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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Afrikan masculinities refer to attributes, behaviours and roles associated with boys and men of Afrikan descent, as social constructs. An essential premise for this study is the view that Afrikan¹ problems and solutions (in this case, in relation to Afrikan men) may be different to other problems and solutions, and that some of these differences can be ascribed to historical events (in this case, colonialism and its after-effects) and cognitive dissonance (a culture of “learnt” meaninglessness – or irrelevance – as a result of oppressive power dynamics). Masculinities – in any society – might never be represented as singular attributes; there will always be a variety of expressions, hence we talk of masculinities in plural. In addition to this, Afrikan masculinities function as a particular sub-genre with its own diversities. With this in mind, the study positions philosophical ideas around education (i.e. learning-processes), anchored in a cultural script, as important for both understanding Afrikan men’s challenges and finding solutions to them.

The study is not so much concerned with Western theory as it is with the Afrikan experience and practice. It also does not concern itself much with a comparative look at the differences between Western and Afrikan approaches. Theory and research – in the way it is situated within current scholarship and knowledge development – has an overarching tendency to position Western knowledge as the norm against which all other perspectives must be tested and validated. Its dominating and destructive role must be challenged. Therefore, this study will – in disobedience to what often is

¹ Throughout the thesis, the name “Afrika” is spelt with “k” (instead of “c”). This comes from an Afrocentric tradition that reflects the spelling and phonetics of how the name “Afrika” is written in all Afrikan languages. Since Afrika has been so deterministically defined, scripted and misrepresented, it also stresses the need to specify an idea of Afrika far removed from what it, typically, has been casted as in the colonial theatre.

projected as academic norms (i.e. start with Western knowledge as main references) render Afrikan perspectives to be strong enough to hold their own.

Wilson (1990) sees the collective experience of Afrikan men, both on the Afrikan continent and in the Afrikan Diaspora, as different to the collective experiences of men of European descent. The historical injustices of enslavement and colonialism meted out to Afrika and the current global racism and neo-colonial power imbalances have marginalised Afrikan men, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the rest of the world.

The idea for this study originates with the researcher's ontological perspectives on social justice, human potential, culture-based knowledge and transformation. Having worked with youth and community empowerment for more than 30 years, one issue that has increasingly caught the researcher's particular interest is the many challenges that seem to confront Afrikan men: Problems of unemployment, poverty, marginalization and disempowerment, but also problems related to violent, compulsive and abusive behaviour. The study examines challenges confronting Afrikan masculinities, by examining historical, cultural, economic and social interpretations, events and effects. By employing a decolonial approach of deconstructive and critical theory, transdisciplinarity and Afrikological perspectives, the study's objective is to understand the impact of coloniality on Afrikan masculinities.

As the study has been envisioned to uncover a holistic understanding of Afrikan masculinities, i.e. analysing the past, interrogating the present and recommending future interventions, it will confront a world of dilemmas, sensitivities and contradictions. The study enters the field at the crossroads between modernity and tradition; Westernization and Afrikan centredness; Hegemonic Eurocentrism and Pan-Afrikan liberation thoughts. It aims to investigate and seek hidden knowledge behind surfaces. It intends to boldly examine notions that describe Afrikan men to be violent and non-caring. But it aims to go further than saying "Afrikan men are violent" – it wants to interrogate, gaze behind what meets the eye and seek meaningfulness where meaning appear to be absent. The study is interrogative in nature and locates its questions in a colonial history, an identity-bewildered presence and a yet-uninvented-

future. It wants to go deep into a complex problem, but also firmly express conviction in the possibility of transformation.

Implicit in the study is also a bias towards a youth-focus within the discussion on Afrikan masculinities. There are many reasons why we should prioritize youth in such discussions. In relation to its population makeup, Afrika is the youngest continent in the world, with 60 per cent aged below 25 (United Nations, 2017; Adegoke, 2017). This means that our current youth will be expected to take up leadership across Afrika very soon. Seen against the fact that 60 per cent of Afrika's youth are unemployed (Jalata, 2014) and that poverty, health, lack of access to education affects young people disproportionately, it becomes evident that the majority of the Afrikan youth struggle for basic survival. This also impacts specifically on notions, practices and challenges related to masculinities. Given that the youth make up the majority of Afrika's population, it is a critical concern that young people across Afrika are not adequately involved in policy development, decision making and leadership structures (as discussed in Ntsabane & Ntau, 2016). Youth are spoken of as a great resource, but in reality they are largely ignored, taken for granted and spoken to – not conversed with. Ironically, as experienced in the research for this study, young men are seemingly more open to discuss sensitive matters related to masculinity and may therefore also represent the segment in our societies that have the greatest potential of creating change and improvement.

A number of societal factors has made this study, not only relevant, but necessary: During the span of the writing of this study (2014-2018) several dynamics have changed the field of awareness and South Afrika's – and also the rest of the continent's – national discourses in relation to men and masculinities: The assertion of Afrikan men as particularly angry, non-committal to family responsibilities, perpetually unemployed, struggling with poor health and being overly violent, especially towards women and children; an alarming number of violent attacks and murders of women by their intimate partners; the projection of hyper-masculine ideals within sports, politics and entertainment; statistics showing escalating numbers of rape and sexual violence, and a growing rape-culture; the *#MeToo* movement, the introduction of many projects for and by men – especially with focus on violence, health and entrepreneurship; the

hashtags *#MenAreTrash* and *#MeToo* – being echoed across social media platforms and causing a storm of reactionary, ultra-patriarchal counter-statements; the dying of young men in initiation schools (as a result of hazardous lack of hygienic practices); the disparities between those who follow Afrikan traditions (and often are portrayed as backward) and those who oppose them (and are seen as modernised); the Fallist movement and the eruption of confrontational discussions about White privilege, decolonization, patriarchy, new feminisms, male privilege and sexual pluralities; underlying tensions – and several outbreaks of violence – by South Afrikan Black men against Black men from other Afrikan countries residing in South Afrika; traditions and cultural customs being seen as conservative and oppressive vehicles for male superiority and female subordination; Black male leadership being seen as a vehicle for infusion of Western values within politics, economics, business, law, education and religion on the continent; prisons overpopulated by men; issues related to mental health, depression and suicidal behaviour among Afrikan men; men's involvement in trafficking, drug trade and prostitution; and a constant culture of violence in which men fight, brutalize and kill each other.

All of these factors tend to postulate that there is something wrong, damaged, broken and, almost, irreparable about Afrikan men. Something that must be contained and removed. Many voices have risen to explain WHAT is wrong with Afrikan men. A few have articulated WHY there are problems with some Afrikan men. But almost none have attempted to explain HOW Afrikan men can be useful, necessary and needed. Rather, practical suggestions have tended to define what Afrikan men must NOT do (kill, rape, violate etc.), instead of going into the characteristics that make good and relevant men, on Afrikan terms. This has created a climate where many Afrikan men feel judged, irrelevant, unwanted and overlooked.

Without claiming that the experiences of all Afrikan men are the same, it seems plausible that many Afrikan men feel “stuck” in an identity-universe where negotiating between ideas that are perceived as old or new, past or future, traditional or modern, oppressive or liberating, invented or forced, stagnate many men's development. This stagnation has had a tremendous impact on Afrikan families, communities and nations. Drawing from close to 20 years of work experience in programs with specific

focus on Afrikan men's issues as well as selected literature, the researcher has identified the need for a study that delves deep into notions of Afrikan masculinities, examines them in light of history and culture, and applies an analytical lens to extract and create new methodologies to revise men's role in holistic peace-building.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

As pointed out by Burrell (2010), the focus on negative practices of Afrikan masculinities can lead to a one-sided view being applied to all Afrikan men. The destructive values and behaviours of some end up being seen as stereotypically descriptive of everyone. Recently, a number of discourses – nationally, continentally and internationally – have focused on destructive values and behaviours exercised by Black men. Statements have been made by Black women, asserting Black men's affinity with toxic masculinity, sexual violence and gender domination. Some Black men have taken offense to what they see as an overly negative imagery of Black masculinity and they have claimed that such discourses are aimed at emasculating, feminizing and, eventually, the extinction of "real men". Some critique may have been justified, but may also have ended up in self-righteous defence.

The motivation for this study erupts from the many forms of hatred, intolerance, discrimination, undermining, infantilization and hatred experienced by Afrikan men. Equally, an underlying interest in the study has developed from the anger, violence, brutality, dysfunctionality, depression, poverty, loneliness, mental illness, cultural dyslexia, spiritual vacancy and brokenness associated with many Afrikan men. It seems that the Afrikan man is hated by many; by history, by institutions, by world systems, by families and individuals, but, also, by Afrikan men themselves. There seems to be a conflict in that the Afrikan man is being told by his surroundings that his masculinity is in crisis, while the Afrikan man, himself, struggles to articulate meaningful responses to this. An existential question seem to nag the Black man's mind; "What does it mean to be an Afrikan man?" - without him seeing his own responsibility in finding the answer.

The study looks specifically at Afrikan masculinities (the plural format indicating an awareness that several constellations of what is regarded to be masculine co-exist in most societies). In common with the history of most civilisations, the popularised history of Afrika is projected primarily as the history of men with stories of warrior leaders, kings, chiefs and liberation heroes throughout Afrika allocating little space to Afrikan women (Walker, 2006). However, even with their overemphasis on the presence of men, the stories told may not have offered a balanced picture of whom Afrikan men were, are and may become. Similar to the ethnocentric focus in many feminist works, the study of masculinity has been largely a Western-dominated analysis of the way in which White men in Europe and North America negotiate an identity in relation to expectations, positions and roles (hooks, 2004). As noted by Lindsay and Miescher (2003), the study of masculinity in Afrika has been carried out mainly by Western-based or Western-oriented scholars concerned with colonial masculinity and, thus, focusing on the “effeminate colonial subject” and the “manly” coloniser.

The study is founded on an invested interest to understand these matters better, and identify some solutions to them, from an Afrikan point of view.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Problem statement

This study will examine the impact of colonization (the historical era between late 1800's to mid/late-1900's) on Afrikan masculinity, and in addition to this, it will apply the term “coloniality” as a term encompassing the continued experience of being colonised which prolonged in the Pan-Afrikan world beyond the point of independence (see Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The study concerns itself analytically with how Afrikan masculinities were (perspective on the past), what they have become (perspectives on the present) and what they can become (perspectives on the future).

1.3.2 Research question

Seeking to apply a consciousness towards oppression, but also towards victory (ref. Asante, 1990), the study proposes to concern itself analytically with how Afrikan masculinities were (perspective on the past), what they have become (perspectives on the present) and what they can become (perspectives on the future).

The research question reads as follows:

How has coloniality impacted on Afrikan masculinities, and what role can Afrikan culture play in shaping a philosophy of education for relevant Afrikan masculinities?

Linked to this question, a number of sub-questions emerged as guidelines for the inquiry:

- What does masculinity mean in an Afrikan sense?
- What are the problems with Afrikan masculinities as they appear today? Were they different in the past – and will they be different in future?
- What were traditional notions of masculinities in ancient Afrika?
- What were the conditions for colonising Afrikan masculinities, and what can they tell us about developing an appropriate philosophy of education?
- What aspects of colonization and coloniality could have impacted on Afrikan masculinities – why and how?
- How are current challenges confronting Afrikan men related to the history of Afrikans?
- What kind of masculinities does Afrika need, and how can they be shaped?
- What ideas and methodologies are useful in deconstructing and reconstructing Afrikan masculinities?
- How can indigenous knowledge be applied in the understanding and transformation of Afrikan masculinities?
- What educational tools can be developed to assist the development and interventions of liberating Afrikan masculinities?

- If Afrikan masculinities today are shaped by “foreign ideas” – what of those who do not see any need to revise an indigenous approach to reshape them?

As the researcher, from the onset, decided to apply the methodology of Participatory Action Research (PAR), it was acknowledged that additional questions would arise from progress made as the project advanced. The research question(s) is broad as it aims at addressing a generic situation facing Afrikan men as a “group”². Through interviews with representatives from a Venda community – where masculinity has been challenged politically, socially and culturally by colonialism and coloniality – findings are seen in relation to a general picture, addressing Afrikan men at large.

1.3.3 Hypothesis

The researcher suspects that colonization had a fundamentally destructive effect on Afrikan culture, including the understanding of Afrikan manhood. The damage of colonization went far beyond physical occupation, political marginalisation and economic dominance; it altered the fabric of Afrikan sociality and its worldview. It devastated and invalidated meaningful agency on the part of Afrikan people. The study will expect these processes to also have severely impacted on how Afrikan men are (mis)understood, both internally and externally.

Acknowledging that Afrika’s indigenous knowledge was sustained through educational processes³ it seems apparent that the trajectories that once guided the various paths towards completing a holistic sense of Afrikan manhood have been altered, corrupted, removed, marginalised, ridiculed and made unattainable. This does not necessarily

² The researcher has been motivated to write about the need for a “generic approach”, addressing all Afrikan men as a “group”, from workshops and meetings held with men in several Afrikan countries – and in Diaspora communities – over the last 30 years. There is a unison voice in which Afrikan men express a very similar need to understand what it means to be an Afrikan man, and that a fundamental crisis in Afrikan manhood can be traced to historical injustices.

³ “Educational processes” here refers to indigenous learning processes in which the home, the family and the community are seen as providing a curriculum of essence.

mean that there are currently no systematic processes for the development of masculinity informed by Afrikan traditions. It might, however, mean that there is lack of clarity, authenticity, wholeness and relevance, as multiple processes of coloniality have reduced the quality and effectiveness of the manhood these practices once were expected to produce. It is these gaps this study wants to locate and respond to.

1.3.4 Objective of the study

An essential aim for this study is to rethink the future of knowledges by developing practical approaches to new knowledge production and sustainable human-centred development (innovation), with specific relevance to Afrikan masculinities.

Furthermore, the study will attempt to develop epistemic tools of knowledge that can be applied within existing institutions (for example youth groups, churches, community organization, formal schools and centres where traditional education is taught); a liberating pedagogy for relevant Afrikan masculinities. The study positions a will to decolonise Afrikan masculinities while also articulating transferable knowledge that can be applied in further studies and interventions. The study will contribute to other Afrikan knowledge studies, international research and global knowledge.

The purpose of study is to analyse – in collaboration with co-researchers – the impact of coloniality on Afrikan masculinities in order to create a framework for new approaches and understanding. Applying a holistic lens of inquiry, the study will approach both problems (asking “what” and “why”) and solutions (asking “who” and “how”).

1.3.5 Anticipated outcome: A youth-focused intervention

Applicability, relevance and practical change are seen as important indicators of what the study seeks to achieve. The choice of “Participatory Action Research” as a methodological instrument, has ensured that the study leads to development of “an

intervention” (for example, a course, program or manual) that encourages a critical reflection on coloniality, culture and family-hood, and projects specific educational processes for shaping relevant Afrikan masculinities. The study is particularly concerned with young Afrikan men (below the age of 30) and a concern that has come to the fore during the study’s development is the fact that few “ordinary young people” read academic thesis. It would therefore be of great importance to, in addition to the thesis, develop something that young men can access and find interesting. Towards the end of the research process – and as a result of close cooperation with co-researchers and other informants, this intervention has become a mixtape where inspirational messages (based on the findings of the research) have been recorded on top of a soundtrack of instrumentals, fit for young audiences.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to explore, and gain practical meaning within a vast and sensitive field. The focus on Afrocentricity and socialisation theory means that little room will be provided to investigate more political, structural and materially founded perspectives. Within the scope of the study, literature, some Afrikan men and the socio-cultural-political realities they are part of, will be consulted in order to better understand challenges facing Afrikan men and some solutions that may alleviate the problems.

This study cannot prophesize to adequately address the experience of all Afrikan men. Yet, it will seek to identify some commonalities in attempt to extract salient points without over-generalising. The empirical research for the study rests on data collection in the Venda-region⁴ of South Afrika. It is obvious that findings are not necessarily applicable to all Vhavenda men, let alone the many other Afrikan male identities within South Afrika, the Afrikan continent and the global, Afrikan world. The experiences of Vhavenda men are used as a lens to zone in on personal reflections that have broader

⁴ “Venda” – used as reference to a region – is widely applied, but not correct. It originally refers to the Apartheid-constructed Bantustan of Venda that was self-governed between 1973 and 1994. It is today part of Limpopo province in the North-Eastern part of South Afrika.

validity, and applied to a Pan-Afrikan framework, seeking to understand both problems and possible solutions that are of relevance to Afrikan men.

Studies on Afrikan masculinity in the Afrikan continent are not available in abundance. The relatively small collection of texts found are often written based on complimentary agendas such as health (i.e. mortality rates, the HIV pandemic) warfare and violence. Afrikan American (and some Afrikan Caribbean) writers have in greater depth attempted to look at the identities, cultural nuances and behaviours of Black men. The study is envisioned to contribute some useful information towards further construction of knowledge development and solution creation. To avoid gross generalisations, the researcher has applied ethical guidelines and an anti-oppressive, liberating focus in analysis and interpretations of data.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher – in collaboration with co-researchers – agreed that the study requires a methodology that has both an Afrikan agency and location in addition to advancing strong elements of transformative development (Asante, 2003). Generally within the academia, there are two main approaches to conducting research, namely, the quantitative and the qualitative methods (De Poy & Gitlin, 1993; Silverman, 2000). While quantitative research is concerned with numbers, qualitative methods focus on words. In addition, quantitative research is based on a deductive approach while qualitative method is inductive and is a more sensitive approach. In view of the fact that the research questions in this study are concerned with views, qualities, information, analyses and not “hard facts”, qualitative methods are appropriate as they provide more validation to the views of each participant and align themselves with concepts such as advocacy, self-help and cooperation (Adams, 2008). An approach where people are placed at the centre of the research process (Mkhabela, 2005) will guide the work by seeking to be of relevance to the community as well as the socio-cultural activities with which the work is concerned (Evans & Beresford, 1999).

The methodology will be based on ontological assumptions rooted in Afrocentric anti-essentialism with the facts being seen to not be given, but as a result of interpretations, and meanings seen as socially constructed (Taylor, 2008). The study's epistemological position will focus the research towards social constructionism. In addition, a transdisciplinary outlook will be applied to enable the phenomena of power and meaning related to culture and cultural knowledge to be studied in terms of how they are socially constructed (Ani, 1994). The anti-essentialist approach is motivated by an inherent rejection of Western/modernist analyses and a commitment to analyse the conditions that give rise to the construction of meaning (Taylor, 2008). As addressed by Sithole (2014), what is seen as conventional research is guided by concepts that are overly Western, and largely unfit to address Afrikan issues from an representative point of view.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

An idea that was very clear in the mind of the researcher from the moment the theme was chosen was the decision to use Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the research method. The researcher had no direct, prior experience with this as an academic tool, but have for many years conducted community-work based on an approach and with activities that were very similar to the methods used in PAR. The method proved to be easily adaptable to previous work experience with related questions, mainly due to its values of inclusion, collective inquiry and the need for the researcher to not just dictate or follow own ideas, but listen, consider, include and collaborate.

The choice of PAR was seen as the most ethical, inclusive and useful approach since the study seeks to involve, engage and regard people who experience some of the challenges being studied, and work with them – for a liberating purpose – to seek improved understanding, new knowledge and meaningful solutions.

1.7 PLACING THE RESEARCHER'S WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The researcher has been involved in youth and community work for more than 30 years. For most of this time, they have worked with Afrikan communities, seeking to find Afrikan solutions to Afrikan problems. The researcher's interest in the topic of this study has been shaped by both personal and professional experiences. He is an Afrikan man who has attempted to navigate in a world that is, in many ways, anti-Afrikan. He comes from an extended and scattered family that has been affected by the many dynamics of dysfunctionality that have come to define the Afrikan family stereotypically, namely, broken family structures, domestic violence, neglect, irreconcilable conflict, economic disempowerment and social disintegration. However, the researcher has also experienced the possibility of transformation.

Accordingly, the researcher have devoted much of my life to being part of social and political change, in terms of community development, youth empowerment and peace building. Looking back over a 30+ year career in social development, the researcher realise that the work has, increasingly, come to revolve around a keen interest in the Afrikan family. In relation to this, a particular concern has become situations that adversely affect Afrikan men in their role within the Afrikan family and community; and how this relates to identity, culture, history and politics. It has been my experience that it is not possible for the socio-political conditions and the issues of power that sustain a world of injustice and non-peace to be radically challenged unless we learn how to create and sustain justice and peace within our own families and communities.

Part of the researcher's focus throughout these years has been devoted to understanding – and transforming – the impact of epistemic, historical, cultural and physical violence on identity, family and community development in the Afrikan experience. At times, questions would arise about how these issues affected Afrikan men in particular. Increasingly, the researcher's attention was drawn to a significant void: Very few theories – and almost no practices – were addressing these issues from an Afrikan point of view.

With a background in youth and community work, the researcher have witnessed how Afrikan manhood has become both victimized by – and a perpetrating force of – violence, violations and destruction. The researcher has also acquired an understanding of indigenous Afrikan culture to provide supportive guidelines for, high expectations to and a deep value-proposition in shaping practices of grounded Afrikan manhood, far away from the patriarchal stereotypes Afrikan masculinities seems to be typified by today. It seems that Afrika has gotten stuck in a confusing entanglement when it comes to Afrikan masculinity; a clash between opposing values, religious disagreements, colonial power-imbalances, racist practices, chauvinistic cultures, fears, economic disparities, marginalization and a general “inability to act”. This last notion, “inability to act” is of great importance, as it seems that many agree that a change is needed. However, few seem able to articulate how this change should take place.

As a social entrepreneur, one of the projects the researcher have taken the initiative to found is *SHABAKA – Men of Afrika*, a men’s programme seeking to provide a dialogic, de-colonising and re-scripting platform for Black men to reflect, share, learn, transform and develop healthy Afrikan masculinities. The conceptualization of SHABAKA, which was founded in 2007, led to a series of conversations, dialogues, networks and, eventually, the establishment of programs by and for Afrikan men. Involving more than 2,000 Afrikan men over the years, mostly in South Afrika – but also in countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Botswana, The Netherlands and Norway, the work of SHABAKA has had a tremendous influence on the researcher – and this research. Chiefly because it has surfaced many points of similarity between Afrikan men (needs, aspirations, and problem analysis) and it has confirmed that Afrikan men, more than ever, are interested in change, even if many do not know how. Contrary to the stereotype that Afrikan men are quiet and do not talk about their problems, SHABAKA has created interventional platforms where men demonstrate great interest in speaking up, sharing and learning from each other. This has served as great validation for this study and shaped its aim to contribute to the improvement of methodologies geared towards healing, restoration and flexibility of meaningful, responsive and responsible understanding and application of Afrikan manhood.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Some terms, which all encompass controversial connotations, feature frequently in this research. Thus, for the sake of clarity and consistency, the following definitions have guided their use in the inquiry:

Afrikan: In this thesis, the term 'Afrikan' is used interchangeably with the term 'Black' in referring to people of Afrikan descent. The term has become particularly politicised in South Afrika where it may denote ancestry (or race), citizenship or even geographical place of birth (Prah, 1999). Used in this research, the term aligns itself with the use which includes people indigenous to Afrika and their descendants throughout the Afrikan continent and the Afrikan Diaspora (Buntu, 2003). However, while using the term in this study, its multiple meanings and tendency to identify Afrikan people as a homogenous group inaccurately are acknowledged with concern. In this study, "Afrika" is spelt with "k" (instead of "c"). This comes from an Afrocentric tradition that reflects the spelling and phonetics of how the name "Afrika" is written in all Afrikan languages.

Afrikology: A broad knowledge-platform, with academic aspirations, pulling together different perspectives of the Afrikan worldview through gathering of data, dissemination of information and application of knowledge in order to create an Afrikan-centred philosophy of education (Nabudere, 2011; Asante, 1990).

Afrocentricity: A collective of related theories that have in common that they advocate for transformation of attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour through an emphasis on Afrikan experiences (Chawane, 2016). It refers to methodology, theory and ideology that critiques Eurocentric exclusion and inferiorization of Afrikan history and culture. Afrocentricity has by some Western scholars been criticised for "romanticising" Afrikan history, while it has gained widespread support across the Pan-Afrikan world as a scientific way of thinking and acting, centered in Afrikan interests, values and perspectives.

Black: The term 'Black' appears in this thesis frequently – and often interchangeably with the term 'Afrikan' – in reference to people of Afrikan descent. The term, which is often used to signify a sense of solidarity against a common experience of racism (Gordon, 1997), and which sometimes refers to a state of mind rather than physical characteristics (Biko, 2004) and, at other times, includes people of Afrikan, Asian and Latin-American ancestry (Sesanti, 2011), is contested and not unproblematic. Used in this research, the term aligns itself with the use that includes people indigenous to Afrika and their descendants throughout the Afrikan continent and the Afrikan Diaspora (Buntu, 2003). However, while using the term in this study, the researcher does acknowledge with concern the limitations, racist origin and tendency to identify Black people as a homogenous group inaccurately of the term.

Colonization/Decolonization and Coloniality/Decoloniality: While colonization/decolonization, in relation to Afrika, largely, refers to the historical processes between 1884 (the Berlin Conference) and the late 1900's (era of independence), coloniality and decoloniality describes how the current world is asymmetrically shaped by colonial matrices of power and the Western premise for modernity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Mignolo, 2009). Decoloniality (in this study also used interchangeably with decolonization) involves attempts to dismantle coloniality on three levels: Coloniality of power (studies power-imbalances and structures of current global politics), coloniality of knowledge (questions who generates knowledge and for what purpose, and how it has been used to assist imperialist development) and coloniality of being (investigates how Whiteness has gained extreme ontological density and the dehumanization of "the other").

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS): Knowledge that draws directly from people's social narratives and artistic expressions, plural spatio-temporal dimensions of lived environments, cultural practices, language and reflexive dynamism to surroundings and interactions. Hence, it is what is closest to people's frame of reference (Shava, 2016). It includes systems of knowledge that articulates people's civilizational, social, economic, scientific and technological identity (Odora-Hoppers, 2001).

Patriarchy is the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. The patriarchal system is characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition. Therefore, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. However, it does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence and resources (Connell, 1995).

Race/racism: The belief in race as a biological determinant to explain human differences has been definitively denounced and proven untrue (Asante, 2003). Nevertheless, race, as denoted by visible characteristics, such as skin colour, hair texture and other physical attributes, continues to inform the way in which we define both ourselves and others. In South Afrika, the term “race” has particularly sensitive connotations in the aftermath of the systematic racial oppression of the Apartheid regime, as the government has attempted to practise non-racialism in the democratic dispensation established in 1994 (Adhikari, 2005). Race-focused discourses and practices are reflected in an institutionalised social reality (Gordon, 1997), impacting on all spheres of human life; the gap between rich and poor, imbalances in political power as well as practices of exclusion and discrimination (Sesanti, 2016). Racism, as defined by Cress Welsing (1990), can best be described as “White Supremacy”, as it refers to the power to create and sustain discriminatory systems that disadvantages non-White peoples and keep them in servitude to, and aspirations towards acceptance from, people categorized as “White”. In this study, race is used to describe an aspect of socio-economic realities in which skin colour, prejudice and racism play a significant part. While using the term in this study, its fallacy, limitations, racist origin and history of separation are acknowledged with concern.

Spirituality refers to meaningful existence through the “ability to relate to the metaphysical levels of experience” (Ani, 1994). It builds intuitive understanding by uniting thought and emotion. Afrikan spirituality is seen as a cognitive sense which is transmitted through ancestral relations.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF STUDY

The study first investigates literature and theories about the three main concepts which are explored in this study, namely, Afrikan masculinities, decolonial thoughts and philosophy of education. A broad approach is applied although the focus is on an Afrikan centred inquiry. As will be demonstrated, the discussion on masculinity involves multiple layers and categories of themes, disciplines, perspectives and theories. However, in order to retain the focus of the investigation, there is a bias towards Afrikan sources, although this does not negate the fact that all the concepts discussed in this research correspond with large volumes of knowledge located in other worldviews.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of what informs the study and its objectives;

Chapter 2 is a review of some literature written about Afrikan masculinities and how this relates to culture and history, and what challenges it entails;

Chapter 3 gives a brief introduction to some central themes in decolonial discourses;

Chapter 4 presents a context for this study's pedagogical vision by positioning how culture, liberation, philosophy and Afrikology relates to learning;

Chapter 5 outlines what the research methodology chosen for this study entails, its advantages and challenges;

Chapter 6 explains the various components and elements involved in the research methodology and its design. It also gives an overview of how data were collected and analysed, and some considerations in relation to the study's reliability;

Chapter 7 gives a thematic report of data collected, structured by themes emanating from the study;

Chapter 8 summarizes the outcomes of the study and the emerging knowledge it has produced. It gives an overview of recommendations and evaluates to what degree the study is trustworthy and reliable.

CHAPTER 2

AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main research question outlined in this study is: How has coloniality impacted on Afrikan masculinities, and what role can Afrikan culture play in shaping a philosophy of education for relevant Afrikan masculinities? In this chapter, a broad range of literature is examined in light of the research questions and objectives. The literature review attempts to consult a broad range of knowledge that address the complexities in understanding Afrikan masculinities.

Masculinity is often described as a set of role behaviours that most men are encouraged to perform within a society. Gilmore (1990) studied masculinity cross-culturally and found it to be an achieved status which, almost universally, includes toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality. On the other hand, scholars discuss masculinity as a collective gender identity – one that is fluid and socially constructed, rather than a natural attribute (Courtenay, 2000). Thus, in view of the fact that several understandings of masculinity coexist, there is an increasing tendency to talk about masculinities in the plural.

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF MASCULINITY

Masculinity normally refers to the roles most men in a society are expected to perform. Khan (2009) observed that there are many definitions of masculinity, yet, as stated by Gilmore (1990), in most societies around the world it seems closely linked to achieving a certain status in relation to toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality. Rather than discussing the biological aspects of manhood, masculinity is discussed as a gender identity which is socially constructed (Courtenay, 2000). Knowing that notions of masculinity have changed over time, present themselves differently in relation to socio-political contexts and refer to coexistence of overlapping and

contradicting variations, it is meaningful to discuss masculinities in the plural, not the singular (Brittan, 1989; Connell, 2000).

There is a tendency to define masculinity in close approximation to domination and violence. Ratele (2008b) observed that expressions of manhood often, but not always, relate to violence against women, aggressiveness and control. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (2005) assert that, while some definitions of masculinity may be located in a brutality, others may be closely related to reconciliation, negotiation and peace building. Kimmel and Messner (2007) have found masculinity to be a quality of manhood which is socially constructed with variations determined by culture, context, class, identity and age.

Akbar (2016:1-25) described a man's development through three stages; maleness, boyhood and manhood indicating the level to which a man fully develops attributes such as responsibility, decision making and a considerate personality. In his view, maleness describes the biological aspect of the male gender, together with the psychological and emotional dependency on urges for pleasure and self-indulgence. The boyhood-stage is characterised as a developmental stage that includes discipline, empathy and an urge for knowledge. The fully mature man reaches the stage of manhood which is defined by discipline (self-control), responsibility and altruistic concerns. Akbar describes the quality of manhood and he notes that not all men reach the stage of manhood, which requires a certain type of transformation and consciousness development. Some men are "stuck in the male stage" (p. 6) while others are unable to go beyond a "boyhood mentality" (p. 14).

We could then postulate that the study of men can be divided into three gender characteristics:

1. Maleness (biological gender); the sex of a man.
2. Masculinity (external gender); society's expectations to how men should behave.
3. Manhood (internal gender); how men express and respond to notions of maleness and masculinity.

2.3 STUDIES OF AFRIKAN MASCULINITY

Studies of masculinities can be dated back to ancient civilizations of Egypt and Greece (Richards, 1999). However, the approach to articulate a discourse about men has developed mostly as a “spin-off” from feminist theories (Mandell, 1995; Adams & Savran, 2002; Carrigan et al., 2006; Shefer et al., 2007). The study of male as gender has concerned itself with issues of power, resources, cultural authority, sexuality and oppression (Berger et al., 1995; Carver, 2004; Edwards, 2006). In addition to the focus on men in relation to labour, authority and leadership, a shifting emphasis with regards to viewing the male body as the main area of masculinity ideals, has emerged (Mosse, 1998) – especially within the commercialisation of youth culture in which athleticism and hyper-masculinity have become instrumental in shaping the standards for masculinity (Burrell, 2010).

Western scholarship on masculinity – having become a popular topic within social science disciplines – attribute credits for laying its foundation to sociologists, such as Connell (1995, 2000), Kimmell (1990, 2004), Messner (1997) and Seidler (1989, 1994, 2006), anthropologists such as Gilmore (1990), historians, such as Morrell (1998, 2001), and psychologists such as Edley and Wetherrell (1995, 1999), Frosh (1994), Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix (2002), Gergen and Davis (1997), Gilligan (2009) and Wetherrell and Edley (1999).

From its beginnings, studies about men were often concerned with gender roles and gender relations. In the 90's, Connell – inspired by Gramsci's work with Marxist analyses of class and power – coined the term “hegemonic masculinity” to discuss how some men use power to maintain control and domination over women and interestingly, also over other subgroups of men. She defined hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Hegemonic masculinities denotes a way of policing men's ideal attitudes and behaviour as a dominant conquest, and, equally, to separate the ‘non-men’ from

the 'real men'. This perspective brought in critical views on power, disparities, production relations (in labour), emotional relations and symbolic relations.

Lipenga (2014) strongly warns against assuming the existence of a single model of hegemonic masculinity. There is no doubt that ideas of hegemonic masculinity (ex. power, aggression, independence etc.) has greatly informed the notions and performance of Afrikan men's roles. However, there are differences between men that deserve greater focus and deeper analysis. The view of – and experience from within the - Black male body has been vastly different from the White male bodies and experiences that a majority of masculinity theories, including hegemonic masculinity discusses. The Afrikan male's experience, in addition to several hegemonic values, is shaped by invasions, enslavement, imperialism, colonisation, capitalism, Arabization and Westernization.

