

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Well, I know he has affairs with other girls. Who doesn't cheat in this day and age? I have made peace with it. I have been with him for more than two years. All I ask from him is that he respects me enough to hide his affairs from me and he protects himself... Other than that I can't really deny him his rights”

“Of course I have multiple girlfriends... I am still young to be in a committed relationship and be tied to one person. I still have to explore... Our grandfathers had many wives and they were never questioned, it was never an issue. Why should it be an issue now that we youngsters are doing it? Let us continue the legacy...”

The first quotation comes from a conversation with Tinyiko, a female friend of mine upon finding out that her boyfriend has been having relations with other girls. The second quotation is a chance conversation I had with Ntwanano, a young man I know, about relationships. Having multiple-partnerships or being in multiple-partnerships, simply defined as “having more than one sexual partner at the same time and finding it acceptable or excusable in some sense thereby linking the partners into a sexual network” (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 31), is a common practice in Giyani. From a male point of view these partnerships are often associated with ‘traditional African culture’. Such norms and values which are considered to be related to ‘African culture’ continue to be very much embraced and held in high regard in the Giyani area. One important factor, pertaining to the focus of this research, as stated by Gilbert and Selikow (2011: 31) is the social construction of masculinity where ‘real men’ are constructed as having sexual prowess which is made evident by having many girlfriends. The term “it's our culture” is normally used to rationalize and/or legitimize risky sexual behaviour by the youth. The acceptance, as well as drawing on culture to justify multiple-partnerships from both genders, is what struck me and serves as motivation for this study.

The aspects that Giyani youth draw on to justify multiple-partnerships are culturally as well as historically informed. There is a close connection made between culture and history to justify contemporary multiple-partnerships, and by making reference to culture and old situations (how things were done in the past), tradition, as Ranger (1983: 02) terms it, is being invented. This is the reason why history moved into the picture and was considered in this research. In relation to what multiple-partnerships meant then – ‘then’ referring to the colonial and apartheid period - the main purpose of the research was to examine multiple-partnerships and their significance to masculinity in present day Giyani. The research sought to find out what

multiple partnerships are now, in relation to what they were historically, and how this history is being reinvented to justify current practices. This was done by tracing multiple-partnerships and masculinities in different historical periods. However, it is worth clarifying that the thesis does not present a periodization of multiple-partnerships and masculinities.

Research on masculinities and multiple-partnerships has been predominantly directed towards the present day, and how this trend contributes to the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Few however make an effort to consider the historical trajectories through which they have been produced. More so few studies approach the issue not immediately in a pathologising way, but more as a form of youth culture. Thus, my research will enhance our understanding of this immediate, yet usually persistent social problem in the Giyani area, taking history into consideration, and offer a fresh perspective on the subject of multiple partnerships. Understanding the reasons, and the meanings attributed to this phenomenon by local actors, the youth as a case in point, is key to efforts of changing or minimizing this kind of behavior. Additionally, hardly any attempts have been made to investigate and analyse the impact of socio-economic change on young men's lives, and how these young men are dealing with their current situation, which this paper also addresses.

More specifically, the question that this thesis answers is what are the shifts in significance of having multiple-partnerships in relationship to masculinity, now and then? And in what ways is the multiple-partnerships trend connected or disconnected to the socio-economic circumstances of actors? Taking as its theoretical framework and departure point, the thesis draws on Bryman's (2004) and Courtenay's (2000) constructionism theory to argue that gender i.e. ideas about masculinity and femininity, is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that constantly shift and vary in space and time. The thesis also draws on Judith Butler's gender performance theory to argue that "the body is a historical situation that comes to bear cultural meanings, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation" (1998: 521).

Theoretical Framework

Constructionism challenges the suggestion that categories such as organization and culture are pre-given and consequently confront social actors as external realities that they have no role in shaping. Rather, constructionism asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a state of constant revision (Bryman, 2004: 17). The same can be said about culture. Instead of seeing the “culture” that the youth of Giyani draw on to justify and legitimate multiple-partnerships and risky sexual behaviour as an external reality that acts on, or constrains people, it can be taken to be an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman, 200: 18). This means that the “culture” that they draw on, and claim to be old, to normalize and justify multiple-partnerships is quite recent and invented. This “culture” then, is a response to contemporary situations which seeks legitimacy in history. Giyani young men however rely on a concept of culture which is opposed to the anthropological notion of culture. For them culture is something which is stable across history and more real than anything else, something to which they can refer as an external legitimising force. Here then we see two different uses of culture.

In developing its arguments, constructionism perspective refutes the male-female sex drive thesis that asserts that “males are biologically endowed with a predisposition for variety in sexual partners, and females are not characterized by such a drive” (Bryman, 200: 18). This argument has been exposed as weak since there is no biological evidence to support it. From a constructionist perspective, women and men think and act in the ways that they do, not because of their prescribed roles, identities or psychological traits, but because of concepts of masculinity and femininity that they adopt from their culture (Courtenay, 2000: 12). Thus masculinity and the idea of multiple partnerships is a social construction whose meanings are built up during interaction. From a social constructivist perspective, men and boys in Giyani, as well as other places, are not passive victims of socially prescribed roles, nor are they simply conditioned or socialised by their cultural context, but they are active agents in constructing and reconstructing dominant norms of masculinity (Courtenay, 2000: 12).

Constructivism theory explains how gender is a social construct, and how individuals are not just passive agents taking on everything that is thrown at them. It does however not clearly explain how incredibly embodied the claims made by Giyani young men are, and how they

stick so powerfully. These identities come with a lot of investment and that is because they are embodied. Judith Butler's gender performance theory clearly shows this. Butler (1988) understands the body to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities. She asserts that the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts (Butler, 1988: 521). "The body is a historical situation that comes to bear cultural meanings, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation" (1998: 521).

Butler further asserts that the body is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention. In other words, the body is a historical situation, as Beauvoir has claimed, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a historical situation (Butler, 1988: 521). To be female/male is a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman/man is to have become a woman/man, "to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman/man,' to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project" (Butler, 1998: 522).

Because gender is not a fact, Butler argues that the various acts of gender creates the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all (1988:522). The formulation of the body as a mode of dramatizing or enacting possibilities thus presents a way to understand how a cultural convention is embodied and enacted... and as "a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual" (Butler, 1988: 526). This further supports Bryman's argument that gender is not an external reality that acts on, or constrains people, it can be taken to be an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman, 200: 18).

As Judith Butler states that the body is a historical situation that comes to bear cultural meanings, this means that the multiple-partnerships trend in Giyani is an act that has been embodied in the name of history and culture, hence the justification that "It is our culture" and "Our grandfathers had many wives... let us continue the legacy". Basically this multiple-partnerships identity is an embodiment of a believed "culture" and historical situations. Also it is not a merely individual choice, and neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual. It appears to be a collective youth choice, engaged in because they want to, and they believe it carries historical significance.

The literature review that follows looks at how the topics of multiple partnerships and masculinity have been explored by other scholars, recognises the gap in the literature, and considers how this research will possibly fill that gap and add to the existing knowledge about youth masculinity and multiple partnerships.

Chapter three details the methodology used for the study and the reasons that informed the choice.

Chapter four looks at the conceptions of multiple-partnerships in the historical period from oral history interviews with the older generation participants. The chapter reveals how establishing a household was central to being considered a “real man” in the past, historical reasons for engagement in multiple-partnerships, and how the migrant system also contributed to the phenomenon of multiple partnerships and considers Christianity’s role in past decline of multiple partnerships.

Chapter five looks at multiple-partnerships in present day Giyani, and what essentially informs them. The chapter also considers how younger people are living up/down to the expectations of the older generation and the generational conflict that arises as a result.

Chapter six explores the spectacle of the festive season, how young men and women prepare for this time of the year and the extent they go to in order to appear relevant. It further explores how relationships develop and are negotiated during this time.

Chapter seven explores how young men and women perform the idea of purity to set themselves apart from the sinful youth who practice multiple partnerships. It further explores how youth sexuality in Giyani is influenced by religion, particularly Christianity.

Chapter 8 is a conclusion of the thesis and offers the overall argument.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In many societies today, like for example in Giyani, construction of “real men” is cemented by reference to ‘culture’ and history (Gilbert, Selikow & Walker, 2010: 76). Consequently, it is in this regard that engaging in multiple-partnerships and drawing on ‘culture’ to justify such behaviour is tolerated and considered typical of men, and atypical of women. This section draws out themes relevant to my investigation of the shifts in significance of having multiple-partnerships in relationship to masculinity. It begins with a discussion of how multiple partnerships and masculinities have been studied recently, with specific focus to HIV/AIDS studies, to theories that seek to explain multiple-partnerships in the colonial as well as the apartheid period. The literature review then moves to theories that explain multiple-partnerships today and the motivations behind them.

2.1 How HIV/AIDS Studies Approach the Subject of Multiple-Partnerships

Tibesigwa and Visser (2014) state that sexual transmission of HIV remains the key most mode of transmission in sub-Saharan Africa, and multiple sex partners have been shown to be central to the rapid spread of the epidemic. It is therefore problematic, they state, that sexual risk-taking, in terms of multiple sex partners, persists in spite of HIV awareness and knowledge (Tibesigwa & Visser, 2014: 01). They assert that “HIV/AIDS statistics show that 80% of new infections occurred through sexual intercourse and epidemiological research suggests that having multiple and concurrent sexual partners significantly increases the risk of transmitting the virus” (Tibesigwa & Visser, 2014: 01).

The presence of social norms, whereby masculinity is associated with having many sexual partners and having concurrent sexual partnerships, as well as the social pressure to conform with these norms – either motivated by the aspiration to build or maintain relationships, to be accepted, for esteem, prestige or even popularity – are significant driving forces behind sexual risk-taking that is persistent in the region (Tibesigwa & Visser, 2014: 02). According to Tibesigwa and Visser, this suggests that social norms that support and maintain multiple partnerships may constitute important obstacles for South Africa to achieve its ‘Zero infection’ vision. South Africa’s young adults are the ones that are most vulnerable to new HIV infections and risky sexual behaviours has been recognised as the main ingredients (Tibesigwa & Visser,

2014: 02). Risk-taking is not a term I simply subscribe to because there proves to be more to multiple-partnerships such as proving that one is a “real man” and falls amongst the hegemonic masculinity construct, than the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Risk-taking is however a term which takes part in the HIV/AIDS studies approach to the subject of multiple-partnerships. Risk-taking is thus linked to the bias of many scholars of the HIV/AIDS approach. For the purpose of this research, the approach is included as I believe it sheds knowledge to some extent about multiple-partnerships.

Surprisingly, Tibesigwa and Visser (2014) found that youth conform to social pressure even in cases where the prevailing social norms clash with personal norms. They state that this is because while conformity to the norm is either met by appraisal or just acceptance, not conforming to the norm is usually associated with some social sanction. Hence, to avoid social sanctions individuals may engage in seemingly irrational behaviour by following the prevailing social norms, which then increases the risk of HIV/AIDS infection (Tiesigwa & Visser, 2014: 04). Their study also revealed that the practice of multiple-partnerships is characterized by the desire and expectation of unprotected sex, and failure to conform may lead to rejection by one’s peers. This is the reason why students in their study chose to have unprotected intercourse over discussing condom use and HIV prevention with their sex partners (Tiesigwa & Visser, 2014: 04).

Another less discussed factor into the multiple partnerships and HIV/Aids discussion is that of cultural norms regarding circumcision. As Gilbert and Selikow state, “in many African cultures, many men’s perception of manhood posits men as superior and often justifies their refusal to use condoms, as they feel condom use diminishes their sexuality and their view of themselves as men” (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 228). Once circumcised, especially the “traditional” way in a traditional setting, for example the mountain, many men insist on flesh to flesh sex with the perception that because they went for “traditional” circumcision, they are protected from diseases. The trick is said to lie in the herbs which they use during traditional circumcision which protect men from HIV/AIDS (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 228).

Gilbert and Selikow’s (2011) article also charts numerous material factors contributing to multiple-partnerships in present day, which in turn lead to HIV/AIDS. They pay attention to rising unemployment and the social inequalities that leave some groups, especially poor women, extremely vulnerable (2011: 328). Poor access to education, combined with low rates of employment, result in economic inequalities leading to inadequate access to basic resources,

such as housing, healthcare, social welfare services as well as HIV-prevention information (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 328). Circumstances that are a reality in Giyani based on my insider knowledge. This socioeconomic disadvantage, Gilbert and Selikow state, has been found to be associated with a variety of unsafe sexual behaviours and experiences, especially for females.

To deal with their socioeconomic circumstances, young girls often engage in what Gilbert and Selikow (2011) term transactional sex which has been highlighted as one of the key drivers of HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa. Transactional sex is defined as a relationship in which sex is exchanged for gifts and money (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 329). Transactional sex involves an ongoing relationship between two people and the best example of this kind of a relationship would be someone in a relationship refusing to have sex until they get what they want (which can be money or material things), or someone offering financial assistance provided the relationship involves sex. In instances where women have little access to resources, often their only way to obtaining those resources and making a living is through having multiple partnerships and transactional sex (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 329). Transactional sex has also given rise to a vocabulary that describes men as ‘ministers’ of transport, fashion, education and the like. Depending on what services the men can provide. In instances where women lack financial resources, Gilbert and Selikow (2011:392) state that it becomes even more difficult to negotiate condom use because of the fear of being rejected.

