It emerged that new initiates place a very high value on how their masculinity is perceived by others, from a traditional perspective of masculinity, emotional expression particularly crying is strongly discouraged as they may be seen as signs of weakness. Traditional masculine behaviour is said to involve the concealment of emotions that might imply vulnerability or dependency but it permits the expression of emotions such as anger. (Connell, 2001, 2000) refers to this as masculinities that are in tension internally and externally. The findings reflect that what participants feel and what they portray externally could be different. Masculinity as a structure in this instance constrains them from showing their emotions as expected from society. When man disrupts normative construction of masculinity by crying, he feels obliged to explain or rationalise such showing of emotions and links it to those that are acceptable like anger because such actions disrupt the notion of a man as not crying.

Men and women experience the same emotion but men are pressured to repress and express them according to rules prescribed by the structure. Gender norms construct male superiority as the ability to suppress feelings of vulnerability by not showing emotions that are considered feminine such as fear and crying. According to Connell (1995), masculinity is defined in relation to femininity, Boyle goes further to say “masculinity is not only what constitutes being a man, (for example, strength, emotional control and an ability to control the immediate environment) but also everything that femininity is not” (2001, p.3). According to Boyle (2001) a hegemonic view of emotionality in this involves an analysis of the gendering and spatialising of emotion within a given context. Thus, it is difficult to talk of emotionality divorced from gender and space.

Koborov (2004) posits masculinity as structure enable men to carefully negotiate a façade in dealing with their emotions particularly crying until an ‘appropriate’ space is available to remove the front and deal with their emotions. This is done because these young men monitor one another’s behaviour, reminiscent of policing each other for any transgressions of popular notions of masculinity. Bird (1996) cited in a study done by van der Walt (2007) on South African men and their construction of masculinities in relation to women and homosexual men argues that “through homosocial interactions, men continually reproduce notions of hegemonic masculinity, whether or not this idealized notion of masculinity corresponds with their own private sense of their masculine self. Therefore, the dominance of hegemonic masculinity is prized above revealing one’s own masculinity which may contain non-hegemonic aspects” (p. 10). The statement by the participant reflects the assumption or the social prescription around the expectation of the society when he says “everybody knows” This statement reflects a taken for granted perception that everyone knows that men are not supposed to cry. This reflects that it is not about showing or not showing emotions (crying) but about where and when.

The social feedback of showing emotions like crying results in men being called names, being considered weak and this ‘forces’ men to hide their emotions and pretend to be in control. Being in control is a way in which gender hierarchies are maintained. This does not take away the point that emotions are present but not demonstrated, i.e., that men do feel emotions but that they exercise control over them. O'Brien, Hunt, and Hart (2005) emphasised the importance of remaining ‘strong and silent’ about emotional difficulties

amongst men and these emotions should not be expressed in public, and should be controlled or suppressed. Men are expected to contain their emotions, and to exercise control over which emotions they express. Crying is seen as a loss of control.

Participants in both focus groups and individual sessions acknowledged the existence of emotions but because of how they were raised, had internalised the idea that men don't cry. Restrictive constructions of masculinity that portray men as showing emotional constraint prevent men from speaking openly about painful emotions they are experiencing. Men are encouraged to disregard painful emotions and should find ways in life to continue despite experiencing pain.

There was contradiction in how participants constructed their masculinity in the focus group space as existence of emotions was acknowledged but demonstration of them was frowned upon; yet in individual sessions some of the participants revealed that they do shed a tear. For fear of being judged or appearing vulnerable most of them felt obliged to justify/explain their action. This justification also looked at the severity of the pain experienced be it physical or otherwise. Some of the scenarios mentioned that participants felt there were things not worth crying over, like when you are hit by another men or losing your girlfriend. Death in the family seems to be an acceptable reason for crying. Perhaps I should be noted that focus groups could be a structures that constrains true expression of one' masculinity.