In Connell's (2005) view, studies of masculinity are divided between essentialist, positivist, normative and semiotic approaches. As noted by Pascoe and Bridges (2016), masculinity is often seen as a "natural property of men" (p. 2) and there is a common notion that everyone has the same understanding of what masculinity means. However, when discussions commence, one often realizes that there are many conflicting views on how masculinity is seen (i.e. what is 'manly', what are the distinct roles men should play, when is a man "not really a man" etc.). Power is often central to the development of masculine identities and may come at a cost. The pressure is often enforced through sports prowess, risk-taking behaviours and displays of hardiness (Frosh et al., 2002). Men who do not confirm to such expectations may face sanctions, be bullied or rendered as unfit to be called men (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Masculinity represents many variations (forms, grades of privilege etc.) – hence we speak about masculinities in plural terms.

Can we discuss "men" in difference to "masculinities"? Pascoe and Bridges (2016) see "man" as a state of being while "masculinities" refer to qualities such as identity, performance, power, privilege, relations, styles and structure (p. 3). Masculinity often features as an opposition to femininity and is defined by some as more in terms of what it is NOT (i.e. seeing crying and house chores as feminine attributes, therefore,

by definition these are not masculine acts) than what it, in fact, is. Men are “gendered”, but as Pascoe and Bridges (2016) have noted, this is often not considered, which can be linked to a certain blind spot: “The mechanisms that afford privilege are often invisible to those on the receiving end of that privilege, meanwhile what makes people marginal is all too apparent to the marginalized” (p. 3).

To Wilson (2016), manhood is not just a developmental journey, it is a process that a society must prioritize, support and have clear expectations of. In his view, men – to a larger degree than women – cannot be left alone to develop the manhood they choose for themselves, but must be motivated by an instructional guiding process where they learn responsible qualities of masculinity.

A critical, feminist argument against men’s studies has been presented, claiming that such studies undermine the progress made in women’s studies by advantaging the experiences of men to the marginalization of women (Canaan & Griffin, 1990; Macleod, 2007). Ratele (2008a) however argued that men’s studies are not necessarily a way to eradicate feminist studies:

“The aim of men’s consciousness thought is to give men something along the lines of what women’s studies gave to women: self-knowledge. Men’s consciousness thought puts men at the centre, just like the women’s liberation struggle put women at the forefront”. (p. 26)

Men are in control, but many men are also being controlled (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Not all men benefit equally from male privilege. Yet, there is a patriarchal dividend. Furthermore, masculinity is not necessarily restricted to the male body alone; women may be seen to take on masculine roles when they behave or interact in ways associated with masculine attributes.

Notions of Afrikan masculinity seem overly linked to violence. As articulated by Burrell (2010), a number of factors do indeed contribute to the violence that feature in many Afrikan men’s lives; socio-economic poverty, marginalisation and an entertainment industry which normalises brutality and, simultaneously, link it with Black masculinity.

In an effort to compensate for an eroding male identity and trying to live up to expectations of power, real or imagined, many young Black males feel forced to play out a violent form of masculinity (Haupt, 2008). Hyper-masculine virility, gangsterism and gang-violence are idealised in the media and inclusion in these behaviours may enhance the street credibility and sense of power of young men. In addition, the link between the economy and power plays a central role in this respect.

bell hooks (2004) describes a situation where Black men are driven to enact “rituals of blood”; to desperately achieve patriarchal manhood through violence to dominate and control:

“If Black males are socialized from birth to embrace the notion that their manhood will be determined by whether or not they can dominate and control others and yet the political system they live within (imperialist White-supremacist capitalist patriarchy) prevents most of them from having access to socially acceptable positions of power and dominance, then they will claim their patriarchal manhood, through socially unacceptable channels” (hooks, 2004:57-58).

Studies of Afrikan masculinity have often been linked to health (crime, domestic violence and sexualities) more than production, leadership, science, ritual, community development and governance. This discrepancy is interesting as we could say that there is a general concern about men’s role within all of these contexts. There seems to be an over-developed focus on certain aspects of situations where men dominate, to the exclusion of others. With a holistic intention, it might be important to broaden the scope of study, in order to extract data from one context that may assist in achieving a better understanding of the nature of another.

How do we explain hatred in men; against other men, and also against women? We can perhaps borrow aspects of what Connell (1995) described as White supremacist “protest masculinity” (against too much women’s liberation, the perceived threat of too many foreigners, the threat of Islam etc.) as a guideline. Her examples are from White men who articulate that “it has come too far” and seek justifications to address a situation, based on a gendered script including discourses of hate, feelings of

entitlement, blaming others, paranoid politics, seeing power as having been stolen away from them. Some of these sentiments are echoed in Afrikan men's frustration with immigrants and women's liberation too.

Kimmel (2010) also writes about mythopoetic masculinity (p. 145); a reaction from men's movements claiming that there is an erosion of patriarchy (power, places, and spaces for men to be who they really are). He links this with the many struggles for autonomous power that are linked to these struggles for patriarchal power (i.e. far right movement, extremist jihadists etc.).

Kimmel (2010) talks about two types of patriarchy: Public patriarchy, encompassing institutions, a society where dominance of men in powerful, economic and political positions) – power and mobility is gendered. And, secondly, domestic patriarchy which is expressed through emotions on a family level, where men's public power is reproduced in the home/private life. Both types, according to Kimmel (ibid) are held together by the threat, implicit or explicit, of violence (i.e. police, militancy in public and rape/domination/violence in the home).

It is important to remember that patriarchy does not distribute power equally among men. The premise is that some men are more men than others, and the masculine project builds on a necessity for other men to attempt, copy and emulate the positions, power and expression of the "most real men". This serves to hold patriarchal power in place. Men who refuse to confirm to patriarchal norms may be sanctioned, while the ultimate enemy of patriarchy are women themselves. Some men experience women's entry into the public arena as an "invasion" (Kimmel, 2010:18), an argument explained through fear of job/income-loss, notions of less "real" manly spaces (women "contaminate and take over"), underlying anger in response to political correctness (PC) and a defensive resistance, as if saying: "women are not strong enough" or that "women exaggerate problem".

2.4 AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES AND HISTORY

According to Akbar (2016), being an Afrikan man – more than just a cultural or geographic description, “...is a declaration of war against those who value your captivity in the ‘cocoon of incomplete development’”. Against this statement, Uchendu’s (2008) question “Are Afrikan males men?” speaks to the dehumanization, physical and social castration and oppression Afrikan men have encountered through encounters with invaders, slave owners, missionaries and colonialists.

Afrikan masculinities seem to, in many ways, be “locked” in matrices of Western-centric worldviews, histories and definitions. A need to better understand what Afrikan masculinities were – and can become – emerges. Hence, the proposed study will seek to, in line with what Mignolo (2012) has described as “the right to de-westernize”, apply a decolonial analysis to a complex field of socio-political and human history and interpret solutions in a multi-disciplinary perspective of culture-based education. So, how do we establish that Afrikan masculinities were, in fact, affected by colonization?

In a world where the notion of being an Afrikan man often equates to a confusing battle between being able, yet unable, to determine existence, the Afrikan male is reduced to an entity. Farmer (2004) calls this situation structural violence, which creates absence of a grammar and a state of non-communicability. Agamben describes being an entity as being caught in the mechanisms and calculations of power (Agamben 1998:71). In the words of Sithole (n/d), the Black subject seeks to emerge, but the attempt is liquidated by objectification.

If Afrikan masculinities were deeply affected by colonialism, we may need to trace how colonisers practiced masculinity. As much as the West seem to present themselves as a champion for gender equity today, they also represent a long history of gender bias. To El Saffar (1994), a fundamental shift took place in Europe in the 1600’s that would change the way women were seen in European culture. The age of enlightenment may have brought with it new perspectives on human values, but it also represented a dismissal of women which was – in her view – in contrast to the acceptance of spiritual knowledge that once was present in Europe. The modern world

embraced a rationality and material-mindedness that, through industrialization, urbanization, labour politics, education and accumulation of profit, built on dualistic thinking:

“In dualistic thinking, difference is understood as opposition. In oppositional structure, the *other* is what cannot, at all costs, be. That means that one must assume a position of power and engage in efforts to resist or suppress that which seems, because of the conflictual nature of the world view, to be threatening to one’s status as a being. It is in this sense that consciousness so develop and comes to be associated with the masculine” (p. 38).

The view is also supported by Brauner (2001) who says that within Europe’s dualistic worldview, perfection was understood, not as merging of opposites, but as a need to exterminate the negative element in a polar pair. Women were seen as being negative counterparts to men, corrupting the perfection of men through everything that stood as opposites to masculine ideals (i.e. being irrational, emotional, weak, non-industrial etc.). These views were practiced to the extreme through labelling, hunting and the burning alive of women who were thought to be witches⁵. Although most women were not believed to be witches, it led to a fundamental gender-bias where everything associated with females and femininity were seen as undesirable. It also created the idea that what is undesirable - and inherently a threat to males and masculinity – must be contained, regulated, neutralized and may need to be excluded or destroyed. The development of such thoughts took place at a time when Europe became obsessed with expansion, world domination and power. Examples of the demonization of female power can be seen in the persecution of witches, institutionalized female subordination, alongside industrialization and the establishment of school systems.

Drawing further from this foundation of thought, we can see colonization as a form of containing and brutalizing the feminine: By giving people, land and natural resources

⁵ According Aarsal & Yavuz (2014), the idea of dualism was greatly advanced in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a popular manual for witch hunt published in Germany in 1487, and served to legitimize the capturing, prosecution and killing of of witches, most of which were women.

a feminine value – by ascribing them to less-than-human characteristics, justified for “the real man” (European colonial, masculine power) to invade, expropriate, enslave and own them. When the carrying out of colonial brutalities are explained as civilizational development, it makes the coloniser noble; a defender of humanity who is obligated to do what is necessary for the greater good. The dualistic relationship of dividing into two opposites can be seen in the relations between “master and slave”, “coloniser and colonised”, “European and Afrikan” – all traced back to the ultimate opposition between “man and woman”.

2.5 AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES AND CULTURE

Mfecane (2018) sees post-colonial Afrikan communities as being “trapped in colonially imposed notions of patriarchy” (p. 47), which creates societies where male dominance, violence and oppression of women is normalised. At the same time, he also cautions us against the norm to demonize Afrikan cultural customs and traditions and over-expect them to be oppressive towards women.

With Afrikan masculinity often being linked to power, domination, violence and force, can we say that this is representative of how Afrikan men were seen in ancient Afrika? What does, in fact, Afrikan culture say about the role of men? Is there an Afrikan “script” for masculinity? And, where would we have to look to find it? The last question – about where we should search – is of critical importance. When we, for example, look at men’s role in Zulu-culture, Yoruba-culture and Kikuyu-culture, they appear to have a distinctly patriarchal expressions (male dominance, male ownership, male leadership etc.).

As pointed out by Walker (2006), many aspects of Afrikan culture were tainted, corrupted, destroyed or modified during colonialism. Oyêwùmí (1997), Diop (1989) and Amadiume (1997) have positioned strong arguments to say that many, if not most, Afrikan cultures practiced various forms of matri-focal and matri-lineal social orders.

Amadiume (ibid.) denies that patriarchy – the way we know it today – even existed in the ancient Afrikan world.

Nehusi (2018) used literary sources and careful studies of the symbolic values expressed through the hieroglyphic writing language to look at the socialization of boys into men in ancient Kemet (Egypt). In his view, studying the Afrikan male represents, at least two potential dilemmas. One being the danger of idealizing and too narrowly define maleness – which, after all, is an individual process. Not everyone adheres to the ideal and cannot, strictly speaking, be grouped, meaningfully. The other dilemma occurs when there is an exclusive focus on the male, as this may isolate him away from the society he is an intrinsic part of, and the holistic multiplicity of simultaneous roles he represents.

There has, for long, been a colonial tradition of over-simplifying everything associated with Afrika: “Afrikan existence and therefore Afrikan conception of existence are simultaneously multi-dimensional” (ibid., p. 3). Academic writing typically represents a compromise which often seeks to narrow, simplify or distort complex social realities. Personhood in Afrika is closely intertwined with communality, and one could risk losing the necessary broadness the subject should be treated with:

“The repeated experiences of disempowerment and the spiritual, psychological, social, economic and political emasculation of the Afrikan people have laid down an urgent challenge of the incomplete, deformed and disoriented male personality among Afrikan boys and men, in Afrikan families, communities, nations and the Afrikan world”. (ibid., p. 3)

Socially, the Afrikan child is androgynous at birth. For the first year of her/his life, the Afrikan child is just that, a child. The sex of the child will be noted, but gender is only meaningfully ascribed when the child reaches adolescence and will be guided into a particular role of responsibility attached to femininity and masculinity. The roles are different, yet complementary, and are linked to reproductive development – in biological, economic, cultural and social sense. Human purpose is articulated through

spiritual, social and economic realities through a myriad of complex, interwoven roles within a family, clan, community, state and nature.

Nehusi (ibid), further, finds that the body – the physical, biological entity of a person – was seen as housing several spiritual aspects of personhood (p. 61-76). He makes reference to *ka* (the vital life force connecting the individual to all other living organisms), *ba* (individual vital force), *akh* (revered spirit passed down from ancestors), *ib* (the conscious mind), *ren* (expressions of particular personal attributes), *sekhem* (individual potential), *sahu* (a spiritual, protective layer) and *shut* (shadow of self); as examples of the complex depository of faculties with distinct personality functions that also are governed by the need to integrate and collaborate in developing holistic personhood.

In contrast, Western definitions of personhood often locks the person into a deterministic reduction. In the studies of Oyěwùmí (1997), it is explained how manhood in ancient Afrikan societies were not biologically determined. In fact, gender, had a much more elastic meaning then than now. According to Gilkes (2011) women in ancient times were priests, magistrates, entrepreneurs, land owners, agriculturalists and leaders. Socially and economically, women enjoyed as much autonomy as their male counterparts. In many Afrikan societies, women were the governors of production and livelihood. In others, they were the ones who ordained men into leadership positions and held them accountable, should they not perform as expected. They were holders of power.

Ogbomo (2005) believes that – in a variety of forms – matrilineal political organization was the most common form of leadership in ancient Afrika. According to her, one reason why the information about matrilineal organization has gotten lost is the fact that Afrikan Oral History only goes back to 1000AD and became predominantly men's responsibility. According to Ogbomo (ibid.), storytelling seems to have started at the same time when a community became male-ruled, and the stories largely ignored matriarchies. She believes that true matriarchies (typified by mostly female rulers, matrilineal kinship, matrilineal female leadership and a pantheon of goddesses)

became extinct by the late 1800s, mostly due to male storytelling (where stories of women were omitted) and the intensity of invasions and colonial rule (ibid., p. 354).

So, how did Afrikan societies change from matriarchal to patriarchal rule? Ogbomo (ibid.) connects matriarchy to agriculture, and she details a number of events that created changes in nature, which in turn also changed political leadership systems. They include droughts which led to migrations and wars due to less fertile soil and inhabitable land; pastoralists who put a stop to field agriculture and enforced exclusive male ownership of cattle; the social and economic effects of 1000 years of slave trade which also sparked conflict and war; the enforced conversions to patriarchal ideologies demonstrated in Islam and Christianity and that fact that historiography increasingly became a male domain which subsequently led to the stories about – and memory of – women becoming extinct.

By 1960, both genders believed male rule was natural and that it had always existed. The fact that ancient societies in Afrika were centred around agricultural production and a communal socialization system, also gave presence to the importance of learning. In Kemet, as noted by Nehusi (2018), education was developed into systems which added “... *value to the individual, and therefore to the community, by nurturing and developing the person and personality*” (p. 7); a process which would develop the person into fully being a human.

Nehusi (ibid.) finds that there is a strong connection between initiation, fatherhood and leadership in ancient Kemet. Initiation-processes taught boys and girls, in separate, but complementary ways, how to become men and women. For men, fatherhood was more than a biological marker, it was seen as a result of a growth-process which entailed both life experience and being guided into responsibility. Afrikan culture gave ground to a communality where every adult was expected to be a social parent. The roles attached to fatherhood presented expectations of material well-being (securing food, clothing, shelter), but also “the need for affection and spiritual, cultural and social direction and development” (p. 12). These virtues also coincided with what was expected from great leadership.

Men's leadership role was often connected to relating to external forces (perceive threats in nature or by other people). This possibly led to the concept of clan-leader (family of related families) and, in turn, nation (clan of clans) and military leadership (with expectation to defend sovereignty), kingship and ancestral veneration – while inheritance normally took place through women. Roles and characteristics associated with fatherhood included ownership, control, drive, discipline, defence, cherish, nurture, shelter, teacher and master.

According to research by both Nehusi (2018) and Walker (2018), initiation processes, where the young boy is guided into manhood, have been part of Afrikan cultural practices since early times. Walker (ibid.), examining practices from all regions of the Afrikan continent has found that while initiation practices are found in all communities, there are variations in relation to the particular age when boys undergo these rituals and also how the practice of circumcision is a part of the rituals. In some societies, where circumcision is done at an early age (before the age of 10), it serves as a cleansing ritual, while in cultures where it is done around the age of puberty or later, its symbolic value is to signify entry into the adult world. While circumcision is practiced by most Afrikan cultures, it is always an integral part of a greater initiation process.

In some societies – such as Egypt and Mali – the lessons related to manhood (and womanhood) were integrated into the overall educational system, which made the duration of initiation practices short (Walker, 2018). It can seem that in societies where formalities of general education were less enforced, the initiation practices took place for a longer time.

Kenyatta (1979, writing about Gikuyu society), Osabutey-Aguedze (1990, looking at Akan society) and Williams (1987, studying Luanda society) have all illustrated the complementarity of initiation practices across Afrika. They found a presence of age grades, where boys and young men receive instructions according to developmental stages and age-specific maturity. Roles of political, economic and social significance would be carefully explained. The importance placed on initiation as an educational process speaks to an understanding that growing into adulthood should be an assisted process (and not something you have to figure out entirely on your own) and that

human purpose expressed through chores, tasks, cultural expressions, production skills, philosophical thought, rhetoric, knowledge of history, agricultural science and leadership represented skills that would make you useful to society. It is also interesting to note that the levels of intellectual depth and grades of respectability were equal for boys and girls, even if this – with age and maturity – would be expressed through gender-specific tasks and domains.

As described by Mbiti (1989), initiation practices are processes of deep, symbolic meaning; through cyclical patterns, the young boy goes through stages of “dying”, being “reborn” and learning how to interact with the spiritual realm. Equally, initiation takes the young boy through a set of exercises that builds his personal character, such as awareness, values, endurance, discipline, social codes and life skills. The essence of understanding the concept of communalism is developed here.

2.6 CHALLENGES IN AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

The descriptions of Afrikan men today seem radically different from what we know about men’s roles in ancient societies. In the words of Biko (2004), the history of oppression (in this case, Apartheid in South Afrika) rendered Afrikan men to become non-men:

“The black man we have today has lost his manhood. Reduced to an obligation shell, he looks with awe at the White power structure and accepts what he regards as the inevitable position. Deep inside him, his anger mounts at the accumulating insult, but he averts it in the wrong direction – on his fellow black men in the township, on the property of black people... all in all, the black man has become shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated and drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity” (p. 30-31).

It would be inaccurate to say that the experience of all Afrikan men are the same. But a case can be made for the many commonalities that the majority of men of Afrikan descent are faced with, to a larger or lesser degree. In light of the disconnection from

identity, culture and socio-economic status that we have seen the colonial experience has created, we can then look at contemporary literature about the challenges of Afrikan men (see Mbele, 2017; Ratele, 2017; Chingonyi, 2016; Sithole et al., 2016; Mpofu, 2016; Mohammud, 2016; Lipenga, 2014; Mangezvo, 2012) and create the following list of problems⁶ many Afrikan men struggle with:

- Religion
 - The disposition that foreign religions (especially Westernized Christianity and Arabized Islam) impose on Afrikan men;
 - The spiritual void many experience in being alienated from their own spiritual literacy.
- Politics
 - The one-sided philosophical ideas around nation state, legislation, democracy and male leadership – by and large presented in Westernized forms – as underpinning ideas that inform the framework of law, justice and society.
- Instabilities
 - Men who are forced to engage in warfare, violent conflict, attacks and defence operations due to ethnic, religious or political instabilities
 - Men who need to migrate – and often travel with great risk to their own, and their family's health and physical conditions – in order to find better livelihoods
- Traditional values
 - The disenfranchisement from an indigenous, cultural literacy (in various degrees, this may include loss of language, history, family-ties, traditions, rituals/ceremonies, communal lifestyles, initiations, moral codes and gender role expectations)

⁶ In this study, the colonial experience caused by Western nations is the main focus, although similar power-dynamics have also been caused by Arab, Asian and – to some extent – Afrikan internal – powers.

- Erosion – or compromising/corruption – of the presence (and quality) of traditional initiation practices that would serve as educational guidance into understanding the roles and responsibilities of being an Afrikan man.
- Education, knowledge and research
 - The dominance of Westernized schooling systems, curriculums and teaching/learning-methods; what it means to be “an educated man” (e.g. often one who is estranged from Afrikan cultural values and worldviews).
 - The life styles, social etiquette and behavioural patterns that often come with “being educated” (moving away from rural areas, seeking and representing Western values etc.)
 - Also: Afrikan men, increasingly, being less educated and “employable” compared to Afrikan women.
- Social norms
 - The expectation of the masculine performance of a character that remains strong, and never “breaks”.
 - The patriarchal values that defines men as superior to women, to not cry, to be granted privilege (especially over women), to get away with not honouring responsibilities (for examples, as fathers).
 - The expectation to be a husband and father, but often having few role models and little information about how to develop these roles.
 - Pressures expressed through male sociality: Expectations, conformity, fear, performance and under-communicated anxieties (related to values, interests, behaviours and choices).
 - The sanctions against men who are not married (seen as unable, unfit and as “losers”), and the insecurities that this can provoke in the individual.
 - The expectations to retaliate (often violently) if ‘provoked’, attacked or outsmarted.
 - Feeling forced to go to extremes – as a reaction to expectations where, as a Black man, you will never be “enough” (i.e. developing hyper-masculine, intimidating or aggressive traits in order to “get respect”, on the one side, or

developing defeatist, delinquent and disintegrated characteristics, on the other).

- Media

- Living up to stereotypical archetypes of Black masculinity perpetuated through entertainment, music videos, fashion, mirroring of reality shows and characters portrayed in movies.
- Pressures emanating from stories, discussions, exchanges, articles and portraits presented in books, online and through social media.

- Economy

- Not being able to play the economic role society expects from a man; Being the breadwinner, being employed, being an entrepreneur, being a leader and a financial provider.
- Men not knowing how to adjust to competition from females in the labour-market or being in relationships with women who earn more than them.
- Not being able to afford to “keep up” with material expectations of “real manhood”, ex. fitness, health care, build a house, buy a car, and afford expensive wedding ceremonies (including high amounts charged for bride wealth/dowry) and general life styles.
- The temptation to take short-cuts that may have devastating outcomes, ex. considering criminal careers, fraud and illegal activities.

- Poverty

- Facing the social stigma that comes with not being able to provide (financially) and not living up to certain, societal expectations (in regard to material possession, being married, having children, building your own home etc.).
- Negative identities that develop from “not having” (being seen as a social outcast, being the shame of a family, losing social networks, loneliness etc.)
- Being forced to seek – and accept – employment that may come with health hazards, inhuman treatment or very little compensation

- Modernity
 - The effects of understanding Afrikan masculinity solely in relation to institutions of “modernity” (Western-defined concepts of democracy, leadership, lifestyles, personality traits, social markers and entitlement).
- Psycho-spiritual issues
 - Lack of tools in order to respond to challenges (i.e. the development of addictions, the need to overspend, compensation-tactics in order to make impressions, act out a false personality for social status etc.).
 - Accepting – or not being able to counter – stereotypes related to race, identity and culture (i.e. racial notions about laziness, womanizing, substance use, fatherly responsibilities, sexual promiscuity, shame of culture, physical traits etc.).
 - Physical and mental manifestations of imbalance (i.e. overweight, deteriorating health, diseases, stress, depression, suicide, mental/spiritual health).
- Unspeakability
 - Moving from a communal cultural socialities governed by individuality has privatized – and made public discourse around it shameful // The many dynamics that have made challenges related to men unspeakable, taboo-related, awkward and hidden, ex. Afrikan men’s sexuality, reproductive health, physical health, mental health, economic standing, political affiliation/loyalty, inter-generational and relation to others – especially other men.
- Gender-conformity
 - Masculinity in Afrika is largely defined by institutions and ideas that were imposed from outside (for example, through religion, education politics, political oppression etc.), forcing men to conform to – and be judged by – a criteria that is not representative of Afrikan, indigenous understanding of gender and social roles and. This creates a reality in which ideals of “being

a real Afrikan man” are – in part or fully – rooted in non-Afrikan sources and worldviews.

With the expectation that Afrikan men should never “show weakness”, the above list presents challenges that can devastate men, and that they often carry on in silence and never seek advice or help. Where silence leads to deterioration and worsening of the problem, it also becomes more difficult to prevent, resolve or eradicate. Although there are exceptions, there are generally a lack of men who role model behaviours and characteristics to demonstrate that men can – and must – seek help, find solutions and speak up when confronted by challenges.

2.7 CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

Notions about Afrikan men’s aggressive nature, sexual habits, inability to reason, laziness, moral weakness and irrational behaviour are results of stereotypes that have developed over many years through Eurocentric writing, entertainment, hearsay, colonial texts and use of demeaning characterization. Such stereotypes have served as an effective way of diminishing Black men’s humanity and cementing White masculine ideals and representation. In his critique of the novel “Heart of Darkness” by Joseph Conrad (1996)⁷, Chinua Achebe (2000) noted the graphic language used to cement stereotypical imagery which helped to justify undermining of Afrikan people. In direct relation to Afrikan men, this described a process of infantilization and primitivisation, in which the Afrikan man was perpetually portrayed as an immature boy whose value depended on his relation to a master/owner (Njemanze, 2013). The paternalistic relations enforced by colonial administrations created an imagery of “the natives” as misguided in their analysis, incapable of autonomous leadership, emotional (as opposed to rational) in political decision making and immature in governance (Schatzberg, 2001). Ebila (2015) has argued that infantilizing Afrikan men through divide-and-rule and brutality – which “proved” that Afrikan men were not real

⁷ A seminal colonial novel, published in 1889, capturing a colonial imagery of “the savage Afrika” which became typical for many related works at the time; and still holds grip in people’s notions about and relation to Afrika and Afrikans. CONRAD, 1996./ Achebe 2000

men – served as justification for further oppressive, disempowering and undermining rulership.

The breaking down of Afrikan male identities featured as an integral – and prioritized – aspect of colonial expansion. Wollacott (2006) describes several aspects in which gender played a central role in imperialistic pursuit: Establishing academic societies with an over-sexualized, racist and pornographic obsession with the colonised and “primitive cultures”; legitimizing sexual and violent abuse as a core aspect of imperial culture; creating stories about hunting and exploration in which White men appeared as hyper-masculine figures (in contrast to ignorant and irrational Black men); constructing myths about certain Afrikan peoples as inherently warlike and dangerous⁸. The positioning of warfare as a dominant form of manliness also reflected in Western sports – especially soccer, cricket and rugby – (both ridden with racist connotations and practices) as the ultimate games of masculine performance.

Furthermore, Wollacott (ibid.) listed some specific drivers in British colonial practices that came to shape the masculinity of colonial “subjects”: Sports (awareness of gender separation, class, prowess and imperial culture), engineering, colonial civil service, sexuality, moral policing of women’s bodies and domestication. Through deployment at construction sites, in military positions, on plantations and in colonial service, Afrikan men were socialized to know their place and rank, what is to be seen as men’s jobs, how to practice socio-economic exclusion and ascribing unequal worth to women and men.

As noted by Levine (2004), the processes of colonization and empires were – for a long time – predominantly men’s spaces; an oppressive interplay between male colonisers and male colonial subjects. Being forced into domestic service, being incorporated into a colonial economy and the ‘demilitarization’ of pre-colonial military cultures, transformed masculinities. Violence became an affirmation of manhood. Leadership in traditional chieftainships were given a new – and more “effective” –

⁸ An interesting note can be made of the impact of colonised people labeled intelligent – often for their militaristic organization – and how they ended up in the colonial script as somewhat respectable, fierce and manly; examples the Zulu of South Afrika, the Dahomey in Mali and the Maori of New Zealand.

template for oppressive and dishonest rulership. The colonisers harboured admiration for colonised groups of men who expressed military prowess. The projection of White masculinity as ideal came to be seen as one of rational, financial prudence, sexual control, authority and responsibility – a colonial script which became the blueprint in colonies, also after independence.

The White anxieties which created allegations of Black men's brutality justified a more repressive line of discipline, control and separation. It resulted in the templates for keeping things clean and orderly, as part of civilizing the home-space. At the fall of the British Empire, "modernization" of gender was given priority in colonial policy, including civilizing missions that would make the colonised man conform to Western notions of domesticity that would create stability – specific programs to civilize the primitive through social clubs, girls' guilds, boy scouts and domestic science training.

Through a number of sociality programs (i.e. social clubs, guilds, leisure activities and school curricula), Afrikan men (and women) learned new standards for "being civilized", i.e. mimicking European values, lifestyles, productivity, aspirations and family relations. This also included learning to relate to Afrikan culture, rituals and meaning as barbaric and uncivilized. Many values were so brutally entrenched that they became part of an internalised male identity that continued also when colonial rule lessened its grip.

As part of the anti-colonial struggle and nationalist persuasion, masculinity was reconfigured; gender-relations seen in line with the colonial culture, the development of anti-imperialist activism coined with aspirations for Westernization, development of a literature of independence that became a masculine discourse with reactive hyper-masculinity, in which women were absent from discourses and (most) nationalist struggles (Levine, 2004). In post-colonial societies, efforts were made to manage populations (and, especially, controlling men), carefully manage political decision making processes (to be in the former colonial powers' interests), creating an elite of (some) well-educate men who would discriminate against women and adhere to colonial value systems.

Even as the British Empire changed to the Commonwealth, efforts were made to ensure that the imperial influence was kept intact, neutralizing/pacifying potential trouble-makers (revolutionaries) and the heavy cementation of what Afrikan families were capable and incapable of; The mother-headed, dysfunctional family; stereotypes about Afrikan women as primitive, sexualized and dependent, and stereotypes about Afrikan men as inferior. This created the image of Afrikans in need of help, unable to govern themselves and, legitimized interventions where Europeans would seek to control, discipline and teach “uncivilized Afrikans” how to be better human beings. Levine (2014) also writes about the over-representation of White women in organizations and movements to tranquilize and surveil political dissidence. The sexualized values governing family life and the intimate sphere were instructed through imperialism; the woman’s body as the man’s property, the sexual violator being seen as a thief and as “damaging another man’s property”, male supremacy vs female subordination as an unquestionable value and a woman being expected to “know her place”.

The loss of empire constituted a crisis in British masculinity and was a huge blow of emasculation to Britishness. The fall was seen as a feminization of Britain, hence colonial times and images were idealized (“the time when men were real men”). Herein lies a distinctly gendered colonial formula for power: What is rendered masculine has the right to attack, invade, conquer, rule, discipline, define and own. Conversely, what is rendered feminine, then, will be attacked, invaded, conquered, ruled, disciplined, defined and owned. To use this illustration further, we can see that, in the colonial grip, Afrika became the feminized victim and Europe the masculine perpetrator. In the case of South Afrika, the Black population was subjugated as an oppressable (feminized) people and the White minority became the (masculinized) oppressor. Arguments for the justification of such power imbalances were drawn from biblical interpretations, scientific postulations, race constructs, colonial imagery and stereotypes.

The power illustration here is built on a self-identification where Europeans saw themselves as a master race. Cress-Welsing (1990) believes that, much more than a “natural”, inborn superiority, this idea of supremacy was a forced projection of fear. In her view, Europeans had an acute awareness of their numerical minority-status within

the human family (only 10% White) and, from a biological perspective, they also knew that in a world where darker skin colour is a norm, Whiteness could potentially be exterminated. In her view, European colonial brutality is a desperate expression of this fear, articulated through the idea of a European master race (more human, more civilized, closer to God, more intelligent, better leaders etc.).

Bederman (2016) agrees that masculinity has been overly shaped in the ideal of Whiteness. So much that an essential attribute of being a “real man” is to be White, or have some close proximity to spaces, positions and mannerisms associated with Whiteness. He sees this as a result of several historical processes linked to the commercial globalization of Amercianised and Westernised lifestyle values in the 20th Century. It includes the linking of masculinity to the identity of White bodies; replacing ideals of hard and honest work with aspirations towards middle class status, vanity, playfulness and muscular body-performance; recreation of manhood shaped by colonial ideas such as racial hierarchies, White power, static differentiations between ‘civilised’ and ‘primitive’, economic exploitation and cultural imperialism.

Kimmel (2010) notes how globalization has impacted on the understanding and performance of masculinity. In his view, globalization has changed masculinity through constant disruptions and reconfigurations on neo-colonial, economic, political and cultural levels. Globalization can, in itself, be seen largely as a gendered process. The institutionalization of Globalization appear genderless, but is not; ex. unequal wages, unequal labour force, unequal ownership/control, unequal control over own body and discriminatory cultural privileges are all examples of how the divide between men and women was enforced. There is a pervasive gendered logic which has created a global hegemonic masculinity effect: The gendering of local, regional and national resistance to incorporation into the global agenda has served as a neutralizing factor. This is also linked to the making of gender as a chief organizing principle throughout society, expressed as a form of “cultural homogenization” of citizens (p. 145).

As a result of colonial laws, ownership and leadership became strictly male domains. Women were excluded from political participation and decision making and were forced to demonstrate strict obedience to their husbands and elder men. Women could

become subject to violent punishments and disciplinary actions should they not adhere to the new customs. They literally became dependent on men and were seen to cause, represent and create problems. Hence they had to be controlled. Another reason identified by Ogbomo (2005) in the decline of women's leadership in Afrika is attached to pastoralism (laws and customs enforced through cattle farming): Cattle politics/ownership and Islamic influences weakened women's status. In pastoralism cattle is wealth, and it gave men opportunity to enforce class and gender privileges.