Gilbert and Selikow, like Tibesigwa and Visser, also recognize the social construction of masculinity where ‘real men’ are constructed as having sexual prowess which is made visible by having multiple partners (2011: 329) as the leading factor to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Equally, perceptions of insufficient male sexual experience can lead to stigma both within a male’s peer group and among women. Surprisingly, Gilbert and Selikow do not present women as victims of a culture that endorses multiple-partnerships, however state that young women accept the male norm of multiple-partnerships as they may not expect to be the only sexual partner in relationships.

Similarly to transactional sex relationships, the term blesser has recently surfaced to explain another kind of relationship involving monetary or material benefits where a man or a woman “blesses” their partners with money and sponsors their expensive lifestyle. Blessers buy their girlfriends/boyfriends expensive cell phones, pay their rent every month, give them a monthly allowance of thousands of rands per month, and take them to glamorous trips overseas such as Dubai (Makhoba, 2016: na). There are levels that identify blessers based on what they can

afford. Some blessers can only manage to buy airtime and take their partners to restaurants now and again. These are classified as level one blessers. Some blessers can manage to pay rent for their partners, take them shopping and to expensive restaurants, and give them a monthly allowance. These are classified level two blessers. Those that can afford all of the above mentioned and take their partners to glamorous trips overseas are classified as level three blessers (Makhoba, 2016: na). Some blessers are married, and have girlfriends/boyfriends on the side that they bless, others are single with “a lot of money to throw around and cannot settle for one steady girlfriend”. With social media influence such as facebook and instagram where people show off their lavish lifestyles, girls and young men feel the pressure to fit in with their peers and opt for “blessers/blessees” relationships. Since blessers offer material support for these young girls and young men, it is common for one to accept that they may not be the only partner and the blesser may be sleeping with multiple others. And like the anonymous man interviewed by Makhoba (2016) stated, blesses do whatever they are asked for money and that is what makes them interesting”, supporting Gilbert and Selikow (2011:392) statement that in instances where women lack financial resources, it becomes even more difficult to negotiate condom use because of fear of rejection, and thus leading to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

Although I recognize the contribution of HIV/AIDS studies in explaining multiple partnerships and their consequences, namely how they contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, I argue that they do not study multiple partnerships in entirety. Multiple-partnerships are only studied in relation to HIV/AIDS and how they contribute to the spread of the epidemic, leaving out certain important contributions which this research will address. What is also problematic is that these studies reduce multiple-partnerships to the idea that they are the driving forces of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, and with that immediately consider them as negative and pathological. With most studies like the ones cited above, only certain aspects like social pressure, conformity, economic factors, and dissatisfaction in relationships are discussed. In instances where culture, polygamy and social norms are mentioned, they are mentioned as references and how they impact people’s decisions to engage in multiple-partnerships. History of such practice that “promotes” multiple partnerships and how it came about is not always considered. My thesis thus points to the necessity to locate contemporary multiple-partnerships trend within the context of historical and cultural processes. As Delius and Glaser (2004: 113) state, a more plausible starting point for the discussion of sexual behaviour is the recognition that there are long traditions of multi-partnership sexuality in this country that need to be acknowledged and accepted in their own right. A study of historically

entrenched practices like polygamy for example, can be useful in understanding contemporary multiple partnerships. I want to make clear however that my seeking of understanding the history of polygamy is not there to validate or discredit the efforts of young men to legitimise their multiple-partnerships. Instead I think such popular version of history making stand in an interesting tension to the scholarly efforts of history making – a tension which needs to take into account especially the socio-economic aspects in which such popular history making is embedded.

2.2. Genealogy of Multiple-partnerships

In their article *The Myths of polygamy: A History of Extra-Marital and Multiple-Partnerships Sex in South Africa*, Delius and Glazer (2004) draw heavily on the writing of missionaries, administrators and anthropologists. They argue that even though their studies have their cultural biases and political agendas, the value of their written observations should not be ignored nor underestimated (2004: 85). Delius and Glazer's article attempts to develop some historical sense of the forms extramarital sexual practices took, and how they changed through time. They state that throughout the twentieth century, most observers of black sexuality in South Africa, from anthropologists to welfare workers and Christian activists, have assumed a close connection between the tradition of polygamy and contemporary male 'promiscuity'. It was assumed that polygamy created an expectation of multiple sexual partnerships for men (2004: 84). Delius and Glaser however refute these assumptions as well as the invocation of tradition to justify, or normalise, contemporary multipartnership sexual practice, and term them "simplistic" (2004: 84).

Delius and Glaser explain that adolescent sexuality was somewhat acknowledged in African societies and techniques such as limited intercourse were implemented so as to allow its expression while at the same time minimising its socially destructive dimensions. These options were to some degree also open to young men but there were important boundaries that they had to abide by. In societies which practised initiation there were strong prohibitions on sexual relationships between youths who had been initiated and uninitiated girls. Amongst the Pedi, for example, any man found at fault of defying this prohibition faced serious fines (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 87). In pre-colonial communities, Delius and Glaser state that the recognition given to adolescent sexuality meant that marriage was not regarded as the only legitimate context for sexual expression. Sexuality, even in ideal terms, "was not seen as entirely contained in, or catered for, by marriage" (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). In this regard, marriage was not mainly concerned with legalising the sexual relations between two individuals but with

establishing paternity and rights to children and establishing a co-operative social unit (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89).

Delius and Glaser reference Alberti's report in 1807 to explain that among the Xhosa adultery is only committed by the woman, the man is not restricted in this respect. It is common to say "the man is made for all women, the woman only for her husband" (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). This does not, of course, as Delius and Glaser affirm, mean that adultery was without important risks. Individuals caught in the act risked a brutal beating and worse from the deceived husband. "Disputes were settled by means of fines of four or five head of cattle, some of which went to the aggrieved party as compensation" (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 91). In South Africa as Delius and Glaser state, a striking exception to this picture of a relatively relaxed attitude to adultery is provided by accounts of Zulu society. "Old records on the Zulu affirm that they were a "moral" people among whom divorce, adultery and illegitimacy were rare. It is said by Delius and Glaser that among the Zulu adultery was severely punished with death, or flogging with thorny branches, or cacti were thrust into the women's vagina" (2004: 92-93). In matters relating to intimacy, married women were expected to remain monogamous (2004: 92-93). It is worth mentioning that the presence of fines and punishment should not however be taken to mean that adultery was less common amongst the Zulu (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 92-93).

Delius and Glaser also recognize the role played by the migrant labour system to be a central part which aided in destabilizing family life and encouraging sexual promiscuity (2004: 95). In the nineteenth and early twentieth century they state, the resources that migrants acquired ensured that they became less dependent on senior male kin for bride wealth. This means that it became easier for young men to marry and that the number of aging bachelors may have been reduced in some communities (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 95). By relatively the same time however, Delius and Glaser (2004) state that it became increasingly common for long-term migrants to abandon their commitments to rural homes. Their explanation for that is that urban expenses might simply have made it not possible to send enough money; or they might have embraced the freedom of town life and purposely escaped the burdens and responsibilities of their rural homes (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 105). Most informed sources reported that adultery was on the increase especially on the part of women as a result of labour migration because often husbands would stay away for so long from the reserve that their wives could no longer control their sexual desire, and thus search for lovers. Men would come back to find that their wives gave birth to one or more children during their absence (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 95).

A striking feature of many rural communities in these decades as reported by Delius and Glaser was the growth of what is termed “concubinage” — a “long-term relationship between a man and a woman, which was not recognised as a legal marriage” (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 97-98). This reality was partly shaped by the incapability of a lot of migrants to acquire enough resources to marry in the context of stagnant wages and, in some areas inflating levels of bride wealth. (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 97-98). For example, Delius and Glaser state that in the 1920s and 1930s bride wealth in Basotholand had become too costly for the average young man. This led to a common, and largely accepted, practice of ‘elopement’ or ‘seduction’, which allowed a marriage to commence without the full *lobola* payment (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 97-98).

In town the situation was not any better. Because of the low income migrant workers received, this includes men and women, some of them were unable to rent or secure a place to stay. This led to an increase in marriages of convenience, what became known as ‘vat en sit’ marriages “where two people who had only recently met, sometimes merely friends, established a civil union in order to get access to municipal housing” (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 107). These marriages were materially convenient for both parties but were often based on very shaky emotional grounds. Men were pleased to be able to marry with little expense or commitment, while gaining the benefits of a house and housekeeper. Women gained themselves a house, a certain amount of protection and an important foothold in town (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 107).

Christianity as Delius and Glaser (2014) assert, with its stress on monogamy, sexuality expressed only within marriage and its strong condemnation of adultery and sex before, or outside of, marriage, offered a powerful counterpoint. Most churches were clear in their view that both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity was forbidden. But Christian communities were to the most part ineffective in controlling pre-marital sexual activity (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 101-102). In fact, as stated by Delius and Glaser, there was a great deal of prestige attached to paternity and multiple sexual partners. As is common to most forms of masculinity, the ‘playboy’ (*isoka* in Zulu) image was a positive one. “In both Zulu and Xhosa rural traditions young men who ‘played the field’, who were sexually vigorous and known to be good lovers, were much admired in their peer group” (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 111). Even among the older generation as Delius and Glaser observed, they were regarded as respectable, and sought after as future husbands, as long as they did not get a girl pregnant. It seem like there was a great deal of emphasis placed on refraining from getting a girl pregnant than

multiple partnerships themselves. On the other end of the spectrum, men who were unlucky or unpopular with women were derided as “sissies” (Delius & Glazer, 2004: 111).

Mark Hunter (2005) presents a similar argument. Arguing against dominant conceptions of African masculinity as being innate or static, Hunter (2005: 389) charts the rise and fall of the *isoka*, the Zulu man with multiple-sexual partners over the last century, showing how the *isoka* developed through changing conditions occasioned by capitalism, migrant labour and Christianity. He states that “colonial rule and capitalist penetration significantly altered paths to manhood and reworked the meanings and practices surrounding multiple partners” (Hunter, 2005: 391). Men did not enjoy unlimited freedom. An unmarried man who played with multiple-girls whom he wouldn’t or couldn’t marry was criticised and referred to as being *isokalamanyala* (literally a dirty man) (Hunter, 2005: 391). Men with integrity were expected to marry, establish an independent household, and oversee the enlargement of their domestic unit through childbirth. The focus for isiZulu speakers was mainly the homestead. “The physical and symbolical centre of this institution was the cattle kraal” (Hunter, 2005: 392). From conversations I had with elders during the course of the year 2016, this was the case in Giyani. Tsonga people were forcefully relocated and allocated land within the borders of Gazankulu. Men’s sole focus at that point became building an independent homestead for themselves. However, based on my search of literature on Tsonga people, specifically on this subject matter, it appears no one has written about it in this way.

Hunter asserts that extra-marital affairs by both genders appear to have been quite well accepted in some cultures of southern Africa well before the onset of migrant labour. In the 1930s, Mark Hunter (2005: 392) reports that “unmarried women could enjoy limited sexual relations with more than one boyfriend”. Different from what Delius and Glaser report among the Xhosa where adultery was considered to be committed only by women and men not restricted in this respect. In contrast, by the 1940s and 1950s, very much in contrast to future attitudes, Hunter’s records also indicate a certain level of acceptance around women having more than one partner, although it is true that those overstepping the mark could be branded as being *izifebe* (loose woman) (Hunter, 2005: 392).

By the late 1950s most rural areas had become dependent on migrant labour. Drawn first to the diamond and gold mines in the late-nineteenth century, “men increasingly found work in the twentieth century in the mushrooming industries of large towns such as Johannesburg and Durban” (Hunter, 2005: 393). Wage labour gave young men new powers, and they could now

assume the position of a breadwinner. The accepted thinking on multiple-sexual partners in the 1940s/50s changed significantly from the nineteenth century because of this. Only men were then allowed to have multiple partners. Instead of being dependent on their fathers for bride wealth, young migrant workers, now able to save ilobolo (bridewealth) themselves, were in a strong position to demand that their girlfriends refrain from having secondary partners. This did not work out as smoothly as they had hoped. The harsh reality of migrant labour also meant that, although women's sexuality was jealously guarded in some circumstances, a number of women did have extra-marital affairs with a certain level of implicit approval from their husbands and boyfriends (Hunter, 2005: 394).