This behaviour seems to be in line with Connell's argument that most men do not actually practice hegemonic masculinity in its purest form (2000). The ambiguity between what is emotionally acceptable within the public realm and what is not is fuelled by the notion that men who cry in public are castigated as not quite "man" enough, or attention seekers of sympathy. Although there was some kind of compromise towards how participants view a man crying, it was tragic circumstances that they accepted as a reason for crying and even this there are acceptable ways of doing it such as seeing tears rolling without weeping or wailing. This creates an implication that man would rather suffer quietly without seeking help or making noise than being judged because of their action which might not be appropriate.

6.2.3 Construction and de-construction of masculine identity in the LO classroom

The embeddedness of the initiation structure is demonstrated through how it is superimposed on the structure of the classroom. How participants perform masculinity in the classroom is

demonstrated by how they control where girls sit and where they sit as men. Giddens (1984) explaining human agency acknowledges “[T]hat human beings are purposive actors, who virtually all the time know what they are doing (under some description) and why” (p.258). He went on to say that each individual’s actions are embedded in a social context that influence their nature. How participants took different positions in class and in group work reveal how the young man are struggling to navigate the dynamics of tradition and modernity in the school space and in LO classes in particular. The agency they exercise through the position they occupy in the classroom and how they interact in group work also reveal the tension between initiation and school curriculum. The school curriculum advocating team work and cooperative learning while initiation school discourages association between boys and men. The rules of the structure of the initiation school are mediated in the classroom to foster social relations.

Turner (2000) explain rules as only understandings which are broadly agreed on by individuals and their aim is to facilitate a broad range of possible practices, all of which potentially constitute rule following. He went on that the final determination of whether a particular action followed a rule properly is not the logic of the rule itself, but rather whether other individuals regard an action as appropriate, that is, whether other individuals understand this action as meaningful.

Sometimes the institutionalised patterns of interaction are “reflexively monitored” (Turner 2003, p. 972), this refers to the ability of the agent to change social structure. Thando in this study shows reflexive monitoring when he considers sitting in front not to be demeaning as considered by other participants. This is according to Giddens, agency, as agency is when an individual is able to observe his/her own experience and then be able to give reasons for their action. as agency influences structure and in turn is also influenced by it, if a other new initiates begin to adopt Thando’s perception of those male who seat in front, this will change the structure and a new one emerges. This would mean that there would be a change in the perception of males who sit in front as gays or labelled in a demeaning way. In structuration theory this is called the duality of structure.

Individual reflexivity of an ongoing narrative with the self is also shown by how Vuyo perceive some of the teachings at the initiation school referring to them as being outdated.

A classroom as a socio-cultural space where both learners and teachers bring their multiple identities creates a setting in which double standards are practised. Learners are confronted by the expectation of both school curriculum and society where they come from. Within the classroom space the agency that new initiates exercise is positionality, Chisholm (2003) argues that school curriculum is premised on the background of a rights based culture which problematizes the notions of masculinity and femininity, this is in contrast with the hierarchical nature of the traditional curriculum of the initiation school.

At school, traditional male privileges are constantly challenged by the curriculum that espouses equality and by teachers' attitude of no-recognition of their new status, there is no significant changes in the attitudes of these young men and how they perform their masculinity.

6.2.4 The gap between curriculum in practice and stated curriculum

The control of space in the classroom by new initiates demonstrates an enactment of power and masculinity. This was demonstrated by how new initiates controlled who sits where. In the classrooms the boys and girls sitting position in class is controlled and curtailed by men. In the classroom new initiates draw on the patriarchal structure of control for women and with respect to the seating of boys the hierarchical structure of masculinity. Further in the allocation of resources in the classroom the initiates expect being served by others and being served first.

These classroom structures and behaviours are tolerated by the other students and the teachers. The allowing of these structures and behaviours in the classroom by the teachers, despite being in conflict with the stated LO curriculum values is notable and problematic. The teachers intentionally or unintentionally select a position of collusion rather than disruption of these classroom behaviours that are in conflict with the core message of the LO curriculum on gender, patriarchy and equality.