Adesina (2005) describes colonialism as a penetration of violence. From the establishment of colonial rule in 1884 until the reluctant retreat during the 1950's and 1960's, Europe exercised a totalitarian submission of the Afrikan continent. The many scrambles for economic expansion, profitable production and political submission resulted in devastating changes on political, social, economic cultural, and psychological levels.

Adesina (ibid) sees the effects of colonialism playing a direct role on changing Afrikan men and their role in society:

"The Afrikan man was re-oriented. He was taught to think like the Europeans, eat like them, talk like them, dress like them, behave like them, believe in what they believe in but know that an Afrikan can never be equal to a European even if he does all this, as the Afrikan was an inferior and barbaric race" (p. 404).

She counts several ways in how Europeans sought to completely crush Afrikan thought, culture and behaviour: Civilizing missions; modifying and destroying crucial expressions of Afrikan culture; forcing European concepts through values, science, politics, economics and building of institutions; the missionary efforts to pacify and prepare Afrikans for takeover; create impression about Afrikan inferiority (culture / civilization); Condemning all things Afrikan; Glorifying all things European; Assimilation (especially the French); Changing the institution of marriage, which led to moral decay and social/family problems; Demonizing Afrikan spirituality; and justifying capitalist expansion.

Jenkwe (2015), looking specifically at how colonization changed Afrikan values in Igbo society, West Afrika, has noted the following changes:

- Respect for Elders (wisdom, leadership, spiritual role). Violent youth revolted against elders (this was supported by colonial administration). Also, in Western Education, Elders had no status
- High sense of social justice (principles of fair play, honesty, honour from early age etc.)
- Collectivism. Sense of unity has been broken by individualism (care, trust, standing up for each other etc.)
- Peer group institution; all members were part of age grade systems and all carried out important societal functions (social order, construction, maintenance – welfare, mental health, problem solving)
- Land: God's gift: Land had sacramental quality as bond between various communities and God, communal ownership of production and harvest. Now we have capitalist exploitation creating land disputes, conflicts and competition
- Moderation: Sexual chastity, preservation of virginity, no excessive drinking. Now we have individualist concerns, refusal to assist each other, crimes and lack of pride.

Embedded in this study is an aim to consider “meaningful masculinities”. What this means is to reposition the values, expressions and practices of what is considered to be masculine – in an Afrikan context – in line with indigenous wisdom, cultural norms, contemporary analysis and ideals for an Afrikanized future. “Meaningful”, is of course a relative and unmeasurable term, but in this study it points to motivating the Afrikan collective to reconsider, restore and reinvent a masculinity that is relevant to Afrikan realities and aspirations.

2.8 MASCULINITY IN A SOUTH AFRIKAN CONTEXT

In their study of the development of masculinity in Southern Afrika, Barker and Ricardo (2005) noted the following tendencies in relation to Afrikan masculinities:

- Masculinity has, traditionally, a place of priority
- Masculinity depends, often, on an older man who holds more power and who decides when a young man is able to achieve socially recognised manhood
- Masculinity is expressed through initiation practices, rites of passage, often including male circumcision, and holds an important place in the socialisation of boys to men
- For many young men, sexual experience is frequently associated with initiation into manhood, but also violence and coercion (threats, force) are common features in people's sexual relationships (the perceptions of men's right to violate/dominate women).

South Afrika is often seen to hold a different position in Afrika, and also in the global world, than most other Afrikan countries: It is seen as a thriving economy, it has a history that – at least to some extent – is well-known around the world, it is seen as an Afrikan country more desirable to live in than other Afrikan countries and there is also a tendency to essentialise the South Afrikan experience, without aligning it to other Afrikan realities. However, under a well-presented façade lies the harsh realities of poverty, racial discrimination and unemployment, making South Afrika the most unequal country in the world (Sulla & Zikhali, 2018). Added to this, South Afrika also has a high prevalence of problems related to violence, crime and health, that affect Afrikan men in particular ways.

As argued by Ratele (2017) and Mfecane (2018), masculinity in South Afrika is normally discussed with an exclusive leaning towards Westernized theories, priorities and methodologies. They, therefore, have identified a need to encourage much more research relating to boys and men in South Afrika, from an Afrikan perspective. Ratele (2017) warns researchers who study men and masculinity to not “other” themselves and the men they research by uncritically adopting a Western focal lens. He questions the modern researcher's ability to “see”, i.e. fully comprehend the context, views, world and experiences of the subject.

Mfecane (2018) suggests that development of Afrikan-centred theories of masculinity must form the basis for studies and programs for and by Afrikan men. He uses the expression “theorising masculinities locally” (p. 10) and encourages scholars to actively engage popular concepts and idioms that form part of everyday Afrikan life. He aligns this to the recent developments within Afrikan Academia to Afrikanise and decolonise knowledge formation. He warns against uncritically applying concepts such as intersectionality and hegemonic masculinity, as they prevent us from seeing Afrikan cultural concepts for what they are. In gender-research there is a tendency to exclusively look at the oppression of all women by all men. There is also a need to look at oppressive mechanisms between men. Mfecane suggest a broadening of the scope, from solely investigating external hegemony (men oppressing women) to include internal hegemony (men oppressing men). There is a need to look at what harmful practices of masculinity does to men themselves (for example, intimidation, threats, conformity, homicide and suicide).

Looking at masculinities in a historical context, Mfecane (2018) describes the colonial experience in South Afrika as a “civilising mission” (p. 15) through displacing women from positions of power, enforcing new means of production built on individualistic values, forcing change on gender-systems through policies (ex. by tax, labor, in the family, in communities) and changing cultural customs in the name of civilising people who were seen to be barbaric. Colonialism changed the South Afrikan understanding of gender, the expected roles genders were supposed to perform and how they related to each other. Masculinity became equal to male power, individualism and lack of female agency. Many cultural customs were restricted or outlawed, while others survived – although in quite revised presentations – especially initiation ceremonies and the negotiations of bride-wealth (*ilobolo*) in marriage.

Mfecane (ibid.) suggests that individualism may have had a particularly destructive effect on South Afrikan masculinities. It expresses itself through showing off wealth as a display of social class affiliation and the adoration of rich men who flaunt their status, without doing anything to uplift communities. Ideas of private ownership, property rights, colonial values and the policies of division enforced through Apartheid have become a script that some Black South Afrikan men use to justify the disregard of

women, gender based violence, male superiority and attacks on Afrikan men from other countries.

Masculinities in South Afrika are a collage of fragmented realities with numerous coexisting truths and experiences. However, masculinity is sometimes spoken about as if there is a general agreement about what it actually is. In most Afrikan societies the roles of Afrikan men are described in relation to the families, clans and communities from which they come, with cultural expectations regarding the specific roles they must play as sons, husbands, fathers and Elders. Effects from historical oppression and the clash with Western-centric modernity have resulted in a number of challenges regarding gender-roles. There is a need to further study this, applying an Afrikan-centered perspective and methodology.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to examine literature that explains masculinity, especially in relation to Afrikan culture, history and coloniality. We have looked at definitions of masculinity and how power, hegemony and culture impacts on how masculinity is understood. We have found that multiple notions of masculinity occur simultaneously in society as they respond to historical and contemporary challenges. Highlighting issues of particular relevance for the understanding of Afrikan masculinities it has been found that racism, patriarchy, Eurocentric values, stereotypes and power dynamics form a fundamental part of the analysis. Within a South Afrikan context, it has also been highlighted that masculinities are both linked to – and challenged by – changes in socio-economic and cultural realities impacting on the family. South Afrika's violent history is seen as one instrumental factor in creating contemporary scenarios where a culture of domination, conquest, violence and rape continues to play a significant role. In view of the fact that masculinity is, generally, linked to power, it is often interpreted as exploitative domination in response to capitalist ideals. However, many notions of masculinity challenge the hegemonic, patriarchal expression of manhood and, thus, it is possible to speak of a plurality of masculinities. Increasingly, Afrikan perspectives in gender studies have enriched and grounded the discourse. It has given voice to the

oppressive marginalisation of Afrikan men and the way in which this impinges on the development of authentic masculinities. Traditionally located within strong networks of family and clan relations, the role of contemporary Afrikan men is being challenged by a modernity that has corrupted cultural institutions. Racist stereotyping, negation and over-determination are some of the areas that Afrikan men are navigating in their search for a balanced manhood; a process that must also seek to find solutions to rape through developing a culture of positive masculinities.

CHAPTER 3

DECOLONIAL THOUGHT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Decolonial thought – not to be confused with postcolonial studies or critique of colonization – is a critical study of global power-relations, which helps to understand contemporary manifestations of historical colonialism. The investigation of coloniality of power, knowledge and being is located in a realisation of the asymmetrical world order in which Black humanity and Afrikan knowledge is doubted and marginalised. This chapter consults literature to understand how decoloniality relates to the study of Afrikan masculinities and philosophy of education.

3.2 DEFINING DECOLONIALITY

Decolonial thought differs from postcolonial studies and theories of decolonization. Although the three are related, decolonial thought refers to a specific focus associated with critical research on modernity and coloniality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) described it as an analytical tool to understand historically infused power imbalances:

“Decoloniality is born out of a realisation that ours is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Afrikans who are socialised into hating the Afrika that produced them and liking the Europe and America that rejects them” (p. 11).

According to Mignolo (2009), honest scholarship involves acknowledging that the academic world has been built on a Western premise, filtered through a colonial matrix of power, conceptualised through a racial system of social classification and compartmentalised through a remapping of the world into first, second and third world countries. Mignolo (2009:7) also identifies two emerging directions of what he terms

epistemic disobedience within global knowledge production and social development. He refers to one of these directions as *de-westernisation* – which may be described as a countermovement within a capitalist economy in terms of which the rules are no longer defined by Western players and institutions – and the second direction as a de-colonial position – which includes various ideological streams which have in common the fact that they are based on a definitive rejection of accepting the role of “the other” and a reorientation of European centred modernity.

As outlined by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), decoloniality is often premised on three concepts: coloniality of power (studies the asymmetrical power structure of current global politics), coloniality of knowledge (questions who generates knowledge and for what purpose, and how it has been used to assist imperialist development) and coloniality of being (investigates how Whiteness has gained extreme ontological density and the dehumanization of “the other”). To think and act in accordance with decoloniality means to go against the stream. To question everything. To disrupt, oppose, refuse and denounce. To decolonise is to attack oppression fearlessly. This, in the words of Fanon (1963), is always violent; it opposes the framework of possibility. It moves the native from her/his colonial position of “repetition without difference” and existence “outside of time” to rescript new meaning, presence and action.

What this means is that to rethink what has become known as “conventional knowledge”, in a decolonial sense, makes a complete paradigm shift necessary. In addition to problematizing the coloniality of knowledge embedded within Westernized institutions and modernist societies, decolonial thought must aim to bring about another world (Banazak & Ceja, 2008). It stands in opposition to international power designs that claim to be of universal validity and attempt to create a multitude of liberating knowledges, forms, visions, concepts and approaches in the world.

3.3 DISCOURSES OF DECOLONIALITY

3.3.1 Views in decolonial thinking

Referencing an overview authored by Banazak and Ceja (2008), we can summarise six main views in decolonial thinking:

1. There is a distinction between colonialism and coloniality

When they use the term “colonialism,” decolonial thinkers are referring to a form of political domination with corresponding institutions; when they use the term “coloniality,” they are referring to something more important for them, namely, a pattern of comprehensive and deep-reaching power spread throughout the world. Decolonial thinkers view the present human subject as constructed to a large extent by coloniality. Categories such as class and gender are part of that construction. Decolonial thought is distinguished by its attempts to explain the relationship between such categories rather than simply juxtapose them.

2. Coloniality is the “dark side” of modernity

Unlike many theorists of modernity who consider colonialism a “deviation” or “phase” of modernity which has already been transcended, decolonial thinkers maintain that modernity is indissolubly linked to coloniality. There would be no modernity without coloniality and coloniality presupposes modernity. In this view, modernity serves as a marker that divides the world into the powerful and the marginalised. Those who can define and those that are defined. In other words, there is no “us” (modernity) without a “not us” or a “them” (non-modernity). Colonised knowledge, being, territories, and populations are epistemically, ontologically, and socially inferiorized by the colonist glance (see Mignolo, 2000: ix–x).

3. Thinking must be done in terms of the world-system

Decolonial thought does not analyse countries or isolated regions; rather it is interested in understanding what happens in a region as it is related to the world system. The world system is the basic geo-political reference point for decolonial thought. Since modernity does not exist without coloniality, the various theorist of decolonial thought will often speak of a modern / colonial world system. That is, the modern world system is produced by European colonial expansion which connected, for the first time in history, all parts of the world and thus reaches a new global scale. From that moment on, local experiences in any region of the planet are impossible outside of their connection to the context of this world system.

4. Eurocentric and intra-modern discourses of modernity must be problematized

Historical, sociological, cultural and philosophical narratives which are used in modernity are the result of Eurocentric and intra-modern perspectives. They presuppose that modernity originated in Europe and has been exported, with greater or lesser success, to other parts of the world; and they assume that modernity can be understood in the light of Europe and these other sections of the globe. In contrast, decolonial thought holds that Europe is best understood from the perspective of a world-system and that Europe is not the origin but a result of that world-system, its technologies of government, and its discursive formations.

5. Rather than a new paradigm, decolonial thought is an “other paradigm”

Decolonial thought does not aim to be consolidated as a new paradigm within the academy (as for example post-structuralism and post-colonialism) but to question the epistemic criteria for the production of academic knowledge associated with Eurocentrism and modernity; and produce knowledge that is not Eurocentric but formed from the colonial difference. That is, it aims at an “other paradigm”; what is

sought in decolonial thought is not only a change of the contents of conversation but also a change of the limits and conditions of conversations. More specifically, we don't need new ideas; we need a completely new way of thinking.

6. Decolonial thought aspires to a decolonial project

Decolonial thought not only aims at problematizing the colonality of knowledge incarnated in Eurocentric academic institutions and modernist narratives. It also aims to bring about other worlds. Hence, decolonial thought gives rise to an ethics and a politics of *pluriversality* (a combination of the words “pluri” and “universality”) (see Grosfoguel, 2012). Standing in opposition to global and totalitarian designs, created in the name of universality (which usually means a particularity claiming to be universal), pluriversality is an attempt to make visible and viable a multiplicity of knowledges, forms of being, and visions of the world.

It is, ultimately, the “decolonial project” – in direct dialogue with concepts of transdisciplinarity, critical theory, Afrikology and Afrikan-centred praxis that makes decolonial thought particularly relevant for this study; to position the analytical gaze – as it discusses the experiences, the challenges and the aspirations of Afrikan masculinities – in the world as seen by Afrikan men themselves.

3.3.2 Fallism as decoloniality

A number of uprisings, confrontational debates, issues of contestation and protest have been staged around the Afrikan continent in recent years. As an aftermath to the Arab spring, student protests in countries like Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt and South Afrika, the Fallist movements of South Afrika, the impact of the *Black Lives Matter* campaign started by Afrikan American youth and a gradual re-popularization of decolonization and critical thinking among Afrikan youth, questions like space, power, ownership, education, colonality and hegemony were raised, and change was demanded. Demands that, by some, were seen as unreasonable, but that the grossly

popular superhero film, *Black Panther*, seemed to effortlessly accept as a premise: Unapologetic Afrikan-defined space, innovation, construction, sustainability, identity, leadership and equity were presented as a norm, not a controversial, revolutionary cause.

The many student uprisings taking place in South Afrika between 2015 and 2017, often referred to as “Fees Must Fall”, serve as an interesting example of practical decoloniality. The Fallist approach to oppressive realities has been one of confrontation, demand and non-negotiation. Using Fanon as a reference, Xaba (2017) argues that such uprisings – often labelled as violent by the media – are necessitated by the fact that:

“State violence and structural racism is normalised [and] when the poor respond to structural violence they are problematised and criminalised” (p. 1).

For young people, these are experiences where lack of hope and disinterest becomes the result of constant attempts to raise voices that, in the final instance, are ignored. When you are victimized by structural violence which restricts the provision of basic human needs/rights and you – in addition to the oppressive experience – have to force authorities to take your complaints seriously, and, when the end result of this not only is that you are ignored, but also seen as a provocation, it leads to social death. You no longer exist; your life is made to be completely insignificant.

The idea of Fallism – loosely defined as campaigns against structures, concepts or positions that must be rendered invalid and “fall” (Moya, 2016) – emerged in South Afrika in 2015 (Mangcu, 2016) and developed into radical, uncompromising efforts by students to challenge university policies (Xaba, 2017). Drawing from the country’s rich history of youth uprisings, students popularized a currency of critical thinking and radicalization, brought to national attention by the *Rhodes Must Fall*, *Fees Must Fall* and a number of related movements. These uprisings became channels for student protest against the colonial residue, discriminatory fee structures, and living conditions for Black students and Westernized curricula represented on South Afrikan university campuses.

Fallism became a series of many co-related actions aiming to highlight, denounce and end oppression against Black people (see Taghavi, 2017). The campaigns were not only directed towards universities, but also addressed the colonial nation state as an instrument for inflicting structural violence on poor Black South Afrikans on a daily basis (Xaba, 2017). The student movements, founded in Black Consciousness, Pan-Afrikanism and – to a certain degree – Black Radical Feminism, brought to the fore uncomfortable and sensitive questions that South Afrika had not fully discussed in public, at least outside of party politics. Concepts such as anti-Black, Black non-being, White privilege, decolonising education, repossession of land and ending patriarchy were widely discussed and created a broader national consciousness, reflected on social media platforms, radio and in newspapers.

The background to the movements can perhaps be traced back to smaller movements, largely spearheaded by Black youth in townships, such as Blackwash and September National Imbizo (SNI) who in 2009-2010 started mobilizing youth around Black critical thought (see Tafira, 2013). These movements, inspired by iconic leaders such as Steve Bantu Biko, Frantz Fanon, Thomas Sankara and Chinweizu, brought about radical interpretations of political ideas previously advocated by Pan Afrikan and Black Consciousness movements in South Afrika in the 1960s. In 2012, Julius Malema, the then President of the ANC Youth League, was expelled from ANC for his radical views and went on to start the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in 2013, which quickly gathered a substantial following and came third in the 2014 general elections. Suddenly, young, politicized voices spoke uncompromisingly in parliament, media and academic symposiums; places that had previously been associated with subdued criticism and a reluctance to exhibit confrontational rhetoric.

These dynamics – coupled with the many civil actions, lawsuits and protests staged around the country, in which young people played a strong role – focused on issues that marginalized and disempowered Black people in general. It sparked a new approach in which youth unapologetically attacked representations of colonialism and westernization and militantly criticized government, education policies and the economy, which continued to marginalize and oppress Black people. In 2015, Rhodes

must Fall led to Fees must Fall and in a matter of months, the whole country saw protests by students who demanded to be heard.

These radical movements influenced new conversations in most corners of society and reminded people in government that young people were no longer prepared to be silent and accept being ignored. Gender discrimination was among the disparities highlighted. Next to the discussion of how white supremacy and capitalism marginalises Black existence, patriarchy was also described as a power construct where Black women were excluded and invalidated. This opened up a new discourse on the role of men in general, and Black men in particular. Terms like “toxic masculinity”, “cultures of violence” and “harmful practices” were heatedly debated and brought forth a need for men to reexamine what masculinity means, especially in an Afrikan context. More than anything, the Fallist movement caused disruption to terms, perspectives, values and practices that were seen to be the norm. There are several important lessons that can be drawn directly from the critique positioned by the student movements. They can be summarized, for the purposes of this study, into three main positions:

- The need to **re-think** (to oppose the status quo and what is considered normal, classic, standard etc., to position dewesternization and to draw knowledge from outside of what has been positioned as the main theoretical frame).
- The need to **re-envision** (to draw inspiration from Afrikan sources, to “see with different eyes” and unmute indigenous voices within places of research, conceptualization, policy making and planning).
- The need to **re-build** (to dismantle what has been colonised and built with new enthusiasm that empowers, liberates and enables).

These are positions inspired by the articulations of young protestors and can serve as a guideline for how to reshape problematic aspects of masculinity in Afrikan societies.

3.4 WHAT DECOLONIALITY MEANS IN THE STUDY OF AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

Decoloniality – in an Afrikan context – demands a converging point between epistemological theories and methodological actions. As a bold dismissal of a Western-centric reality which seeks to reconstitute and revalidate its own worldview, decoloniality becomes a process of rescripting the Afrikan as a subject in her/his own location. A drive, then emerges, to liberate the Afrikan subject and seeing the study of – and engagement by – the Afrikan subject as a prerequisite to open up the possibility of liberation.

When discussing masculinity in Afrika, colonization may be referred to, but it rarely is placed at the centre of the analysis. Lugones (2016), writing from a feminist angle, has brought together critical race theory, coloniality of power and analysis of gender dynamics by women of color, in order to understand intersectionality better. We may borrow from this angle to discover multiplicities of colonial impacts on Afrikan masculinity. Patriarchy, as a hierarchy of male oppression, played a central role in the colonial project. Through a decolonial lens, it becomes clear that the political oppression of Afrikans has also been gendered. An overarching male bias has served to silence, omit and ridicule women's presence, opinions and experiences. In a very similar way to how the experience of Afrikan people, collectively, have been silenced, omitted and ridiculed.

In this study, the decolonial lens is aiming at the experience of Afrikan men. Colonisation and coloniality has not only targeted Afrikan men, but this study argues that the roles and lives of Afrikan men have been – and continue to be – strongly affected by its histories of hegemonic oppression. It argues that the way in which contemporary Afrikan masculinities are associated with toxicity, abuse, violence and lack of consideration, it is an extension of – and a result of – the atrocities meted out against men as colonial objects.

Decolonising Afrikan masculinities, in this study, is directly linked the conceptual pillars of the decolonial, epistemic perspectives of power, knowledge and being (Ndlovu-

Gatsheni 2013). In regards to power, the decolonial interest lies in understanding how a global, asymmetrical – and geo-political – power structure affect Afrikan men's reality, identities, values, choices and actions. Concerning knowledge, the investigation turns to what is known about Afrikan men, who creates such knowledge and how this relates to the imperial agenda. Lastly, in relation to being, it is of interest to see how Afrikan men relate to the Black experience, Other'ing, dehumanization and the vacuum of meaning that erupts when representing the opposition to – and primary victim of – Whiteness.

The question of Afrikan male subjectivity occupies the central focus in this examination. What does the Afrikan man know about himself? How has he been scripted by colonial histories and in what way does he rescript himself away from these? Here, the need for a methodology, a melting together of theory and action - epistemology and methodology – appears with urgency.

In this study, coloniality in the space of masculinity also means to question, disrupt, displace, rattle and unsettle what may be seen as regular, normal and conventional. It is understood that dominant perspectives – such as qualitative, quantitative and triangulation methodologies – are irrelevant in understanding the Afrikan man from within. These perspectives are located in what Ake (1982) calls “sciences of equilibrium”; they represent a contaminated ideological bias of mainstream Western science and are part of a modernity project that is opposed to change. Within this, the physics of power are hidden.

Mignolo (2011a) that all thinking is located somewhere. It is of great importance that Afrikan men – as subjects – are understood in the location that informs their thinking; within the location where their subjectivity is articulated and in the location that addresses the direction where subjection comes from. In other words, the attempt the Afrikan man makes to represent the “Othered” self.

This points to a decolonial critical analysis, a methodological intervention that gives primacy to the lives and experiences of Afrikan men, in the way they experience them as Afrikan subjects.

“...questions the truth of authorigy, techniques to reveal the figures of power that operate in dominant discourses or ideologies at Euro North-American episteme” (Hardt 2011:19).

A number of decolonial epistemic perspectives have been positioned over the years, each with its own history, dynamics and effects (Sithole, 2014): Negritude, Pan-Afrikanism, Ethiopianism, Afrikan Personality, Black Theology, Afrikan Humanism, Black Consciousness, Afrocentricity and others. Although gender often has been explored within these perspectives, the male perspective, position, role and view has had a tendency to dominate, take on the role as a sole narrator (or thought producer) and “own” the liberation narrative. A truly decolonial mission in regards to Afrikan masculinity must be driven by what Dastile (2013: refers to as “[a]n African centred epistemological framework and ontological location” (p. 93). This creates a need for groundedness in the lived realities of Afrikan men in order to contribute to a new generation of knowledge, marked by epistemic justice.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, decoloniality has been explained. The concept of decoloniality has been linked to the Fallist movement, which has developed over the last few years in South Afrika. The need to re-think, re-envision and re-build has been highlighted and related to the study of Afrikan masculinities and development of an Afrikan-centred philosophy of education.

CHAPTER 4

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As a discipline, Philosophy of Education articulates methods, objectives, forms and meaning of education (Phillips, 2017). Spanning a long history of development, it has drawn on Western philosophical ideas founded in idealism, pragmatism, existentialism, critical theory, social reconstructionism and democratic thought (Lynch, 2017). It expresses ideas about how think, the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, how teachers should be trained, the role of students and what they should be taught. Philosophy of Education is often discussed in relation to its role in informing formal education within state-owned and private educational institutions offering standardised education as a prerequisite to acquiring professional certification that may eventually lead to employment.

In this regard, there is an underlying assumption that most educational principles are universal. This could not be further from the truth, as argued by Ani (1994), as all philosophical ideas are anchored in specific world views and thought systems representative of cultural geographies of reasoning. The premise of this study rests on a symbiotic relationship between culture and education. It particularly looks at ideas and meaning of learning within an Afrikan idea-universe. This chapter will look specifically at how the two concepts relate and in what way; how they are of importance to this study and its focus on meaningful Afrikan masculinities.

4.2 CULTURAL BASIS FOR AN INNOVATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The study's objective of producing new knowledge and recommend innovative interventions stems from an expectation that education can – and should – be anchored in culture. Similarly, we can say that culture should be anchored in education. They are two sides of one coin.

Boateng (1996) views Afrikan culture to be of high educational value. The role of traditional education, he asserts, is to bridge the gap between the young and the old generation. Western education – which did not consider cultural transmission as a goal of the educative process – has, largely, been an obstacle to the process of cultural transmission and intergenerational communication. Further, Boateng sees Afrikan traditional education as intergenerational communication, which refers to transmission and continuous preservation of the values and traditions of a society from one generation to another. This transmission ensures peaceful transition from youth to adulthood and creates understanding of the roles of each generation in the society.

Such a process of Afrikological praxis would start on an individual level and then, through youth and family members, reach community levels as it expands. It would make every participant both a student and practitioner. Education as a field of learning and application must enable students to gain a strong sense of self. This means that it needs to start by locating the students in their own history: Past, present and future. Students must experience themselves as change agents, not mere objects of a “repeat-after-me” indoctrination. The focus of such educational programmes must include vocational training, capacity building and leadership development located in Afrikan history, culture, science and wisdom. This means a radically different perspective on education as a liberating and enabling process. The goal must be to implement a reorganised educational system which is suitable and appropriate to the needs of Afrikan young people. In its initial stages, this process can be initiated at community level, with an emphasis on alternative and complementary education: Saturday schools, weekend camps and afternoon classes.

Afrikan history represents a legacy of innovation. From the fields of architecture, science, mathematics, agriculture, crafts, cultural expression and philosophy, innovation – understood as new imaginations and creative thinking – has always been deeply invested in Afrika’s cultural and scientific development. Although not always recognised, this is an essential aspect for all considerations of Afrika’s future.

We can, in fact, argue that the template of Afrikan culture is innovation. By locating the harmony between people and nature at its centre, Afrikan indigenous knowledge becomes a way of life where culture and innovation are two sides of one coin, whether it applies to manufacturing, governance or social transformation. As a way of life, innovative culture begins with learning, induction and passing on knowledge.

And this is where the question of culture and education becomes applicable to challenges of Afrikan masculinities. Increasingly, Afrikan men are asking the question “what does it mean to be an Afrikan man?”⁹ The weakening of the traditional institutions that used to provide responses to this question in many parts of the continent exposes the need for validation and guiding mechanisms towards sound development of Afrikan masculinities.

As the modern Afrikan man aspires to be successful within in a largely Eurocentric defined world – a world he is expected to succeed in, but also denied from – the cost might be the loss of a cultural self, an authentic self. The centrality of cultural norms in Afrikan family and community structures, points to a rich and prioritised understanding of identity development. Traditional institutions and systems of knowledge that represent a toolbox from which new and relevant remedies can be extracted to aid Afrikan men in their quest for self-determination.

4.3 FREIRE AND DIALOGICAL ACTION

Through his explanation of how oppression is implicit in educational systems, Freire (2006) advanced the need for revolutionary leadership through dialogical action. His contributions to Philosophy of Education has had a major impact on the understanding of how to create innovative and liberating learning-processes. In our pursuit of pedagogical tools for liberation, Freire’s approach can serve as a guide for practice of

⁹ In the experience of the researcher, this is a very common question that comes up when Afrikan men, in different localities, are given an opportunity to ask questions about men’s issues.

indigenous Afrikan learning processes in modern times. He has developed the following characteristics of dialogical action:

1. Cooperation: A premise in which all participants represent subjects who meet to “name” the world in order to transform it;
2. Unity for liberation: The development of people-focused, revolutionary leadership through solidarity based on a class consciousness that cut ties with oppression;
3. Organization: Systematic pedagogic focus on learning how to name the world, leading to authentic authoring inspired by freedom (from oppression);
4. Cultural synthesis: Multi-level processes of becoming through confronting culture itself, establishing a climate of creative enthusiasm for change and collective creation of guidelines for action.

There may be a number of challenges to such liberation processes. Freire describes the phenomena of a “false unity of the divided self”, which speaks to the fear that oppressive regimes install in people to make them reluctant – even fearful – of unity and liberation:

“Part of the oppressed I is located in the reality to which it “adheres”; part is located outside the self, in the mysterious forces which are regarded as responsible for a reality about which nothing can be done” (Freire, 2006:173).

This explains a mental place of being stuck in perception of self, environment and possibilities. In this scenario, past and present becomes identical and future is a place of no hope. The individual is barred from “becoming”, so s/he is unable to build a future of unity with others. This may come across as reluctance, disinterest and active resistance on the part of the individual or group. By breaking the adhesion and objectifying reality, Freire believes that consistent dialogic action – as a pedagogic process of liberation – will create the awakening of reflective interest, human purpose and validation, necessary for taking part in liberating processes.

For Freire, dialoguing is a liberating process to transform and resolve oppressive situations. By the same token, the absence of dialogue is seen as the enabler for

oppression. Where dialogue is prevented, realities of conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion dominate. The collective nature of such dialogues puts everyone on equal footing; no models, cultural positions or suggestions can be imposed. The process must be governed by leadership which identifies with people's demands, highlights problematic dilemmas, inspires critical thinking and plays a cooperative role in order to develop deeper solutions.

Dialogic action presupposes that those who initiate it have a clear understanding of political dynamics that impact on oppressed communities and exercise a combination of inspiring pressure and collective will. When leadership is located in the praxis of thinking and acting with people, instead of for them, it lays the foundation for a cultural revolution; a total reconstruction of society through permanent dialogue between leaders and people (Freire, 2006:125).

In relation to this study – with the intent to create critical thinking and value-based transformation of Afrikan masculinities, Freire's dialogic action – will need at its foundational level, a clear and unapologetic, yet non-essentialist, understanding of Afrikan being and purpose, both in a general and specific sense.

4.4 AFRIKANIZATION; INNOVATIVE AFRIKAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

As Afrikan philosophy expresses the worldviews, aspirations and meaning-making produced by Afrikan people, it helps us to understand what *being* Afrikan means. Idang (2015) explains Afrikan philosophy as expressed through a series of social, moral, religious, political, aesthetic and economic values in which communalism, spiritual reverence and inter-connectedness feature strongly. Where Idang's view could lead to a rather static understanding or practice of philosophy, Hountondji (2002) explains the role of Afrikan philosophy as a form of methodological inquiry that relies on rational justification and interpretive argumentation with the intent to bring about a critical transformation of Afrikan thought and practice. Authenticity and purpose are central to this argument. In turn, Afrikan philosophy positions education as a process of mediating through, what Waghid (2004) terms, deliberative inquiry – a structure of

dialogue which allows for a combination of critical reflection, active listening and inclusive logic as it aims to reconstitute “Afrikanness”.

From this we can state that “being Afrikan” is both a process of reconnecting with what “has been” (tradition, legacies and heritage), but also a movement towards what “shall be” (modifications, navigating new experiences and responding to new needs). The question of groundedness – as a firm place to view, interpret and act from – becomes essential. This can be expressed through Afrocentricity; a paradigm that suggests that all discourse about Afrikan people should be grounded in the centrality of Afrikans in their own narratives (Yancy & Asante, 2015). It was similar ideas that inspired forerunners of Afrikan approaches to architecture and design (for example Nwoko, 1979 and David, 1994) and they can also be found in new, creative forms such as Afrofuturism.

Described as a combination of fiction, Afrocentricity, magic realism and Afrofuturism positions ancient Afrikan civilizations as a reference point to imagine a future that brings together advanced technology, liberation and spiritual elements through a Black cultural lens (Sisson, 2018). It is, as expressed by Eshun (2018:1), a visualization that creates scenarios of possibility if the ambitions of Black creative minds are realised. This is not only a process of fantasy. It represents a direct challenge to the world as it exists in the present. It is, in fact, a prerequisite for innovation; the dismantling of impossibilities, creating pathways for never-heard-of solution-concepts and navigations towards a more balanced world. A world away from the suffocating realities of Westernised confines, centred in Afrikan thoughts, ideas and aesthetics.