Like Delius and Glaser (2004), Hunter (2005) asserts that Christianity sanctioned a single, monogamous, moral code that was endorsed by Christians/believers. Hunter (2005) states that various groups of people drew on Christianity and the notion of "the pure body", and "the body being the temple of God" to forbid extra marital affairs by both men and women, but more especially women since the colonial state looked towards customary law to solidify patriarchal traditions (Hunter, 2005: 39). But this only worked on those who had adopted Christian religion. To limit women from having multiple partnerships elder women were assigned to periodically test Girl's virginity. Women who did not conform to these set of rules were labelled "isifebe", meaning a loose girl, and hence not marriage material. Christian Africans played a significant role in re-asserting traditions that could stem women's revolt. As Hunter (2005) states, "The apparent new tradition that limited women, particularly the unmarried, to only one boyfriend seems to have emerged out of this subtle blend of Zulu and Christian values" (Hunter, 2005: 394). In addition, "evidence from court cases, oral testimonies collected by the colonial official and historian James Stuart at the turn of the twentieth century, and early ethnographies, all suggest that the way sex was practiced was also subject to historical change" (Hunter, 2005: 392). Non-penetrative forms of sex (or thigh sex) were widely practiced among unmarried persons, thus avoiding risky sexual practices by the youth (Hunter, 2005: 392). As years progressed, and men gained some sort of economic independence from their fathers, due to the migrant labour system, penetrative sex as opposed to thigh sex had become a mark of manliness that celebrated multiple-sexual conquests. Not only could men have partners back home that they could visit periodically, but they found girlfriends in the cities and lived with them in the hostels.

Mark Hunter's article clearly shows how multiple-partners were the subject of ongoing change and contestation. Tradition, rather than being simply passed down or lost, faced intense

contestation at every historical turn. The notions of multiple partnerships clearly developed through changing conditions occasioned by capitalism, migrant labour and Christianity (2005: 389).

The article by Delius and Glaser (2004) and Hunter's (2005) article both recognize the influence of Christianity, migrant labour, and inflating levels of bride wealth as having contributed to extra-marital affairs and multiple-partnerships. What the articles reveal is that a great deal of past relationships was all about adultery, not about explicit polygamy.

Most of what we come to refer as African culture, our customs, values, that we often draw on to justify our behaviour, like the conversations cited at the beginning, is really invented tradition, through contact with European as well as British settlers, which resulted in indirect rule (Ranger, 1983: 252). Indirect rule was a British concept created to manage Africans under the administrative rule rather than to emancipate them (Khonou, 2009: 83). Traditional authorities were recognized and shaped by colonial governments to suit, adopt and promote the objectives and aims of their colonial strategies and missions (Khonou, 2009: 83). The foundation of apartheid was premised on the formation of artificial black nations or homelands. These homelands were created on the basis of the language and culture of a particular ethnic group. "The traditional authorities in these 'artificial' states became no longer accountable to their communities but to the entire political hegemony of apartheid (Khonou, 2009: 81). Through indirect rule, like Ranger documents, the mission was, to 'pick out what is best from (European culture) and dilute it with what Africans hold' to build up the ideas and structures of 'tribal' tradition' (Ranger, 1983:252). These invented traditions of African societies distorted the past but became in themselves realities (Ranger, 1983: 252). So what then is claimed as culture and tradition for not only Tsonga people, but Africans as a whole? Is there really a pure African culture which determines how sexual relationships and partnerships are being committed? And yet, however constructed the concept of 'culture' is, it keeps on playing a role in how people speak about why they do what they do. This thus reveals that however constructed something is, it can still have huge subjective significance. It can become embodied and existential for people. Ideas about masculinity also become an embodiment of a constructed reality.

"Masculinity is defined as a collective gender identity and not a natural attribute. It is socially constructed and fluid. There is no one universal masculinity, but many masculinities" (Morrell, 1998: 607). These are 'not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in

particular situations in a changing structure of relationships. The contours of these masculinities also change over time, being affected by changes elsewhere in society and at the same time, themselves affecting society itself' (Morrell, 1998: 607).

During the *mfecane* (the devastating inter-tribal wars in the interior of Southern Africa during the first half of the 19th century), the Tsonga clan was subjugated by the Zulu military leader, Soshangana (Buis, 2011: 17). Thus, similarly to Hunter's (2005: 392) report on Zulu society emerging from a period of military warfare, Tsonga society, although not documented by many scholars, also emerged from a period of warfare, the clan subjugated by the Zulu military leader, Soshangana (Buis, 2011: 33). Bravery and fighting skills thus became significant characteristics associated with manliness. Hunter (2005: 392) further reports that big men accumulated many cattle, had several girlfriends, and thus built a successful homestead. The more girlfriends a man had the more labour he was able to control and the richer and more esteemed he became. Cattle herding was a major male activity. During this period of warfare, cattle, representing wealth and power, had a high symbolic value and constituted the major part of the bride price (Silberschmidt, 2001: 660).

Morrell stresses the other side of the coin of migrant labour. Besides actually gaining financial independence, migrant labour exposed African man to highly humiliating and emasculating influence of white domination. During the migrant labour system in the 1950's, black masculinity was mostly defined by working and living in the city. The new masculinity incorporated work as a central feature of its identity (Morrell, 2001: 625). Colonialists then became obsessed with African working men for years, and legislated what they would earn and where they might reside. "Beneath the rhetoric of social control, these were attempts to create an African masculinity that mirrored a flattering vision of the official's own maleness" (Morrell, 2001: 612). "European imperialism, global capitalism under US hegemony and modern communications have brought all cultures into contact and obliterated many" (Morrell, 2001: 612).

Whereas other theorists argue the impact of colonialism as having changed gender relations and the idea of masculinity for Africans, Morrell states that new research which highlights cultural (rather than political or economic) contestation, finds that the colonised were not powerless nor did the coloniser operate exclusively on his or her own terms. They formed new masculinities, their own masculinities to deal with the harsh treatments by white settlers (Morrell, 1998: 619). So where then do we situate invented traditions? Are they invented

traditions in that indigenous culture was swept away by European and British settler's culture? Or are they invented traditions because black people changed their own forms of masculinity to deal with their then inferior status to white males? As much as this is the argument, my thesis argues that it is invented tradition in the sense that alterations to indigenous masculinity only took place through contact with white settlers, so to assert their manliness; men took it upon themselves to make women their subjects. The invented traditions of African societies, whether invented by the Europeans or African's themselves in response, distorted the past and became in themselves reality (Ranger, 1983: 215).

2.3. Masculinity at Crisis

'Men behaving differently' focuses on changing concepts of masculinity in a period marked by rapid social transition (Reid & Walker, 2005: 02). Authors in this collection reflect on masculinities of the past, and how they are refracted into the present and mediated through new possibilities opened up by democratization (Reid & Walker, 2005: 02). Reid states that in South African context, scholars have pointed to the influence of colonialism and apartheid on men and the study of masculinity. Like Morrell, Reid asserts that masculine identities were also constructed through opposition to apartheid—legitimated as a necessary response to the apartheid government.

Reid realizes that although gender transitions occur at the level of the social, the locus of change rests with the individual. Without the individual's willingness to change, change will not happen. Failure to fulfil masculine ideals (socially and economically constructed) can be played out at a personal level, resulting in crisis of masculinity — “moral panics about men and boys” (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). Men have found it very difficult to assert their manhood through traditional avenues and women's advances and achievement became the scapegoat for popular understandings of ‘masculinity in crisis’. In this context, Reid states that alternative means of achieving manhood, such as violence and having multiple-sexual-partners, take an exaggerated significance (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). Here it is not the colonial other, but the female other which poses the threat.

In similar vein, Liz Walker (2005) argues that the transition in gender/power relations embodied in the constitution have exacerbated a crisis of masculinity. While ‘constitutional sexuality’ seems to have shut some doors for men, by shrinking the ‘patriarchal dividend’, at least at the level of legislation, it has simultaneously opened up spaces and created opportunities for men to construct new masculinities (Walker, 2005: 161). “Situating South

Africa's 'crisis of masculinity', Walker states that such a crisis has its roots in a number of social phenomena, namely the collapse of traditional men's work, and the rise of feminist consciousness" to name a few (Walker, 2005: 162). Walker further states that because men's sense of selfhood has been destabilized, and their ideas of what a "real man" is has been changed, they are making sense of this in the context of competing masculinities, both old and new (2005: 179). Expectations men have of themselves, each other and women, are contested and in crisis, giving rise to new notions of manhood (2005: 180).

Presenting a similar argument more explicitly is Silberschmidt's. Silberschmidt's (2001) article illuminates underlying and so far overlooked factors which contribute to an understanding of how socio-economic change has affected men, and eventually their sexual behaviour. With unemployment and problems fulfilling social roles, male identity and self-esteem have become increasingly linked to sexuality and sexual manifestation. Multiple-partnerships have thus become essential for masculinity and self-esteem (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 657). "Before British colonial rule, the division of labour was clear. Women were the food producers and men were warriors defending their territories from attacks and hunters" (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 660). In the 1940's and 1950's a new situation emerged. Land was dispossessed from many African Farmers, and women were no longer able to feed their families. This meant the survival of the household depended on men's financial aid. Thus, men got new social roles—that of a breadwinner. But most men could not fulfil this role and the expectations linked to it, even those who became victims of the migrant labour system. Life in town was expensive, and salaries were low. The urban minimum wage only provided essentials for single men. Consequently, allowances from husbands were often irregular or non-existent. As Silberschmidt's argue, this resulted in a pattern of absent migrant—tax paying men with more responsibility towards the state than their families. (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 661).

Land dispossessions and the disappearance of cattle camps had a very negative effect on men also, and the payment of cattle as bride price. Some men even resorted to paying bride price in "instalments". In cases where the bride price could not be paid, couples who have been living together for two years were registered as "married" by local authorities, although a proper marriage was that which a bride price had been paid (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 663). With an increasing number of men unable to provide bride price, marriage was increasingly substituted by temporary "unions" as shown above in the article by Delius and Glaser. Marriage no longer provided a life-long security for women, and male control over women began to weaken (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 661). Traditionally, poor men were despised, while rich men were

admired. This remains the case today. This trend had fundamental consequences for the relations between genders. More and more women took command of the household, and men's position as head of the household became increasingly challenged (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 662). Thus, although Silberschmidt (2001) like Hunter (2005) considers the colonial period as having contributed to the multiple-partnerships trend, Silberschmidt's central argument is that today's "sexual networking" and multiple-partnerships are not the result of some traditional "permissiveness", but they are the result of a breakdown of traditional norms and regulations surrounding sexual behaviour and this approach is what my research subscribes to, and aims to argue. Multiple-partnerships seem to be the tool to acquire self-esteem, a tool of domination and control over women as well as a legitimate way of manifesting masculinity; a sentiment also shared by Hunter (2005: 389). The high value placed on men seeking multiple-partners increasingly filled the void left by men's inability to become men through previous means. If you cannot be a successful winner, you can be a successful seducer (Silberschmidt's, 2001: 667-668). My research on multiple-partnerships and masculinity thus seeks to understand how history is manipulated in present day by making reference to past situations to justify the new form of masculinity and the multiple-partnerships trend. And in order to grasp the full context, such shifts in notions of masculinity have to be considered.

The crisis in masculinity as discussed by Reid and Walker as well as Silberschmidt is even more acute now. Today, two forces threaten South African men's path to the historically esteemed head of household status: the difficulty that men face in marrying (paying lobola) and setting up an independent household, and more educated women gaining new work opportunities, and thus their independence from men (Hunter, 2005: 396). Though some men have taken advantage of the post-apartheid de-racialization of schooling and employment, for the great majority of men the prospects of steady work are very slim, and this proves to be the case in Giyani (Hunter, 2005: 396). Since the payment of ilobolo (bride price) is so heavily dependent on a man's employment, weddings in many South African communities are infrequent events today. Wedlock continues to remain outside the scope of most young men's financial capacity. (Hunter, 2005:396). This is the context in which marriage becomes not only undesirable but unnecessary from the perspective of men (Hunter, 2005: 396). These young men, given their economic circumstances, no longer work towards building an independent household for themselves to affirm their manliness. Having multiple-partnerships thus serves to assert their control over women and their "superior" status. History is then invented to justify the new phenomenon.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at literature relating to explanations of multiple partnerships. The chapter considers how HIV/AIDS studies approach the study of multiple partnerships. I argue that although HIV/AIDS studies contribute to the understanding of the occurrence of multiple partnerships. They do not study multiple partnerships in entirety. What is also problematic is that these studies reduce multiple-partnerships to the idea that they are the driving forces of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. The chapter then explores the genealogy of multiple partnerships in South Africa, and how the construction of masculinity has changed over the years from being centrally concerned with building a homestead, to celebrating promiscuity and having multiple partners. The change, it is argued, came about as a result of changing economic circumstances for South African men. The reality results in what is called masculinity at crisis. Which sees the invention of tradition to deal with present realities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This section describes and justifies the research design selected for this research. Ethical considerations pertaining to my research are also discussed and accounted for in a different heading.

The study area for this research was Giyani, which means ‘place of dancing’ in Xitsonga. Giyani is a small town situated in the north-eastern part of the Limpopo Province of South Africa and was established in 1969. The town lies on the northern bank of the Klein Letaba River and to the west of the Kruger National Park. When Gazankulu became a self-governing homeland assigned by the apartheid government in 1973, Giyani became the official capital of Gazankulu and was designated a homeland for those classified by the *Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act 26 of 1970*, as Tsonga- Shangaan. The Tsonga-Shangaan were forcefully relocated and allocated land within the borders of Gazankulu.