The motives and reasons of these teachers approach was not part of the study, but the teachers did make clear that they were aware of these structures in their classrooms. One teacher stated that she was aware of it 'so long as it does disrupt the class'. One might draw the inference that the teachers were making a trade off in dealing with the situation, of being prepared to collude or compromise on this matter provided they could teach the LO

curriculum on gender etc and the initiates listened to its messages. The interview data of the initiates shows that the new initiates listened to the messages and could repeat the LO core values accurately. They just disagreed with most of these new values.

The allowing of overt structures and behaviours in the classroom that are in direct conflict with the stated values and intentions of the LO curriculum is problematic as it seems to signal tolerance of such behaviours and values. The LO curriculum on gender and equality is clearly intended to educate learners. The fact that these concepts are part of the curriculum is indicative of a systemic problem with gender equality in society as a whole and the LO curriculum seeks to assist in changing attitudes. How far a school or classroom teacher should go in demanding the actual change in behaviour is a contested matter and not the focus of this study. Yet it can be argued that if teachers and schools allow these behaviours in the school and classrooms to continue in our schools and classrooms then it raises the question how will we realize the ideals of the curriculum? It needs to be noted that section 8 of the South Africa Schools Act of 1996 (South Africa, Department of Education[DoE], 1996) directs that schools must have a Code of Conduct and such must be developed in consultation with the following stakeholders- parents, teachers and learners of the school.

6.2.5 Normative gender and power relations

In gender, structure is formed through performances. Repeated performances reproduce a particular form of gender. “[G]ender is socially constructed in a way that involves or includes an unequal power relation, such that, while there are differences within genders, it is mainly males who have access to, enact and embody power” Paechter (1998, p. 55). New initiates assert their masculinity through demands to be served first when resources are available and demand that boys or girls vacate seat at the back of the class for them to seat, these are normalised gender relations in this study.

The control of space in the classroom by new initiates demonstrates an enactment of power and masculinity. This was demonstrated by how new initiates controlled who sits where. In the classrooms the girls sitting position in class controlled and curtailed by men. In the classroom again new initiates draw on the patriarchal structure of control for women. This practice is "structured" so that while individuals are knowledgeable, they act in a way which unintentionally reproduces the system (Giddens 2000). Giddens (1984) claims that structure is closely related to practical consciousness and that practical consciousness refers to that

horizon of meanings which allow individuals to go on in the appropriate manner in their interactions with other individuals. Participants argue that it is a known fact that girls sit in front indicating a taken for granted attitude towards their action.

The normalisation of positionality in the classroom girls in front and males and particularly men at the back. In this context was that seating arrangement denotes positions of power, or status. From the discussions held with the participants it emerged that seating positions in the classroom are not 'innocent' positions but carry subtle statements. What emerged is that by sitting at the back participants were associating themselves with a particular group as one of the participants aptly put it "it's a guy thing" This statement reveal that back seats were a space in the classroom that is 'reserved' for those who consider themselves guys. This space carries undertone of masculinity construction and its hierarchical structure. The normalisation of the treatment of girls and boys in this study reflect an internalised social structure, if there is no agency through what is learned in an LO class, these new initiates will continue with the routine and reproduce the same behaviour.

It should be noted that although girls in this study are treated as subordinates to new initiates, they can influence the new initiates. No individual can change the structure single-handedly, it requires the effort and support to act in ways that are odd with the existing structures this will then modify the structures and new one will be formed. This is called "dialectic of control" which means although subordinates might be restricted by structure their agency can still influence structure. Nevertheless, their almost non-existence of challenging new initiates and their privileges might reflect their acceptance of patriarchal discourse which expects them to adhere to established gender norms.

Structure and agency are central in how teachers should understand the behaviour of young men at school. Learners and also teachers are not completely free to act as they please, because of structures that already exist but they have the agency to influence what form structure take, if then teachers or learners do not exercise any agency then the status quo remains.

Understanding learner behaviour or a human phenomenon through structuration lenses will help us particularly LO teachers address some of the tensions that have bedevilled our field over the years.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The aim of the research was to investigate amaXhosa new initiate's construction, mediation and negotiation of masculine identities and the implications this has for the Life Orientation curriculum. The study was carried out in Makana district in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. A qualitative approach was used to generate in-depth data through focus group discussions, individual interviews, and classroom observations. The study centred on new initiates who were at school in grade 11. Findings indicate that social and cultural practices played a role in shaping the new initiates' identity as well as how they positioned themselves in the Life Orientation classroom.