In order to position the praxis entailed in Afrikan Philosophy of Education, a de-learning and re-learning process is required. The many generations of exposure to, and internalization of, external world views has created a need for Afrikans to be educated completely outside of what has come to be known as “ordinary education”. Besides, institutions of “ordinary education” are not premised on an intention to prepare the Afrikan mind for Afrikan-centred operation. Even “Afrikan Studies”, as Amadiume (1997) reminds us, cannot be trusted as they are founded on a Western premise and aids to further disempower and misdirect Afrikans. Afrikanization should

then be positioned as a, simultaneously, specific and broad framework for practice. In the words of Maluleka (2015:1):

“Afrikanization is the re-orientation of persons, institutions, products, processes and ideas towards a fresh, creative and constructive imaging of Afrika and Afrikan contexts which take past, present and future Afrikan reality and Afrikan potential seriously, consciously and deliberately.”

Verharen et al. (2014) argue that Afrikan philosophy, ideally, is a key ingredient for Afrikan innovation and development. Science is directly linked to philosophy and imagination as the primary engine of philosophy itself. The task of philosophy, therefore, is to re-imagine conceptions about the world and human life. In response to this, scientific theories are supposed to translate such imaginative schemes into hypothesis that can be tested. The outcome that follows should then be concepts, which translates scientific theory into practical action. For this to be a reality, the current European, Arab and Asian dominance within Afrikan learning processes must be replaced – they, in particular suggest the inclusion of an ethics core deriving from ancient Egyptian and Ethiopian thought. The reliance on non-Afrikan principles and personnel has misdirected Afrikan development, “[...] resulting in unsustainable and sometimes destructive outcomes” (ibid., p. 3).

The definition of philosophy in the opinion of Verharen et al. (ibid.) represents an interesting angle. They reference three principles (p. 4): The brain’s capacity to reduce complexity of experience to simple notions, to recognize that the ability to process information does not dictate the structure of the universe and that – in addition to describing and explaining our reality in general terms – philosophy is prescriptive, it tells us how to live our lives:

“Philosophy is the comprehensive vision that tries to fit all of our experience into a comprehensible whole. It is the process of answering all the important questions that we cannot begin to answer with any degree of final certainty: how did we get here, where are we going, and how are we supposed to live” (ibid., 4).

When attempting a practical approach to philosophy, it may be of great importance to give attention to the relation between science and ethics. With science, on the one hand, describing “how things are”, ethics explain “how things ought to be” (ibid., p. 7). This relationship between facts and values is of critical importance, especially within Afrika where ideas, practices and technology have been forced from the outside for such a long time.

“Eurasian ethical systems have accompanied the world to unprecedented crises. Eurasian nations have singled out ethical goods that may challenge the species’ survival if they are pursued past the point of moderation” (p. 7).

The systems of *Ma’at* and *uBuntu* constitute but a few examples of the scientific, practical and adaptable nature of Afrikan philosophical foundations. *Ma’at* is an ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) deity, representing the key elements of human perfection, articulated through seven virtues that must be respected in all spheres of life: Truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order (Arewa 1998). These virtues can also be likened to values expressed in the philosophy of *uBuntu* – described as a quality and dignity of humanness which is a fundamental element within Southern Afrikan cultural axioms (Koka 2002). Positioning Afrikan values as a basis for innovation and scientific development can create a dramatically different orientation. Ethics steeped in Afrikan indigenous philosophy have the possibility of anchoring values shaped by a holistic approach, harmonizing inclusivity, co-existence between the spiritual and material worlds, considerate preservation, honourable restoration, people-centred servitude and a self-understanding of being commissioned by God to preserve and protect all that is alive. This would stand in stark opposition to Eurasian practices that have perpetuated a philosophy of rationality, single-tracked power of reason and abstraction, exploitation, separation, conflict-focus and a self-understanding as being entitled or chosen by God to invade, dominate and appropriate.

Through colonization, the Afrikan experience of education became synonymous with alienation and inferiorisation. However, in line with the central role education has always had in indigenous Afrikan communities – education must be repositioned,

reclaimed and centred meaningfully so that it can be the cornerstone of human and innovative development. In response to the challenges of how an Afrikan approach to learning can be sustained, a combined approach could entail mass-lectures, followed by dialogue- and discussion based classroom learning and one-on-one tutorial follow-up and peer-learning. Learning, ideally, should be seen as a lifelong commitment with upgrades and specialization offered in continuous cycles.

4.5 RITES OF PASSAGE AS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

An example of an Afrikan institution that has traditionally given voice to what men go through, what they must face and how they should carry themselves is the Rites of Passage ceremonies or initiation rituals. These are – simultaneously – educational, preventative and restorative interventions to safeguard positive and relevant masculinity. If we examine the principles such initiations have been founded upon, we realise that they articulate positions we can easily revive and adapt in response to modern challenges. Hill (1992) reminds us how processes of Afrikan initiation rituals serve as culturally based education: ten basic principles of Afrikan education found continent-wide for educating and socialising children:

1. Separating child from the community and routines of daily life

Separation allows the participant to focus fully on the ritual experience and knowledge being conveyed. Aspects of the initiation requires each individual to spend time alone, which allows for reflection and self-knowledge. Other aspects are group-based, teaching the initiate about the importance of collaboration and communality.

2. Observing nature

Traditionally, Afrikan schools were built on observing nature. Cycles of growth and development are based on universal principles of life. These principles, which also guide agricultural processes (from planting to harvesting) symbolize important

expectations to men (i.e. putting ideas into practice, create stability within the family and understand inter-dependency).

3. A social process based on age

Traditional education in Afrika is a social process as opposed to the Western educational emphasis on individualism. Children are expected to master requirements from beginning to end as a group. There are no gifted, average, and impaired groupings; there is communal education and advancement.

4. Rejection of childhood

Completing the Rites of Passage ritual helps to separate manhood from boyhood. In both symbolic and practical ways, the initiate is assisted in drawing a line – and part with – the immaturity of the boy and embrace the new position of a responsible man.

5. Listening to the Elders

In Afrikan traditional education, the most significant part is conducted by the Elders. Wisdom is more than information. The initiate is taught to seek and respect the experience possessed by Elders and receives insight into the sacrifices and achievements of those who have lived longer than him. This is a valuable contribution to the participant's problem solving and decision making skills.

6. Cleansing rituals

An important part of the Afrikan sacral world is marking transitional journeys (for example from boyhood to manhood) with cleansing rituals. On a spiritual level, elements like water, fire, clay and masks can assist in protecting the individual from harm and ward off negative emotions and dark spirits.

7. Test of character

Being confronted by adversity in life, Afrikan men are expected to demonstrate courage, confidence, bravery, strength and endurance. In the initiation space, participants take part in exercises and activities that help them to shed fear,

irresponsibility and cowardice. Life is seen as a journey of challenges, and a strong character is essential in order to be a productive man.

8. Use of special language

As part of the initiation process, a new vocabulary is created. Particular words, sayings, songs, wearing of cloths, use of natural elements, use of objects from the animal kingdom, dance and food all form part of a symbolic language, helping to make the process memorable and also mark the journey from old to new identity (boy to man).

9. Use of a special name

Special names are used which are symbolic of certain characteristics. Symbols or names that have special meaning to the initiation process are also chosen.

10. Symbolic resurrection

Upon successful completion of the rites, the participant is no longer the child who began the ceremony. The boy has “died” and given way to a man who is better equipped to manoeuvre through the adult world. The last part of the initiation takes place when the entire community gathers to celebrate the arrival of the new men. This becomes, at once, a validation and public officiation. An announcement of the responsibilities men are expected to carry.

Although Afrikan initiation processes have similar objectives – preparing younger men to take up responsibilities within their community – they differ in content, duration and emphasis across the continent. For the purposes of this study, Rites of Passage feature as a well-founded articulation of Afrikan Philosophy of Education. Its position within Afrikan societies, however, vary largely, as ideas of modernisation, stigma attached to tradition and disparities between indigenous knowledge and everyday lives, have, in parts of Afrika, relegated these rituals into extinction while in other parts being a non-negotiable journey into manhood.

4.6 AFRIKOLOGY AND AFRIKAN-CENTRED PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Analysing the roots of Western thought and behaviour, Ani (1994) finds that European traditions negate – or, at the very least, sceptically questions – the spiritual world while Afrika locates its foundation in it. The premise for the Afrikan world lies in a symbiotic relationship between religion and culture. Spiritual practices are inextricably linked to culture, exercising a vast influence on human beings; and at the same time, bringing to life both personal and communal activities in society. Afrikan indigenous spirituality is “inherently holistic” (Igwegbe, 1995) and this sense of wholeness is an important aspect of Afrikan worldviews. Spiritual practices are ingrained in all significant life events: birth, naming, initiation, marriage, illness, healing, and death (ibid.). In Afrikan spiritual practices, one can hardly separate the secular from the sacred, the religious from the nonreligious, the spiritual from the material areas of life (Mbiti, 1989).

Playing such a fundamental role in a person’s life, Afrikan spirituality is, simultaneously, experiential and educational. For each life event, one learns lessons about values, change processes, conflict resolution, discipline and how one fits into the greater environment. As Boateng (1996) writes, the role of traditional education is to minimize the gap between younger and older generations. Culturally, Western education stands in stark difference to what Afrikan, traditional education has sought to transmit. It has, in fact, served as an obstacle to the process of cultural transmission and intergenerational communication in Afrikan societies. Boateng (ibid.) describes that Afrikan traditional education takes place through a communication process between different generations with the objective of transmitting and preserving values and traditions. This transmission guides a meaningful transition from youth to adulthood and initiates people into the roles they are expected to play within each generation of society.

Some common ways of facilitating this transmission include oral literature (fables, myths, legends, proverbs) and secret societies (initiation). With particular reference to initiation, several psychic and social challenges were addressed and responded to, such as gender identity, relation to parents, cognitive development and psychological grounding. Young women and men were guided from childhood to adulthood with a

distinct way of leaving childish and irresponsible behaviour behind. The handing down of technical skills and know-how would also follow a similar, inter-generational pattern.

Armstrong (1975) observes that in an Afrikan worldview, energy, rather than matter and dynamic, rather than static being, express the true nature of things. To this argument, Ani (1994) would possibly have added that Afrikan epistemologies are rooted in a symbiotic duality; encompassing both scientific and metaphysical observations. This is quite an interesting reminder, especially in light of the shallow assumption that Afrikan knowledge is purely metaphysical. It would then make sense to say that Afrikan science is rooted in a spiritual context. Mbiti (1989:1-2) explains the universe of Afrikans to be deeply religious, to such an extent that "... to ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes, practices and symbolic values can only lead to a lack of understanding of Afrikan behaviour and problems".

Attempting to further explain the educational value of Afrikan culture, Boateng (1996) explains that the role of traditional education, he asserts, is to bridge the gap between the young and the old generation. Such a process of Afrikological praxis would start on individual level and then, through youth and family members, reach community levels as it expands. It would make every participant both a student and practitioner. Education as a field of learning and application must enable students to gain a strong sense of self. This means that it needs to start by locating the students in their own history: past, present and future. Students must experience themselves as change agents, not mere objects of a "repeat-after-me" indoctrination. The focus of such educational programmes must include vocational training, capacity building and leadership development located in Afrikan history, culture, science and wisdom.

Western scholarship has, rather arrogantly, refused the possibility of indigenous knowledge systems to be validated by their own foundation of knowledge and worldview. Afrika, as a location, is positioned as a site in need of external help to realise its' spiritual and scientific path. To the extent that Afrika is given value, it is often seen through a lens of infantilised imagery, restricted to quite blurry notions of, for example, Ubuntu, values of common humanity and forgiveness. In other words, a rather child-like mysticism, not "real" philosophical positions.

These misconceptions should be challenged, first and foremost by representatives of Afrikan communities of spiritual practitioners themselves. As pointed out by Mignolo and Tlostanova (2009:144), decolonial thinking and action must be “...led and created by the social actors Frantz Fanon referred to as *“les damnés de la terre”* (1963); all those humiliated, devalued, disregarded, disavowed, and dealing with the “colonial wound”. The myriad of cultural tools expressed throughout Afrikan traditions can be revived, re-interpreted and re-applied in accordance with contemporary relevance. A symbiotic relation between old and new will be beneficial. Spiritual strength, as articulated in the order of Ma’at, the reclaiming of an authentic Afrikan history and the centring of Afrikan values, location and agency, will make Afrikan modernisation an ideal, not a threat.

We have described Afrikology as an Afrikan-centred epistemology for social transformation, with the ability to carry out production and dissemination of knowledge simultaneously. This entails an expectation to Afrikan knowledge holders and practitioners to, unapologetically, position Afrikan challenges and solutions as the focal point of their work. This impacts the positioning of an Afrikan-centred philosophy of education. Empowered with a critical and de-colonial apparatus, Afrikan pedagogics must advance an Afrikology that develops:

- Resilience towards legacies of oppression, to rebuild and develop autonomous educational structures;
- Access to – and implementation of – knowledge embedded in indigenous wisdom and science;
- Dissemination and positioning of own pools of knowledge, to enable interaction with other systems of knowledge on equal terms.

Odora-Hoppers (1998:184) reminds us that just saying we want transformation does not mean it actually takes place. Our abilities to analyse, choose and sacrifice might already have been wired in such a way that we keep on blindly paving roads that do not present sustainable solutions, but become repetitions of what we actually want to change.

If education is the mirror of society, then there is obviously an urgent need to yet define the form and nature of this “society”. If education’s role is to connect a learner with his/her heritage, then there is another urgent need to define whose normative heritage is being transmitted in present education practices. The crises we seek to overcome are not only of Afrikan importance. The whole world community suffers from the imbalanced nature of globalisation. As emphasised by Odora-Hoppers and Richards (2011:93), the age of the “positivist illusion” – stuck in the enslaving idea of universal determinism and linear confines of rationality – must be exposed and broken down, and space must be cleared to include metaphysics and indigenous knowledge. It is within this project of deconstructing ideas, decolonising knowledge and re-asserting presence that Afrikology appears as a position in line with Mignolo’s (2009) “epistemic disobedience”. Afrikology activates a process of de-westernization and refuses the Afrikan to appear as “the other” in her/his own view of the world. It accentuates an understanding of a collective Self in which determination of location, agency and possibilities is drawn from within.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter attempted to explain an Afrikan-centred approach to the philosophy of education. It positioned Afrikology as a foundation for the development and orientation of Afrikan pedagogical action. Rites of Passage and initiation practices have been looked at as an example of how Afrikan culture brings together philosophy, cultural traditions and learning processes.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will seek to explain Participatory Action Research (PAR) – which holds a fundamental role in this study. It explains how PAR relates to Afrocentricity, Afrikology and decoloniality. It also looks into some of the dilemmas associated with PAR as a research methodology.

5.2 AFROCENTRICITY, AFRIKOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Asante (1987; 1990; 2003), Asante and Mazama (2002), Mazama (2003) and Mkhabela (2005) explain Afrocentricity as a theory for social transformation located in Afrikan agency. As this is the underlying paradigm throughout this study, it serves as a philosophical approach to social and cultural interpretation and is founded knowledge from ancient Afrikan civilisations as the starting point for analyses of Afrikan people and their history. Although we can say that Afrocentricity developed in opposition to Eurocentrism, it is not just a contra-theory, turning Eurocentrism on its head. Afrocentricity – or Afrikan Centred studies – does operate with a narrow and exclusionary world view and does not claim universalism (Akbar, 2003). It is, rather, a centred approach to the Afrikan experience.

Spearheaded by Molefi Kete Asante, Afrocentricity has developed into a paradigm, inspired by the philosophies of Biko's Black Consciousness, Padmore and Nkrumah's Pan-Afrikanism, Garvey's economic pragmatism, Frantz Fanon's existentialism and Cheikh Anta Diop's historiography (Asante, 2003). Considering the fields of research, knowledge production and learning, Asante (*ibid.*), Koka (2002) and Nabudere (2011) have advanced a methodological approach through Afrikology.

Encompassing both data collection and the application of knowledge in a complementary process, Afrikology envisions:

“...an Afrika with scholars based on Afrocentric studies in socio-economics, philosophy, religion and spirituality, governance, technology and science – dedicated to the development and advancement of Afrika, her people, and competent of representing and presenting Afrika in forums of nations” (Koka, 2002).

As a methodological approach, Afrikology shares similar characteristics to qualitative research methods in that both assume people to employ interpretive schemes which must be understood, and that the character of the local context must be articulated. However, the focus within Afrikology is not so much on complementary methods, but on the development of an alternative paradigm and the ontology of understanding the world and what it is to be human (Asante, 2013:188).

Conceptually, it is difficult to present clear distinctions between Afrocentricity and Afrikology (Osha, 2018). The two complement each other and hardly express any disagreement, either way. One can perhaps say that Afrikology is a continuation, maybe even an expansion, of Afrocentricity. Where Afrocentricity has been pitted against its conceptual twin, Eurocentrism (although the two exist for vastly different purposes), and also blamed for over-emphasis on the primacy of Kemet’s (ancient Egypt’s) civilization, Afrikology may have drawn its inspiration through a broader Afrikan lens. Then again, Afrikology has existed for a shorter period than Afrocentricity, and has certainly been much less targeted for intellectual attacks. The complementarity between the two offers no academic controversy; they rather assist in developing an eclectic lens through which Afrikan research, knowledge and praxis have become greatly enriched.

Nabudere (2011:159) describes Afrikology as an authentic platform with academic aspirations, drawing “...together all the strands achieved from all the different perspectives of the Afrikan worldview (...) and uses this to critique Eurocentric mystification”. As a term, Afrikology encapsulates both the gathering of data and the application of knowledge as complementary processes. This, as part of an Afrikan-

centred approach represents a platform for multidisciplinary research, discourse and applied knowledge and adheres to what Asante has described as the necessity to "... abandon ethnocentric and racist systems of logic and, therefore, to place the undiscussed in the centre of discourse" (Asante, 1990:140). Thus, as a philosophy of education, Afrikology transmits theoretical knowledge into both cognitive and pragmatic currencies.

The reluctance demonstrated in Afrikology to be confined within the Academia easily relates to transdisciplinary research as an orientation towards problem fields in the life-world rather than attempting to suit problem analyses within established disciplines (Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008). Also, Afrikology carries within it notions of critical inquiry and fearless aspiration for new paradigms, positioning epistemic disobedience at the core of its operations (see Mignolo, 2009).

5.3 FRAME OF REFERENCE

5.3.1 Transdisciplinarity

This study required a methodology that has both an Afrikan agency and location in addition to advancing strong elements of transformative development (Asante, 2003). However, in order to avoid an arrogant researcher-dominated project, the methodology used in the study was grounded in participatory processes during which the participants were invited to be part of both the reflective and the interpretive inquiry and not as mere informants. In addition, a people centred research approach guided the work in seeking to be of relevance to the community as well as the socio-cultural activities with which the work was concerned (Mkhabela, 2005).

The methodology was based on ontological assumptions rooted in Afrocentric anti-essentialism, with the facts being seen to not be given, but a result of interpretations, and meanings seen as socially constructed (Taylor, 2008). The study's epistemological position focused the research towards social constructionism. In addition, a transdisciplinary outlook enabled the phenomena of power and meaning

related to culture and cultural knowledge to be studied in terms of how they are socially constructed (Ani, 1994). The anti-essentialist approach was motivated by its inherent rejection of Western/modernist analyses and its commitment to analyse the conditions that give rise to the construction of meaning (Taylor, 2008).

5.3.2 Qualitative methodology

Within the academia, there are generally two approaches to conducting research, namely, the quantitative and the qualitative methods. While quantitative research is concerned with numbers, qualitative methods focus on words. In addition, quantitative research is based on a deductive approach while qualitative method is inductive and is considered to be a more sensitive approach (De Poy & Gitlin, 1993; Silverman, 2000). In view of the fact that the research questions in this study are concerned with views, qualities, information, analyses and not “hard facts”, the quantitative methods were considered both unsuitable and inappropriate. On the other hand, qualitative methods were found to be appropriate as they give more validation to the views of each participant and align themselves with concepts such as advocacy, self-help and cooperation (Adams, 2008). Such approaches help to place people at the centre of the research process (Evans & Beresford, 1999):

“Humans engage with their world and make sense of it, based on their historical and social perspectives. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher’s own experiences and background” (Cresswell, 2009:8–9).

Qualitative research is sometimes criticised for not possessing accuracy and rigour (Brink, 2006) and, hence, reliability and validity become important. Reliability refers to consistency and stability in the data collection process while validity refers to the accuracy and relevance of scientific findings (ibid.).

5.4 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

5.4.1 Defining PAR

There are several, conflicting theories about the origins of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Reason and Bradbury (2008), MacDonald (2012) and Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) link it to the research that was done in the late 1940s by Prussian psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946), addressing social problems such as segregation, discrimination and assimilation. Glassman and Erdem (2014) have identified two separate versions of PAR, noting the tradition of Lewin as one being characterized by reactionary focus on harmonizing relations between minority and majority, yet seeking to maintain the status quo of social order. On the other hand, they point to a revolutionary practice of PAR during the 1960's and 70's – in Afrika, Asia and Latin America – where radical movements confronted colonial power-dynamics through research and actions.

According to Jordan (2009), PAR largely developed in the 1960's through mostly radical campaigns by decolonial movements in the Global South. In the 1990's, however, PAR had undergone dramatic change – through efforts by researchers, governments, development agencies and NGOs – to depoliticize, assimilate and reconstitute forms of social organization that were aligned with neoliberal globalization.

Minkler et al. (2002) outlined the key elements of a PAR process as follows (p. 16-17):

1. It is participatory.
2. It is cooperative [engaging community members and researchers in a joint process in which both contribute equally].
3. It is a co-learning process.
4. It involves systems development and [local capacity building].
5. It is an empowering process through which participants can increase control over their lives.
6. It achieves a balance between research and action.

PAR takes place in the real world and must also take into considerations the many realities that impact on imbalances, conflicts and problem situations. As pointed out by Bell (2001) and Maguire (1987), attention must be given to race, gender, class and culture and their effect on the research enterprise.

Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey (2009) have described activist scholarship as “the production of knowledge and pedagogical practices through active engagements with, and in the service of, progressive social movements” (ibid.,p. 3). And, in addition to this, that the work of activist scholars aim to create emancipatory knowledge by breaking conventional borders and become fluent in a “bilingualism” of “...both activist and scholarly cultures and languages” in order to create “new solidarities and accountabilities” (ibid., p. 7-8).

The term “action research” relates to a group of research methodologies that normally claims to contribute to greater social justice for marginalized groups (Cardno, 2003). The approaches applied may include developmental research, practitioner research, participatory action, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action science, classroom action, action learning and critical action research (Noffke, 1997).

To participate can refer to many ways of engagement but is seen particularly in light of what Kindon et al. (2007:11) have referred to as “...a political commitment, collaborative processes and participatory worldview”. There can be different levels of participation, the nature of participation can change over time and, instead of seeing the researcher as the principle actor, group members participate and mould the research process in their own way.

Characteristics of PAR, as noted by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005), include social processes, participatory engagements, practical examination, emancipatory outcomes, transformative analysis, critical reflection and non-hierarchical approach to theory and practice:

“PAR is a qualitative approach to inquiry that builds capacity, focuses on community development, empowerment, access, social justice, and participation; is democratic,

equitable, liberating and life-enhancing, providing agency and giving voice to those in society who are marginalized from power and resources. PAR aims to contribute to knowledge construction and to bring about social change and or transformation” (Nelson, 2017:4).

Jordan (2009) argues that since the development of neoliberal globalization in the late 70’s, PAR has been sanctioned, challenged and compromised through co-option and assimilation. One such example is the shift towards applying PAR to investigate influence of floor workers in decision making in a factory (although terms from critical discourse may be used – ex. social capital, justice, emancipatory, power analysis etc.), the overall impact becomes an uncritical tool of capitalist accumulation. Action research became a means of controlling what people do in relation to the priorities of the colonial power, far from its emancipatory roots.

5.4.2 Challenges in PAR

There are researchers who claim to do PAR, but actually do not include people; this is often the scenario when the distance between researcher and the community is vast (see Nyemba & Mayer, 2018). In order to call research PAR, there must be a distinct connection with people. So: Researchers must NOT formulate their own actions before meeting with people. People must formulate the direction through involvement on ALL levels. As PAR is about changing people’s lives, it is demanding, challenging and time consuming. So, the researcher must be critical about every part of the process. It takes patience, the ability to plan, to exercise practical implementation skills, a high level of sensitivity to ethics, trustful relationships, participating in social and cultural contexts: Instead of seeing yourself as an “outsider expert”, seek to become a “cultural insider” - “Participation from within”. PAR takes time: In indigenous communities, the taking of time is a mark of respect and shows the importance of something (Khupe & Keane, 2017). Time is not a commodity that is a variable in “return on investment.

PAR – in its critical stance on anti-oppression and objective to impact change in society – can also run the risk of being self-righteous. Keane et al. (2017) remind us that

research is essentially written for other researchers and carries many oppressive elements within itself. For example, the use of English (or other colonial language(s)) and the tendency to validate only certain knowledges (to the exclusion of others) equate to epistemic marginalization. Even, as positioned by Smith (2012), the term “research” in itself carries many negative connotations. For example, the lobotomizing of mental health patients, racial practices called “racial hygiene” and introduction of certain life-threatening diseases have all been introduced as “research”¹⁰.

As a methodology, PAR raises many questions of ethical nature. The application of ethical considerations is a complex process that requires moral integrity and to abandon aspects that may cause harm to participants (Khupe, 2017:32).

In regard to ethical considerations, issues such as free and informed consent and considerations to ensure that participants are prevented from any form of harm (i.e. embarrassment and unwanted exposure), are seen as essential (Robinson & Lai, 2006). Addressing such concerns through open communication and transparent processes are of key importance (Fraser, 1997; Zeni, 1998). Also, as stressed by Robinson and Lai (2006), involving participants in ethical decisions that may affect them should be a key principle. Since each research setting may be different, a broad – yet specific – attention to consulting widely, alleviating power dynamics and paying close attention to ethical protocols throughout the research work is of utmost importance (Sandretto, 2007).

Anonymity (The New School Collaboratory, 2018:111) cannot always be guaranteed (i.e. in a community setting). There may be information spillage (the oppressive stakeholder may get insight into compromising information about the oppressed). The practice of sharing control can lead to ethical conflicts as to who is right. Participation can be a masked effort to drive personal opinion/interest. PAR depends on flexibility, while Ethics Boards expects full disclosure about activities up front and expects the dynamics of the study to remain the same throughout – this is not realistic...

¹⁰ Methods such as lobotomizing, injection of illnesses, sterilisation and other forms of racial hygiene experiments were presented as research in Europe and America after the Second World War, in pursuit of the preservation of a “pure white race” (Kühl, 2013).

Foley (1999) wrote about the importance of the incidental learning that can occur when people become involved in voluntary organizations, social struggles, and political activity. The learning experience here, Foley advises, should be used to develop the problem analysis and the theoretical framework within which the research is located. In addition to active learning, such processes also enhance the possibility of unlearning dominant discourses and learning resistant discourses, resulting in emancipatory learning. Linking the informal to the formal, critical self-analysis lead us to the awareness Foucault (1991) highlighted through the concept of governmentality; analysis of the manner in which a government attempts to reproduce citizens who willingly fulfils the policies of governance; looking at the organized practices that govern subjects (such as mentalities, rationalities, techniques).

Jordan (2009) who sees PAR as having been co-opted into an assimilation tool for neo-liberal economies, presents three suggestion for how to ensure PAR is practiced in line with its original objective (p. 23-24):

1. PAR must draw on – and form alliances with – other critical methodologies. Positivism in social research must be rejected and a clear commitment to social justice must be articulated. The focus should be on marginalized groups and perspectives from political economy should be integrated. The approach must advance a critique of social sciences, especially on how they are implicated in capitalist governance. Acute awareness of power-dynamics, including the researcher's ability to understand – and minimize – disparities related to own social location and the will to challenge tendencies to see theory as more important than practice.
2. PAR must see learning as a process that takes place through social action. By seeing learning as integral to all human activity and – within this view – understand the centrality of informal learning (everyday practices). It is important to see learning as a result of struggle, where people's needs, and aspirations form the basis of the participatory action. The researcher must be aware that learning to resist and struggle for improvement is possible, but a complex, contradictory and contested approach (especially in regard to its inherent focus on the colonial effect policies have on customs, traditions and relations).

3. Pay close attention to language, conceptual framework and power dynamics

5.4.3 Afrikan approaches to PAR

In recommendations on particular considerations in research involving indigenous Afrikan communities, Mkhabela (2005) described this field as follows:

“This is research where indigenous communities are involved as participants, subjects, or possibly as junior members of a research team. The indigenous communities may be trained in contemporary research methods and mainstream analysis. This type of research might create more effective, more sustainable, more rational, and more genuine educational improvement processes. In particular, and among others, it offers enhanced accountability by identifying specific duties and duty-bearers of the indigenous people involved in the research process. Research is approached as a negotiated partnership, allowing the indigenous communities to define for themselves the degree to which they wish to make themselves available as subjects” (p. 182 – 183).

The recent rise in indigenous research methods, according to Khupe (2017) has – especially in Afrika – been necessitated by Western dominance within theory and knowledge production. There is both a need to oppose Eurocentric paradigms and to decolonise academic processes. Khupe (2014) positions flexibility, participation and negotiated purpose as key elements to an Afrikan approach to research. Mkhabela (2005) and Ndimande (2012) highlighted the need for Afrikan research to interrupt colonising forms and focus on Afrikan thought and experience.

In her description of Afrocentric research method in work on indigenous culture, Mkhabela (2005) sees participation as a must:

“The ‘participatory’ approach allows professionals to learn with, by, and from indigenous communities and to create a working relationship in which people's priorities and values become more fully expressed in research” (p. 183).

Mkhabela (ibid.) sees participatory research as being “...more effective, more sustainable, more rational, and more genuine” (p. 182) in regard to creating an educational improvement process. The presence of values such as involvement, partnership, self-defining and inclusion are essential.

In regard to implementation of participatory research, Mkhabela (ibid.) is of the view that only a few researchers practice what they preach: “Their [researchers] participation appears in some cases to be limited to being consulted on research priorities, design, and assisting in the execution and evaluation of research results. They have been treated as “informants” rather than colleagues and equals. For instance, researchers come from their universities, do their field research over a number of months, get to know people in the community, get local help, and then go back to write and publish their findings. They are acknowledged as the ‘experts’ (particularly if they have included indigenous people in the data collection and can cite them in their research)” (p. 185).

As Mkhabela (ibid.) further explains, Afrikan researchers have an important job to do in reviving and regenerating Afrikan indigenous collective ethics. This work is of great importance as it will lead to a stronger practice in which culturally grounded ideas and practices are adapted and applied. For this to be done meaningfully, Mkhabela (ibid.) raises the point of paying close attention to ethics, which in her view must encompass:

- an appreciation of the importance of all individuals in the research group;
- an understanding that research is part of a very complex (community) whole;
- the respect of heritage authority;
- the inclusion of elders and cultural committees in the research process;
- an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things (including the spiritual) and a required long-term perspective in dealing with research issues;
- researchers must act in an appropriate and respectful way to maintain the harmony and balance of the group (community).

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter attempted to explain PAR as a research methodology and how it relates to the study. In addition to Afrocentricity and Afrikology, also transdisciplinary and qualitative methodology have been explained. Lastly, PAR was explained in more detail, including challenges in its application as a research methodology, ethical dilemmas that may arise and how to locate PAR in an Afrikan-centred practice.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework used in this study, outlining the steps and procedures that were followed. In doing so, the study seeks to connect the rationale of the choice of methodology with the Afrocentric paradigm and the research questions guiding the research. Research work aims at identifying opinions about cultural conditions while using the study's major concepts as the appropriate lenses for investigation.

The chapter will first outline the paradigmatic approach adopted in the study, and then explain the research design and activities involved in the data analysis. Finally, the chapter will consider on the study's reliability and the researcher's own experience as a researcher.

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

6.2.1 Fine-tuning the research methodology

The study was, from the onset, focused on practical outcomes, both as part of the research process (to empower participants) and as an outcome (develop recommendations for future work). In order to do this, "participation" – in particular by men who have an interest in redefining Afrikan masculinities – and "action" – as a series of practical activities where participants engage in deep reflection and transformative work – were seen as essential. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was therefore found to be highly relevant for this study. PAR, an approach to research, differs quite radically from ordinary methods in that it brings in aspects of collaborative inquiry, reflexive and dialectic critique, social change, risk taking and people-centred

activism (O'Brien, 2001). Where conventional research observes, PAR gets involved in order to enact change (Klocker, 2012).

Action research has traditionally been concerned with self-reflection around teaching practices (Noffke, 1997; Mc Taggart, 1988 in Sandretto, 2007), but has also been used widely in regard to marginality and social justice (Lewin, 1988). The dual focus on education and social transformation were regarded to be highly relevant to this study as it seeks solutions to how meaningful Afrikan masculinities can be learnt and transferred. As argued by Carr and Kemmis (1986), all action research projects should be “systematic investigation[s] of social or educational practice... participatory or collaborative, and... employ the spiral of self-reflection” (Sandretto, 2007:201). Principles guiding PAR include processes that are collaborative, creating a self-reflective community and involving those affected by the practices under consideration (ibid.).

Even if the choice of research methodology was clear from the beginning, it was also evident that the approach had to be fine-tuned. PAR has often been used in particular scenarios of reviewing a practice (i.e. teaching methods and curriculum within a school), creating awareness about social injustice (i.e. unfair housing policies) or opposition to an oppressive practice (i.e. discriminatory practices against an ethnic group). These scenarios have in common that they may have a clear distinction between who wants change (those that are affected, unfairly treated or marginalized) and who needs to consider change (i.e. a school board, a municipality department or the management of a certain institution). The category “Afrikan men” is very broad, as it applies to millions of men who differ in regard to age, socio-economic background, nationality, spiritual orientation, political interest, language and personal interest. It is a huge generalization to state that Afrikan men, collectively, see themselves as being dislocated by historical events, that they have an expressed interest in cultural education in this regard and, even, that they have a common interest in redefining masculinities. So when this study does lend itself to several generalisations about Afrikan men, it has to do with a location. As argued by Chawane (2016), the historical dislocation of Afrikans, as well as the similarities in challenges they face as a direct

effect of this, creates a location of time and space (Asante 2003) in which one can observe, compare and analyse.