Giyani, like other parts of South Africa was affected by white rule. People’s lives were altered significantly. There is an overload of research on some of South Africa’s ethnic groups like the Zulu, Xhosa and Basotho, and other ethnic groups like Tsonga people are ignored. Thus, Giyani was chosen as my research area so as to document the lives and experiences of Tsonga people that have by and large been neglected by scholarly investigation. The research will open Giyani’s history to other people, including, significantly, those whose lives the research is about.

I have used qualitative-ethnographic research method for my study. This research method entails semi-structured interviews as the primary methodological approach to my research, focus group interviews and participant observation. I have chosen this method because of its strength in revealing the hidden. The method allows for hyper-exposure of interaction of peers in performance. Questionnaires will not have been able to cover performance as it is acted up. I hung-out in a local braai and chill area called man’ombe as a non-participant observer to identify potential male participants for my study. Man’ombe is frequented by local young men and women of eighteen years and above, employed and unemployed. I was particularly on the lookout for popular young men (those girls gather around) and also for young men trying to “score” with girls. I approached and asked them to be participants for my study. Upon agreeing,

I asked for twenty potential male participants to exchange contact details with me to set up a meeting in a place and time that suits them. I also relied on snowballing sampling technique to ask male participants from the local braai and chill area to direct me to other participants they thought would be helpful for my study.

I also volunteered at a local youth centre for girls. The youth centre focuses mainly on recreational activities such as netball, and there are girl's meetings conducted every Wednesday where contemporary youth issues are discussed. I became some kind of member of the meetings so as to spend quality time with the participants. I also asked to have my own focus group and interviews with twenty girls to discuss matters relating to my research. As much as I was "participating," my role as a researcher, research interest and topic was clearly communicated before the meetings commenced. I have chosen to include girls in my study and not just focus on young men because I believe they are active actors in this multiple-partnership trend. Masculinity is always constructed as a relation, not as an isolated occurrence. Having their point of view on this matter will prove beneficial. Twenty male and twenty female participants are included in the research. Upon finding a few participants, I also relied on snowball sampling for other potential participants.

Mark Hunter (2005) combined ethnographic, archival and secondary sources in researching multiple partnerships and masculinities in historical perspective in Kwa-Zulu Natal. His data collection methods also featured life histories of informants with special emphasis on relationships. Similarly, I have conducted oral history interviews on multiple-partnerships and masculinity with older generations.

In order to distinguish between the invented history of my participants and the history of masculinity from the older generation, young men were asked to recount what they think is the history of multiple-partnerships and masculinity, which was then cross referenced with the historical data I gathered from oral interviews with older generation. Special attention was paid to these reconstructions of history.

All interviews were conducted in my home language, Xitsonga, and I took it upon myself to translate to English, hoping meaning was lost in translation.

Ethical appraisal

To ensure the protection of my participants, before the interviews commenced, participants were fully informed of what the research is about and what it entails. Informed consent was

thus treated as a fundamental so as to ensure that participants did not feel coerced to participate. Protection of privacy, the right not to answer questions they are not comfortable with, as well as the right to withdraw participation at any point of the interview or focus groups was communicated to the participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were also stressed so that participants felt completely comfortable to disclose information that would be useful for the success of my research. I also stressed the fact that I would not disclose information that they did not want me to disclose. Since Giyani section A is a small location, I have used pseudonyms and tried to be less descriptive of my participants in order to protect them from identifiable data and potential consequences, for example embarrassment, distress, their partners finding out that they are not faithful, which may then result in a break up, and ruin participants' social status and standing. At the end of each and every interview, as well as focus groups, I communicated my notes as well as my understanding with my interlocutors to ensure that they are best represented in my final thesis, and the information that they communicated is true and accurate. It is my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that participants are in no way harmed emotionally as a result of their participation in the research study, thus extra caution in terms of phrasing my questions to avoid humiliation was taken. I understand that gift giving is a typical aspect of many cultures. Thus, it was stressed that the research is for academic purposes and to fulfil the requirements of the Wits University Masters in Anthropology programme, and will thus not result in any benefits. Verbal consent was thus attained from those who agreed to participate in the study.

Reflexivity and Positionality

My motivation to undertake this research topic was based on two chance conversations I had with a female friend of mine and a young man I know. I must admit that going into the field I had my own pre-conceived knowledge. Somehow I was convinced by the justification that multiple-partnerships are historically informed. Little did I know that my interviews and observations would reveal an invented tradition I had not considered nor thought about, and reveal societal factors such as poverty, lack of employment, and cultural factors as contributing to the recent trend of multiple partnerships in Giyani.

In conducting my research, I realized that being a female researcher might have limited the responses and the data obtained from the interviews. Male participants may not have been fully comfortable in opening up some aspects of their private life, and there are participants who will give you responses they think you want to hear which I fully recognise. Although I note that

a male researcher conducting the same research may have obtained more in-depth responses from the male participants, I believe that the responses I obtained also shed light into factors influencing multiple-partnerships in present day Giyani.

Also, being a female, and listening to daily experiences of female participants, mostly negative, and what influenced their engagement in multiple partnerships was difficult. I sympathized with them. And at times I felt like I could offer advice, or simply tell them that what they are doing is wrong. Many times I felt the need to “save” them but I had to constantly remind myself that saving them is not the reason I was doing this research. The feeling of sympathy I had towards the male participants was not the same as the feeling of sympathy I had towards the female participants, I figure this is because of the arrogance that was apparent in most of the male participant’s responses. To check whether what I had written and my analysis was not unfairly biased, I shared my thoughts and analysis with the participants to ensure I conveyed what they truly wanted to say.

Some female participants had expectations that were beyond my control. They would come up to me for relationship advice and guidance, or just to confide in me. At times I found the line between researcher and participant blurred, and I had to constantly re-align my position and my goals. Ethically, my involvement with the participants had to be limited.

Being a newlywed, pregnant and exploring this research topic also did not come easy. The time I was still doing my fieldwork I was also trying to settle into my new role, and a lot of the responses from both males and females sent me into depression mode. I second guessed my marriage. I was not prepared to go through what most young women go through in Giyani. I became paranoid. There I was in Giyani doing fieldwork while my partner is in Gauteng, out of sight. Could he share the same sentiments as the men I was interviewing I asked myself? After all he is also from Giyani. Could he have married me to own me, so that leaving him would be not just an individual decision but a family effort? What was so special about my relationship that it would be an exception to what I was discovering? That my relationship would possess all the positive qualities such as honesty, respect and commitment.

I also recognise that I privately had a very strong normative idea of what was to be a good relationship. As such I found myself not agreeing with most of what my participants were communicating to me. As such I felt like the way in which the participants chose to arrange their relationships was wrong.

It is without a doubt that the interviews with both male and female participants brought insight that I had not considered.

Time Frame

To plan for the research and ensuring its completion, the months of May, June, July, August, September, October 2016 were dedicated to writing up the research proposal, refining as well as revising it depending on new information I was still to come across and consider for the research. I recognised that new information would come to light and it was best to leave my research proposal as open as possible. Since one cannot anticipate what will emerge from fieldwork, it is important to try and cover all bases relating to the research topic. November 2016 to July 2017 I was in Giyani doing fieldwork and data collection for the research, this included identifying possible themes, transcribing and coding the data at the same time. August 2017 to February 2018 was dedicated to analysing and writing up the research report.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the research design and methodology followed for investigating the shift in significance of having multiple partnerships in relationship to masculinity then and now. I used qualitative ethnographic research method, consisting of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. A sample of twenty females and twenty males was selected using purposive as well as snowballing sampling. Ethical considerations were also accounted for. Lastly I reflected on my positionality as a researcher, and included the time frame for my research.

CHAPTER 4

Multiple Partnerships in Historical perspective

Mid December was the time I set out to start with my fieldwork in my home town Giyani. Travelling from Johannesburg to Giyani I was very excited. It was the festive season and I was going to spend time with my family. I was not so keen about conducting fieldwork for my research report though, partly because when I conducted fieldwork for my honours thesis, I was labelled as “that educated girl from Wits University who goes around asking people about their work and living conditions at home”. Again, a part of me wished I could just spend time with my family, catch up with them and not do school related activities.

It was warm when I left Johannesburg, but what better way to welcome anybody to Limpopo if not by the blazing hot weather? Passing Polokwane, I knew I was home. After driving those long hours, I finally saw the Welcome to Giyani sign, and drove past the famous Adolph Mhinga Bridge (over the Klein Letaba River), just a few kilometres from Kremetart, a gated suburb formerly for white people working in Gazankulu. After more than six hours on the road I was finally home.

A week after I had settled, I decided to start my interviews with older participants. This is because I wanted to conduct interviews with the youth around the 23rd of December. That is when the hype around festive season begins and endless youth functions are held. Of course I would have a lot of interviews in the coming months, but I thought to myself why not capitalise on December when *Magayisa* (Youth working outside Giyani) are around and spending money recklessly to prove to those that are stuck in Giyani that they have made it in life. By the time I got home my mother had already hooked me up with older generation participants I could have interviews with about my topic. They even came up with a topic for what I should research next.

This chapter looks at the oral history about multiple-partnerships from older generation and explores their conceptions of multiple-partnerships. In this chapter I argue that the idea of being a “real man” was centred around the household, being able to take care of one’s family and having children. not by having multiple partnerships. Further, I argue that in instances where people engaged in multiple partnerships, it was done in the context of perceived circumstances,

and as an alternative to difficult circumstances such as the inability to have children. I formulate my argument based on the data I received from my oral interviews with the older generation participants. I analyse older people's recollection of multiple partnerships in the past, and consider their similarities and differences to multiple partnerships in present day. The responses from the participants are influenced by a number of factors such as how traditional or religious one is, their economic status, level of education and political affiliation to name a few.

Many older residents of Giyani that I spoke to during the course of my fieldwork clearly recognized sexual promiscuity by youth in the present day and they believe it is amongst the drivers of HIV/AIDS in the community. They explained how marriage was a respectable practice and was expected of them in the past, not "very brief" relationships Giyani youth engage in today, which goes against Delius and Glaser's argument that adolescent sexuality was recognised within African societies and techniques such as limited intercourse existed to allow its expression while minimising its socially destructive dimensions (2004: 87), at least not in the Tsonga society. One of my participants was an elderly woman by the name of Mom'Sarah. Mom'Sarah is 65 years old and is one of the many residents that have lived in Giyani for a very long time. She used to be a teacher at a local primary school and has since retired and stays at home full time. She takes care of two of her female grandchildren. One who is twenty-seven years old, and the other who is sixteen years old. Her grandchildren have different parents. Mom'Sarah is not so much a church person. She does go to church every now and again as she has explained but she subscribes more to traditional practices than Christianity. She is not rich but lives comfortable, and she is a die-hard ANC Supporter. Mom'Sarah explained to me:

"In the past our parents expected marriage from us, not what these kids of today are doing. It is embarrassing. They have lost values and morals. They do not even fear cultural taboos".

In Delius and Glaser observations, the recognition given to adolescent sexuality meant that marriage was not regarded as the only legitimate context for sexual expression. Sexuality, even in ideal terms, was not seen as entirely contained in, or catered for, by marriage (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). Marriage was not mainly concerned with legalising the sexual relations between two individuals but with establishing paternity and rights to children and establishing a co-operative social unit (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). What Delius and Glaser observed in the past seems to be in direct opposition to Mom'Sarah's response. Circumstances could have

shifted resulting in the two opposing observations, or Delius and Glaser's article does not match what was happening in Tsonga society in the past. Mom'Sarah's comment leans more towards the cultural aspect of things, referencing cultural taboos. This could be because of her subscription to cultural practices.

Mom'Grace, looking somewhat uncomfortable about the topic when speaking to me told me that:

“In the past we took sexual relationships very seriously. One could not just have sex with anybody. We were taught that sex is not just a physical exchange for pleasure but a spiritual exchange as well because during intercourse people exchange fluids and in that sense every person you have intercourse with becomes a part of you for life. So imagine how many people you invite to be part of your life by thinking only for today and not thinking smart”.

Mom grace is 60 years old and she is a deeply rooted Christian. She explained to me that she goes to church almost every Sunday and believes nothing surpasses God's power. Like Mom Sarah, she has lived in Giyani for quite some time. Mom'Grace was a domestic worker and took her children to school with the little money that she earned. Now all her five kids are working and take care of her. According to her, Christianity has gotten her through the most difficult circumstances. And this sheds light into why her response was based on spirituality.

Asking her to elaborate on the spiritual part, she reiterated that during intercourse people do not just connect on the physical level but spiritual level as well. Seeing how uncomfortable the both of us were I decided to leave it at that. In African cultures, it is not always easy to have conversations like this with your elders. Young people are expected to figure it out for themselves. African parents mostly feel like discussing sexual intercourse with their children threatens respect between both parties, or may encourage the onset of sexual relationships. I think this is one of the reasons why many South African youths find themselves trapped in sexual multiple-partnerships. They are not taught about the consequences of multiple-partnerships from an early age. Lessons mostly come as judgement or condemnation for actions.