The data reveals that the participants come from communities where hegemonic notions of masculinity are still very dominant. Hierarchical structures were evident in participants' families where males assumed more powerful roles, while females held supportive roles to men. Participants revealed that fathers assumed the main decision maker role and mothers a supportive role. Any decision by mothers had to be sanctioned by fathers or other males in the family. It emerged from the findings too, that from a young age, this group of males understood their positions and were prepared to take the lead in their households. A few mentioned that families compelled them to go to the initiation school so that they can take up this role. The social and cultural practices in the home and in initiation schools strongly mediated the construction of participants' identities, which they displayed in Life Orientation classrooms.

Social and cultural constructs that define norms in masculinity construction, have evolved over generations and have been justified and internalised. These constructs create scripts for men or mediate masculine identities, shaping how, where, and in what way men behave. In a highly regulated traditional space as was the case for all the participants, social and cultural practices and expectations create affordances and sanctions that many found difficult to negotiate. For example, some participants expressed that the expectation that men endure pain and do not express emotions resulted in their silence and inhibited them showing emotions. Participants in this study revealed that they were expected to that the initiation school prepared them to withstand physical or emotional pain and were not allowed to

express discomfort (or pain) or flinch. They stated that crying is regarded as a form of weakness and a loss of control and should not be shown in public. Sanctions against such behaviour was high, causing participants to only express their emotions in private. The fear of losing respect by crying in front of those who hurt you seemed to be the driving force for not showing emotions. Interestingly with this cohort, crying was juxtaposed with anger. It seemed okay for a man to cry out of anger than to cry because of hurt or pain.

The presumption that hegemonic masculinity meanings are the only mutually accepted and legitimate masculinity meanings helps to reify hegemonic norms amongst this cohort. According to the participants, the traditionally circumcised man continues to represent acceptable masculinity. Although debates ensued on other forms of masculinity, the majority of participants in this study stuck to traditional form of masculinity and displayed these in Life Orientation classrooms in ways that contradicted and often disrupted the dominant message of gender equality espoused in the curriculum and expressed in LO classes. The need to belong, not go against expectations, and/or not be sanctioned mediated what was possible for a number of the participants in this cohort.

One cannot underestimate the power of the social and cultural influences that construct gender ideals in the community. Being a man from where this cohort came from not only translated into many roles and responsibilities but also expectations and public displays of a particular kind of man. The hegemonic discourse that, for a man to qualify as a 'man' he must possess certain demonstrable characteristics of which providing for and protecting the family is one, mediated the construction of particular masculine identities in and outside the classroom.

This study also revealed that additionally to being a provider, how much a man earns for a living, getting married, and bearing children completes the identity of a 'real' man. Although this cohort was predominantly traditional in its conception of manhood, they were in touch with some of the realities of South Africa, for an example, the high rate of unemployment. Some were able to disrupt social and cultural expectations that men, for example, do not participate in household chores. They were able to do so in the private space of the home but still retained the dominant position in a public space.

The changes in gender roles brought about by current contextual and economic realities in

South Africa invoked debates and contestation in the conversations amongst participants that stressed that assumed assertions about masculinity could no longer be stated as fact without qualification. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that there were new initiates who were willing to debate and question assumptions about their gendered identity and masculinity including admonishing others for labelling those who do not subscribe to the dominant masculine identity. It emerged in the individual interviews that others questioned the role and teachings of the initiation school in moulding them into men thus revealing alternative voices on the construction of masculinity. Despite this though, these participants found it difficult to express such sentiments in a public space and negotiate alternative identities without sanction.

The modern and traditional contradictions are highlighted in this study illustrating how the traditional notion of non-association with boys enables or restricts participants in the teaching and learning process particularly activities that involve group work in the classroom. Findings also revealed that the sitting arrangement in classrooms and their voluntary nature reinforces and perpetuates the dominance of hegemonic over subordinate or lesser masculinities.