This study's assertion that there is a need to redefine Afrikan masculinities has some resonance in academic studies (i.e. Nehusi, 2018; Ratele, 2017 and Wilson, 2016). But, to a much larger degree, the needs stem from other sources, such as health statistics, men's associations, discussions on social media platforms, crime reports that give evidence to violent behaviour and complaints by women who ring the alarm on men who are abusive, non-supportive or neglectful. The need to look critically at Afrikan manhood has also been placed within movies, non-fiction literature and is implicit in numerous studies on gender, sexuality, health, leadership, business development and social justice. So there is evidence to claim that *some* Afrikan men exercise unhealthy forms of masculinity and that both women and men are interested in a discourse interrogating – and transforming – the constitutive rules of Afrikan masculinities¹¹. However, since it is not an undisputable fact that Afrikan men see their forms of masculinity as problematic and linked to colonization, it has been an integral part of this study to engage in research activities where men can give a richer response to this question.

To the extent that contemporary Afrikan masculinities are affected by external dynamics (i.e. colonial history, oppressive experiences, war, economies and (un)employment), this study has an interest in the internal effects, reflections and needs, as experienced by Afrikan men. PAR – as it lends itself to critical analysis, political awareness, cultural anchoring and liberating education – was identified as a meaningful approach, both to keep the study focused and make it sensitive to nuances. Tripp (1990) renders that action research projects have the potential to enact social change by taking on an emancipatory character. The study therefore, in its focus on decolonial thought, seeks to be of a liberating nature.

¹¹ This resonates with the researcher's experience from numerous community workshops, academic engagements and organizational meetings over 30 years in Afrikan communities in South, West and East Afrika, where both Afrikan women and men express concerns in relation to how Afrikan masculinities are understood and exercised, and an interest in indigenized transformation.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) relies on plurality of structure and collaborative resources (O'Brien, 2001). In practice, this means that the research design is constantly scrutinised and modified throughout the whole research period. In the context of this study, the researcher started out with a research design that ended up being much richer and more sensitive to its objectives, with the constant reflections, interrogations and questions that were sparked as the study developed. It will not be fair to lock the research design completely at this point. As a basic point of departure, a guide for research design for youth-focused transformation work (referenced in Amsden & VanWynsberghe, 2005) served as a guideline for the research process, following a structure similar to this outline:

1. Define the problem
2. Identify who is affected by the problem
3. Develop partnership with relevant partners
4. Assign roles and responsibilities
5. Set out research objectives
6. Crystallise research methodology
7. Empower facilitators through training
8. Find participants
9. Set up workshops
10. Conduct workshops
11. Organize information: Coding
12. Interpret data of findings
13. Decide what should be done with the new information
14. Develop and set in motion an action plan for transformation

This proved to be an outline which was specific enough to keep a focused drive, yet flexible enough to actively seek and give room for new angles and perspectives.

6.2.1.1 *Frame of reference*

This study required a methodology that has both an Afrikan agency and location in addition to advancing strong elements of transformative development (Asante, 2003). However, in order to avoid an arrogant researcher-dominated project, the methodology used in the study was grounded in participatory action-processes during which the participants were part of both the reflective and the interpretive inquiry and not mere informants. In addition, a people centred research approach guided the work in seeking to be of relevance to the community as well as the socio-cultural activities with which the work was concerned (Mkhabela, 2005).

The methodology was based on ontological assumptions rooted in Afrocentric anti-essentialism with the facts being seen to not be given, but a result of interpretations, and meanings seen as socially constructed (Taylor, 2008). The study's epistemological position focused the research towards social constructionism. In addition, a transdisciplinary outlook enabled the phenomena of power and meaning related to culture and cultural knowledge to be studied in terms of how they are socially constructed (Ani, 1994). The anti-essentialist approach was motivated by its inherent rejection of Western/modernist analyses and its commitment to analyse the conditions that give rise to the construction of meaning (Taylor, 2008).

Underpinning the methodology in this study is an intention to not borrow from Western thought, imply Eurocentric tools, position an argument that fits in with the academic norms or perform for acceptance. A position that builds on Afrocentricity and Afrikology to express an Afrikan-centred, decolonial paradigm which "...aims at liberating, emancipating and decolonising existing knowledges about African subjects and subjectivities" (Dastile, 2013:103) and is able "...to enhance the ability for independence, self-understanding, self-worth and self-discovery" (ibid.). Mignolo (2011:55) describes this as "combative methodology", a disruptive stand in which all Western concepts undergo "constant and coherent critique". This is what informs this study's frame of reference,

6.2.2 Research design

Having chosen to centralise Afrikan agency, transdisciplinarity and a combative stance towards Westernized methodologies, the design of this research is informed by many sources. These include the researchers' own experience as an Afrikan man, the professional work he has engaged in on related topics and the many years of experience gained through dialogues, workshops and seminars with and for Afrikan men in many countries. The researchers' work with SHABAKA – Men of Afrika over many years served as a background to the study's cultural anchoring. This created a foundation that allowed the researcher to draw from experiences with intuitive observation, historical awareness, narratological dialoguing, cultural sensitivity, Pan-Afrikan philosophy and multi-dimensional interpretation. Awareness developed as a result of input from hundreds of men in conversations prior to the research was a useful navigation guide in fine-tuning the activities of inquiry.

6.2.2.1 Research plan

The researcher's first plan was to conduct active research with different co-researchers in different countries. The idea was that Afrikan masculinities is a vast and complex field of experiences, and that, in order to do justice to the theme, the researcher would have to interview men in different parts of the Afrikan continent. The researcher then realized that this could easily turn into a comparative study, which was not the intention. And that, even if the researcher went to – as originally planned – three countries. It was therefore reconciled to limit the empirical study to South Afrika, while consulting literature and broader, continental and global discourses for balance.

A research plan was developed in line with the research objectives and research questions. The initial plan was quite general and open, as it was a key principle for the study to involve the co-research team throughout all processes. As the researcher have been working with related issues for a number of years, they decided not to do data collection in communities they already know, or where their work had been

introduced. With the danger of already carrying some bias (due to the researcher's work experience), they wanted a neutral environment. The researcher decided to go to Limpopo province, to the Tshivenda-speaking community in and around Thohoyandou. Through a hospitable relationship with University of Venda (UNIVEN), the researcher was able to meet people they had never interacted with before and involve people who had no prior experience with their work. In line with cyclical PAR-principles, it took many rounds of going back and forth in order to recruit the co-research team, complete the research plan and engage in all research activities. Constant reflections, active engagements and critical thinking were applied throughout the research period. Initially, it was suggested to do focus group interviews with young men in and outside of Thohoyandou. For the purposes of a wider scope of references, it was decided to also include interviews with women. Women relate closely to men and form an essential part of how masculinities are shaped. The research plan was developed and refined by the co-research team and consultation was obtained from a broad variety of knowledge holders, academics and people in general.

The co-research team was trained in PAR methodology, decolonial thought and Afrikan-centred knowledge development. A question guide was developed in accordance with the research questions and members of the co-research team conducted data collection interviews in Mangaya village outside Thohoyandou, after consultations with Elders and leaders of the community were consulted and had given their endorsement. Each interview was held in Tshivenda, audio-recorded and transcribed, although the members of the research team also took their own notes. Debriefing meetings were held after each interview and as the process of interpreting the data unfolded. The research data were analysed with the help of Grounded theory.

The role of dialogue and the importance of storytelling, interactive engagements and action-orientation was carefully thought through as the intention was to interview men and women who were not "professional experts", but "regular people" in their communities and who could hopefully represent the diversity of views one would encounter in social settings. After a test-interview that was held with UNIVEN-students, all other interviews were held as personal and focus group interviews with individuals in the community and groups of 4-6 participants.

In addition to the main data collection, a number of reflections, group discussions, consultations and creative brainstorming meetings – to interpret, and further develop an understanding around the findings – were held with men and women.

6.2.2.2 *Choice of research site*

The region of Venda¹² in South Afrika was chosen as a research site, primarily due to its Pan-Afrikan genealogy, resistance to colonial invasion, deep cultural heritage and elaborate history of indigenous institutions – in which initiation into manhood has featured strongly. A draft research plan for planning, meetings, recruiting co-researchers, finalizing research design, collecting and interpreting data, create an intervention and evaluate outcomes was developed.

After having considered numerous research sites and after having consulted with colleagues within related fields, the researcher's choice narrowed down to the town of Thohoyandou which is part of Thulamela Municipality in Vhembe district, Limpopo province. The researcher decided to choose one area to do the research in, and that the co-researchers would also be identified within the same area. The researcher has previously done extensive work in most provinces of South Afrika, but never in Venda-speaking communities. This made possible a necessary distance, helping to prevent the applying of a bias based on findings made in other localities. The researcher wanted it to be a genuine exploration of new information together with people they had not worked with before and within a community they had to humbly take a backseat, learn and be guided by people who had more insight than the researcher.

In order to proceed with the study within Thulamela Municipality, it was important that the study would be welcomed, accepted and seen as necessary. An important Afrikan indigenous value is that you cannot enter a place without being welcomed.

¹² "Venda" – used as reference to a region – is widely applied in South African everyday talk, but is not correct. It originally refers to the Apartheid-constructed Bantustan of Venda that was self-governed between 1973 and 1994. It is today part of Limpopo province in the North-Eastern part of South Afrika.

Fortunately, the Community Development unit at UNIVEN welcomed the researcher warmly and assisted greatly in identifying a number of knowledge holders from within the university (students and academics), community leaders and practitioners of indigenous knowledge. A first orientation meeting was held at UNIVEN¹³ where the researcher presented their research proposal and the draft research plan. This was well received, and, after some critical questions and concern, the researcher was granted the goodwill and acceptance to continue. The reason for welcoming the study, as articulated by the meeting, was that there is a general concern about Afrikan men from different corners of society. The researcher was warmly welcomed, and the research program endorsed.

The Vhavenda (= the Venda people, speakers of the Tshivenda language) descend from many heterogeneous peoples that are subgroups of the Vhangona and Vhatavhatsindi clans (Luonde, 2018). They are said to have come from the Great Lakes of Central Afrika and started populating today's northern South Afrika and the southern part of Zimbabwe around 400 AD. They share linguistic affinity with the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Lozi of Zambia and represent many sub-groups who now speak a common language.

The Vhavenda are strongly associated with the founding of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe (1075-1220 AD), a civilization of great architectural, industrial, trade-economy and cultural magnitude (Kgatla, 2016).

*Mfecane*¹⁴ – around 1816 – caused social upheaval by attacks and plundering of the Venda by other nations (Muthivi 2010). The impact of Mfecane (tensions and dislocations), mixed with conflicts over land with Portuguese explorers, traders and

¹³ The choice of having the first meeting at UNIVEN was not unproblematic. The University as an institution has played a direct role in many of the atrocities this study was geared to highlight and change. However, the researcher was comforted by the fact that UNIVEN's Community Development unit had a long and invested relationship with community leaders and practitioners of Indigenous Knowledge.

¹⁴ Mfecane (meaning "crushing") refers to the period between 1814-1850 with widespread chaos and warfare among different nations in Southern Africa, as a result of droughts, scarcity of resources and political conflicts. During Mfecane, some nations were destroyed, others scattered and new groups formed.

the arrival of Boer migrants (Voortrekkers) during 1830's caused tense situations. White settlers were met with strong resistance and driven out when they first attempted to settle in the region. Around 1895 they were able to return and secure their presence through power-manipulation and instigating of rivalries between royal leaders and their supporters. During the Anglo-Boer war, which broke out in 1899, the Boers lost their stronghold to the British in 1902. The British, similarly, caused further conflicts between royal houses by their own manipulation tactics.

In 1913, the Land Act was enforced and huge masses of land in Venda were declared 'white areas' and turned in to white-owned farms. Most Vhavenda were forcibly removed and resettled in other areas. The development of Apartheid laws and colonial administration caused substantial harm to Vhavenda leadership, cultural practices and social lives. *Venda* was created as a self-governed area in 1973 and was declared as the 'Republic of Venda' in 1979 by the Apartheid regime which founded it as a Bantustan, with Thohoyandou as its capital city.

During the freedom struggle towards democracy a number of violent riots broke out in reaction to, on one side, chaos caused by colonial policies and, on the other, the attempts to reinstitute traditional leadership (Luonde, 2018). Venda as a homeland was dissolved in 1994. The disputes of leadership created by the colonial administrations, however, lingered on. A number of commissions were established to find solutions to contestations between different royal houses and clans who by now had huge disagreements about historical events, political technicality and the sacred values which were supposed to guide leadership. The disputes were only resolved (not without disagreements and controversy) in 2012.

The area was re-incorporated into South Afrika after the first democratic elections in April 1994. Vhavenda is a minority group in South Afrika counting app. 1 million people and living mostly in the north-eastern part of the country, in the Thulamela district of the Vhembe municipality in the Limpopo province. The region has always been known for autonomous leadership and holding on to indigenous practices (Luonde, 2018). Resistance against the oppressive governance of Apartheid was strong. The Black

Consciousness Movement made a huge impact on the political awareness many engaged in uprisings and struggle to end Apartheid (Kgatla, 2016).

Culturally, family and self-sustenance are strong values among Vhavenda and the practice of polygamy has a central position. Rites of Passage, or initiation rituals, have had a strong position within Venda culture. The boys go for *Murundu* (circumcision) between the ages of ten and 10 (Luonde, 2018). *Thondo* refers to the initiation process of which *Murundu* is only one part (Dionisio & Vivani, 2013). In the initiation school boys are taught about cultural values, family responsibilities, respect and leadership. The vast majority of Vhavenda boys are circumcised, but mostly through clinical circumcision (Luonde, 2018). The practice of *Murundu* is slowly dying out. Correspondingly, girls undergo three different initiation rituals; the *M Musevhetho* (as a child), the *Vhukomba* (as a youth) and the *Domba* (as a young adult, ready to get married). A few communities retain the traditional initiation rituals, but Rites of Passage traditions for young women have – like for young men – been abandoned by the majority.

What made Venda particularly interesting for this study was a combination of its history, politics and culture. The Venda nation is a result of several strands of, relatively recent, migrations. They are a small nation that is somewhat marginalised in the broader South African narrative. They have a history of resistance against colonial impositions and invasions. They have anchored traditions of indigenous leadership, educational institutions, cultural ceremonies and sacred sites. They have solid traditions of living in big, polygamous families organised through chiefdoms and clan-systems. They have strong legacies of how to organise communities, solve disputes and conduct elaborate initiation rituals. They represent a culture in which women and men have very particular roles, exercised with quite harmonious co-operation between the genders. They own their land and take pride in working on it. They represent a spiritual identity where waters, mountains and forests are seen to hold sacred values. But, they also have been colonised and brutalised by violent attacks and invasions. Been victimised by foreign powers to have their histories invalidated, their leadership crushed and their customs outlawed. Due, perhaps to their independent lifestyles, cultural practices and affinity for traditions, a number of stereotypes exist about

Vhavenda in South Afrika. Some of them portray Vhavenda as mystic, traditional and practitioners of witchcraft, ritual murders and supernatural powers.

All these characteristics were seen to, potentially, enrich the study and give insights that could speak to how Vhavenda masculinity is developed, but also how it relates within a broader, Pan-Afrikan frame. As a nation often seen – from outside – as culturally intact, indigenously aware and grounded in their own pride – it would be of great interest to better understand their level of resistance towards coloniality and modernity. In addition to their experiences of military conquest, political dictatorship and socio-economic destabilisation due to colonisation, Vhavenda also wear the marks of what wa Thiong'o (1986) has deemed the “most important area of domination”, which he describes as “...the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world” (p. 16).

6.2.2.3 *Research activities*

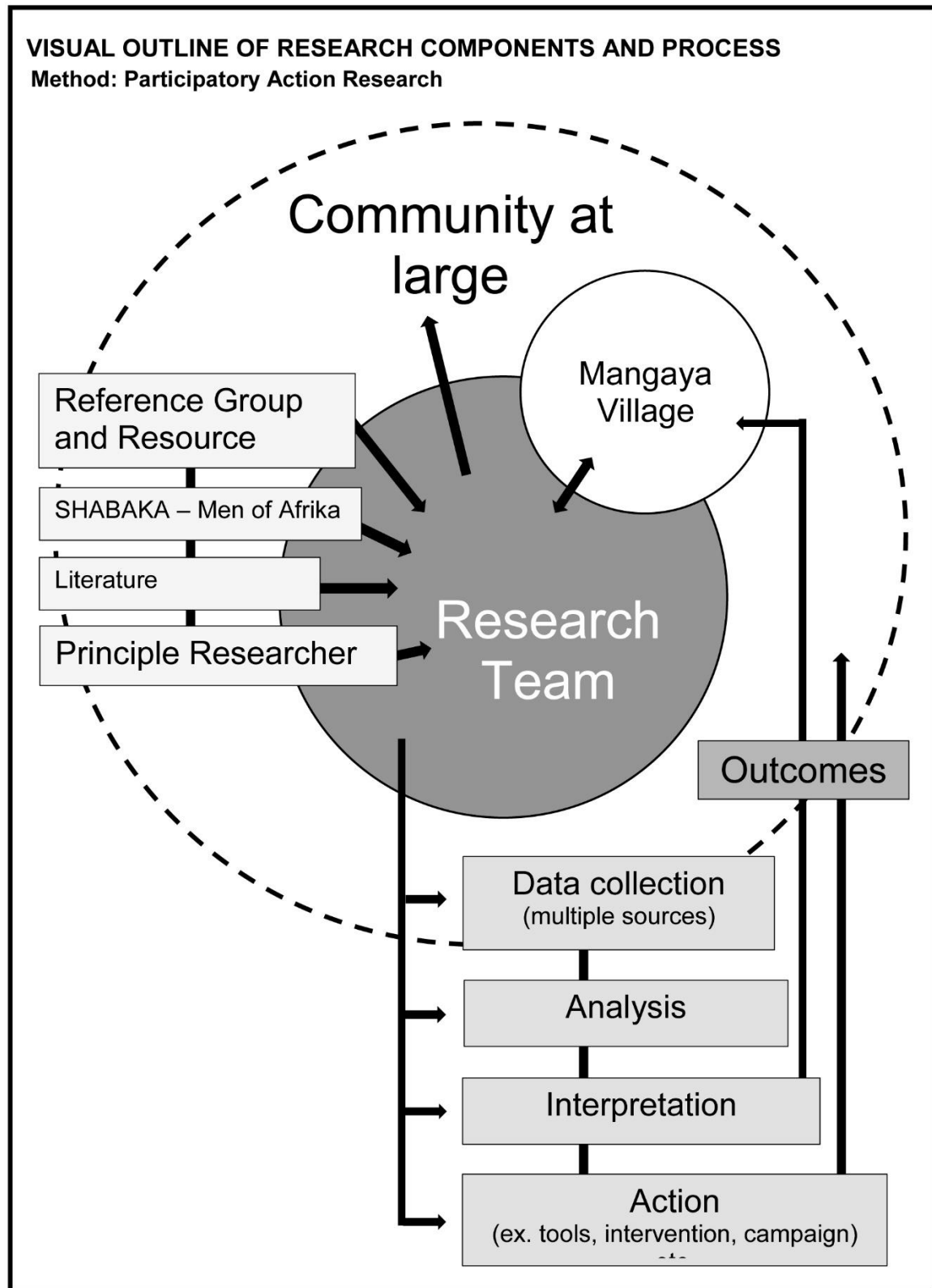
The various stages of the research produced constantly refined and reformed research plans and choice of activities. The dynamic experience of PAR is a constant learning process and new reminders, considerations and sensitivities popped up along the way as a result of dialogues, research interviews, analysis, interpretations, advice and insights. In the preliminary phase, the planned activities were inspired by suggestions for PAR projects as referenced in Mertens Ferrance (2000), Burgess (2006) and Cammarota and Fine (2008), which included identifying and working closely with co-researchers, developing partnerships with institutions and knowledge-holders, identifying participants, planning and setting up interviews, conducting group sessions, organising data, extracting new insights and recommendations and evaluation of the learning process and outcomes.

After a research site had been identified, the following outline illustrates the research plan as presented in the orientation meeting at UNIVEN and as the first discussion document with the co-research team:

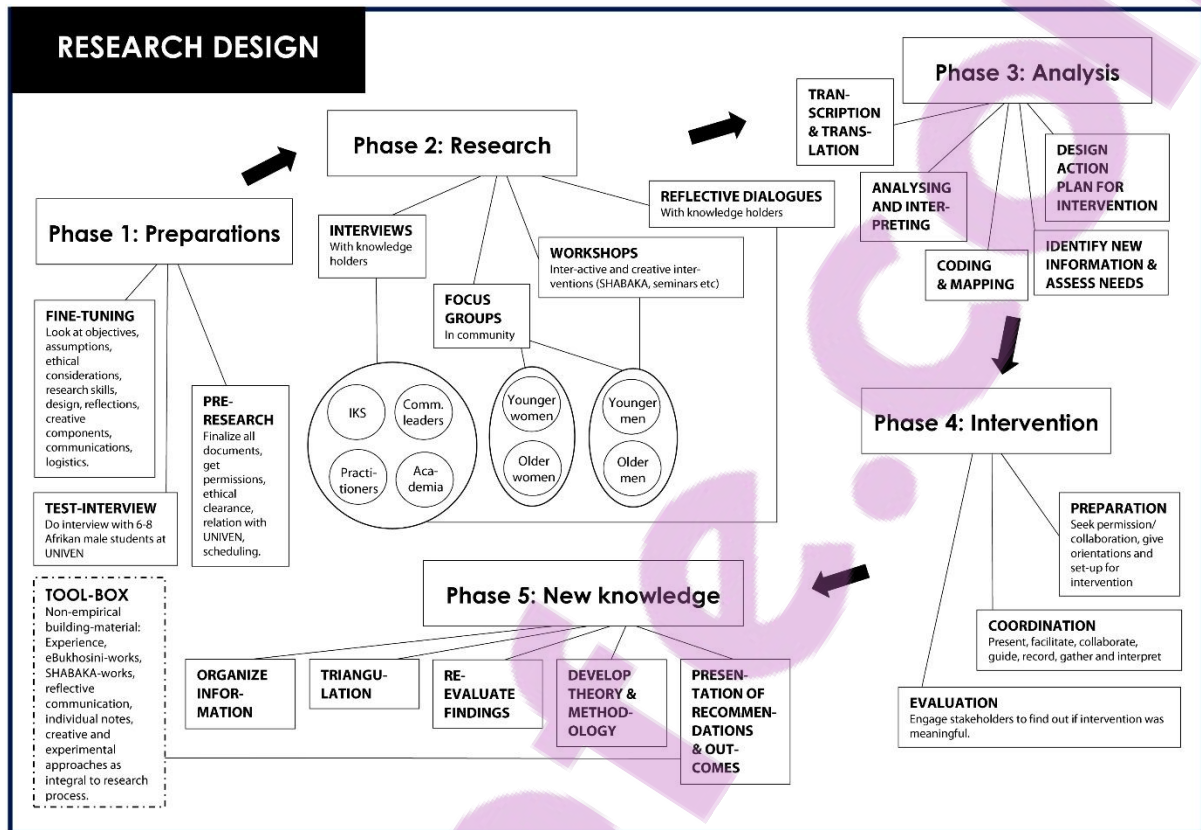
RESEARCH DESIGN - Vhembe District

Phase 1	IDEAS, BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING	<p>Identify and establish relevant contacts at UNIVEN and in community (organizations, traditional and political leadership);</p> <p>Identify specific community for this research;</p> <p>Identify protocols and ethical considerations to be observed;</p> <p>Plan for working space and logistics;</p> <p>Contact relevant knowledge holders;</p> <p>PR-ideas (use media to mobilize for Seminar-lecture, see Phase 2).</p>
Phase 2	ORIENTATION MEETING, IDENTIFY A REFERENCE GROUP, SEMINAR-LECTURE ON CAMPUS AND IDENTIFY RESEARCH TEAM	<p>Meeting with key people/resource persons;</p> <p>Introductions and authorizations;</p> <p>Identify and establish a Reference Group;</p> <p>Seminar-lecture to introduce themes and get feedback from student/Academic community;</p> <p>Recruit members to research team (young Afrikan men with great interest and some academic background);</p> <p>Decide on process to screen and select team members.</p>
Phase 3	GROUP PROCESS WORK WITH RESEARCH TEAM AND FINALIZE RESEARCH DESIGN/PLAN	<p>Multiple meetings with research team (awareness, reading of texts, reflections, identify needs, personal journeys, training, conversations, brainstorming of ideas for data collection);</p> <p>Finalize detailed research design/plan;</p> <p>Present plan to Reference Group.</p>
Phase 4	DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	<p>Collect data (research interviews, but also literature, notes, reports, conversations, articles, artistic aspects, meetings, audio-visual material etc);</p> <p>Analyze, discuss, organize and interpret the data collected;</p> <p>Identify groups of themes and concepts. through coding.</p>
Phase 5	ACTION PLAN BASED ON FINDINGS, REFLECTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND EMERGING NEW KNOWLEDGE	<p>Develop action plan (intervention) based on findings, analysis and interpretations;</p> <p>Present outcomes to Reference Group;</p> <p>Implement action plan;</p> <p>Evaluate results;</p> <p>OUTCOMES: Extract emerging new knowledge, design innovative pedagogy and develop final recommendations based on lessons learned.</p>

After the first round of meetings with the co-research team, an outline of the research was visualised as follows:



Finally, after the first test-interview and further consultations within the co-research team, with reference group members and various resource people who demonstrated great interest in the research, the following research design was drawn up:



Although the main-research activities consisted of dialogue-based interviews, a great variety of data collection methods were employed, in order to get a thorough understanding of all aspects of the theme, and in order to enable an innovative and meaningful process of finding solutions.

As an introduction to Vhavenda masculinity, it was humbling to get the opportunity to have an interview with a distinguished Elder and knowledge holder, Vho-Matsheka. This served as a navigation-guide for the collection of data that followed. Individual interviews were held with Elders, professionals and practitioners of Indigenous Knowledge in the Mangaya community. These were all people who were seen to be held in high regard within the community and who – through their work roles – engage with all segments of the community on a regular basis. It was expected that they would be able to articulate the concerns and needs of the community.

Focus groups were held with young men and women (under 35) and older men and women (over 35):

“A focus group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition and interview procedures. The focus or object of analysis is the interaction inside the group” (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins & Popjoy, 1998:2).

All interviews were conducted by two or more of the co-research team members. All communication was done in Tshivenda. Semi-structured interview processes, guided by a set of research questions aimed at finding out what people feel, know and construct, based on their experiences (Ferreira, 2010) were conducted. In regard to the utilisation of the focus group as a method it is both understood and actively encouraged that the participants influence each other through their answers to a question, that the moderator plays a role in stimulating the discussion and that the research data include not only transcripts from the interviews, but also from the moderator's own reflections.

Based on the outcomes of the interviews, interpretations of data led to an intervention in the format of a workshop for men of all ages in Mangaya village. Reflections and responses from this workshop further helped to develop a deeper understanding of both problems and possible solutions. The research plan also included the writing of essays, internal discussions, one-on-one conversations, reading, creative expression and personal narratives with the members of the co-research team. To test out findings, all outcomes were discussed, brought up and reflected in several forums through the personal networks of the co-research team members and the researcher. This created a broader platform for interpretation and resulted in the development of some new understandings and the development of a non-empirical “tool” in the form of a youth-friendly mixtape with inspirational messages, meant for young Afrikan men, advocating critical self-analysis and engagement.

6.2.2.4 *Research procedures*

Being welcomed at UNIVEN was very helpful to the research process. The researcher was given access to meeting rooms, work space, students, resource people, an extensive network of knowledge holders and other researchers. After successfully having recruited a co-research team of five members, a revised and synthesized research plan was developed with activities including meetings, consultations, literary references, creative workshops, interviews, dialogues, reflections, interpretation, analysis and interventions. The specific – i.e. data collected in province of Limpopo – was reflected on in relation to the general – i.e. information by and about Afrikan men from other parts of South Afrika, Afrika and the Afrikan Diaspora.

During the research process, the co-research team played the most central role in shaping and carrying out data collection, interpretation and activities. The process was also informed by findings in literature and experiences made during the researcher's long standing community practice, both in South Afrika and other parts of the Afrikan world. The work was coordinated by the principal researcher. Consultations were had with knowledge holders, practitioners and academic researchers, to test validity, cultural coherence and relevance of data. A reference group – quite loosely composed – also served as a “check-in” point at critical junctions of the study process. Based on findings from data collection, an intervention for young men in one Venda-community was planned and executed. Finally, a non-empirical and accessible “tool” was developed in the form of a mixtape with music and inspirational messages to reach young men in a broad sense. The ultimate objective was to develop new knowledge and practical interventions that can benefit the broader Pan-Afrikan community.

6.2.2.5 *Purpose of research activities*

The objective of gathering information through interviews, meetings, discussions, dialogues and reflections was to listen to views, opinions, experiences, concerns and suggestions regarding Afrikan masculinities – especially in relation to identity, coloniality and culture – from men and women. Most participants were members of

communities that have been marginalized, excluded and marginalised. The engagements combined elements of interviews, narration and storytelling, and positioned what was shared as sources of knowledge. This served the purpose of attempting to decolonise methodology. Telling stories from one's own perspective represents an approach to claim epistemic authority (Stone-Mediatore, 2003) where participants "...articulate and situate unspoken tensions in everyday life can transform experience, helping those of us who have been reduced to victims to claim agency" (p. 150).

It was also an expressed aim to create research situations that would ensure fairness and confidentiality, free from bias. With many years of experience in work with youth, communities and social problems, the researcher was aware of his own non-neutrality with regards to the topics under investigation. For this reason, the co-research team played a dual role; of being both collectors of, and contributors to, knowledge, and developed a question guide with as many open questions as possible.

6.2.3 Role of co-research team

A co-research team of five (5) Afrikan men played an instrumental role in most of the work done for this study. An announcement seeking the participation of young Afrikan men for a co-research process went out on campus at UNIVEN and also through some community organizations in Thohoyandou. The criteria applied were being an Afrikan male under 25 years of age, having personal and academic interest in the subject of Afrikan masculinity, and, preferably, some experience in research work. The motivation for the criteria was that, aligned with principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR), it was seen as important to recruit researchers who themselves were young, Afrikan men. It was assumed that many men in their early 20's go through processes of self-evaluation and seeking a deeper understanding of self and identity; this was seen as being of great advantage to the study. Pre-screenings and personal interviews were held, after which five men were chosen to be members of the co-research team. The candidates also wrote essays about their own understanding of Afrikan masculinities. In the final selection, four were men under 25 years of age. One

was above the original age criteria, but was seen as being able (and willing) to offer a more mature insight to the study.

The role of the co-research team members was to take part in all research activities, conduct interviews, take part in workshops, participate in meetings of reflection, data analysis, interpretation and development of ideas for action. They also consulted with the Elders and leaders of Mangaya village to secure their endorsement of the research in the community, did all logistical arrangements regarding interviews and assisted in engaging with the broader community to create interest and participation in the theme. The researcher was not physically part of the interviews, as they do not speak Tshivenda, and we regarded it to cause 'disturbance' if we had commenced with interpretation in the interviews. The co-research team was also, after interpretation of findings, responsible for planning and conducting a community-intervention with men in Mangaya with content directed by the outcomes of interviews. The researcher was present in this workshop, but apart from an introduction and a short presentation, their role was behind-the-scenes, to allow the workshop to be conducted in Tshivenda. The program was directed by one of the team-leaders from SHABAKA – Men of Afrika (who is originally from Limpopo province) and all other items were rendered by the co-research team.

In addition to having coordinating roles, the co-research team members also agreed to share from their own personal journeys as Afrikan men; their individual reflections, questions, contestations and suggestions played an instrumental part in the study.

After the research was concluded, the co-research team continued to play a role in how the outcomes of the study continued to develop; through communication, interaction and further activities – in Mangaya village and in the personal networks of each member. The findings from the study were brought up in conversations and workshops with Afrikan men in several provinces in South Afrika, Nigeria, Botswana, Uganda and the Netherlands – coordinated by SHABAKA – Men of Afrika. Findings were also presented at academic seminars in South Afrika, Norway and United Kingdom. Feedback from all these engagements helped to cement a solid foundation for understanding the theme and provide meaningful solutions.

The research team consisted of one moderator – the researcher – and two research assistants. The role of the researcher as moderator was to ask as open questions as possible, to ask the questions with as much clarity as possible and to invite diverse responses. The role of the one research assistant was to manage the audio and video equipment for recording purposes while the other research assistant was there to help set up the room, welcome the participants, introduce the interview format, manage the attendance register and prepare refreshments.

The research team communicated closely and held briefing sessions both before and after all focus group interviews. Notes were taken during each interview and discussed afterwards. This was a great help in the further analyses of data, as it provided a mechanism to note and discuss details such as non-verbal communication, body language and “the energy” in each interview.

6.2.4 Role of participants

Participants in the study included 30 people who were interviewed. All of them were inhabitants of Mangaya village. Their role was to draw from their own experiences and observations, and assist in reflecting on questions related to this study in order to identify a rich understanding of both problems and solutions.

This group can, obviously, not be said to be fully representative of the very broad category of “Afrikan men”. However, they played the role of being voices of *some* Afrikan men. Their contributions were compared to – and analysed against – opinions and reflections by many other men who also played a role in the study. Other participants such as reference group, resource people, workshop participants and knowledge holders were consulted for specific aspects of the study, to which they assisted with comments, insights and suggestions to enrich the study.

6.2.5 Sampling method

At the onset of the study it was deemed ideal to have a minimum four (4) co-researchers and do individual and focus group interviews with 30 participants, in order to get both substance and diversity. For the co-research team, one of the criteria was that they would be under the age of 30. It was anticipated that men's search for an interest in their Afrikan male identity would be stronger among young men. However, after interviewing interested candidates, it was decided to invite five participants – one of whom was above the age of 30, both for diversity, and because the candidate expressed interests and insights that were seen to be beneficial to the study. All co-research team members were students at UNIVEN and indicated strong, personal interest in the topics raised by the study.