Mom'Gloria shared the same sentiments as mom'Sarah and mom'Grace, her explanation however leaned towards the religious aspect of things. Mom'Gloria is 60 years old and she is also a deeply rooted Christian. She also goes to church almost every Sunday. She has lived in Giyani for quite some time. Her children are now grown up and are church goers themselves. They also take part in church activities. Mom'Gloria has been married to her husband for 23

years and he is also a Christian. She does not subscribe to politics as she believes they deceive people and a lot of them are corrupt. In a nutshell, she does not like being part of anything that causes people suffering.

She explained that

“Sex was intended for a man and a woman, only when they are married. God created Adam and seeing that he was lonely, He caused a deep sleep to befall him. Out of his rib he created a woman to keep him company. Sex before marriage is a sin. One is supposed to save him/herself until marriage. Dating is not a problem, it only becomes a problem when you young kids (yes I was included in the mix) want to sleep with every person who promises you heaven and earth only to give you hell and diseases”

I could not help myself but laugh. That surely broke off the tension and anxiety that we both had. She continued: *“It’s like your heads just won’t turn to say no. The only answer you kids know is yes”*

She told me that for the longest time she did not have a companion and she did not have kids. That is the reason her children are very young. But that did not make her go around sleeping with anyone who proclaimed love for her.

“I waited” she said, *“and even though my husband has another wife, the first wife, we made sure we do things the right way, the dignified way. He paid lobola for me and I was handed over to him the right way, the cultural way”*. From her responses I could tell how much she values religion, culture, and marriage. She kept on emphasizing how she did things the right way.

Getting married and having children were ideal attributes of adulthood in Giyani. Men would even travel to other cities to find work so that they could establish households for themselves. As Hunter notes, during the migrant labour system in the 1950’s, black masculinity was mostly defined by working and living in the city (Hunter, 2005: 391). The new masculinity incorporated work as a central feature of its identity (Morrell, 2001: 625) and this was the case in Giyani. Being independent and finally leaving their fathers house was celebrated. I was told of the difference in prestige between a man who fails to marry, one who marries but still remain in his father’s yard, and one who marries and establishes a house for himself and his family far away from home. The latter was more respected. This is similar to Hunter’s observations amongst the Zulu speaking people. Hunter writes that men did not enjoy unlimited

freedom. An unmarried man who played with multiple-girls whom he wouldn't or couldn't marry was castigated as being isokalamanyala (literally a dirty man) (Hunter, 2005: 391). Men with integrity were expected to marry, establish an independent household, and oversee the enlargement of their domestic unit through childbirth. The focus for isiZulu speakers was the homestead and it seems so for Tsonga people in the past.

Working in cities and establishing a household did not stop men from having multiple partners in the past. Some men took pride in having multiple lovers and extra-marital affairs. In fact, Delius and Glaser recognize the role played by the migrant labour system to be a central part in destabilizing family life and encouraging sexual promiscuity (2004: 95). In similar vein, Hunter also notes that the harsh reality of migrant labour also meant that, although women's sexuality was jealously guarded in some circumstances, a number of women did have extra-marital affairs with a certain level of implicit approval from their husbands and boyfriends (Hunter, 2005: 394).

For some men, engaging in multiple partnerships was not the result of the migrant labour system. It was because of cultural norms and expectations that stipulate that a man cannot be satisfied by one woman, and thus practicing multiple partnerships was to make up for not fulfilling the ideal type of masculinity, and for others it was just for pleasure and satisfaction. As such, one elderly man, Bab'Mazibuko shared the same sentiment. Bab'Mazibuko is a 67 year old man and he is very traditional. He has not lived in Giyani all his life. He comes from Venda and relocated to Giyani in 1997. He is also a die-hard ANC fan. Bab'Mazibuko used to work as a mechanic and now receives government pension fund. Bab'Mazibuko is not rich nor poor but he lives comfortable with his wife who is also a pensioner. He explained to me that:

“Celibacy and being single were perceived to be more dishonorable than promiscuity. Sometimes men would have extra-marital affairs and multiple-partnerships not because they wanted to but they wanted to gain respect from their peers and prove that they are real men”.

This is a sentiment shared by many of the older men I interviewed. Bab'Maswanganyi told me that

“Polygamy would have been an ideal for many men if they could afford to have many wives but in reality a lot of us could not, and because of that many men bent the rules. Also, in the past when one got married, elder people kept a book for record purposes. In case something went wrong, for example a man denies his wife, or the wife is deceitful and marries again, that

served as proof of the marriage procedure, gifts exchanged and etc. also in cases of divorce and the husband asks for his money back, they refer to that book for reimbursement”.

He continued

“In the past wives were also formally introduced to the chief and family members. So it was not that easy to have many wives without the means and valid reasons. A man had to convince his wife to allow him to marry another woman because without her approval it would not happen. As you know a lot of women do not like sharing their men so trying to convince them in many instances failed. As a result, a lot of men resorted to having extra-marital affairs”.

Elderly informants also explained to me that in the past, family members would show their disappointment to a man who had died without having children by publicly shaming him during the funeral ceremony or inserting a log into the anus of the corpse. As one would imagine that was a very shameful practice.

It was also communicated to me that if a man was unable to have children, the brother of the husband was expected to help out in the situation by impregnating the wife. The husband then claims the children as his own. Sometimes it was done with the knowledge of the husband or without his knowledge. It would become a secret that the parties would take oaths and shed blood, promising to take the secret to their graves. A lot of superstitions were associated with breaking or not honouring oaths. Thus stories of such cases were not widely known in the community. People did all they could to keep the secret.

In other cases, women would have extra-marital affairs to have children and in order to protect the family name and their husband’s dignity. The husband would thus claim the children as his own. I was told this happened particularly in cases where the husband was not comfortable with his wife having sexual relations with his brother. In this way, it was also much better not to have the family involved and know the man’s business or his infertility. Bab’Mathebula is a 55 single traditional man. He separated with his wife in 2005. He does not follow religion at all. He has four kids from his marriage and only one of them, his only daughter is quite accomplished, his two sons do not work and the last born son is still studying. Bab’ explained to me that

“It is much safe for a woman to have extra-marital affairs and have children because in that way, the “stranger boyfriend” would not really be certain whether the children are his or not, and thus would not really make claims to the children. It is also culturally condemned to have

an affair with a married woman so rather not claim the children than to face punishment and fine”.

The information above affirms Delius and Glazers argument that in most African cultures adultery was not committed without important risks (2004: 91). But also that it happened partly for exactly holding up the ‘ideal family’.

He continued

“And for the husband, it is better to raise the children as his own than suffer the shame of sexual impotence”. As u bab’Mathebula joked “women are like teabags, one teabag can be dipped into three mugs of hot water to make tea, sharing is caring”

The statement affirms Hunter’s records that indicate that women having more than one partner, and overstepping the mark could be chastised as being izifebe, meaning a loose woman (Hunter, 2005: 392).

Bab’Mathebula also told me that African men did not really go for fertility testing, so some women would have children outside of marriage and the husband would not even know because he did not know of his fertility problems.

Bab’Mathebula’s comments leans more towards women being perpetrators of multiple prtnerships. This made me wonder if his comments were informed by the fact that he has separated from his wife.

I was told of instances where women would go as far as having a child with their next-door neighbours. Mom’Zondo, a well-known township gossip said to me

“You see Mr Nxube, him and his wife were married for a few years before they could have children. See in the past there wasn’t this technological testing thing that they use nowadays. So him and his wife could not go and test who has a problem between the both of them”

It is worth noting that in-vitro fertilization and artificial insemination were not common in the past and many people, especially in Giyani did not know about it. Mom’Zondo continued

“Well, Mr Nxube’s wife started to doubt him and had relations with the man who lives front opposite her house. She fell pregnant and had her first born child, a daughter. It was fun and joyous at the beginning because they waited so long to have a baby and community members were starting to talk and speculate”

She went on:

“But as years went by we could notice how the child looked nothing like the father. You know old people can pick up these things. The girl was big boned, her “father” was not, and appearance wise she looked like the front opposite neighbour and his children”.

At this point I was taken aback but yet intrigued by the story she was telling me. I leaned forward, at some point feeling a bit uncomfortable because I thought that was confidential information. What if someone can hear us I thought to myself, at that moment it looked less like an interview and more like a gossip session. She did not mince her words; I could tell she wanted me to have all the juicy information for my research report. She continued

“I do not know how but the woman ended up confessing to her husband. Because he did not want people to know about his situation, he raised the child as his own and never divorced his wife. They went on to have two more daughters, so three girls in total. Only if she had the patience to wait for God’s time, she would have saved the poor man all the pain, shame and heartache. Now he has passed on, his family, discovering the truth, they threw his wife out of their mansion but the first daughter, got a portion of his wealth. Such a great man ne?” she asked me. At that point I was so surprised I just smiled and nodded.

I was told of a similar story by bab’Mathebula. His friend and wife got married and had two children, a girl and a boy. They tried to conceive again but things were not working in their favour. Bab’Mathebula stated: *“My friend clearly wanted a big family and many children so he started putting more pressure on his wife to conceive. It took forever so he started having extra-marital affairs and not sleeping at home. Feeling the pressure and seeing that she was losing her husband to another woman, she also had extra-marital affairs and conceived a baby girl. The husband went home to his wife and everything was fine”.*

Trying to fully understand the story I asked if the husband never found out the child was not his. Bab’Mathebula, keen to further relay the story to me stated:

“Everything was fine until the child grew up and looked nothing like the first two children who looked more like their father. She was light in complexion whereas the first two were dark. What is interesting in this case is that it is not community members who called the woman out

but her first two children when their father passed away. They refused for the last born to inherit anything from their father's pension funds because they knew she was not their father's child. The parents' although they knew, managed to keep it a secret for so long. If it was not for the disputes over the man's wealth when he passed on, the community would not have known''.

The most extreme case I heard from the elders was that of a woman who got married and her husband could not have children. She had five children, and each had their own father, that is, five extra-marital affairs that yielded in children. What is more surprising to me is that her husband never left her. He raised all children as his own for fear of being ridiculed and wanting to maintain his dignity. The news only became known to the community when the husband passed on. The woman started heavy alcohol consumption, and whenever she was drunk, she would communicate her personal business to people.

What I have realized from the stories communicated to me is that it was also common for women to have extra-marital affairs and have their husbands raise the children as their own. I tried to find cases in which men had extra-marital affairs that yielded children, and their wives took the children and raised them as their own. I was only told of one case. The wife was barren and her husband wanted a child of his own. With her permission, he had extra-marital affairs and had a son who is now raised by him and his wife. The rareness of such cases could be the fact that the children conceived outside marriage are a constant reminder of what the wife cannot have. It is also not conventional for women to raise other women's children as their own. Especially if the child is a product of extra-marital affairs. They develop a resentment of some sort towards the children. This information did not come from my fieldwork data collection but is based on the on the many stories about stepmothers I have heard, and how horrible they treat their step children. I have also experienced this first hand from my cousin who did not like her husband's son who was conceived before they met.

In cases where married women could not have children a man was allowed to marry another wife, a polygamous union if his financial standing allows so as to expand his surname. If the wife disagrees because she wants to remain the only wife, the man has extra-marital affairs and have kids outside of marriage. What caught my attention and I find interesting in this explanation is that women had some sort of power to either agree or disagree with the intentions of their husbands having extra marital affairs or simply having another wife. They were not

“passive” wives as many historical texts portray them. They were active in decision making in the context of historical patriarchy.

It seems like having children was the main driver of multiple partnerships in the past. What is interesting is that the burden of not having children weighed heavily on men than women. Men seem to have been the ones who suffered most for not being able to have children than women. If a couple could not conceive, it was generally assumed that it was the man who had a problem. It seems like it is believed that men are the ones responsible for having children. The woman is less blamed. How then would one know who between the parties involved had a problem since like stated above technology like fertility testing was not common. Women were somehow shielded and protected from the shame.

During the course of my fieldwork, I also learned that divorce was not an option once one gets married. Once the father receives cows or lobola money for the woman, no matter how hard the marriage would be, abusive or if the husband had extra-marital affairs, the father is not allowed to welcome his daughter back home unless he is willing and able to pay back the bride price (cows). In most cases fathers could not afford to pay back the bride price because one, the money was not saved as a precaution should such an unfortunate event happen, and two, the money was sometimes given to the bride’s older brother to marry as well. If a bride is in a fortunate situation where she has a younger sister, she would have to wait for the younger sister to get married, and the younger sister’s bride price is paid back to her husband in order to set her free.

From the information above, multiple-partnerships seem to have been a more cultural phenomenon (integrated into negotiating realities between ideal and everyday practice), and happen mostly in the context of marriage. Of course there are cases in which extra-marital affairs and multiple-partnerships occurred not as a relief of unfortunate circumstances such as the inability to have children, but for other reasons such as the inability to pay *lobola* and marry. This reality, as Delius and Glaser put it, was partly shaped by the incapability of a lot of migrants to acquire enough resources to marry in the context of stagnant wages and, in some areas inflating levels of bride wealth (2004: 97-98). Bride wealth in some African cultures became too costly for the average young man, thus without the confinement of marriage, men and women enjoyed unlimited freedom to be with whoever they wanted without any consequences.