Contradictions were evident between traditional forms of masculinity and expectations of a modern man in the school curriculum. What is expected as norm within the traditional community context was considered stereotyping in the Life Orientation curriculum. This created a discord in what new initiates grew up with and socialised into and what is taught at school. The juxtaposition of identity positions between the traditional and modern resulted in choices being made by participants, for the most part, who chose to foreground their traditional roles despite feelings on the contrary. This juxtapositioning also resulted in some participants being silenced and in them not taking up positions associated with 'modernity' in a public space.

The observations that the classroom structures and behaviours are tolerated by the other students and the teachers shows a gap between curriculum in practice and stated curriculum and raises important questions. The allowing of these structures and behaviours in the classroom by the teachers, despite being in conflict with the stated LO curriculum values is notable and problematic. The teachers intentionally or unintentionally select a position of collusion rather than disruption of these classroom behaviours that are in conflict with the core message of the LO curriculum on gender, patriarchy and equality.

7.2 Recommendations

The study investigated amaXhosa new initiates' masculine identity construction, mediation and negotiation and the implications for the Life Orientation curriculum. The study reveals conflicts and tensions for the initiates in the LO classroom, teachers and curriculum and strategies adopted in this space. It also shows a disjuncture between the curriculum in practice and the stated LO curriculum. The traditional versus the modern man dichotomy remains a challenge, with solutions not easily forthcoming.

In making a recommendation I am mindful of the fact that this study did not look into alternative strategies that have been tried in other schools to respond to the issues and problems raised in this study.

It is recommended the approach be one of 'unlocking through dialogue' on four interdependent levels to examine and fashion a way forward.

1. Unlocking through dialogue with teachers - to explore ways to address the problem of classroom behaviours in conflict with the stated LO curriculum. But this task cannot be done alone as it requires attention at a school wide level. Also share among themselves how they are unpacking the LO curriculum to see possibilities for improving the lesson pedagogy.
2. Unlocking through dialogue within the school - to explore ways that the school as a whole can and needs to support and address the issue of behaviours across the school as a whole that conflict with the intentions of the LO curriculum and the stated goals of equality and respect of the Constitution. Mindful of the fact that schools are required by legislation to have a Code of Conduct that has been developed in consultation with learners, teachers and parents. The latter might be seen as representatives of the local community.
3. Unlocking through dialogue with the community – given that the main keepers and supporters of values of learners, such as the initiates of this study, are the communities they come from, consultation with them would be wise in developing alternate standards of behavior for the school space. In addition, this consultation is required by law in fashioning Codes of Conduct. There may be some traditional values, such as “perseverance”. “hard work” and “resilience”, which were strongly

advocated by the initiates that might be incorporated into the values espoused by a school and not in conflict with the values of the modern project.

4. Unlocking through dialogue within the department – given that the Department of Education is the keeper of the LO and broader curriculum and also responsible for school policies and supporting teachers, they can and need to explore what they might do to contribute to the challenges and issues of curriculum and school culture.

An additional recommendation for an area for further research. That because we know little on the matter, research be done on the different ways that other LO teachers and schools might be dealing with the challenges of curriculum and tensions between the culture and values of learners and communities and values and behaviours that the school wishes to promote. There is also the need to explore the values of teachers themselves and how these challenge teachers in the classrooms when teaching topics or ideas that conflict with their personal values.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Permission to conduct research from Department of Education



Province of the
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EDUCATION

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Enquiries: Dr Heckroodt

Email: pernetla@iafrica.com

03 November 2011

Catriona Macleod
Psychology Department
P.O Box 94
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140

Dear Prof Macleod

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE AN INDEPENDENT STUDY: LIFE ORIENTATION SEXUALITY PROGRAMMES AND NORMATIVE GENDER NARRATIVES, PRACTICES AND POWER RELATIONS

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research at 6 schools under the jurisdiction of Grahamstown District is hereby approved on condition that:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;

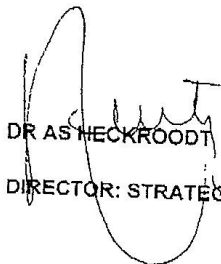
building blocks for growth

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Isimvo aliqaqambileyo!