It was deemed instrumental to the quality of the study to obtain a sample that represented diversity in terms of the participants' awareness of the themes to be discussed. Cresswell (1998) refers to this as theoretical sampling. For those identified for individual interviews, the criteria was that they have very good knowledge of their community and that they have responsibilities that put them in touch with most residents of Mangaya village. They represented expertise in traditional healing, education, local leadership, and faith communities. Participants in focus groups were chosen based on gender and age; older men (above 35), younger men (below 35), older women (above 35) and younger women (below 35). Also, a test interview was done before commencing with the individual interviews with students at UNIVEN. Apart from the gender and age bracket, the only other criteria was that the participants should not belong to the same "clique" of friends or colleagues and that they should represent some diversity in regard to background (education, employment, interest and "role in society"). The recruitment was done by co-research members who worked through the traditional leadership of Mangaya village and were given free reign as to approach and identify candidates for interviews.

Padgett (1998:52) states that the "...sample sizes in qualitative studies can range from one to as many as the researcher needs (and can pursue), given the constraints on time and resources".

Snowball sampling can happen in a number of ways, but generally it is when a group of people recommends potential participants for a study, or directly recruits them for the study (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Those participants then recommend additional participants, and so on, thus building up momentum like a snowball rolling down a hill. Through the endorsement of the Headman of Mangaya village, many people offered helpful suggestions to identify suitable candidates. With one of the co-research participants being a resident in the village, it made it easy to get access to people and be accepted. Further snowballing was applied by finding one person who qualifies to participate and then ask the person to recommend others (purposive sampling, Morgan 2008). To some extent, network analysis (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004) was applied, by working through the traditional council of Mangaya village to get permission, seek goodwill and also get access to a broad variety of participants with valuable insights.

Cresswell (1998) suggests that the researcher should start by selecting a homogenous sample – in this case young Afrikan men. Then, from this homogenous group, a heterogeneous subsample should be selected – in this case older men, young women and older women from different segments of Mangaya village. The decision to include interviews with women played a crucial role. Women relate closely with men, as mothers, partners, wives and leaders. They experience men, their thoughts and their behaviour on all levels. Additionally, women play an integral part in men's masculinity, both because masculinity – in many ways – plays out as a response to femininity, and because women raise, nurture, marry and coexist with men. Based on this it was concluded that women would have vital opinions and experiences to shed light on Afrikan masculinities.

A total of five co-researchers and 31 participants took part in interviews. Among the 31 participants 19 were men (of which 10 under 35) and 12 females (of which 5 under 35). Eight participated in individual interviews, the other 23 were spread over 5 focus group interviews with four to six participants in each.

After the research was concluded, the co-research team continued to play a role in how the outcomes of the study continued to develop; through communication, interaction and further activities – in Mangaya village and in the personal networks of each member. The findings from the study were brought up in conversations and workshops with Afrikan men in several provinces in South Afrika, Nigeria, Botswana, Uganda and the Netherlands – coordinated by SHABAKA – Men of Afrika. Findings were also presented at academic seminars in South Afrika, Norway and United Kingdom. Feedback from all these engagements helped to cement a solid foundation for understanding the theme and provide meaningful solutions. All in all, 174 people (of which 142 were male and 32 were female) participated in conversations involving data collection, comments on findings and fine-tuning of research outcomes while approximately 1,320 people¹⁵ were exposed to partial findings of the study.

6.3 DATA ANALYSES

6.3.1 Data collection methods

Although the main data were collected through individual and focus group interviews, a number of other data collection methods - with the co-research team – were conducted. They included a number of more open, emerging and interactive ways of collecting data, gaining insights and allow new knowledge to develop.

These methods included writing of essays, inter-active group exercises, storytelling, creative and arts-based exercises, personal narratives and journaling, evaluations, constructive critique, using audio-visual learning material, open question-time, poetry, meeting with Elders and knowledge holders, one-on-one conversations, educative dialogues, group discussions, exposure to new information, intersubjectivity and transdisciplinarity. Also, a number of disruptive elements, such as surprising topics,

¹⁵ Many people were also engaged via social media platforms, radio and TV interviews – of which no estimation of numbers can accurately be given.

unexpected angles, in-the-moment suggestions, public observations and unorthodox presentations within academic spaces were applied.

This approach of multiple data collection methods were chosen in order to uphold an innovative spirit throughout the study. With regards to the co-research team; they were all university students. There is a tendency among students to get used to, and adhere to a particular student vs lecturer dynamic. The researcher wanted to provoke barriers, inspire to develop new perspectives and encourage the members to be in a constant, reflective mode – both in relation to themselves, each other and the environments around them.

In line with Freire (2006), at the centre of all research activities, was an objective of experiencing, learning, contributing to and develop through liberating learning-processes. Keywords guiding this process were critical analysis of reality, cooperation, unity, organization, cultural synthesis and the development of deep solutions.

The findings from interviews served as a basis for the development of an intervention for men in Mangaya village. This workshop, in itself, was both a presentation of what we had found throughout the collection of data, but, also, a data collection method in itself. All information gathered were carefully discussed, coded, interpreted and re-interpreted.

Throughout the study, components of findings were ‘tested out’ on participants in workshops and engagements for and about Afrikan men, especially through the communication engagements of SHABAKA – Men of Afrika. Finally, a number of women and men were asked to contribute suggestions for instrumental knowledge they believe every (young) Afrikan man must learn. These suggestions were interpreted in light of the outcomes of the study and developed into an outline of a curriculum for young Afrikan men. With the concern that academic writings do not appeal to most young men, it was decided that this will initially be presented in the form of a mixtape; with brief and motivational messages (based on the study’s outcomes) recorded by the researcher on top of deep house music, mixed by a young Afrikan male DJ with an invested interest in the overall study.

All the interviews were recorded on audio with the permission of the participants. Prior to and immediately after each interview, the research team gathered to share observations, discuss concerns and reflect on outcomes. After the interviews the discussions were transcribed verbatim from the recordings. All the data was then organised and stored with attention given to ensure strict anonymity before the data analyses commenced. All the recorded interviews were erased once they had been transcribed.

6.3.2 Data analyses

The interviews produced approximately 150 pages of transcripts as well as several pages of notes and pointers, comprising a large amount of data that had to be sifted through and interpreted. As the interviews were all conducted in Tshivenda – a language the researcher do not speak – professional interpreters helped to translate all transcripts into English. Articulation in one's language is not only about technical information, it also contains symbolism, cultural meaning and subjective expression. To cross-check and ensure that the meaning of each interview was captured qualitatively, a linguist with speciality in Tshivenda, assisted to review all translations and re-translate or clarify where needed.

With so much data and with the added multiplicity of the data collection methods, the co-research team had to work with huge volumes of perspectives, opinions, experiences, values and suggestions that were to feed into a coherent, analytical process. Much time was spent in dialogue, where all members engaged in deep reflections in order to extract, compare and synthesize meaningful outcomes.

Elements of grounded theory were applied in the interpretation process as it is regarded as particularly well suited for investigating the lived experience of participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory combines inductive and deductive strategies to access views through detailed coding processes. In addition, it achieves a balance between a relativist approach, seeking to be influenced minimally by pre-

existing realities, and a pragmatic worldview, which acknowledges the influence of historic events on theory (Mills et al., 2006). Charmaz (1995; 2000) notes that constructivist grounded theory rejects notions of objectivity. The researcher is aware that research is an interpretative process and, hence, that data does not provide a window to reality. Instead, a discovered reality arises from the research process. Grounded theory combines inductive and deductive strategies to access views through detailed coding processes. In addition, it achieves a balance between a relativist approach, seeking to be influenced minimally by pre-existing realities, and a pragmatic worldview, which acknowledges the influence of historic events on theory.

This form of analysis included theoretical sensitivity in order to discover complexities as well as interpret and reconstruct meaning through questioning techniques, while examining the transcripts. Also, feedback, inputs and opinions by the many who participated in secondary data-collection (through participating in seminars, workshops and dialogues) were considered and analysed against the data extracted from interviews. Further, analyses of already existing theory as a contributing voice – rather than unquestionable truth – and non-technical notes and reports were also included. A number of coding and programming processes were exercised in order to compare and interpret data. Lastly, the process resulted in components for an emerging theory which integrated all the aspects discovered and represented a story line that was worked into a conceptual label.

6.3.3 Results

The structure of each interview interrogated one concept at a time and then moved to the next concept. The data coding was done by extracting key concepts, first line by line, and then merging codes for similar concerns and notions. Then, during the data analysis, the data from all the interviews were investigated, both interview by interview and by extracting the thematic responses to each concept in all the interviews. The selection of codes, their meaning and importance, were discussed repeatedly with the co-research team. Furthermore, this formed the basis for further dialoguing, probing, reflections, checking against literary references and included in presentations for the

intervention for men in Mangaya village. Collectively, the findings from all these events were then brought back in the co-research team for further reflection and formulated into components of new knowledge. This, finally, was developed into a summary of recommendations and a non-empirical “toolbox”; a curriculum for young Afrikan men in the format of a mixtape with motivational messages recorded on top of a soundtrack of deep house music.

6.3.3 Reporting

The reporting process was based on a continuous comparison of data, theory and notes. However, the emergence of consistencies and discrepancies changed the reporting structure and revisions had to be made. The transcripts from the interviews were read several times and the data compared. In reporting the findings, attention was given to an objective process which was capable of producing credible analyses. Although it is difficult to discard preconceived ideas, the researcher’s personal opinions were set aside to enable the data analysis to proceed with an open mind. However, a degree of interpretation follows the application of grounded theory analyses and, thus, the data was analysed several times, from different perspectives. In reporting the opinions of the participants, the words used were carefully chosen as to not give a false impression. For example, instead of quoting numbers or percentages, the views were reported as “several participants were concerned about...” or “most participants responded...”.

6.4 CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE STUDY’S RELIABILITY (TRUSTWORTHINESS)

6.4.1 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are principles that guide the research process on “what ought to be done and what ought not to be done” (Denscombe, 2002:175) with the protection of the participants’ integrity and anonymity being perceived as paramount. Accordingly,

in this study, care was taken to ensure that the study complies with both generally accepted standards and South African legislation on research and confidentiality. Complete anonymity, within the parameters of the nature of this research study, was granted to all the participants and names and references that can identify individuals were removed from the transcripts, while the audio and video recordings were erased after use. All research input and output took place in consultation with the co-research team and participants. Clear information was provided to all participants who were also asked to sign a letter of consent. In addition, participation in the study was explicitly on a voluntary basis; participants – including co-research team members – were informed that they have the right to excuse themselves from the project at any given time, without any particular explanation being required. Regular updates, briefings and adequate follow-up interventions were conducted. In addition, a deep respect for the integrity, experiences, knowledge and opinions of the participants, research assistants and every individual who contributes to the study were upheld at all times.

6.4.2 Reflexivity

Qualitative research is motivated by a reflective stance, which also requires of the researcher to critically examine his/her personal values (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Critical and reflective thinking enhances a research work as it helps to challenge beliefs, judgements and values (Brown & Rutter, 2006). Reflexivity in this study meant that the researcher – and the co-research team – engaged in deep reflections about their own thinking process, their own experiences in relation to the topics addressed and continuous evaluation of their own actions and influence on the study.

In the researchers' role in the research process, they sensitised themselves to any potential threats, dangers, harm and compromising situations to which participation in the study may have exposed the respondents. The researchers then did everything in their power to avoid these dangers. The principle researcher was also aware that coming in as an external researcher may have created an atmosphere of intimidation and distance, and also that there was a possibility that participants could have shaped their responses to what they perceived the researcher wanted to hear, rather than

giving their honest opinions. This was alleviated by the principle researcher taking a backseat role in research and intervention situations, and by choosing co-researchers who shared the participants' cultural identity and language.

As a facilitator, the researcher conducts workshops and community discussions regularly, and have done so for more than 30 years. In the process, the researcher have developed a facilitation style that is fairly expressive, creative and interactive. This helped in regard to training the co-researchers and also make them feel free and in charge of their tasks. However, with regards to the data collection processes of the study – which was conducted exclusively by the co-research team members – the researcher's role was not to interact, but carefully listen to their feedback and interpretations, in order to absorb what they had learned. Co-research participants were also trained in how to conduct interviews with attention to details. Prior to the interviews the researchers were concerned as to how effectively they would be able to moderate the interviews without much interaction, and whether the participants would feel validated if their responses were minimal. In addition, they were worried that the experience of participating would be “technical” and leave the participants feeling that they had just been drained of information and viewpoints. Accordingly, as a team, these issues were taken care of and addressed extensively, in order to create an environment of trust and loyalty before the interviews started.

Based on the responses from the participants, contact persons and co-research team members, it was clear that, without exception, all the interviews had represented much more than just interviewees answering the questions of an interviewer, and that the interview sessions had become platforms for awareness, reflection, information sharing and self-development. Even with minimal active feedback, the researchers left each interview feeling enriched and hopeful, having helped to start a reflective process. Feedback from the Headman and leaders in the Mangaya community also confirmed that the interviews had initiated something positive. It was clear that the interviews had helped to bring out in the open some thoughts, questions and answers of considerable importance, and, thereby, had given validation to both opinions and change processes.

With a lengthy track record in fields relating directly to the topics of the study, the researcher is fully aware of their own potential bias and non-neutrality. Accordingly, throughout the study the researcher developed the habit of thinking about every issue on two levels – being aware of their own thoughts and analysis and also opening themselves to listen and read with openness and a non-judgemental attitude. The researcher also actively sought to minimise bias through ongoing consultations, briefings and discussions with peer-groups, colleagues, youth and people in general throughout the research project.

6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter explained the thought processes which informed the various activities involved in choosing, and carrying out, the methodology used in this study - in response to the objective of understanding Afrikan masculinities, decoloniality and cultural solutions. Mangagya village in Venda was chosen as the research site as it was deemed an ideal place for studying these topics. This choice was motivated by the region's history, culture, colonial experience and social needs. Drawing from the methodology of PAR and an Afrocentric paradigm, research activities were chosen for their ability to enable liberating reflections and contribute toward emancipatory solutions.

A de-Westernized, combative and decolonial objective was positioned to create epistemic authority and Afrikan-anchored findings. To ensure an empowering research process for everyone involved, guidelines informed by ethical and value-based considerations were implemented. Strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the study's reliability were carefully analysed and, in addition to explaining the various research activities carried out, the chapter also explained the researcher's observations and experiences.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of findings emanating from the data collection activities of this study. It illustrates views, concerns and analytical points in relation to Afrikan masculinity shared by men and women residing in Mangaya village. It also outlines a conceptual framework for further work on Afrikan masculinities. Through application of grounded theory and deep analysis, the data has been themed, and these themes serve as a guiding outline for the presentation of findings.

At the beginning of the chapter, knowledge extracted from an interview with a distinguished practitioner and holder of indigenous knowledge in the Venda-region; Vhavenda Vho-Matsheka. This will serve as a sub-chapter, sharing insights and considerations, rooted in Venda cosmology. The section gives an overview of what the Elder shared in specific relation to the research topics and will be reported with limited commentary, as they stand, solidly on their own merit.

In line with a de-Western, decolonial approach, the narrative points will be given value to stand on their own. Epistemic authority is given to each participant and contributor as they are sharing their personal views and experiences. The researcher will refrain from over-interpretation, arrogant “validation” or imposed strategies as to determine the credibility of what is shared. Rather, reliability and validation is infused in the rigorous discussions with the co-research team, which is reported on towards the end of this chapter.

7.2 THE WISDOM OF ELDER VHO-MATSHEKA

As will be shown later in this chapter, many interviewees had rather vague formulations about what constitutes manhood or masculinity, specifically, in specific

reference to Venda culture. It was also found that, in regards to literary references and research, there were resources explaining the procedural events of initiation processes, but very little on a contemporary discourse on manhood and masculinity within Venda culture. Through the sharing of wisdom by Elder Vho-Motsheka, a cultural and spiritual understanding of Vhavenda ways of being men was given.

Vhavenda Vho-Matsheka is a historian, musician, story teller, practitioner and knowledge holder of Vhavenda cosmology. He is also a farmer, sculptor and manufacturer of indigenous instruments. He is well known within the Venda region and loved for his wealth of knowledge and caring values. He has taken a specific responsibility for guiding young people on issues of identity, self development and cultural grounding. In many ways, Vho-Matsheka's knowledge represents "curriculum" of cultural knowledge, rooted in the history and worldviews of Vhavenda.

The Elder's insights on the issues of particular relevance to this study are presented below, largely without commentary or interpretation. As much as Vho-Matsheka is a respected knowledge holder, the Elder's contribution to the broader knowledge production is marginalized. Despite some recent improvements, indigenous knowledge holders are only marginally being consulted or seen as authorities by government institutions. Vho-Matsheka stated invitations are extended to conferences and media-appearances where and when IKS is a trending topic, but there is very little streamlining or inclusion of practitioners in the general production of knowledge, educational material and policy development. For this reason, and in line with a decolonial approach, Vho-Matsheka's insights in this study renders epistemic authority.

7.2.1 The wisdom of Elder Vho-Matsheka: Vhavenda masculinity

In regards to discussing Vhavenda masculinity, Vho-Matsheka explained that the Elder sees this as a branch of a collective, pan-Afrikan tree of knowledge and practice. In the view of the Elder, there were three major concerns that should be examined

closely in order to understand Vhavenda masculinity and also to re-align it as it has currently deviated greatly from its original meaning:

1. Traditionally, Vhavenda masculinity is supposed to be the outcome of learning processes taking place in a number of indigenous institutions. These processes have been eroded or replaced by Westernized institutions.
2. Vhavenda masculinity is, ideally, a response to – and an acceptance of – communal needs and expectations. Today, masculinity is marked by individuality, selfishness and greed.
3. Colonization – and coloniality – has made the indigenous script for developing Vhavenda masculinity to appear as irrelevant, dysfunctional and in constant conflict with notions of – and aspirations towards – modernity.

In the view of Vho-Matsheka, the development of Venda masculinity is directly linked to the institution of family – for which preparation to become a husband, father and Elder are roles which each man is supposed to be guided into by the community. **Through participation in the *tshitambo* (initiation), young men would learn about marriage and by the time they engage in marriage they would have known how to carry themselves, their roles and how to support their wives and each other.**

“Now, *muta* (family) is the end of *ndzeo* (marriage process). When there has been a marriage process, there can now be a family (*muta*). The two that are married are referred to as a family. This that we call family planning, is done before the family is there. The planning comes first, the family then follows. These two Traditional schools *domba* (girls’ initiation) and *tshitambo* (boys’ initiation) are the ones for “*vhutea muta*” (family planning). This is where people are told what they’ll come across when they leave the school. People are taught how to act and react to situations that may arise in a family setup. This is because they know you are going to meet someone with their own life (values, characteristics) that you don’t know in depth, you see!...”

Vho-Motsheka positioned several points to advice that Afrikan masculinity must be taught and learned. It starts with receiving lessons, being inducted into cultural norms and being assigned a number of challenges to affirm the young man's will to approach life as a responsible man. Many aspects of the knowledge of Vhavenda, the Elder lamented, is currently being ignored, sidelined and is at risk of disappearing. Vho-Motsheka shared the following instruction for this study:

"...what I am trying to say here is that, your research must recommend our needs as your source of information, it must show that what we have is very important, it must not be a hide-and-seek kind of a game wherein you just hear one saying, 'I heard this from Mr Matsheka' or 'Mr Matsheka must come and give evidence of what he is saying now, unless he is dead'; but even though he might be no more the university must know where you gathered this information and you must be in a position to be able to tell your leaders that we are people and must be appreciated."

7.2.2 The wisdom of Elder Vho-Matsheka: Colonised modernity

Vho-Matsheka sees the modern Venda man as highly colonised. Both by internalized, self-conflicting values and identities, but also through the impossibilities life represent by having marginalized and invalidated Afrikan values. The intellectual properties of Afrikans were sold, damaged and taken through colonial conquest:

"We were bought with property in this slavery, they bought our minds."

"Their aim was to remove you from your path..."

"Today's man have been bought, there are temptations that are in place. Even if you choose to live by your Afrikan principles as an Afrikan man, there are limitations to what you can achieve, there are places you cannot go. This causes all man to be forced to adopt the new path following the teachings of the colonisers to get rewards of what they are being offered. This has resulted in men not living a proper life, they live a life of people that have been bought."

While Vho-Matsheka criticizes the “modern man”, the Elder also believes that the distinction between “modern” and “traditional” man serves an ulterior motive; that of unquestionably accepting “modern ideas” as good and relevant, while “traditional ideas” are seen as undesirable and unfit for application.

“...people are trying to differentiate one person to be two people when they say that one and this one. If they could they would have already created their own person called “morden.” They are failing only because God created man as he is. The idea that there is a “morden man” and a “traditional man” is being advanced to facilitate motives behind, so that when these motives are put to the people, people should not be surprised but embrace the change. They are desensitizing the conscience so that it must be ready for anything new that may be coming, which may be unacceptable if the person has not changed their way of life, it may only be acceptable to a “modern man.”

As expressed by Vho-Matsheka, the modern Venda man has become selfish. Men who have access to resources, according to the Elder were supposed to assist those who have little or nothing to develop their own resources, but, instead, they will complain that there is nothing in it for them.

“The difference between Afrikan men in old times and today’s man is that: Today’s men live off peer pressure from what they see as good. Today’s men live in a way that they want to lead by themselves. Today’s men live in a way that when a man has a woman, she is his alone. Today’s men live in a way that their way of living looks out only for self, not mind about their community.”

“However today, those very men that are supposed to make sure that the underprivileged do not steal, they should also have food or they should not starve or live in suffering, someone must plough for them. Those very men today are saying, “we cannot go plough for a pint of traditional beer and some pork, if we want pork, we will buy it.” You see, the man has moved from their way of being. He has moved to the

side of those that surround their houses with high fences so that they can hide while they eat.”

Vho-Matsheka sees a distinct form of colonization impacting on Venda men and how they relate to women. The Elder sees the value of treating women as less intelligent and worthy as a direct outcome of colonial learning.

“We can say they are deviators. They are deviators who have deviated from the path of being an “Afrikan Man.” Let me give as an example, these people that see the idea of listening to your woman/wife as a bad thing, as being dumb or stupid. You are understood in a wrong way because you are looked down on. You are not taken as a real person, so if you also listen too much to this criticism, you may also get to a stage where you bear a grudge against yourself or be self critical that you are not a proper person. That is the biggest challenge.”

“Men where oppressed in such a way that one could not see that these are men of this country. They were like passer bys, even though it was their land...”

7.2.3 The wisdom of Elder Vho-Matsheka: Indigenous learning

Elder Vho-Matsheka sees Vhavenda culture as an ongoing process of learning, from early age until elder-hood. In reference to manhood, Vhavenda had a number of indigenous institutions in which boys would be taught values, principles and responsibilities that would guide them in their development into manhood.

Vho-Matsheka explains that while the traditional school gives guidelines for preparation (for manhood), the real learning lies in the process of practice. Learning from a teacher does not mean that every lesson is a dictation; it is an invitation to become responsible and make decisions rooted in values that have been internalised.

“As something that does not stick on you or bite you like a tick, or like a branch that one can say it broke when. In life it is not like that, there is a gradual growth as your

path becomes clear before you. Sometimes doubts set in and you go back and forth till you come to a point where you take a stand point. It is not like being born or getting baptized.”

In this sense, learning becomes part of life itself: “I can say that as we have been living, bit by bit, one day I learn something, a year goes by I learn something else. There is no specific person that I can point to say they helped me in that way, besides institutions that I attended. Institutions I am referring to traditional Venda schools (Mula, Vhutuka, Murundu, etc) from which there were a lot that we learnt, of which those school at present are not there.”

As explained by Vho-Matsheka, the lessons in traditional schools were delivered by highly trained scholars and teachers. There was a strict protocol of boundaries that a teacher could not cross. The lines that are being crossed today (ex. teachers who violate or have inappropriate relations with children) would be unheard of in the traditional school.

“And these lessons are not disseminated by anyone, there are professors and doctors specialise in this sphere of life, tasked to teach these lessons in the community, just like in modern school systems you have specialists in different fields.”

Vho-Matsheka explains that when the male goes from boy to man, he learns discipline. He learns how to carry himself, and resist temptations and unbecoming behaviors. The school is a place for gradual preparation to be disciplined when confronted by the challenges of life.

“...There are two main important Traditional schools, you spoke your English of “prepare,” those that transition a person from *Vhutuka* (a boy) to a man, from *Khomba* (a girl) to a woman, these are *Tshitambo* (boys’ initiation) and *Domba* (girls’ initiation) respectively. This is why I say, a person without this knowledge is easily provoked by sensual emotions”.

Vho-Matsheka opines that learning manhood (through *Ngoma*-institutions, i.e. indigenous learning institutions) constitutes a huge asset. Some may say that this is descriptive, generalized and narrowed-down, but the Elder does not agree. In his view, it is exactly this – the fact that you have received lessons; notwithstanding its complexities – that makes the practice of being an Afrikan man easy.

“It is easy being an “Afrikan man,” when a person has told themselves that they want to be an “Afrikan man” by following the lessons learned from different *Ngomas* they have been too about how an “Afrikan man” should be and listening to advice from elders.”

Vho-Matsheka admits that The Elder has also found the path of Afrikan manhood challenging, sometimes looking down on what it means to be an Afrikan man. He also explains how he parted with this view and found that manhood was not necessarily difficult or a burden; it was a road towards liberation.

“My journey from the beginning has had its ups and downs on the way, at points thinking that life as an Afrikan man is backward. Luckily while living, there came a time that one ask themselves, when I say being an Afrikan man is backward, where exactly am I being left behind, I found there is no marked or visible disadvantage for being an Afrikan man. I realized that there is no where that I am backward for being an Afrikan and I also saw the lifestyle as not difficult, not being a burden because it also makes life for people around me to be free.”

Vho-Matsheka sees the *Ngoma*-institutions as having irreplaceable value and is concerned about the fact that they are gone (destroyed by colonialism) and replaced by institutions that drives *Vhavenda* away from their identity (schools). The Elder makes a distinct separation between “secrecy”, on one hand, and “sacredness” and “order”, on the other. The Elder believes that certain lessons must be given only at the appropriate time. In Western education, it is seen as oppressive to “withhold” (as a secret) certain information (The Elder mentions the examples of giving very complex explanations to a young child or graphic sex-education to a young child), while in the

Ngoma, certain things remain sacred until an appropriate age or maturity level. He sees this as care, not oppression.

“They (colonisers) have taken our *Ngoma* (indigenous learning institutions) and put in its place their own “Ngoma” (universities, colleges, high schools, etc) and recommended that theirs are the good ones. When we talk about abuse, they say we should speak the truth, everyone should be told everything as it is referring to our Ngoma. Whoever, in their (colonisers) schools they do not agree that a grade 10 learner be taught University lessons. Or a Grade 1 learner be taught Grade 10 lessons, they don’t allow that in their system of teaching. They say the learner is being abused.”

The fact that these institutions are no longer there, is to Vho-Matsheka seen as a threat: “This gap is creating misunderstanding of where we are going as a people.” For the Elder, manhood must develop within a context. Today – with families choosing to not send their sons to the Mountain – there is no space for building manhood. He cautions against reducing manhood building to circumcision, which is just one integral part of the process.

“Their understanding is that things are good when they are being done their way. For example when they say *Mila* (circumcision) should be done in hospitals it shows that they have seen the importance of circumcision.”

Circumcision, in the traditional sense is done in the context of *Mulani* (place for the circumcision operation) which is a school of thought for a certain age in its own right, thus hospital circumcision take away the educational part of the process. Vho-Matsheka sees it as a big loss that the “Ngoma”-institutions (traditional schools) are now lost. He wishes to find a way to reinstitute them.

“I aspire to find a way that would give me a platform to teach and share among other “Afrikan men” having found a place and a way where it will be possible that those Venda Ngomas can be brought back so that they can build “Afrikan men.”

Vho-Matsheka sees parenthood – in the broader, collective sense – as instrumental, yet an eroding institution. In his view, the learning input of children has been left in the hands of government (i.e. schools). The relational energy that is exchanged in parent-to-child learning cannot be substituted by government institutions. Also, in his view, this backfires to deteriorate the relationship between adult and child. School becomes an invasive actor. Vho-Matsheka sees language as a transmitter. When indigenous knowledge is translated – especially into Western languages – it loses its meaning and becomes incorrect knowledge.

7.2.4 The wisdom of Elder Vho-Matsheka: The communal ethos

In the view of Elder Vho-Matsheka, the communal ethos is what used to shape the traditional understanding and practice of Vhavenda masculinity. The lives of men in older times were lived in response to what communities said, did and needed. Vho-Matsheka sees Afrikans as a communal people, yet separated – divinely so – by language and interpretation of certain customs. But all Afrikans converge around a deep understanding of *Mvumbo* (which describes the essence that defines what a human/man is or is supposed to be).

In the Elder's explanation, today's Afrikan man is torn between individual greed, on one side, and the communal ethos that, ideally, should guide an Afrikan man's life, on the other. Sharing is (supposed to be a) natural part of being an Afrikan man. When sharing is at the heart of the economy, it no longer focuses on personal profit – or dividends for the few – but a collective process to gain wealth, which again will be shared.

The Elder sees the communal practice as inherently anti-oppressive and anti-violent. Today's individualism, in the Elders view, produces greed and leads to oppressive, conflict-oriented behaviour:

“...[M]en in old times lived a life according to what the community said. When a man had a wife, he knew she belonged to his community. He knew not to abuse a wife, for

a woman belongs to the community. He knew that if there were challenges between him and his wife, there are ways to follow to resolve this, not by himself.”

Elder Vho-Matsheka makes an interesting observation about men’s role in spousal conflicts:

“What you refer as conflict management, he [the husband] knew ways to follow to resolve conflict, not by himself, because two people who are fighting can’t arbitrate each other, because [then] one has to lose. Now we can say that fight justly brought to a resolution, because a mediator has to be neutral. With today’s man because the wife is his, he is also the arbitrator and to arbitrate for him is defeating the wife. It is not all the time that this will be just, there are times were he will be oppressing the woman. Now I would chose to be a man of old times.”

The example illustrates that modern concepts of individuality and private ownership have replaced the practice of communal values, leading contemporary men to see themselves as “made men” and “owners of wives”. The men of old were taught to be mediators, while today’s men are arbitrators. This creates a completely different dynamic in finding solutions; today’s men are always right and women are always wrong.

7.2.5 The wisdom of Elder Vho-Matsheka in light of decoloniality

With direct relevance to this study, it is striking how Vho-Motsheka’s insights easily relates to the three conceptual pillars of decoloniality. The Elder’s concern about how modernity has subjugated Venda culture and identity, corresponds with coloniality of power, which addresses the racialised organising of a global order in which Euro-North America stands as the dominating empire (Quijano, 2000).

When Vho-Matsheka speaks about the disappearance of indigenous learning institutions and erosion of cultural learning, it relates to coloniality of knowledge,

whereby a geopolitical, Western hegemony articulates Eurocentric thought as the only valid locality of knowledge (Walsh, 2007).

And, where Vho-Matsheka highlights Vhavenda masculinity having changed from a communal location to that of being greedy and selfish, it communicates coloniality of being, through which the Afrikan becomes an ontologically void subject, excluded and eliminated in an anti-black world (Maldonad-Torres, 2004).

Noting this correlation, it encourages a process by which Afrikan masculinities must seek a decolonial remedy. This would include robust critique of coloniality and how it suffocates the lives and stereotype the expectations towards Afrikan manhood, attention to the structures of coloniality that shape thinking about, and practice of, Afrikan masculinities, and, give authority to the lived experience of Afrikan men; those who suffer from subjugation.

7.3 THE ROLE OF AFRIKAN MEN

Most respondents defined the role of men in relation to duties in the home and community.

7.3.1. Role/character/self

Typical for many of the interviews – when discussing Afrikan men – was to distinguish between, on the one side, how Afrikan men *are*, and, on the other side, how Afrikan men *should be*. The way men “are” was often described in negative terms (stoic, violent, inconsiderate, absent and arrogant) while the way they “should be” was often direct opposites of such negatives and, at times, phrased as rather romantic notions of desirable behaviour or values (open, attentive, caring, open-minded and supportive). This phenomenon could be observed in both female and male responses,

and many respondents felt that today's Afrikan man is not living up to the duties expected from him.

"...to be an Afrikan man means having responsibility in your family and community, he should also see to it that women are safe and secure while also making sure children in society are given guidance by a father figure. He should offer foresight in society in terms of development." ¹⁶

[P5, adult female respondent]

"The biggest problem is men who are too lazy to work, they are too lazy to work and have found stability in liquor. They are lazy to work. Because this world has everything, some ask for land but never get around to ploughing the fields."

[P8, adult male respondent]

For some, however, the characteristics of a man starts with self:

"Venda man are known to be humble and poised without partaking in wild activities, a Venda man carries a sense of dignity around him."

[P18, young female respondent]

"Oohh, the first thing I can say that, a man must have humanity, that's the first thing that God want and when I see some people I just realise that I see the image of God. An Afrikan man must be seen by his actions, and he must be full of respect needed, if you don't have that you don't know good things. You must respect elderly people."

[P11, adult male respondent]

Where there seemed to be a difference, gender-wise, was in the underlying explanations of why the Afrikan man is not living up to his obligations. Among men, this was often explained as a result of being blocked, hindered and marginalized from places of power (employment, political decision making, ownership, power to define),

¹⁶ In the interest of authenticity, all quotes are presented verbatim and no amendments were made to grammar or language.

while, for many women, there was more an assumption of men having given up, “becoming less of a man” (for example through consumption of alcohol, becoming lazy) and not being able to live up to his role. To some extent, men placed the reason for many challenges externally, while women seemed to see it more as an internal weakness.

“...there are too many things going on right now and it makes it difficult to attach themselves to cultural activities; the men in this community spend their time drinking from dusk till dawn and they have no regards for family.”