Since prestige was attributed to both marriage and multiple-partnerships, if one could not get prestige through marriage, the alternative was having multiple partnerships. In situations where *lobola* money was a problem, many young men would leave Giyani to find work in different provinces in South Africa, Like Gauteng and Cape Town, and leave their girlfriends at home. Delius and Glaser (2004) state that it became increasingly common for long-term migrants to abandon their commitments to rural homes. Their explanation for that is that urban expenses might simply have made it not possible to send enough money; or they might have embraced the freedom of town life and purposely escaped the burdens and responsibilities of their rural homes (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 105). The girlfriends would then find other partners to keep them company, especially if their “migrant boyfriend’s” did not send them money. Like bab’Mazibuko told me:

“That’s when the problem of having multiple-partners began. Most men in the past would go to work in cities like Johannesburg and spend a long time without coming back. Their girlfriends thought they even forgot about them. You know how women love fancy things. If you did not send them money a particular month you were only asking trouble for yourself. You either had to give them money to keep the fire burning, or risk sharing your girlfriend with some other guy”

Bab’Mazibuko further stated that his comments were not to paint women in a bad light because he recognises that men who travelled were not saints themselves. They would find girlfriends in cities and live with them. Bab’Baloyi, aged 63 is a teacher by profession and lives with his wife and three daughters. Bab’baloyi is an ANC supporter and a ward councillor for Giyani ward 11. He is very educated and quite rich. He has a beautiful home and two luxurious cars. He is one of the few Giyani residents who were lucky to obtain formal education and did not have to go to cities such as Johannesburg for job opportunities. As will be seen in his comment, city life was not an achievement for him, and never excited him at all. It is evident by how he comments about migrants who went and worked in the cities. He told me:

“City life would excite them so much that they would not come back home. They would not even send their girlfriends money to visit them in the city because they lived with jo’burg girls now”

For married men who left Giyani to work in other provinces, their brother’s would assume their roles and take care of their wives sexually until they come back. Sometimes the wives would be impregnated by the brothers. Sometimes fall in love with the brothers and forget about their

husbands away. I was told of sibling disputes because of such instances. My fieldwork revealed that Giyani people extensively accept illegitimate children and adultery did not, and still does not, cause too much of a disruption. There aren't really measurable consequences or punishments to having extra marital affairs and multiple-partnerships. This could also be another explanation to the reason Giyani youth engage in multiple partnerships, and thus, the perception that it is okay to have multiple-partners. Although there is a need to keep adultery a secret, it inspires little shame.

It was common even for old men to site that as men, they are naturally inclined and traditionally entitled to have polygamous relationships. Scholars like Khonou (2009: 81) disagree with this sentiment. They argue that through indirect rule, like Ranger documents, the mission was, to 'pick out what is best from (European culture) and dilute it with what Africans hold' to build up the ideas and structures of 'tribal tradition' (Ranger, 1983:252). These invented traditions of African societies distorted the past but became in themselves realities (Ranger, 1983: 252). So what these old men cite as their traditional entitlement to have polygamous relationships, and similarly multiple partnerships, is distorted history that has become their reality. This thus reveals that however constructed something is, it can still have huge subjective significance. It can become embodied and existential for people.

These old men also see their capacity to have multiple-partners as a sign of masculine success. Their explanation of desired polygamous unions differs from bab'Maswanganyi, a polygamous man in the location with five wives and twenty children. For him, having many wives was not a matter of biological urges, but a matter of growing his family name. He explained to me that when people started to settle in Giyani a while back, there was a need to occupy land and dominate. And the only way his father could do so was by having many wives and children. He stated that,

"My father always told us that he worked very hard for us to be known in this community and no matter what we have to carry on his legacy and stick together. My father had seven wives and I have five. For me, it is a matter of building a family empire"

Indeed, there are a few surnames that are known to be amongst the first settlers in Giyani and thus owners of land.

Another explanation for multiple-partnerships and extra-marital affairs offered by many elders was witchcraft. The sentiment shared by many women I interviewed. They explained to me

that many men were bewitched by women so that they could go after them. This, it was explained, was to ensure that people's husbands take care of them.

“In the least extreme cases, these women bewitch your husband so that he can take care of them and their children. He will no longer give his wife money, buy anything at home nor take care of his children. All his money will go to his makwapeni. The husband just comes home to sleep and bathe and that is it. He won't even eat the food his wife cooks. He will no longer find his wife desirable and will no longer touch her in bed”

She continued

“In the most extreme case, the husband will leave his wife altogether and forget about his family”

I was told of a story where a man left his wife to live with another woman in her home. People were surprised because the man really loved his wife. There was no other explanation to why he would leave her except witchcraft. He did not take care of his children thereafter. The only way his wife would get money from him was through the magistrate's court. I was told that

“The wife would sometimes find things in her yard, weird things like red strings tied to her door handle. If that woman was not a prayer warrior, she would be dead as we speak. She kept on praying for her husband and her family. It took a couple of years for her husband to return home but he did”.

This made me eager to evaluate the plausibility of witchcraft as one of the contributing factors of multiple-partnerships in the past. Was it real or women were just finding explanations in witchcraft in order to deal with their unfortunate situation of losing loved ones? It made me question how shameful it must be to lose one's husband to another woman that wives found it necessary to paint the “other woman” in a bad light, and blame it on witchcraft. There could be other factors blame can be attributed to like dissatisfaction in the relationship but blaming witchcraft seems to help deal with the situation better.

One of the observations I made was that some of the people I interviewed could have simply be talking about themselves but did not say so. Their stories were so informative and personal so to say. Infidelity topics really stroke a nerve with some participants and they became aggressive in their responses. They would often comment on how despicable so and so is as if it affects them. It is also clear that Christianity informs people's ways of life and thinking in Giyani. Many participants would draw on Christianity to explain to me why something is

wrong, and how so and so would not have made it this far if it was not for prayer. Mom'Gloria even recited a bible verse for me in one of her responses.

From the interviews that I conducted with the older generation, it is quite clear that the idea of a real man was centrally around the household. The responses reveal the importance of establishing a household and the social value in having children. There were ideals of being a real man and that lies in the language of the household. Having a household and having children was so powerful that the older generation made having multiple-partnerships an excuse. This is the reason you find that for some, multiple partnerships were not really an ideal. Children were a form of wealth and this way a family with more children was considered to be more powerful.

The economic decline does not really start now in the present. My data shows that the decline started a long time ago. People had multiple-partnerships and extra marital affairs meanwhile polygamy has always been an option provided that one has the financial means to provide for multiple wives and the household. A lot of men rather had multiple-partnerships or children outside marriage, regardless of whether this situation was created by the circumstances discussed above or not instead of polygamous unions, and this was because they did not have the economic means for it. Polygamy was an ideal in the past but African men could not afford it. They did not have the economic means to live what they aspired and hence emphasis was largely placed on being able to establish a household and have many children. Without the language of the household, there is a perceived failure in being a "real man". As a result they established a household with one wife and as an alternative to make up for the lost aspiration of having many wives, had extra marital affairs.

Also, it seems that what also caused the decline, or lack rather of polygamous unions was simply because of the influence of Christianity in some South African households, and also in Tsonga households as a case in point. There is no doubt that the influence of Christianity altered the way of living of many South Africans. Polygamy was certainly made "unlawful", and fulfilling the laws of Christianity became an ideal for many as will be shown in one of my chapters. Christianity as Delius and Glaser (2014) strongly put it, with its stress on monogamy, sexuality expressed only within marriage and its strong condemnation of adultery and sex before, or outside of, marriage, offered a powerful counterpoint. In support of the statement above, they assert that most churches were clear in their view that both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity was forbidden. However, they also recognise that Christianity was not

always effective in controlling pre-marital sexual activity (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 101-102). Like Delius and Glaser (2004), Hunter (2005) asserts that Christianity sanctioned a single, monogamous, moral code that was endorsed by Christians/believers. Hunter (2005) states that various groups of people drew on Christianity and the notion of “the pure body”, and “the body being the temple of God” to forbid extra marital affairs by both men and women. But this only worked on those who had adopted Christian religion.

In another article, Delius and Glaser (2002) are of a different view to most of the responses from my older participants with regards to the promiscuity of present day youth. They state that “promiscuous and violent sexual culture is primordial in Africa and that contemporary realities are an inevitable outcome” (Delius & Glaser, 2002: 27). They are of the view that sexual activities have never been contained/constrained in South African cultures. Instead adolescence was seen as “a time when sex should be practised vigorously” (Delius & Glaser, 2002: 27). The problem was “how to allow this without the price being paid in terms of social disorder ... and the impregnation of potential wives” and this is also articulated by Hunter in stating that non-penetrative forms of sex (or thigh sex) were widely practiced among unmarried persons, thus avoiding risky sexual practices by the youth (Hunter, 2005: 392).

This chapter has looked at the conceptions of multiple-partnerships in the historical period from oral history interviews with the older generation participants. Data from the interviews reveal that in the past, people engaged in multiple partnerships primarily as a relief of unfortunate circumstances such as the inability to have children. The migrant labour system seems to have also contributed in that young men would go work in the cities and neglect their families. Some would even start another family in the cities. Polygamy as opposed to multiple partnerships was the ideal but since a lot of Tsonga men did not have the material means for a polygamous union, multiple partnerships and extra marital affairs thus became perceived alternatives. Also, the advent of Christianity saw a decline in polygamous unions and multiple partnerships because it advocated for monogamous unions and the idea of the “pure body”. The data also revealed that the idea of the “real man” and a desired form of masculinity was centrally around the household, establishing an independent household for oneself and having children, not necessarily around multiple partnerships.

Having looked at explanations of multiple partnerships in historical period and what motivated them, what then informs multiple partnerships in present day Giyani? Are these present day multiple partnerships influenced by historical practices as justified by Giyani youth or is there

a disconnect between what motivated multiple partnerships in the past and what motivates multiple partnerships in present day? The chapter that follows looks at perceived causes of multiple partnerships in present day Giyani and makes connections between their justifications and what actually happened in the past.

CHAPTER 5

The Old.. The New.. and Connecting the Dots

Why is the acceptance, as well as drawing on culture to justify multiple-partnerships from both genders so widespread in Giyani? Is the justification really based on historical motivations for multiple partnerships as discussed in the previous chapter, or does the justification simply make reference of history to legitimate its practices? These are the kind of questions the chapter explores and seeks to answer. The chapter looks at multiple-partnerships in present day Giyani, and what informs them. The chapter also considers how younger people are living up to or fail to fulfil the expectations of the older generation, and the generational conflict that arises as a result. Finally, the chapter explores whether and how multiple partnerships in historical perspective inform multiple partnerships today.

The chapter starts by looking at the influences of cultural practices on multiple partnerships, the kind of intimate socialites and the quality of relationships which emerge under these multiple partnerships. Some of these traditional practices are not used as “cultural explanations” (in the emic sense) of why multiple partnership are happening. However, I have chosen to look at, and include these traditional practices in the thesis because these were and to some extent still are the avenues in which multiple partnerships were/are practiced. Some of my participants also cited these traditional practices as possible cultural reasons as to why Giyani present day youth engage in multiple partnerships. Therefore, instead of just naming them and just leaving it at that, I have chosen to explain them in full so as to give context.

The chapter then moves to looking at the economic circumstances of the actors, both male and female, that may aid in influencing multiple partnerships. The chapter will also deal with how the current social and economic conditions in Giyani make it difficult for many men to achieve the desired masculinity such as securing jobs, marrying, fathering children, or establishing their households.

The Influences of Cultural practices on Multiple-partnerships

In the Tsonga culture, men are placed in a powerful position in relation to women due to practices such as *lobola* and *ku phangha*, with religion playing out also in a positive and sometimes negative way. Based on my interpretation of the context, these seem to have become normalised, with both young men and young women being socialised to conforming to the cultural ideals. Unfortunately, it is these practices that implicitly and explicitly condone and tolerate this new trend of multiple-partnerships.

Based on my interviews with the older generation, young men and women, as well as my insider knowledge since *lobola* has also been paid for me, *Lobola* in the Tsonga culture entails the provision of gifts to the parents and the family of the bride to be, either in the form of money or livestock. The groom's family are the ones in charge of the gifts after the negotiation process between both families. The gifts serve as a token of appreciation to the family of the bride for raising their daughter in a good way, and as compensation since the groom is taking one member of their family to add to his. *Lobola* as communicated to me by the participants thus certify the union between the bride and the groom as well as their families. Regardless of the cultural benefits of *lobola* like uniting families and being in a culturally recognised union as stated above, some men view the process as having attained the right to not only control but to mistreat their partners and have multiple-partnerships, similar to Hunter's observation that young migrant workers, now able to save ilobolo (bridewealth) themselves, were now in a strong position to demand that their girlfriends refrain from having secondary partners (2005:394). Women on the other hand view the practice of *lobola* as having won the prize, the "wifey" title to the extent that even if their partners cheat on them, they think it is acceptable as long as they are the wives. The main partner or wife is often thought of as someone who is deserving of love, respect and care and who would be/is acceptable for marriage and to be presented to the family and the extended family as an appropriate partner.