- e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, as educators' programmes should not be interrupted;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to the Director: Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretarial Services;
 - g. the research may not be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where a special well motivated request is received;
 - h. your research will be limited to those schools or institutions for which approval has been granted;
 - i. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis. This must also be in an electronic format.
 - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Director: The Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretarial Services upon completion of your research.
 - k. you comply to all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDE document duly completed by you.
 - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
 - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Director: Strategic Planning Policy Research and Secretariat Services.
3. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Dr. Annetia Heckroodt on 043 702 7428 or mobile number 083 275 0715 and email: annetia.heckroodt@edu.ecprov.gov.za should you need any assistance.


 DR AS HECKROODT
 DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES



GRAHAMSTOWN
6140
11 APRIL 2012

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

.....
GRAHAMSTOWN
6139

Dear Sir

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am currently studying towards a Master's degree in Education at Rhodes University. I am involved with a SA/Netherlands Research Programmes on Alternative Development (SANPAD) project that looks at Life Orientation sexuality programmes and normative gender narrative, practises and power relations. The aims of the study are to understand the complex social world of learners, particularly new initiates, how they construct mediate and negotiate their identity constructions and the implications for Life Orientation curriculum. This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge that can lead to the development of responsive sexuality programmes in and out of school.

It is my humble request for permission to conduct this research at your school.

The research study involves conducting observation, individual interviews with the, Life Orientation teacher and Learners and focus group interviews with learners. The research study will not in any way interfere with the school programme.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours truly

S. Mdaka

Annexure D: Ethical clearance



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee, Rhodes University, P O Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
Tel: +27 46 603 8399 • Fax: +27 46 636 1205 • email: ethics@rhodes.ac.za

06 May 2011

Dear Prof McLeod,

Ethics Clearance: 2011Q2-2 Life orientation sexuality programs and normative gender narratives, practices and power relations.
Principal Investigator: Catriona McLeod

This letter confirms that a research proposal with tracking number 2011Q2-2 and title: 'Life orientation sexuality programs and normative gender narratives, practices and power relations', was given ethics clearance by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee at its meeting of 6 May 2011.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether or not the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Yours sincerely

Professor M. Göbel: Chairperson RUEESC.

Note:

1. This clearance is valid from the date on this letter to the time of completion of data collection.
2. The ethics committee cannot grant retrospective ethics clearance.
3. Progress reports should be submitted annually unless otherwise specified in the clearance letter.

Annexure E: Consent form for parents/ guardians

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Your child has volunteered to participate in a research project conducted by S. Mdaka. The project will be looking at Life Orientation sexuality programmes and normative gender narrative, practises and power relations. The research will be in a form of individual and focus group interviews.

Please be aware that!

- The research will not interfere with your child’s education and school programmes
- Participation is entirely voluntary
- Your child can withdraw in the study at any time and nothing will be held against him
- Your child reserves the right not to answer questions he is not comfortable with
- No information that may identify your child will be included in the research report

I HEREBY CONSENT FOR MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT

Child’s Name

Date.....

Parent’s Name.....

Parent’s Signature.....

Annexure F: Individual interviews

1. Tell me about yourself and family?
2. In your family who decided when and where you should go to the initiation school?
3. Why did you go to the initiation school?
4. What would happen to you if you did not go to the initiation school?
5. When in your community are you considered a man?
6. If people say you are a man in your community, what do they mean?
7. What are the expectations of being a man in your community?
8. . What are the things that you can do in your community that will make people respect you for as a man?
9. . What are things that you may do that will cause people to think differently about you as a man?
10. What does being a man mean to you?

Focus group

1. What can you say is the role of a man in the family?
2. When are you considered a man in your community?
3. What is it that you learnt at the initiation school about being a man?
4. What are the problems or challenges if any, about being a man while still at school?
5. How is what is taught in the classroom work with what you were taught in the initiation school?