[P6, adult male respondent]

“...when I look at the men here, many of them are unable to care for their families and normally do so only after being taken to courts.”

[P5, adult female respondent]

7.3.2. Home

The Afrikan man’s role was seen as being a provider, a protector, a decision maker and a peace maker – especially in the home. This corresponds closely with the notion of the man being “the head of the house”, which is ascribed a religious role, often promoted within Christianity and Islam.

“I’m the one who is supposed to take responsibility of a variety of things taking place in the family, meaning that my wife and children should consult me as the head of family when there is something they need. It means that nothing will happen without my prior ‘consultation’; if they are the children even if they consult their mother, it will end up coming to me, that children are looking for this and that, responsibility of Afrikan man is that he is the head of family, I am the head of family in this family, it means I have got responsibility of everything.”

[P7, adult male respondent]

“Eehh..., if we are talking about man we are talking about someone who do have family and wife. Here at home he must be respected, and must show love to his wife. He must also show his wife that he is the head of the household.”

[P11, adult male respondent]

There are several reasons one can problematize the notion of men being the “head of the house”. The definitions of power that have influenced political and domestic Afrikan life for many generations are now mostly hierarchical and binary. They build on a premise where one is powerful, and the other is not; One is a leader, the other is a follower; One can make decisions, the other must take orders. With the possibility of exploitation and unfairness, there is a great potential of this being practiced in a very unhealthy way. This concern was voiced by some of the young male respondents, who advised that that a man must relate to his wife as a partner, not an opposite, and also relate well with the children, not just be their disciplinarian.

“In my view, a Venda man must be well behaved, all depending on how he was raised. Not because all men have manners. In TshiVenda, the most important thing is that all men should be well-mannered. Secondly, a Venda man must be a person who takes care of the people he knows, unlike other cultures when they are rich; they only care about themselves, driving expensive cars when their neighbours are struggling. A Venda man, when he lives, the little he has, he shares with neighbours if they're struggling in life. That's what I can say about a Venda man.”

[P26, young male respondent]

“In my perspective, a Venda man should love his children so that he can be separated from other men, not a man who just lives a directionless life, not knowing his roots. Because if a person doesn't know his roots to where he comes from, he has no idea of where he is going as well.”

[P29, young male respondent]

7.3.3. Family

“...a man must take care of his family to help in the advancement of the children, in terms of education, lifestyle and culture of the Vha Venda.”

[P6, adult male respondent]

“A perfect Venda man is the men who looks after his family, taking care of his family, making sure his kids are well taken care of, balancing between home and community.”

[P27, young male respondent]

Few participants provided further explanations as to why the man should be the leader as this was seen as self-explanatory:

“Mmhh, ya, it touches me, man these days do lose their character because you will find me trying to discipline my child, the mother would get upset and that will bring bad character to the child, and the child will start to see father as violent, and even a single day a wife will never be the head of the family. [Laughter] A woman only knows how to bring children in the family, if a man went away for job purpose, he must support the family back home. If he doesn't do that he is failing because we have an agreement...”

[P11, adult male respondent]

7.3.4. Community

The question of power features very strongly in defining manhood. And, as many respondents demonstrated – although, mostly articulated by the males – the expectation of men to playing a leadership role is high. Not only in the home, but also in the community, as someone who organizes the members, act when something of collective interest must be executed and make active contributions to the common good.

“The role of a man is to be a provider to his family, to be a leader in his community, be it in any organization within the community, generally men are on the leadership positions.”

[P3, young male respondent]

“According to Tshivenda culture, man should be seen as... Actually is a leader. It brought us to that one I have spoken earlier, man is actually a leader, and “man should be seen as head of family, taking responsibility of everything.”

[P7, adult male respondent]

7.3.5. Culture

Several respondents, both men and women, thought it important that a man has many wives and many children. Several respondents felt that Afrikan culture may not hold many solutions to resolve the challenges Afrikan men experience currently:

“These days, Venda, Sotho, Zulu, are all the same, because they’re controlled by technology... What is happening is that people all over the world have forsaken their cultures, Zulu’s have forgotten their culture, we are living in the culture of the western.”

[P27, young male respondent]

Yet, many expressed that there are specific cultural values that must be observed and held on to. Awareness of culture, respect for others, practice of traditions and attending initiation school were some of them:

“Mmmhhh... eehhh... [...] let’s say a young man married and divorce his wife, I think the first step should be taken by parents is to call a meeting with Vho Makhadzi (Aunties) and Vho Khotsimunnene (Uncles) and sit down with the young man to hear his side of the story. If there is a case, it’s just that here we don’t have Vhakoma (First hand to the Headman), if there is Vhakoma, we report the matter to Vhakoma who would look at the merit of the case before he could report it to the Headman. Vhakoma would sometimes summoned the concerned people to resolve the problem and just

report the outcome to the local Headman without his interference. Some of the problems ended up in in local Traditional Council and Headman's kraal based on its merit. [Ringing phone] The information and outcomes should never be disclosed..."

[P7, adult male respondent]

"Solution is to let young men to attend initiation school so that they can get guide, because it seems like there is a great lesson taught there. I think it bring some solutions."

[P14, adult female respondent]

The question may then become; What equips Afrikan man to be a leader? What processes are in place to ensure that Afrikan men become fair and caring leaders? And what cultural values should they draw their leadership from? Some were concerned about the deterioration of initiation schools and suggested that this is the reason why many men today are not as responsible and culturally connected as before.

"It is guidance (U layiwa) Tshitamboni (Initiation school for men), where this young man will be told everything which he will come across when he is in marriage. The do's and don'ts, these things helps a man to be a responsible man. Not just to get into marriage without any knowledge of what to expect. We will elaborate further on this matter."

[P21, adult male respondent]

"You would come back [from initiation school] ready to be a man by the manner in which you addressed elders, that's where everything was taught. These days you find young men with the inability to show respect because they address their elders with their hands in their pockets."

[P8, adult male respondent]

"Things like initiation school are the things that encouraged people through motivation, where you would learn a lot and you would start to have peace."

[P11, adult male respondent]

7.4 AFRIKAN MEN – BEING AND BECOMING

How do men become men? And at what point do they know that they are, in fact, men? Most respondents gave answers that seem to show that men are not men anymore. They may have the potential, but “something” stops – or slows down – the processes through which men are supposed to become real men.

7.4.1. Abuse

A major problem mentioned by many respondents was violence. Respondents said that men’s violence against women and children has caused a dramatic change to the quality of their manhood. Men cannot be relied on, are difficult to relate to and cannot be trusted when they commit to a relationship or marriage. Only few reflected on *why* men are violent. Some attributed it to the fact that men are themselves abused from young age.

“There are men who are abusive, they abuse their families. Others don’t provide for their families. Others, eish, there’s a lot of things in this world. The most important thing is that they abuse their families.”

[P9, adult female respondent]

“...when I look at it right now in my position, I was abused by the man I loved as he was raised by parents who found it easy to hurt other people. The atmosphere he grew up in made him aggressive and we dealt with it accordingly by dealing with the root of the problem. We chose to deal with the situation he began to see that a family needs love, trust, understanding and care for it to grow and flourish; as I am speaking now my husband is full of love and care and no longer the aggressive man I knew at some point in our relationship.”

[P5, adult female respondent]

7.4.2. Substance abuse

Substance abuse was also seen as a major contributor to the decay of men. Some talked about men being “always drunk” or “always high” – which may be an exaggeration, but still points to a concern that husbands, due to intoxication, are not able to perform a range of practical roles and responsibilities needed in the household. According to the co-research team, substance abuse was a direct outcome of unemployment. Permanent jobs are few and difficult to find. And with that, men are not able to build and maintain homes, feed their families and may feel ‘socially castrated’. This, again, leads to men gathering at drinking places to drown their sorrows.

“As a man and a member of the Mangaya, I was born here and know the men in this area. I see that they have committed themselves to useless things such as substance abuse and even though not all of them live in this way, it’s painful knowing a family man with a family would get paid and not lift a finger to help his family but instead disappears for three days and comes back having squandered the money despite the fact that there is hunger at home. I see this in our community, that there are men like that, but the solution is difficult because talking doesn’t always help.”

[P6, adult male respondent]

7.4.3. Fatherhood and family

Several respondents also commented on men’s decaying fitness, fertility levels and general health conditions. A circle of unhealthy life style, poverty and shame resulted in men marrying late, marrying few women, having fewer children and, by extension, smaller families. Some women complained that, in the absence of present men, they had to take over men’s roles in the house – to which some men would claim they are no longer needed.

“...we were born in a family of multitudes, about nine children mothered by one wife, even 10 was not a big deal but this generation of yours is applying family planning

(condoms) to reduce the number of children, and condoms reduce affection. This time you own a mansion with [only] two children. Isn't it that some were into polygamy of about three women? [yeah]."

[P14, adult female respondent]

"They don't understand, [these days] we are surprised by pregnancy. Even if we say something is a taboo, they would ask you and you will never have any answer to provide. During those days when we say something its taboo, for example, young boy is not allowed to sit on Tswiya (Three legged steel equipment made to balance Afrikan pot when placed on fire), just because testicles would be swollen. But it was normal that you might sit on top of it while it is coming from fire place. This time around when you say don't make intercourse; they would say I'm doing family planning."

[P32, adult female respondent]

It was expressed that men's absence from the home (caused by the cycles of poverty and shame) also led to little family time and, hence, the cycle of the absent father continues. The frustrations have also led to men having irresponsible relationships, extramarital affairs, having children outside the household and dating young girls.

Another contributing factor to the deterioration of quality in men was seen as weaknesses in personality. Some felt that men no longer have respect for elders, women, children, even themselves. Others said men are lazy or absent and fail to take up their homely duties and family responsibilities.

"Ok, I will make a comparison of two different people. There are men who have no responsibility, combine with the element of being careless within themselves, their families included. And there are men who are responsible, say maybe 50 per cent. I will weigh them. There are also men out there, in terms of percentages I can say 80 per cent, actually, there is no man who takes 100 per cent responsibility."

[P9, adult female respondent]

7.4.4. Self

“According to me, they have lost their direction of duty as being responsible - not all of them, though, hence things like not participating in their children’s lives or grooming their women, which brings about situations in which men no longer come back to their homes or months go by without him providing for his family.”

[P6, adult male respondent]

“Ancient men were polygamists and they would support their family. Today’s generation is not supporting their family, they leave their children behind and wander. Expecting us to support on their behalf. And condom thing, there was no condom during those days, and you would have to control yourself.”

[P13, adult female respondent]

In discussing where men learn to be men, some mentioned initiation school, others talked about cultural spaces of learning, for example traditional council meetings and dances.

“Problem of initiation school is that, today’s generation doesn’t want to go there, in olden days when we attend initiation schools, we were being guided, but this time around young men are being taken to surgery for circumcision which is something else, because those time men would spend three months at initiation school, this generation view this as a violation of human rights.”

[P12, adult female respondent]

“And allow men to attend Tshitambo (Traditional men’s forum), just because when they get back from there, they come back being disciplined. It means there was something which were done, and they were afraid to go there again as they were in fear.”

[P13, adult female respondent]

“...my granny would send me to traditional council (Khoroni), after which I had to give a full report when coming back... There was also Tshikona dance that we danced at the Headman’s Kraal and it helps me a lot and not forgetting football games during those days...”

[P7, adult male respondent]

However, few pointed out specific ways in which men learn the expected virtues of strong character, patience, care and good values that they seem to expect from men.

7.5 AFRIKAN MEN, HISTORY AND DECOLONIZATION

7.5.1. Discipline

All respondents expressed that colonization had affected Afrikan men in specific ways. One area that was mentioned was how waged labour and discipline was introduced and enforced during colonial and Apartheid times. This, to many, had made men to become “loyal” and “disciplined” to brutal employers (who presented themselves as superior to Afrikan men), but resulted in weak behaviours and lack of self-employment among themselves.

“Eehh...it’s just that colonialism brought a bad thinking capacity like when we think White man is solution to everything. Now that thinking capacity makes us feel like White man is capable and Afrikan man [is not].... Sometimes when we go out and only to find out that things are not going well, and someone would ask, who is the manager, only to find out that the manager is Afrikan man, is then that somebody would say it’s obvious, if there was any White man here, things would be in order. Is some of the thinking capacity we have been fed with [negative stories] and it’s difficult to do away with it, but positive thing is that, I can talk of indoctrination, most White people commit themselves when they perform their duty. Afrikan people were strictly under pressure but yielded positive results. But if we have to implement those strategies, we can go far than thinking that only White man can do it.”

[P7, adult male respondent]

“Apartheid government developed segregation whereby Afrikan men left their homes as migrant labour, where they finally separated from their family whereby some of the marriages finally broke up as some of the men never came back, and it completely destroyed the family.”

[P7, adult male respondent]

7.5.2 Violence

The brutality experienced from oppressors outside the home had also made men take their frustration home, where men became violent towards women and children. The culture of violence was commented on by many. In many respondents' views, when Afrikan men are mistreated, it leads to them mistreating members of their family.

Interestingly, as much as women and men seemed to be quite divided in their explanation of the challenges represented in contemporary Afrikan masculinities, there was strong agreement in regard to the impact of colonialism.

“Men used to be beaten by Afrikaners, they were arrested and if they were found guilty of serious crime they would be hanged. [These experiences] brought challenges [to the home].”

[P10, adult female respondent]

“...the beatings those men suffered broke them down emotionally and mentally to a point where they would become aggressive towards their wives and children, the cycle would continue when the child becomes a man with own wife.”

[P5, adult female respondent]

7.5.3. Brokenness

Many seemed to see men as the “reason” for broken families. They were seen to be bad communicators, not easy to relate to and being absent from home. Some stated

that this has led to children to not respect their fathers, as they now see mothers performing the roles of both mother and father.

“A man is valueless, he lives for himself with less regard of others. A man doesn't care.”

[P9, adult female respondent]

“They no longer relate to our culture and seem to be losing touch with what makes them Venda men.”

[P20, young female respondent]

Other concerns that were expressed focused on Afrikan men's role in the economy. The fact that unemployment is rife in societies where it is expected that to be a real man you must have an income, can have a devastating effect on men. As pointed out by some, Westernization has created high expectations of material possessions and consumerism, which locks many men in cycles of spending to impress, when they don't have money, ending up in debt, which cause another stigma/shame. That the Afrikan man is seen to fail economically means that he cannot create his own powerbase and becomes dependent on external assistance to survive. Locked in a stagnancy of few opportunities, the Afrikan man becomes ashamed of himself, but also becomes a source of shame for those relating to him – especially his family.

A number of addictions were also mentioned as results of colonial aftermaths. Many men hang out in taverns, consuming alcohol and spending long hours outside the home. Additionally, addiction to social media, electronic devices and money schemes were mentioned. This could also give a subtext to say that Afrikan men are valued more for their economic worth than their moral character. As colonial subjects, the monetary worth still lingers on.

7.6 CULTURAL SOLUTIONS FOR AFRIKAN MEN

7.6.1. Not culture

As we saw under the heading “Role of Afrikan men”, several respondents thought that a man must hold on to cultural values, most were doubtful whether Afrikan culture can actually remedy the challenges affecting Afrikan manhood. In fact, some think culture brings more problems.

“...not really, not many men would choose to make public their participation in these rites of passage, it wasn’t regarded as a boastful achievement. I wasn’t easily influenced then it would be hard for me to participate or feel pressured to do so.”

[P6, adult male respondent]

“...when they go get circumcised and come back, it appears that they come back more virile and eager to have sex. I have observed that many men upon their return are forever chasing girls in pursuit of having sex with them. It seems they are told the main purpose of a penis is to pleasure a woman.”

[P5, adult female respondent]

“There is no difference whatsoever; I don’t see any difference between a person who went to Hogoni (initiation school for boys/men).”

[P29, young male respondent]

These statements could be linked to aspects of culture that is seen as old-fashioned and outdated.

7.6.2. Education

In a quest for solutions, many respondents emphasized the importance of education. But, not the formal, institutionalized kind. They called for Afrikan men to learn about respect, cultural values, be motivated, take responsibility and follow traditions.

“I am talking about a continuous program. I think the solution to that is to re-instate those programs through-out government. As we speak, I have an institution called Mabidi Future leaders Primary cooperative something, the aim of this institution is to re-instate those cultural dances to keep the youth busy and keep them off the streets. I make sure that those things entertain them in terms of competitions, and they will win. We are not surprised when children have gone astray, but they are not advised. You don’t know where a good advice would come from. To answer your question, we must bring back all the indigenous dances to keep our youth busy. Maybe if we bring back tradition, there could be contradiction.”

[P3, young male respondent]

“It’s just that we want to see maybe for example in this village, maybe there are men who are facing abuse, maybe we can use our local Headman to intervene, maybe there might be any Afrikan cultural method that can be applied in those kinds of problem. Maybe if we use the elders within the community.”

[P29, young male respondent]

It is interesting that culture is seen both as a necessity and an impossibility. This could speak to the fact that we often use the word culture to describe vastly different aspects of reality. But could this also expose that there is a cultural confusion taking place; what is truly Afrikan culture? What does Afrikan culture say about men? What is the role of Afrikan culture when we need to solve a new problem? Perhaps we are caught between irreconcilable positions: One saying we must “go back”, one saying we must “remain in position” and one saying we “must go forward”. And, maybe this is where the source of real solutions lie; doing it all – at the same time.

With regards to culture as solution, some respondents were of the view that Afrikan culture shapes manhood in strong ways. This includes an understanding and respect for the role of Elders (as guides, teachers and parents), the Khoroni (ritual place for communal decision making / wrestling matches between men), the Tshikona dance (men's dance), being able to collaborate, maintain a sense of Brotherhood and the importance of initiation schools.

“By getting married [the traditional way], it made me get back to reality and focus to become an ideal man of which I think if it was not for the marriage, I would have even died considering how addictive I was when it comes to beer consumption...We didn't married through the Western means of lifestyle.”

[P7, adult male respondent]

“Even the things they learnt when they are out in the grazing field, it was to prepare them for the future.”

[P24, adult male respondent]

7.6.3. Personal

Several respondents pointed out the importance for Afrikan men to engage in deep self-knowledge; understanding their own personalities, identities, histories, self-respect and honour.

“I think the best way is to do correction [is to] sit down and do self-introspection. Introspect your life style, we all know our life styles, sit down, do self-introspection, check the good and the bad, reform from the bad to the good, and then take what you've planned to do and live on moving forward.”

[P9, adult female respondent]

This point of self-introspection was echoed throughout the study and came up in conversations with the co-research team and in other research meetings.

7.6.4. Modernity

Lastly, it was pointed out that a danger Afrikan men must steer clear of is – on one side being too stuck in their own worldview and – on the other – being too gullible to accept Western values (“White culture”). This speaks to Afrikan masculinities being squeezed between modern and traditional expectations.

7.7 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

The themes extracted from the interviews can be seen outlined below:

A. ROLE OF MEN	B. BEING OF MEN	C. COLONIZATION OF MEN	D. SOLUTIONS FOR MEN
1. SELF	1. ABUSE/NEGLECT	1. DISCIPLINE	1. NOT CULTURE
a) Self-respect	a) Beating women	a) Behaviour	a) Culture → more problems
b) Self-knowledge	b) Beating children	b) Job skills	b) Culture doesn't work
c) Livestock	c) Men who are abused	c) Peace/order	
2. HOME	2. ALCOHOL/DRUGS	2. VIOLENCE	2. EDUCATION
a) Provider	a) “Always drunk”	a) Violent culture	a) Respect
b) Protector	b) “Always high”	b) Being mistreated (→ mistreating family)	b) Cultural values
c) Decision maker			c) Arts and culture
d) Peace maker			
3.FAMILY/RELATION- SHIP	3.RELATIONSHIP/FAMILY/ FATHERHOOD	3. BROKEN MEN	3. MOTIVATION
a) Partnership with Wife	a) Infertility/ impotence	a) Stuck in the past	a) Responsibility
b) Relate well with Children	b) Fewer wives/children	b) Irresponsible	b) Follow traditions
c) Many wives	c) Women have taken over men's roles	c) Always angry	
d) Many children	d) No quality time with family	d) Lost ability to lead	
	e) 50/50 doesn't work		

A. ROLE OF MEN	B. BEING OF MEN	C. COLONIZATION OF MEN	D. SOLUTIONS FOR MEN
	f) Irresponsible relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women outside - Children outside - Dating young girls 		
4. COMMUNITY	4. PERSONALITY/SELF	4. BROKEN FAMILY	4. PERSONAL
a) Leader	a) Lazy	a) Communication/ relating	a) Self-knowledge
b) Organizer	b) No respect for Elders, women, children, values	b) Not being home	b) Understand history
c) Active contributor	c) No respect of Self (→ not respected)	c) Women taking over (→ Children respect mother more)	c) Respect
			d) Stop drinking
5. CULTURE/VALUES		5. ECONOMY	5. CULTURE/ COMMUNITY
a) Respect		a) Unemployment	a) Role of Elders and Vhakoma
b) Initiation schools		b) Materialism	b) Tshikona dance
c) Cultural awareness			c) Collaboration
d) Practice traditions			d) Brotherhood
			e) Initiation schools
		6. ADDICTIONS	6. MODERNITY
		a) Taverns	a) Don't copy White culture
		b) Substance abuse	b) Mix
		c) Social media	
		d) Technology	

In an attempt to articulate this framework through four action-based sentences, the following outline will stand as a summary of the findings in this study:

1. The Afrikan man is expected to play a meaningful role within family/home, community and in regard to cultural values; his greatest deficit lies in self-knowledge, which is where his focus of restoration must be anchored in order to fulfil all other expectations;
2. The Afrikan man has developed irresponsible behaviours and anti-social attitudes; therefore he needs to seek healing to regain a holistic sense of health;
3. The Afrikan man has become broken as a result of colonial injustices and imbalances – which manifests in anger, violence and lack of integrity; hence he must commit to an empowerment process of enabling – not destructive – character;
4. The Afrikan man has lost many vital values and needs to embark on a re-learning process of resurrecting himself through personal commitment and critical reconnection with indigenous knowledge, culture and education.

The essential solution-concepts here are: SELF-KNOWLEDGE, HEALING, EMPOWERMENT and RE-LEARNING. However, it is important to point out that these actions place almost sole responsibility on each individual man and fail to take into consideration the many systems of epistemic violence, hegemonic power imbalances and social-political-economic disparities which serve as major obstacles to Afrikan men in their pursuit to know themselves, heal, be empowered and re-learn. Therefore a dual process, based on simultaneous consciousness towards fighting oppression and building towards victory is a key component of a decolonial transformation strategy. This means that Afrikan men will have to find innovative ways of working in unity – among themselves and in balanced and mutually beneficial relations with women and their families. Being sensitive to the complex and challenging nature of such a change operation, we can refer to this as revolutionary fitness. A fitness which Afrikan societies, on community-level, must commit to awaken, nurture and shape through the implementation of a cultural curriculum for men, from a young age.

7.8 SUMMARY

This chapter outlined findings data collected on Afrikan masculinity in Mangaya village, Thulamela Municipality in Limpopo province. Even if the sampling was done in a rather small community, it relates to concerns, notions and needs expressed through literature. After presenting findings in relation to men's role, being, coloniality and relationship to culture, a conceptual framework for Afrikan masculinities has been presented.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The main research question interrogated through this research has been: How has coloniality impacted on Afrikan masculinities, and what role can Afrikan culture play in shaping a philosophy of education for relevant Afrikan masculinities? In previous chapters, literature was examined and research carried out in order to better understand the multiple relations between the main concepts and how a broader understanding can help to develop practical solutions to the development of meaningful Afrikan masculinities.

The aim of this chapter is to bring together the findings of the thesis. After summarising the central issues which emerged from this inquiry and which were, thus, highlighted by the inquiry the limitations of the study will be discussed. Lastly, the chapter will present a list of recommendations for innovative philosophy of education addressing the decolonization of Afrikan masculinities.

8.2 CENTRAL ISSUES

The findings of this study has been captured in a conceptual framework from which four action-concepts have been outlined:

- Self-knowledge
- Healing
- Empowerment
- Re-learning

Taking into consideration the systemic power dynamics that serve as obstacles to these actions, a decolonial transformation strategy has been suggested, with revolutionary fitness as an objective.

This was tested out by the co-research team in the coordination of an intervention for men in Mangaya village. After sharing the results of the research with the Headman and Elders of the village, permission was given to coordinate a “Mutangano wa Vhanna” – a meeting of men. The intervention was presented in the form of a workshop/seminar with interactive components, dialogues, exercises and discussions on themes related to the four action-concepts (self-knowledge, healing, empowerment and re-learning). There was a primary focus on self-knowledge, as it was seen as a catalyst for all other change processes. Issues like history, identity, culture, the role of men, family responsibilities and self-development were addressed through an activity-based program. In addition to engaging men – young and old – in processes of self-exploration, the co-research team was also interested in gathering innovative ideas that could help to unpack the action-points – in order to develop recommendations for further transformation work for Afrikan men.

The outcomes of “Mutangano wa Vhanna” was further triangulated against literary references and a vast number of engagements where the principle researcher shared parts of the findings of the study in workshops seminars and dialogues with men (and some women) across South Afrikan and internationally. Through a process of continuous feedback, cross-analyses and probing, a rich analysis gave birth to a more detailed understanding of what components could be meaningful in further interventions for Afrikan men.

Lastly, a group of 24 young men and 22 young women helped to generate practical suggestions for what a young Afrikan man must learn and master as part of developing meaningful masculinities. Through another process of cross-analysis based on the 74 suggestions and all previous data, the following essential lessons were extracted:

ESSENTIAL LESSONS FOR YOUNG AFRIKAN MEN

LESSON	Feed-in terms
1. VISION	Constructive open-mindedness / aspirations / purpose
2. MIND	Thinking deeply / Rehabilitate the mind / broad reflection / reading books / understanding / ancestral language / intelligence / knowledge / wisdom
3. SELF	Knowledge of Self / introspective self-inquiry / Self-awareness / self-actualization / identity / emotional intelligence & awareness / holistic self-love & development / human consciousness
4. WILL	Integrity / discipline / lifestyle & behaviour / character / respect
5. SPIRIT	God-consciousness / spirituality / control bad spirits
6. RELATIONS	Love / communication / emotions / empathy / sympathy / humbleness / conversation / dialogue / commitment / helping & sharing skills / uplift others / work & life balance / relate to Afrikan Queens
7. FAMILY (Role)	Role in the Afrikan family / being a King / being a Warrior / Brotherhood / Community involvement / role modelship & mentoring
8. SEX & VIOLENCE (Life and death)	Violence / Anger / power / sexuality / gender equality / contain sexual energies / depression & mental health
9. LAND (Nationhood)	Political history / Afrikan history & legacy / Effects of colonialism / Pan-Afrikan vision / financial literacy / practical Afrikan perspectives / patriotism

The above nine lessons cover deep self-reflection, analysis of the surrounding environment, commitment to principle values and exercise of practical actions in the life of an Afrikan man. It is suggested to serve as a primary curriculum for young Afrikan men, yet having relevance for all age groups as a benchmark-list to continuously review and recommit to.

In the following recommendations, the nine lessons – as a practical break-down of the four action-concepts – serve as a pedagogic tool.

8.3. TOWARDS AN INNOVATIVE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION FOR AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES

As an outcome of this study, an Afrikan-centred curriculum for masculinity – in the shape of a decolonial transformation strategy - has been suggested, with revolutionary fitness as objective. Four action-concepts – self-knowledge, healing, empowerment and re-learning – have been articulated through nine essential lessons for Afrikan manhood: Vision, mind, self, will, spirit, relations, family, sex and violence, and land. It is suggested that traditional leadership and indigenous knowledge holders are made the custodians of this curriculum and that it is located in – and managed by – communities. By engaging community members in both the design and coordination of knowledge development will create ownership of tradition, agency and a purpose-filled future-orientation located in each community's particularity. It is of great importance that this process is anchored within communities, and not state institutions. Afrikan departments of education, arts and culture are already deeply invested in – and marked by – colonial content and teaching methods, and should not be trusted to host indigenous processes at present. However, it is hoped that, with the current pressure on state institutions to decolonise and Afrikanize, such departments – with time – can become more conducive and appropriate to coordinate indigenous education.

With the emphasis on teaching and guiding the development of meaningful, Afrikan manhood, the emphasis is to inspire, expose, internalize, equip and challenge each student to embark on a learning journey which is, simultaneously, a liberation process internally (self-awareness, knowledge, values) and externally (skills, social interaction, wealth creation).

Education is often spoken about as something that students “receive”. However, a community-oriented model brings into consideration that students take an active part in “creating” learning processes. And this, according to Melaville (2007), offers a much-needed emphasis on engaging students in new ways to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for success in adulthood: “Collectively referred to as community-based learning, these strategies include academically based community service, civic

education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning. It draws from research on peer-assisted learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning”.

The approach here, as a philosophy of both learning and operation, equally places restorative justice and transdisciplinarity – as a holistic approach to liberating discourse, practice and thought – right at the centre (Odora Hoppers, 2013). The program will seek to empower community members, with specific focus on the male population, who want to make a difference, are eager to learn and show leadership potential. Through participation in the program, the overall objective lies in developing a practical understanding of meaningful Afrikan masculinity through processes of inspiration, exposure, challenges and empowerment.

The main focus of the program will be to stimulate and strengthen the already latent potential in each individual and the group as an organism, anchored in knowledge, concerns and needs reflecting the community. Integral to the program is an underlying ethos of cultural methodology and pedagogy. Essentially this means that the program represents perspectives of particular relevance to each community, through which students will be encouraged to study, examine, reflect and learn by participating holistically in processes that are centred in their own historical and cultural references.

The pedagogical process will be seen as a combination of interactive presentation styles, group-focused facilitation, student involvement, integration of cultural tools of education (i.e. storytelling, ceremonies, cultural expressions) and engagement in practical solutions (skills development, project work, mentoring and networking). Theme-components that draw from a rich body of knowledge within history, culture, social sciences and leadership are envisioned to guide further research and more detailed curriculum design. A collective process of feeding into a pool of knowledge, concerns and objectives must seek to be representative of each particular community’s composition and diversity.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, culminating in four action-concepts, nine vital lessons and a transdisciplinary, IKS-based and decolonial philosophy of education, four practical recommendations are outlined below. They are inter-active learning-modules for meaningful Afrikan masculinities. They are outlined as implementable programs that can be coordinated individually, but are seen to be most effective when they are part of a strategic transformation process. Engaging Afrikan men in these interventions will also further solidify needs, approaches and possibilities – as they must feed into a dynamic, Afrikan-centred curriculum.

The first three recommendations are events that can be coordinated within communities, organizations and networks. The fourth recommendation has been developed as an extension of this thesis and serves as a practical tool for the inspiration of individual, young Afrikan men. All four recommendations respond directly to the action-concepts of self-knowledge, healing, empowerment and re-learning. They also give ample space to address each of the nine lessons for Afrikan manhood in depth.

8.4.1 Dialogue for Afrikan Men

This is an interactive dialogue-based initiative where Afrikan men get to listen, share, learn, experience and action their thoughts, views, knowledge and insights. Themes can be broad, narrow, philosophical, personal, but must always lead to practical commitment. Duration can be from 3-6 hours and it can be hosted indoors and outdoors.

- *Format:* Drawn from indigenous practices of community meetings, leadership councils and consultations. Participants sit in circle and engage in interactive dialogue in which they share personal stories, experiences and viewpoints.
- *Participants:* 8-40 participants, men only, particular age groups or open age.

- *Coordination:* 2-4 facilitators guide the dialogues to ensure that participants share speaking time, that communication is flowing and that respect for Elders – and protection of youngsters – are upheld. Coordinators also ensure an environment of openness and non-judgmental communication.
- *Themes/lessons:* Themes can be general (“What does it mean to be an Afrikan Man?”) or specific (“Entrepreneurship”, “Fatherhood”) and must cover components of history, philosophy, cultural values and practical implementation. Themes should be far-reaching and “confrontational”, but not be phrased in problem-focused ways (i.e. “Alcohol abuse”) as it puts men off.
- *Pedagogic approach:* Combination of energizers, storytelling, chants, songs and group exercises help to keep both depth of seriousness, high energy levels, attentive engagement and practical commitments in check.
- *Procedure:* Opening segment; presentation of program; introduction of participants; expectations of the day; energizer; thought-provoking exercise; dialogue/sharing/storytelling; summarizing challenges; finding and committing to solutions in smaller groups; evaluation of day; follow-up (after event).
- *Outcomes:* Self-knowledge, healing, empowerment, re-learning. Realize own potential and challenges. Commit to change process.

8.4.2 Rites of Passage for Afrikan Men

This is an intervention seeking to instil responsibility – especially with regards to reproductive health and family responsibilities – in Afrikan men by preparing them for marriage and fatherhood. It can be done as a one-day engagement or a longer event, from 3-7 days. Must take place in nature, preferably on a mountain top (represent sacred anchoring). Is not meant to replace indigenous initiation practices, but, rather be a supplement to them.

- *Format:* Drawn from indigenous practices of initiation.
- *Participants:* 12-50 participants, men only, particular age groups or open age.
- *Coordination:* 1-2 Elders who coordinate ceremonial aspects and provide instructional content, 4-6 assistants who help with orientation and logistics.
- *Themes/lessons:* Aspects of history, politics, cultural knowledge, spirituality and reproductive health in relation to the Afrikan woman/man/child/family.
- *Pedagogic approach:* Combination of learning from Elders, sharing own challenges, seeking advice, engaging in ritual, spiritual reconnection, cultural knowledge, cultural expressions and group exercises.
- *Procedure:* Orientation; round of introduction; ceremonial rituals; instructional messages; practical advice; spiritual knowledge; questions and answers.
- *Outcomes:* Self-knowledge, healing, empowerment, re-learning. Realize own strengths and weaknesses. Commit to personal improvements, working in balance with the Afrikan woman and being responsible within the Afrikan family.