Some of the young men aged 25 and above that I interviewed communicated to me that once they pay *lobola* the woman does not have much of a say since she has become their "property". They go as far as stating that they have paid a lot of money for the bride and thus she should respect them in all ways possible and not challenge them nor any of the decisions that they make but as Hunter (2005: 394) observes, this does not always work out smoothly as young men hope. The young men further stated that the wife should be grateful for them choosing her amongst all the beautiful girls in the area and in the world. She gets the status of being called

wife, and the other girls do not really matter, they are just side pieces for pleasure and entertainment.

Themba stated to me that: *“You see once I pay lobola she is my wife, recognised by my family and everyone who attended our traditional wedding and all those who know that we are married. What I choose to do outside should not concern her”*

Another male participant Vusi stated that:

“Having paid lobola for her makes her my wife, the rest are just side chicks that will never become anything else, not that I do not love them but I mean they will never be my wives and I am not looking for them to be, we are just passing time. She should even be glad that instead of demanding a second wife I go and do my things outside and try to keep it from her. That way she enjoys the title of being my wife alone”.

Thembani shared similar views and communicated to me that:

“Do you know how much people charge for lobola around here? Yet you want to ask me why I decide to have girlfriends on the side. Let’s say you are my girlfriend; would you even want to question me in such instances to only hurt yourself? Let’s say I admit to cheating, will you leave and pay back my lobola money”?

The increase in bride price is also noted by Delius and Glaser. They found that from the 1920s and 1930s bride wealth had become too costly for the average young man which led to a common, and largely accepted, practice of ‘elopement’ or ‘seduction’, which allowed a marriage to commence without the full *lobola* payment (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 97-98). In the Giyani context however seeing that *lobola* is expensive, it is used as a way to mistreat wives.

Further reiterated by Nhlamulo, he said to me that:

“You know lobola puts us at a better advantage, there are a lot of instances where my girlfriend caught me red handed with other females. Sometimes she would find texts on my phone and other times she caught me in the bedroom that we share together with them”.

I asked him if he is still with his wife, and he continued:

“Yes, like I said lobola puts us at an advantage. I swear if it was not because we are married she would have left me. There are instances where she got really mad, packed her things and

went home but she always comes back. If I have paid lobola she cannot just pack up and go as she pleases. It is much more complicated than that”.

When I asked if he knew that he was being unfair and hurting her he responded that he does, but there is nothing he can do about it. Sometimes men just cannot be contained. Nhlamulo is a well-established young man who is based in Gauteng but alternates between Gauteng and Giyani regularly. He is a tenderpreneur and has two cars. Nhlamulo also rents an apartment in Gauteng and when he is in Giyani he lives at his parents’ house. His wife on the other hand only studied until matric and she is unemployed at the moment. Nhlamulo’s socio-economic status sheds light into why he is so empowered and confident about his actions never leading to great consequences.

From these statements and similar others, it seems like the men justify having multiple-partners by emphasizing that “I paid *lobola*” and thus it is their right to do as they please in the relationship. *Lobola* seems to be a ticket to cheating and some men use it as a leverage. From my interviews, I also realised that it is not only men who endorse having multiple-partnerships but women as well. Women also normalise the trend in their marriages and relationships. A few traditional married women that I interviewed agreed that once a man has paid *lobola* for you there is nothing you can do about it but learn to accept and live with it.

Nkateko stated:

“What can you really do when you find out? You are married, you are a wife, and you cannot just pack up and leave. That is unacceptable”.

Masingita further illustrated that:

“To leave a marriage is both shameful to you and your family so you cannot just leave, you stay in the marriage and pretend to be happy. Like everything is okay”.

In similar vein, Khanyisa stated that:

“Once you live you open the door for another woman to come and occupy your space, which is a shame. Plus if your husband comes from a really strict family they will ask you to return the money they paid for you. Where will you get it? You are not really doing yourself a favour by leaving because in this time and age all men cheat. So you leave your current partner, what makes you so sure the next one will not cheat? Will you keep hopping from man to man?”

These are very strong responses I must say, and they left me quite surprised. A lot of women agree that it is acceptable for their husbands to have multiple-partnerships or extra marital affairs in this case. Similarly to men, *Lobola* payment is seen by some women as entitlement to cheat on their spouses and for women to be submissive to their husbands. Cultural idioms that are thrown around in Giyani such as “vukati va kanda hi mbilu” translated to women must endure the pain in marriage, encourage women not to leave their cheating partners and stay with them. This idiom was cited quite a number of times in my interviews. The idiom is even transferred to relationships as justification for the reason young women stay in relationships, even when they are not married. They claim that their endurance in these type of relationships is practice for when they finally get married. It’s like these young women expect nothing more of their boyfriends than infidelity and cheating. Instead of cheating being an exception in the relationship, it appears that being loved and having a faithful husband or boyfriend who treats you right is the exception. People get into relationships already expecting the worst and thus the acceptance of the multiple-partnerships trend.

The concept of faithfulness has been/ and still is widely promoted as a fundamental building block of relationships. However, it appears as if in the context of these relationships faithfulness is not necessarily understood as being monogamous. Rather, this concept is related to the notion of protecting a ‘main’ girl friend from the knowledge that one is cheating or being unfaithful. Here we go, now we are getting there: you are really analysing local categories So faithfulness in these kind of relationships is also viewed in the sense that as long as “additional” relationships are kept secret, they are seen as okay and justifiable. There is more effort put to keeping additional relationships a secret or private than actually being faithful. The rationale behind this is of course respecting the ‘main’ partner or the wife.

Also, the fact that women who choose to leave such marriages are mocked and made fun of by people in the community as not “respecting their culture”, called names, and viewed as failures in life further encourage women to stay in marriages that they are cheated on. The idea of having to pay back *lobola* money should you choose to leave the marriage because some men and families demand it makes women feel trapped in these marriages, like there is no way out. It is in this regard that some participants state that “the practice of *lobola* can serve to do good, or harm in a marriage”.

For the girls that are not married, they tend to stay in unfaithful relationships because of the mockery that befalls one if another girl takes your boyfriend. They would rather stay with

boyfriends or husbands that cheat on them because they do not want another woman to replace them or take their space as that is seen as a shame. They even have a saying for it. They refer to this kind of phenomenon as “Ku biwa hi xitina”, translated to English to mean being hit by a brick. Like it was stated in one of the responses above, it is more shameful for another woman to move you out of your household, or to take your boyfriend from you, than to remain with your partner and maintain the “wifey” or main chick title. So for most women rather they stick it out than to leave their partner. For some women it is not that this behaviour is acceptable and they condone it, but it is because of the stated shame. Some even feel like they have invested a lot of time, years and energy in the relationship to throw that away because of incidences of cheating. They explained to me that:

“He has cheated three times before and I forgave him, imagine if I decide to leave now. All that hurt and effort would have been for nothing”.

Adding to this, the one who succeeds in taking one’s boyfriend gains a prestigious status because they “upgrade from being a side chick to being the main chick”. Thus, leaving a relationship because your man is cheating might just downgrade you from ‘main chick status’ to ‘side chick status’. In this regard, influences as to the multiple-partnerships trend are at community level, and influenced by peer pressure.

Having a partner who was married was also seen by unmarried girls as falling into a particular category of trust, honesty and ‘faithfulness’ that was different from having unmarried partners. Some of them stated that their preference was more towards married than unmarried guys. They explained that at least with married guys you know what you are getting yourself into from the beginning and there are no surprises. Single guys tend to come with a number of other girlfriends and they are never faithful nor satisfied. With married guys, he has to think of his wife first, and will try to limit his relations as possible as he can. They also mentioned that with married guys there is no sense of competition because the moment one agrees to be in the relationship, they already know that he is committed to someone else, and it is not always the case that they would want to dethrone the wife from her title. In this manner the sense of competition is limited.

Some of these explanations above go far beyond *lobola*. They are revealing the kind of intimate socialites and the quality of relationships which emerge under these multiple partnerships. It seems like *lobola* also influences the way in which individuals structure non-*lobola* relationships, such as the idea of enduring the pain in a relationship as a way of practicing for

enduring the pain in marriage. *Lobola* also produces relationships of entitlement where one views themselves as the ‘main chick’ and thus the important one amongst the girlfriends. As such, they would rather stay in an unfaithful relationship to maintain their status. Basically, *lobola* relationship arrangements also happen in the realm of non-*lobola* relationships. Non-*lobola* relationships are structured to resemble *lobola* relationships. This makes me wonder if this could be due to aspirations of marriage in a context where marriage is restricted by socio-economic circumstances.

Of course there were some women who stated that they could not stand their men cheating on them. Regardless of *lobola* considerations, they found cheating unacceptable especially in the context of marriage. These women were of the idea that once a man decides to take the step to marry a woman, he should be fully committed.

They stated that:

“Once a man decides that he is grown and wants to get married, that means he is ready to leave the temptations of the world and commit to one woman. Otherwise he is not a man but a boy and should remain Single”

Vonani further added that:

“A man who decides to cheat on me does not even get to demand his lobola money back because it is not like I wronged him in the relationship but he wronged and disrespected me. So if I choose to leave it is because of his actions”.

In all the interviews that I did with traditionally married women, I was surprised that none of them mentioned cheating on their husbands whether in the past or present. They stated that it is unacceptable for a married woman to conduct herself in that manner. This is similar to Delius and Glaser reference of Alberti’s report in 1807 explaining that among the Xhosa adultery is only committed by the woman, the man is not restricted in this respect. One usually says “the man is made for all women, the woman only for her husband” (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). This is quite different from the information I got from the older generation interlocutors who communicated to me that married women could cheat in a marriage and not face divorce either because the extra-marital relation was arranged, or because of the shame that bestowed a man who is cheated on. In that regard it appears as if women had some sort of agency and could negotiate their ways in a marriage, and that marriage was sort of a safe space for women to have extra-marital affairs without having to face consequences. But from the much younger

participants, it seems like the option to explore cheating in the marriage is not open for exploration. The confines of marriage does not offer them the protection to cheat. This made me wonder if there is a possibility that there is shame in such behaviour and hence they would not want to admit that they do have extra marital affairs.

Based on the information I received from the participants, “Ku phangha” in the Tsonga culture is considered a culturally legitimate kidnapping of a woman with the intention of marrying her. It was practiced in the Tsonga culture for a significant amount of time but it is rare nowadays. The young woman is abducted from a place she usually frequents and is forced into a relationship with the man that abducted her. This practice was only cited by a few participants as one of the cultural factors that contribute to men thinking it is okay to have multiple-partners.

The cultural practice is apparently now used for the wrong reasons. Historically, if a man abducted a woman that basically made her his wife, even though she would return home at a later stage once negotiations between both families have been done, and only waiting for *lobola* proceedings to take place. Young men thus exploited this practice and sometimes abduct as many girls as they can for the entitlement of girls being their wives. In this case, men get to enjoy relationships with as many girls as possible, and this will only stop once he marries one girl from the many he had abducted and it becomes known in the community, thus exposing him.

Like one participant stated:

“It gives men the idea that women are objects for their consumption because they abduct as many girls as they can because it is culturally acceptable”

Within the period of abduction while the families are still negotiating for the marriage to take place or for the female to be released the man remains single and can do as he please. He is not tied to anybody so this often results in men abducting a lot of young women to have their “experience” with them. Even if it is short lived. The idea of multiple partnership thus plays out in this culturally legitimate realm for some men. Recently this practice is treated as a criminal offence hence it is rarely practiced, but some men continue to practice it anyway. The phenomenon being treated as a criminal offence recently could explain why a lot of my participants denied having engaged in such and were reluctant to talk about it. A lot of the participants mentioned:

“Why abduct a woman and force her to be in a relationship when you can just negotiate with her. If she refuses, then you move on to the next one. There are a lot of women out there”.

Others continued by stating that:

“There are negative effects associated with ku phangha. The practice could easily be treated as kidnapping or rape. Why would I want to put myself through such”?

People disclaim practicing “Ku phanga” today but there was a kind of rhetorical value placed on the practice in the past. Like communicated by one of the older generation participants, this was the way in which Tsonga men courted wives in the past and took great pleasure in it. Bab’Maswanganyi even mentioned a number of the families in the area that are a product of this practice, and emphasised how despite how the union started, the marriages remain successful even to this day.

Even though the practice was mentioned as one of the culturally and historically informed drivers of multiple partnerships in present day, when participants talk about this practice now they talk about it in a bad way as much as it was a good, celebrated practice in the past. They do not see the need in abducting a woman when they can get one the right way. Like stated in the response above, this could be because of the treatment of the practice as kidnapping or rape in the present day. So the fact that it is treated as a criminal offence could be the reason why the practice is less desired today.