8.4.3 Sensitivity training for Afrikan Men and Women

This is an exercise-based workshop where Afrikan women and men come together to learn from each other. The format can bring to surface many emotionally charged topics and memories and must be guided carefully. Themes can be phrased in many ways, but are ultimately geared towards improving the relationships (family, friendship, colleague and intimate relations) between women and men. The event seeks to confront the challenge that both men and women feel greatly misunderstood by the opposite gender. A key component is to encourage every participant to listen more than they talk. Duration can be from 3-6 hours and it can be hosted indoors and outdoors.

- *Format:* Drawn from indigenous practices of community meetings, leadership councils and consultations. Participants sit in circle and engage in interactive dialogue. In the beginning women and men sit separately, and for the last part they can sit mixed.
- *Participants:* 20-100 participants, women and men, open age.
- *Coordination:* 2 facilitators guide the proceedings, ensure that no individual is dominating discussions and pay close attention to guarding the space as safe.
- *Themes/lessons:* Questions in relation to gender-specific miscommunication, antagonism, stereotyping, relationship-matters, expectations and support between men and women.
- *Pedagogic approach:* Dialogic sharing and co-learning. Learning through reflection, listening, questioning and brief explanations.
- *Procedure:* Orientation; brief introduction of theme(s) and format; split into two groups (men and women separately) to discuss questions to be asked to the other gender group; plenary; taking turns answering questions; collective reflection; personal learning journeys; summary.
- *Outcomes:* Self-knowledge, healing, empowerment, re-learning. Get deeper insights into conflicts between women and men, and, possibly, own complicity within this. Better understanding of the lives and experiences of the other gender. Commitment to improved relations.

8.4.4 Toolbox for Young Afrikan Men

This intervention must be seen as an extension of this study (although it can perfectly work in isolation from the study). – see Appendix H. Being aware that an academic thesis is far from appealing to most young people, a concern throughout the study was how to engage young Afrikan men in the subjects raised. Previously mentioned are three interventions where young men can participate. But, what about those who are not interested in participating? As an important finding of the study, it was realized that self-knowledge is a hugely undermined awareness/skill, and that the attitude towards change normally starts within each individual.

An idea developed to create a non-empirical tool where the nine essential lessons serve as an outline for motivational messages – to inspire individual reflection and commitment within young Afrikan men. In discussion with the youth, a suggestion came up about making a mixtape where the principle researcher record brief motivational messages in line with the nine essential lessons that emerged from the study. A young DJ mixed a soundtrack of deep house beats as a musical background to the messages.

The mixtape works as a youth-oriented metaphor for collectively created learning material. It is, at once, a cultural tool and a modern intervention. It can be listened to by anyone in their private space and each individual can put emphasis on the messages that are most useful to them. The nine themes are spread across just as many instrumental beats and can be played as a non-stop mix or track by track (theme by theme). The use of music works as a social constructionism assisting the thesis writing by presenting emerging knowledge in a format that does not require an academic engagement. The mixtape engages the listeners in the use of reflection as part of meta-science, in order to focus on inner reflections as an individual self-dialogue in the shape of scientific inquiry. The music style applied is “deep house”. House-music has a history of rebelling, opposing and defying boundaries in the modern era of electronic music. The commercial aspects of house (and its predecessor, disco) are often criticised for creating a soundtrack for hedonistic lifestyles and shallow values. Yet, there is a strong history of Black resistance and

innovation within house – especially in its origin as an “underground” musical culture. Deep house differs from commercial house in that it is more musical, poetic, reflective, percussive and incorporates aspects of jazz, soulful and Afrikan music.

The mixtape is being made available online and can be downloaded and listened to in connection with or separated from the thesis. In the following section, the nine essential themes guiding the mixtape-outline are linked to Afrikan quotes of relevance (see Appendix H):

THE AFRIKAN MAN TOOLBOX

INTRO: THE NEED

The black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth.

Steve Bantu Biko

LESSON 1: VISION

Everything that an AFRIKAN MAN can imagine, he is capable of creating.

Thomas Sankara

LESSON 2: MIND

The central objective in decolonising the minds of AFRIKAN MEN is to overthrow the authority which alien traditions exercise over the AFRIKAN MAN. This demands the dismantling of White supremacist beliefs, and the structures which uphold them, in every area of Afrikan life.

Chinweizu Ibekwe

LESSON 3: SELF

AFRIKAN MAN, let no voice but your own speak to you from the depths. Let no influence but your own arise you in time of peace and time of war. Hear all, but attend only to that which concerns you.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey

LESSON 4: WILL

Our power to create lies in the AFRIKAN MAN's Will and its ability to aspire beyond what is immediately available. The will power has the unique ability to pull the mind and flesh in the direction of Truth.

Na'im Akbar

LESSON 5: SPIRIT

The focus here is not on ritual itself, but for the AFRIKAN MAN to open up something in HIS heart and spirit that has been locked away so long that HE can barely remember the source.

Malidoma Patrice Somé

LESSON 6: RELATIONS

To take part in the Afrikan revolution it is not enough to write a revolutionary song: you must fashion the revolution with the people. And if the AFRIKAN MAN can fashion it with the people, the songs will come by themselves.

Ahmed Sékou Touré

LESSON 7: FAMILY

A culture generates effective power when it aligns its subcultural, social and individual units, especially its family and communal units, in such ways that they can most effectively create and exploit its human, social and material resources to its own advantage, relative to its environment and other groups or cultures.

Amos N. Wilson

LESSON 8: SEX & VIOLENCE

Sexual confusion and perversion are ways of thinking, not just simple chaotic, abnormal acts.

Mwalimu Baruti

LESSON 9: LAND

For a colonised people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity.

Frantz Fanon

8.5 RELIABILITY, LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Criticism is often levelled against qualitative research that it lacks both reliability and accuracy (Brink, 2006) and, thus, it will be important to state that these concerns are addressed throughout the research study. Credibility is described as “how vivid and faithful the description of the phenomenon is” (Beck, 1993:264) and relates to the trustworthiness of the findings (Carpenter Rinaldi, 1995). Banks et al. (2013) have explored the ethical issues experienced in undertaking community-based participatory research (CBPR), with the focus being on “research that is based on a set of values that includes the promotion of equal partnerships and co-learning and an explicit commitment to ensuring research leads to, and is informed by, action” (p. 264). Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007) suggested that the validity of PAR can be examined by trustworthiness; this concept focuses on the degree to which the findings represent the actual meanings of the research participants.

The importance of trustworthiness (Ocean et al., 2008) - including exit interviews, assist coresearchers in their pursuit to continue doing similar work and/or integrate emerging knowledge into their fields of study and practice, disseminate outcomes and build on them further (UK etc).

Having an anti-oppressive stance (Potts & Brown, 2005): Respect participants, ensure that focus is on the experiences and perceptions of the participants. That the study

reflects the views of the participants. That they see the analysis as true, in their view. That the research matter to them. That it did something useful for them.

The importance of verify early findings and have a critical look at how the participants' experiences link with researchers' results (Kruger, 2015). To have courageous conversations within the team, allow team members to have free reign and ask unjudged questions, address the imbalance between researcher, co-researcher and participants (Lather, 2007). Strive for balance (between perspectives, knowledge sharing, crafting the action/interventions

In this study, the data have been narrowed down appropriately to ensure a practical focus. In addition, a wide variety of literature, both of direct and indirect thematic relevance, will be consulted and existing theory, paradigms and sources of information be explored and respectfully acknowledged. The researcher has considered the factors involved in the data analysis of grounded theory as mentioned by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Chiovitti and Piran (2003). Accordingly, the participants have, as far as possible, been encouraged to guide the inquiry process; theoretical constructions have been checked against participants' views, phrases and meanings. Information has been consulted from multiple sources and discourses, including books, articles, video material, post interview briefing notes, research journal notes, formal and informal conversations and seminars. The reliability and validity of this thesis have been ensured through a consultative peer-review process with co-students, colleagues, research fellows and assistants throughout the course of the study. In addition, monitoring and constant feedback from scholars, research fellows, advisors and practitioners have been instrumental in ensuring both vigour and credibility.

The study has sought to explore, and gain practical meaning within, a vast and sensitive field. The focus on Afrocentricity and social theory means that little room has been provided to investigate more political, structural and materially founded perspectives. Focusing on a few young men during the research also means that an incomplete picture in relation to age, cultural diversity, socio-demographic factors and

political demarcations may have been drawn. A sole focus on men's lives might also have left out valuable knowledge in describing women's lives.

The region referred to as "Vendaland", within Limpopo Province, in the north-eastern part of South Afrika was chosen. This is a part of the country that is often seen as being more intact with its indigenous roots, history and culture. Focusing on a few young men only during the research will, obviously, fail to provide a complete picture in relation to age, cultural diversity, socio-demographic factors and political demarcations. This dilemma is responded to by drawing data from both literature and interviews, and with the inclusion of many open-ended considerations. A sole focus on men might also omit valuable considerations by women. It was attempted to alleviate this by including literature by women scholars and also interviewing women as part of the research. Interviewing few people in one Tshivenda-speaking village may not be representative of Venda-culture itself, let alone the vast identities contained in the term "Afrikan men".

An inherit challenge in this study has been that it draws knowledge from only few interviewees. Herein lies a potential risk to oversimplify Afrikan culture, generalise issues that requires much more detailed examination and overlook details that could have been captured in a quantitative research design. In an increasingly individualised world, chances are that participants in the study also have highly individualised views on, and experiences with, Afrikan masculinity and culture. This can create vague notions and make it difficult to synthesise applicable, meaningful change and pedagogical tools.

The trans-disciplinary approach may have given way to a shallow study where neither subject is explored in depth. This has been addressed by attempting to both include many sources from different disciplines, and also allow the voices of co-researchers and interviewees to provide depth to the themes of the study.

Also, to talk of Afrikan culture as if it is one set of easily identifiable determinants has been a potential trap. Afrika is a vast continent with many different experiences and worldviews which also encompasses an Afrikan Diaspora with further diverse

dynamics, which the study may not have been able to reflect, nor represent. The study has been located mainly within South Afrika and was able to draw reflections from only a few representatives of the many Afrikan cultures that exist within the country. Non-fluency in South Afrikan indigenous languages on the part of the lead-researcher created a limitation in accessing the depth of cultural thought and symbolism. It was seen as an undisputable value that all informants should be given the opportunity to speak in their own language. All co-researchers were therefore partly chosen for their language fluency. All data were transcribed to English, but extensive discussions about data and concepts took place – in vernacular – among the co-researchers.

The pursuit to employ an Afrikan-centred/Afrocentric focus, rooted in an Afrikan worldview, has also presented a challenge in identifying relevant literature, which has Afrikan ideas at the centre of its' analysis and awareness of history, heritage and cultural ideas. As the academic field of knowledge is vastly Eurocentric, the researcher have taken a critical stance towards it, yet attempted not be consumed solely in opposing institutionalised and systematic ideas. This was resolved by considering a broad list of literature and sources of knowledge. The researcher took time to discuss all aspects of the study with a number of people who offered valuable insights and advice.

This study runs a risk of oversimplifying questions of a complex nature. Looking at broad concepts such as “masculinity”, “culture”, “indigenous”, “coloniality” “Afrikan” and “Black”, it has been challenging to give adequate attention to details and at the same time identify generalisations. For example, to talk meaningfully about “Afrikan men” would imply an in-depth study of the variations and complexity that Afrikan men represent. To articulate Afrikan traditional culture is also to define what elements should be seen as traditional versus modern, original versus imposed, authentic versus copied. In other words, many of the concepts touched on within this study deserve a more thorough, separate analysis. In this study, they have been brought together for the purpose of identifying new possibilities, merging points and doorways towards further research.

Relying heavily on Afrikan American literature in describing (South) Afrikan situations is, at best, problematic. Careful navigation has been applied to move in between these pitfalls, and an all-present consciousness of these implied weaknesses has been articulated. The study does, however, not claim to have covered everything about each component and will not propose to apply one generalised view on all phenomena or situations. It is asserted that all studies are relative and can only expose partial truths (Yon, 2000). A mindset of non-judgmental openness, and careful attention to human dignity, Afrikan cultural practices and sensitivities within Black experiences have been exercised throughout this journey. In each research activity, principles of self-critique, active feedback and critical thinking have been applied in such a way that the researcher can attest that the study has been carried out with the greatest ethical sensibilities.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined conclusions and recommendations emerging from the study. It positioned four action-concepts and nine vital lessons for Afrikan manhood. This has been referred to as the need for a decolonial transformation strategy, with developing revolutionary fitness, as objective. Based on data collected, interpretation of data, extensive dialoguing, an emerging, innovative philosophy of education has been presented and applied in four practical recommendations seeking to respond to the concern of this study; understanding how coloniality has impacted on Afrikan masculinities and applying Afrikan culture in the shaping of a philosophy of education for meaningful Afrikan masculinities.

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APPENDIX A

REQUESTING PERMISSION / Assistance with research program

Amani Olúbánjọ Buntu

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

I am currently doing a PhD program in Philosophy of Education, with the College of Graduate Studies, under supervision of Prof. Catherine Odora-Hoppers who heads the South Afrikan Research Chair Initiative in Development Education, located at the University of South Afrika (UNISA).

I am hoping that you will be willing to share some contacts and ideas that can be useful to my study. I also would be very honoured if you can attend an Orientation Meeting, planned to take place in Thohoyandou next month (see more information below).

The working title of my study is “Decolonising Afrikan Masculinities – Towards an Innovative Philosophy of Education”. I seek to understand to what extent coloniality has impacted on notions of Afrikan masculinities and what role Afrikan culture can play in shaping tools to develop and sustain relevant Afrikan masculinities today.

In reference to the Participatory Action Research that I am planning to carry out in Thohoyandou, I am seeking assistance with a number of things. The two primary needs I have is to form:

1. REFERENCE GROUP

To identify knowledge holders (from Academic, Traditional Leadership and Community Leadership backgrounds) to be part of a Reference Group which will give some guidance to the research process. The group is envisioned to meet 2-4 times over a 6-month period.

2. RESEARCH TEAM

To identify potential co-researchers to be part of my Research Team (young Afrikan males, with some academic background and interest in the subject, comfortable with doing research in indigenous languages) to help collect data through interviews, workshops and surveys. Each member will, in total, be expected to do research for app. 20 days spread out over a 6-month period.

I have been working in the field of youth/community empowerment, education and culture for more than 30 years. For most of this time, the work has been strongly influenced by Pan-Afrikan perspectives, decolonial discourses, restorative justice and Afrikan-centred educational values. I have developed a number of community interventions. One of them is SHABAKA – MEN OF AFRIKA, a platform for Afrikan men to identify challenges and finding solutions through interactive reflections. This experience has inspired me to go further in co-creating innovative solutions. The PhD program follows in line with this, with a particular focus on solutions regarding the role of men.

I realize that it is challenging to fully transmit the content of my study through telephonic and electronic channels. I have attempted to give a brief overview in this letter, but, to make sure the communication is clear, I am wondering if you would be willing to meet with me. I am planning to come to Thohoyandou around ____ (date) and I would be very honoured if you are willing to attend an Orientation Meeting where the objectives and format of my work will be explained and discussed in detail. Hopefully, as an immediate follow-up to this meeting, I will also conduct a lecture, to spark interest in the content of the study. Date and time for these events will be communicated by the beginning of July.

In the meantime, it would be great to stay in communication with you. Should you already be able to identify names, contacts and ideas that can be of help, please let me know. I highly appreciate all advice and recommendations I can get.

I am attaching an outline of the research design (this document is subject to revision) and my bio, so that you can get some insight into what I do and envision to collaborate with you on.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

Baba A. O. Buntu
Principle Researcher

E-mail: _____

Phone number: _____

APPENDIX B

ANNOUNCEMENT: SEEKING CO-RESEARCHERS

Amani Olúbánjọ Buntu

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

This is to announce that I am a PhD candidate from University of South Afrika looking for co-researchers from UNIVEN to assist in Participatory Action Research in Thulamela Municipality. The working title of his study is “Decolonising Afrikan Masculinities – Towards an Innovative Philosophy of Education”.

This trans-disciplinary study will be an Afrikan-centred investigation into how coloniality impacts on Afrikan masculinity in Thulamela (and surrounding areas) and the role of indigenous knowledge in developing relevant, contemporary masculinities.

CRITERIA FOR CANDIDATES

- Must be Afrikan male, below 35 years of age
- Must have good understanding of Tshivenda, Xitsonga and English; and ability to use all three languages in research situations
- Interest areas: Pan-Afrikan philosophy, Afrikan Indigenous Knowledge, Critical Race Theory, social transformation, coloniality/decoloniality, men's role and Afrikan-centred education
- Must have ability to work in a disciplined way, think critically/creatively and be interested in developing practical solutions (applied to both individual and group work)
- Must be open to creative, unconventional, radical and transformational theory and practice
- Although it is preferred that candidates have some experience with academic work and/or community work, no specific prior experience is necessary. Training in research methodology will be given

SCOPE AND REMUNERATION

- Work capacity and period: Research work will count app. 15-20 days of work over a 4-months period (dates/months/period).
- A humble remuneration will be offered, as a token of appreciation.

Further details will be communicated directly to the interested candidates.

For further information, candidates should send
a 1-page resume/CV with contact details to:

Department of Community Engagement, UNIVEN

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

APPENDIX C

CO-RESEARCHER CONTRACT

CONTRACT

CO-RESEARCH TEAM: "DECOLONISING AFRIKAN MASCULINITIES"

This Agreement is entered into between

Name: Amani Olúbánjò Buntu (hereafter referred to as Principal Researcher)

Address: _____

Cell phone: _____, **ID number:** _____

and

Name: _____ (hereafter referred to as Co-researcher)

ID number: _____

The Agreement concerns the following:

- The Co-researcher agrees to be part of a Co-research Team, to assist Baba A. O. Buntu in Participatory Action Research in Thulamela Municipality/Vhembe District for a PhD degree registered with UNISA, titled "Decolonising Afrikan Masculinities – Towards an Innovative Philosophy of Education".

Role and responsibilities:

- The Co-researcher is expected to take active part in all activities planned and discussed with the Principal Researcher and the Co-research team. This includes, but is not limited to: Reading, writing, collecting and interpreting data, conceptualization, implementation, evaluation and representation. Additionally, clear communication, strict ethical conduct and efficiency is expected in all tasks carried out.

- The Principal Researcher is expected to portion out reasonable workloads, communicate clearly, provide ethical leadership and be available for guidance and assistance.

SCOPE AND CAPACITY:

- Work tasks will be agreed to from month to month, and will count app. 20 days of work over a 5-months period (dates/months), with an average of app. 3-5 work days per month.

VALIDITY:

- This Agreement is valid from _____ (date) to _____ (date).

Intellectual Property and acknowledgements:

- The PhD-project is governed by the Intellectual Property Policy of UNISA, which stipulates that UNISA is the owner of all intellectual property created by candidates.
- Principal Researcher will ensure to always accredit and acknowledge the contributions of the Co-researcher in the dissertation itself and wherever it is presented or referenced.
- In case of publication of thesis – or part thereof – (or in any event that implies changes to the intellectual property clause) the Co-researcher will be acknowledged and informed in due course.

Remuneration and payment terms:

- The Co-researcher will receive a stipend of _____ (amount) at the end of each month of participating in research activities, for as long as the research project is commencing, but limited to a maximum of five (5) months (= amount). The payment will be transferred via EFT to personal bank account
- Other expenses the Co-researcher may incur as part of agreed research activities are limited to reimbursement of transport and a per-diem amount for lunch. The plan for each research activity will outline details for such expenses, will be reimbursed by claims and either paid in cash or via EFT.
- Co-researcher's banking details:

Name of account	
Name of bank	
Type of account	
Bank account number	
Branch name and number	

CONFIDENTIALITY, Liability and indemnity:

- The Co-researcher cannot use, promote, reference, publicise or broadcast any data or information acquired or developed under this Agreement, without obtaining prior consent from Principal Researcher.
- The Principal Researcher cannot offer any liability, insurance or indemnity in case of any accident, injury, theft or violation that may be incurred in relation with research activities. The Co-researcher is solely responsible for own safety, health and is expected to observe all necessary precautions.

End of contract / EXTENSION OF CONTRACT:

- This contract can end before time should Co-researcher or Principal Researcher find reason to no longer collaborate. Such complaints must be put in writing and result in a formal release from contract between the two parties.
- Principal Researcher can suggest an extension of this contract, if need be, and an addendum be added to this Agreement.

Signatures:

Date/place	Name (Principal Researcher)	Signature
Date/place	Name (Co-Researcher)	Signature
Date/place	Signature, witness 1	Signature, witness 2

APPENDIX D

ORIENTATION AND CONSENT LETTER

Amani Olúbánjọ Buntu

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

_____ (date)

SEEKING ASSISTANCE / PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH FOR PHD STUDY
ABOUT AFRIKAN MEN, HISTORY, CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

My name is Amani Olúbánjọ Buntu – ID number 670705 5888 188 – and I am currently carrying out a PhD study about Afrikan men, history, culture and education. The study is located in Philosophy of Education and registered with the College of Graduate Studies at the University of South Afrika (UNISA). The dissertation is supervised by Prof. Catherine Odora-Hoppers who heads the South Afrikan Research Chair Initiative in Development Education, located at UNISA in Tshwane.

The working title of the study is “Decolonising Afrikan Masculinities – Towards an Innovative Philosophy of Education”. The study attempts to look at the role of Afrikan men today and to understand how men relate to history and culture. It looks at some challenges associated with Afrikan masculinities and seeks to find out whether we can develop educational tools to solve them.

As I am based in Johannesburg, I have recruited a team of five co-researchers who all are affiliated to University of Venda:

(Names and ID numbers of students in the Co-Research Team)

All members of the Co-Research Team are highly committed, are well versed in both academic research and cultural values and are greatly motivated to take part in a study which aims to be of relevance to communities.

On behalf of myself and my co-researchers, I kindly seek your assistance / permission to do research amongst the members of your community. The research activities will include interviews, focus group meetings, workshops and conversations with knowledge holders and leaders in the community. Participation in the research project will be voluntary and confidential. Information will be processed with respect and dignity. It is important for me to express that our aim is not solely to collect data; we would hope to form a relationship of collaboration with members of your community to reflect on challenges, and also find solutions together that can be of interest to the community at large.

A little about myself: I am originally from Anguilla – a small island in the Eastern Caribbean where my people ended up as a result of forced migration through the Transatlantic Enslavement many centuries ago. I moved back to the Afrikan continent, to Johannesburg, in 2000, where I now live with my family. I have worked in the field of community empowerment for the last 30 years in South Afrika and internationally. I am the Founding Director of eBukhosini Solutions, a Black-owned/managed community-based company specializing in Afrikan-centred education. As part of my work I have also founded a movement for Afrikan men called SHABAKA – MEN OF AFRIKA, which facilitates workshops and seminars for men in various parts of South Afrika and abroad.

Through my work experience I have found that there are many unresolved challenges related to the challenges many Afrikan men face in today's society. Some of these challenges are related to unemployment, identity, conflicts, family relations and cultural loss. With a keen interest in social and educational development, I have found that there is a need to also look into the roles men can play in creating a better society.

This is an attempt to create new, innovative and practical solutions. I hope you would like to partner with us on a solution-oriented journey.

As part of the study I am using Participatory Action Research, which seeks to involve people in their own transformation. The goal is to engage community members in critical reflection, identifying challenges and developing solutions. I am therefore seeking to interview and engage with members of a community where there is historical memory and cultural pride, but also the presence of problems we associate with 'modernity' (loss of cultural values, leaning towards westernization, marginalization of indigenous practices etc). This has led me to your community, and I kindly ask you to consider us forming a working relationship.

Me and my Co-Research Team will be interested in talking to a variety of community members and knowledge holders. Participants will be duly informed about the study and participating is entirely voluntary. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time, and this would not be held against that person or yourselves.

I do not have any funding that enables me to offer remunerations to any participant in the study. However, I do hope that the study results in solutions that will be of great value to the community, much beyond the study itself.

On behalf of myself and my Co-Research Team I kindly ask for permission to collaborate with your community members. We assure that we shall honour the relationship with you with deep respect. Your support will be acknowledged and all findings from the study will be shared with the community.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me for any clarifications on the following details:

Cell number: _____ / E-mail: _____

Your assistance / permission / cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Humble regards,

Baba A. O. Buntu

CONSENT

I have been informed and understand what this research involves and what is expected of participants:

I understand that:

- All participants will be participate voluntarily and only after signing consent forms
- Participants may refuse to answer any questions that they feel uncomfortable answering.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time and it will not be held against them in any way.
- Participation in interviews is entirely voluntary and no information that may identify the specific individual will be included in the research report.
- Any information shared in the group interview will also be kept confidential by the researchers
- Audio/video recordings will only be seen, heard and processed by the research team.
- All recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.
- The organization/community will be credited in the research report and thanked for their cooperation
- The researchers commit to share outcomes of the research with the organization/community by making research reports available

I hereby consent to the research team having access to members of my organization/community to conduct research activities according to the outline above.

Place: _____ Date: _____

Leader's name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____

Comment/advice/request:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(A semi-structured guide for Individual and Focus Group Interview)

QUESTIONNAIRE

“Decolonising Afrikan Masculinities” → A study about Afrikan Men, History and Culture

Brief/simplified explanation of the study:

This study looks at the role of Afrikan men today, how men’s experiences relate to history and in what way culture can play a meaningful part in their lives.

A. GENERAL VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF AFRIKAN MEN

1. How would you describe the ideal Afrikan man?
 - a. In your view, what does it mean to be an Afrikan man?
 - b. In your own words, what are the values Afrikan men are expected to live by?
2. What characteristics do you see Afrikan men representing today?
 - a. In your experience, how do Afrikan men understand their role today and what values do they live by?
 - b. Is there a difference between being an Afrikan man and a muVenda man? If so – what is the difference?
 - c. Do you have any concerns about Afrikan men in your community – if so, what are they and how do you suggest they can be resolved?

B. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH BEING MEN

1. How does one become an Afrikan man? (“The journey towards manhood”)
 - a. Do you identify as an Afrikan man? If you do not – how do you prefer to describe your identity? And if you do – what does being an Afrikan man mean to you?
 - b. How would you describe your own journey towards being a man?

- c. At what point do you consider that you became a man – and why/how, or: are you still working towards becoming a man?
 - d. Who (persons) and what (events/experiences) has played a significant role in your understanding of what it means to be a man?
- 2. What are the experiences, challenges and aspirations Afrikan men encounter?
 - a. How would you describe the experience of life as an Afrikan man?
 - i. What is challenging?
 - ii. What is easy?
 - b. To what extent do you reflect on yourself?
 - i. What do you see as your strongest and weakest characteristics as a man?
 - ii. How do other people see you as a man?
 - c. What are your aspirations as a man?
 - i. What do you need to fulfil your aspirations?
 - d. Is there anything you wish you had access to (past or present) that would have made your journey towards becoming a man easier?

C. HISTORY AND AFRIKAN MEN

- 1. What can be said of the relation between history and the values, actions and experiences of Afrikan men?
 - a. In your view, what is the difference between the role of Afrikan men in ancient times (thousands of years ago) and today? If you could chose, in which time era would you rather live, and why?
 - b. The way you see it, how did Afrikan men relate to women and children – in the past, and how do they relate now?
- 2. What can be said of the impact of colonialism and Apartheid on the values, actions and experiences of Afrikan men?
 - a. The way you see it, how did Afrikan men experience the eras of colonialism and Apartheid?
 - b. In your opinion, how has colonialism and Apartheid impacted on Afrikan men today?
 - Can Afrikan men draw positive lessons from these experiences?
 - Have these experiences created any problems for Afrikan men?

3. How do you see Afrikan men's role in the future?

CULTURE AND AFRIKAN MEN

1. How do Afrikan men relate to Afrikan culture?
 - a. In your view, what does culture say about (expect from) Afrikan men?
 - b. In your experience, how do Afrikan men today relate to culture?
 - c. In your opinion, are Afrikan men and women seen differently within culture? If so, how?
2. What solutions can be drawn from Afrikan culture that have particular relevance to the role of men?
 - a. In your understanding, how can we use Afrikan culture to solve challenges experienced by (or in relation to) men?
 - b. In your opinion, what are the limitations of Afrikan culture to solve challenges experienced by (or in relation to) men?

APPENDIX F

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

PRE-RESEARCH

Activity	Source/site	Insights
Conversations with young men	SHABAKA	Needs, points of importance
Literature consultations	Personal	Needs, discourses, research
Conversations with men who work with men	SHABAKA	Needs, points of importance
Consultations with knowledge holders and academic experts	UNISA etc	Research methodology, cultural knowledge, creative approaches
Consultations/presentations with students	SARCHI	Feedback, input, suggestions
Conversations with Supervisor	SARCHI	Feedback, input, suggestions
Conversations with young men	SHABAKA	Suggestions
Outlining research plan	Personal	Draft plan

MAIN RESEARCH

Activity	Source/site	Insights
Implement research plan	UNIVEN	Act on draft plan, set-up
Recruit Co-Research Team	UNIVEN	Identify co-research team
Training of Co-Research Team	UNIVEN	Getting to know co-research team. Capacitation
Fine-tuning and executing research plan	Co-Research Team	Organic, collaborative work format
Community interventions and dialogues	Thohoyandou	Localizing needs and approaches
Creative methodologies	Co-Research Team	Innovative approaches
Reference group meetings	UNIVEN	New insights. Fine-tuning approach and understanding
Public lectures	UNIVEN	Feedback and assurance
Interviews	Mangala Village	Rich data for the study
Translation from TshiVenda	UNIVEN	Transcripts in English
Check translations	UJ	Clarifications, depth of cultural codes

Activity	Source/site	Insights
Initial coding/interpretation of data	Co-Research Team	Insights, emerging knowledge
Designing intervention	Co-Research Team	Practical, meaningful approach
Conducting intervention	Co-Research Team	Rich data for the study
Further coding/interpretation	Personal	Insights, emerging knowledge
Follow-up interventions	Co-Research Team	Feedback, further insights
Evaluation	Co-Research Team	Overview of what was achieved and shortcomings

POST-RESEARCH

Activity	Source/site	Insights
Other events/seminars (“control-groups” to test out findings)	SHABAKA and personal	Insights, broader perspectives, emerging knowledge
Conversations with knowledge holders and “everyday people”	Personal	Insights, broader perspectives, emerging knowledge
Lectures	JHB, US, UK, UNISA	Feedback, further insights
Conversations with young men	Personal	Insights, broader perspectives, emerging knowledge
Final interpretation of data, relate to literature, experiences and discourses (i.e. patriarchy, decoloniality and femicide)	Personal	Insights, broader perspectives, emerging knowledge, solutions
Collecting different streams of additional data (conversations, written material, audio-visual material, insights into findings by practitioners, authors and speakers)	Personal	Learning premise: Step-by-step development, continued return to SELF knowledge as foundation, innovation as integral, reaching out to young men
Conversations with men who work with men	SHABAKA	Insights, broader perspectives, emerging knowledge, solutions
Assistance with finalizing	Co-researchers	“Authorization”, cementing
Developing a toolbox	Questionnaire	Ability to share outcomes of study
Designing an educational philosophy	Personal	Finding meaningful solutions
Designing programs of intervention	Personal	Finding meaningful solutions

APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANTS IN STUDY

P1	Male student
P2	Male student
P3	Male student
P4	Male student
P5	Mrs Maluleke, Dumba initiation
P6	Mr Ndanduleni, Church member
P7	Mr Bele, Teacher, language, confl.resolution
P8	Mr Nethengwe, Headman
P9	CDE Ms Monenyiwa, Ward councilor
P10	Mrs Mmbengeni, Sangoma
P11	Mr Maginya, Sangoma
P12	Older Women
P13	Older Women
P14	Older Women
P15	Older Women
P16	Younger women
P17	Younger women
P18	Younger women
P19	Younger women
P20	Younger women
P21	Older men
P22	Older men
P23	Older men

P24	Older men
P25	Younger men
P26	Younger men
P27	Younger men
P28	Younger men
P29	Younger men
P30	Younger men

APPENDIX H

INTERVENTION/LEARNING TOOL: MIXTAPE

Artist: Baba Buntu feat. DJ Huey P.:
Project name: THE AFRIKAN MAN TOOLBOX –
9 Liberating Steps for Young Men
Time: 57:22

Tracks and credits:

1. INTRO

Music track title: Chant of Eternity (Meditation Relaxing Music)
Artist/Album/Record: Unknown
Year: Published on YouTube, 2010
Available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWUk62BOLiQ>

2. VISION

Music track title: Delusions
Artist: KVRVBO (Karabo Moloi)
Album: Plutonic Dreams
Record Label: Stay True Sounds
Year: 2018

3. MIND

Music track title: Camacho (Michael Melchner Remix)
Artist: Alexkid & Alejandro Vivanco
Album: Camacho EP
Record Label: Wrong State Recordings
Year: 2014

4. SELF

Music track title: Beyond the Machine
Artist: Move D
Album: Future Sounds of Jazz Vol. 14
Record Label: Compost
Year: 2018

5. WILL

Music track title: Myriad
Artist: Z Lovecraft
Album: The Creator EP

Record Label: No Bad Days
Year: 2017

6. SPIRIT

Music track title: Part Song
Artist: Frank
Album: Mercy of Means
Record Label: Scissor & Thread
Year: 2018

7. RELATIONS

Music track title: Drum Therapy
Artist: Chaos In The CBD
Album: Multiverse
Record Label: In Dust We Trust
Year: 2018

8. FAMILY

Music track title: Haus
Artist: Vril (Rework)
Album: Anima Mundi
Record Label: Anima Mundi
Year: 2018

9. SEX & VIOLENCE

Music track title: Square Down Smoother
Artist: Losoul
Album: Island Time
Record Label: Hypercolour
Year: 2018

10. LAND

Music track title: Defeated (Prelude to The Origin)
Artist: Maarka
Album: Unreleased
Record Label: Unreleased
Year: Unreleased

11. OUTRO

Music track title: Elevation
Artist: Nomumbah
Album: Amanha
Record Label: Yoruba Records
Year: 2016