The practice of virginity testing which entails testing whether a young woman is still a virgin or not, and referred to as “Ku khoba” in the Tsonga culture came up in some of my discussions with young girls about what cultural elements could be contributing to the trend of multiple-partnerships. This practice is very old and was common in the Tsonga culture years ago. In this regard Hunter writes that to limit women from having multiple partnerships elder women were assigned to periodically test Girl’s virginity in the past. Women who did not conform to these set of rules were labelled “isifebe”, meaning a loose girl, and hence not marriage material. The practice of virginity testing as asserted by Hunter emerged out of the subtle blend of Zulu and Christian values (Hunter, 2005: 394). The practice has however lessened over the years in Giyani. As an insider, I have not heard of any cases nor celebration of virginity testing in the area. Even amongst the young women that I have interviewed none of them have undergone virginity testing or know of anyone who has recently. A few cases of the practice are reported in some of Giyani’s surrounding villages. The practice is also common amongst the Zulu who practice it extensively to this day. After some research about it, I found out from a nurse in the

area that it was discouraged by the commission for gender equality as they believed the practice invades the sexual privacy of young girls. Furthermore, the girls indicated that because this practice is celebrated in a form of a big event where the young woman is showered with gifts, it usually makes these women targets of young men. They agreed that although it is some form of prestige for a man to have multiple-partners, it is more prestigious for men to have been the ones to “deflower” the girls. As one young woman stated:

“This whole idea about virginity testing is basically advertisement of all the virgin girls around. It makes it easier for young men to spot these girls and then they become victims”

She continued:

“They go around thinking they are pretty and all that, that is why they are popular with the men but they are popular because men know what they are after. And they do not only pursue one girl, they will pursue the rest of them so that their number of the girls they have deflowered increases. It is very common for young girls who have recently celebrated their virginity testing ceremony to lose their virginity a couple of weeks after”.

In similar vein, Khanyisa added that:

It is very surprising how this month a lot of them celebrate their virginity and a couple of months down the line they are pregnant. It is like they wait for the celebration in order to be promiscuous”.

A lot of the male participants also alluded to the statements made by the female participants that virginity testing makes girls targets by young men. The consensus was that it is such a high honour to be the one to deflower the young girls. It’s like being in a place where no one has ever been before.

Like Kulani mentioned in his response:

“It’s like buying a new pair of shoes and wearing them for the first time versus someone giving you their old pair of shoes. It will never be the same. The new pair gives you more satisfaction than the old probably worn out shoe”

To convince me to get the point he was making he further went on to say that:

“Imagine going to a restaurant and they give you left overs, would you be satisfied with that? If you are hungry you will eat, but it won’t be the same as food specially prepared for you. The satisfaction will not be the same”.

Another male participant by the name of Vutomi seemed to agree with the fact that the more names you have on your list, the more respect you get from your peers. This may be due to the fact that perceptions of insufficient male sexual experience can lead to stigma both within a male's peer group and among women as Gilbert and Selikow (2011:329) state. Vutomi stated that:

“As men we are constantly in search of the innocent girls you see. Because we are men we talk. We probably know who has been where you see. So when you get an innocent girl no one can claim that they have been there”.

There were other participants who did not seem to care whether the girls they are involved with are virgins or not. To them the experience is the same. Some men even argued that innocent girls are clingy and they would rather not deal with that, it is better to get those that have been in the game for quite some time because sometimes as men they are not looking for a serious relationship but a no strings attached relationship.

In this regard, Ntshembo added that:

“Food is food, at the end of the day we all get full regardless”.

From these conversations I was struck by how the topic of intimacy was addressed by being likened to food or clothes. It made me wonder whether the subject was delicate for the participants to address it in its own terms. Furthermore, I had my own feelings about the practice itself. The practice appears sexist to me. It seems like there is this expectation for girls to remain virgins while young men who experiment sexually are celebrated and given some sort of prestigious status depending on the amount of girls they have on their list. Such young boys are celebrated as real men, but young women who are found not to be virgins are mocked and shamed. Women who choose to have multiple partners are called derogatory names such as slut and tea bags dipped in multiple mugs of hot water, and are not regarded marriage material. They are seen as damaged goods and even if men do date them, they seem not interested in marrying them or having a stable relationship with them. Marrying a girl who has been around the hood is a great shame to these men. It seems like there is a double standard from the society in this regard. Yet again confirming Delius and Glaser's assertion that adultery is only committed by the woman, the man is not restricted in this respect. One usually says “the man is made for all women, the woman only for her husband” (Delius & Glaser, 2004: 89). It

further confirms Hunter's observation that women with more than one partner are chastised as being izifebe (loose woman) (Hunter, 2005: 392).

During my interviews, female genital mutilation was cited only once and this was in relation to male circumcision. Female genital mutilation entails the ritual associated with the removal of some external female genitals. Female Genital mutilation is celebrated in a very similar way to Vukhoba (Virginity testing). The practice is not really common amongst the Tsonga, But very common amongst the Venda, who are only separated from the Tsonga by only a few kilometres. The participants mentioned female genital mutilation to me as one of the cultural influences of multiple partnerships, especially for women, because it gives the idea that the woman has transitioned to womanhood, and thus can explore with as many partners as she wants. This according to the participants lead to promiscuous activities. I tried to probe my participants, both male and female with regards to this topic but none of them had nothing to add. They were not quite familiar with the practice and could not relate to it. Some cited that they only know the practice common amongst the Venda speaking people and not the Tsonga. However, I have chosen to include the contribution in my thesis. I have included it because the practice was cited in my interviews in relation to male circumcision. The two practices are not far off from each other and this I believe sheds light into some of the cultural practices that are used as justification by the youth to engage in multiple partnerships, not only by the Tsonga, but by other ethnic groups as well such as the Venda.

Male circumcision was also discussed amongst cultural influences that are contributing factors to the recent trend of multiple partnerships. Male circumcision is a common cultural practice among the Tsonga people and other cultures in South Africa. Circumcision is regarded as a rite of passage that young boys should go through in order to be regarded as real men, and to achieve the status of manhood. In this regard, initiation schools headed by traditionalists are said to play a significant role in socialising young boys to become responsible young men, but based on what happens during circumcision amongst young Tsonga men this statement seems highly contestable. Recently the interpretation of this cultural process gives the suggestion that initiation paves the way for young men to engage in unlimited sexual relations and multiple-partners with the right not to be questioned. There seems to have been some alterations to the original purpose of the cultural practice of male initiation in the Tsonga culture. After initiation and boys are declared "real men", there seems to be an expectation for the young men to explore their new title of manhood. This thus becomes a very integral part of their masculine identity. HIV/AIDS is also seen to be fuelled by this practice. As Gilbert and Selikow (2011:228)

suggest, once circumcised, especially the “traditional” way in a traditional setting, for example the mountain, a lot of men insist on flesh to flesh sex with the perception that because they went for “traditional” circumcision, they are protected from diseases. The trick is said to lie in the herbs which they use during traditional circumcision which protect men from HIV/AIDS.

As it was unashamedly put to me:

“When you go through initiation and you transition to a real men you become better in bed. So you have to test drive yourself, and explore a world that was not known to you before”.

Themba in the same vein stated that:

“There is definitely a difference between men who are circumcised and those who are not. The difference does not only lie there, but there is a difference between those of us who go to the mountain and those who go to the hospital. At the hospital you are not taught how to become a real man, they just perform the procedure and then you go home. At the mountain on the other hand we experience extreme hardship, and we are taught tricks you see, so we are bound to be better. And once you get these new tricks why not explore them”.

Jabu, another male participant stated that:

“Cultural circumcision is also understood by those that are deeply rooted to the Tsonga culture to cleanse and protect the next generation which comes from circumcised men from dangerous external influences and evil. It also binds all youth to their friends and ascertains generational respect and authority pattern”.

From the responses it was apparent that indeed the aspect of teaching young boys to be responsible men was now sexualised, and the real meaning of initiation eroded. The practice also now advocates for a masculinity that mocks and makes fun of young men who opt to have their circumcision performed in a hospital setting. Knowing what a delicate subject this is to men since they are not allowed to talk about their experiences in the initiation school I did not want to probe any further. I also know that they are not supposed to reveal this sort of information to women so I did not want to invade anyone’s privacy. Besides, circumcision was only one of the cultural influences discussed by some participants, and most of them were not really comfortable with discussing the matter. It would have been selfish and unethical on my side to force them to divulge information or engage in a conversation they are not comfortable with for my own gain.

I was surprised that young women also endorsed these sentiments. There was a clear agreement from some female participants that there is a difference between a man who has gone to the initiation school and one who has not. They also agreed to sentiments shared by the male participants that intimacy with a man who has gone to the mountain for circumcision or the hospital is different. A lot of the participants stated that they prefer men who have gone to the mountain than those who have gone to the hospital. Apparently after the initiation process the men are taught how to handle a woman in bed. This made me wonder if these claims were valid or they were just being stated to confirm cultural myths that have been part of Giyani people's lives for a very long time. Also some female participants refuted these claims and stated that there is really no difference, people just exaggerate the importance of traditional circumcision. The difference between the two lies in the setting. Meaning there is no difference in any way, shape or form between men circumcised the traditional way at the mountains, and those circumcised at the hospital.

Another cultural factor which was used as justification for having multiple partnerships by mostly males rather than females was polygamy. Forefathers having practiced polygamy was often cited as reasons why Tsonga young men feel the need to engage in multiple-partnerships. It was mostly stated that men have sexual needs that cannot be satisfied by one partner, and as a result it is better to have as many partners as one can, so that when one is not in the mood you simply move on to the other partner. I was amazed by how some participants stated that it was their "right" to have as many partners as they can. For example Simon stated to me that:

"A woman has no right to tell me how many people I should date. It is my right as a man to have as many partners as I can. I am a very strong man. One woman will not be able to handle me emotionally and sexually. Not that I don't love my girlfriends I love all of them, but sometimes that is just the way it is".

Polygamy is indeed an African custom that no one can refute. The reasons that the younger participants were giving me in terms of using polygamy to justify multiple-partnerships was different from what the older participants had shared with me. Having done interviews with older participants at first was beneficial because it shed some light with regards to reasons why men practiced polygamy in the past. First polygamy was practiced in a more dignified way, *lobola* was paid for all wives and all parties involved had an agreement and could live under the same roof without any quarrels. The first wife also gives the go ahead for the husband to marry the second wife. Without the first wife's agreement then polygamy is impossible. With

the younger participants I found that even though polygamy is cited as justification for having multiple partners the arrangement is a secret. The parties involved except for the man do not know of the arrangement. The first girlfriend, often referred to as the “main” does not give the go ahead for the boyfriend to pursue other partners. This is explanation as to why many girls fight when they realise that they are involved with the same partner.

These are the cultural practises that were mentioned to be contributing factors in present day multiple partnerships. Besides *lobola* which a lot of participants drew on as giving them the right to engage in multiple partnerships and cheat on their partners, as well as how these *lobola* relationships produce non-*lobola* relationships participants did not draw on the rest of the practices as motivation for them to engage in multiple partnerships. This shows that the term “it’s our culture” is used loosely to rationalize and/or legitimize risky sexual behaviour by the youth. This means that the “culture” that they draw on, and claim to be old, to normalize and justify multiple-partnerships is quite recent and invented. Like Delius and Glaser argue, the invocation of tradition to justify, or normalise, contemporary multipartnership sexual practice, are “simplistic” (2004: 84). This “culture” proves to be a response to contemporary situations which seeks legitimacy in history

Economic Factors and Multiple-partnerships

Giyani in many ways still resemble a traditional setting. Greater Giyani is largely rural, with Giyani the only semi-urban concentration. To this day growth and development has been/ and remains relatively slow. There is still, maybe even more than before a great deal of unemployment opportunities in Giyani. Given this reality, a lot of young men relocate to larger economic centres such as Polokwane and Johannesburg for example for better work opportunities. The level of adult education in the area is also relatively low, with a low number of the population having finished grade 12 or attained a higher education qualification, and a very high number of those with no formal education at all. This has serious implications in terms of employment and money generating opportunities for the population. Employment is largely secured in supermarkets such as Spar, Shoprite, Pick n Pay, or by waitressing at a few restaurants in the area, furniture shops, a very few number at the local municipality, Indian small shops, and basically by opening a salon by the roadside, or selling fruits and vegetables. Those with formal education are able to secure employments as either teachers, nurses, and

police workers, and this may be owed to the free bursary grants that are provided to individuals from poverty stricken households in the area.

Community living standards reveal that a lot of people in the Greater Giyani area live beneath the poverty line. These low income levels indicate that most of the population is dependent on a small income, implying that the local population is less able to afford basic needs and services. Household dynamics at home are set up in such a way that only one person in a household has a job, and the rest of the family depends on their income. Even where this is not the case, the type of jobs that most people have in Giyani as stated above make it hard to sustain a household and make ends meet. It can thus be argued that it is these economic realities that contribute and act as a driving force in a lot of multiple-partnerships in the area. This is perhaps what Gilbert and Selikow's (2011) argue that numerous material factors contribute to multiple-partnerships in present day. They pay attention to rising unemployment and the social inequalities that leave some groups, especially poor women, extremely vulnerable (2011: 328). Poor access to education, combined with low rates of employment, they state, result in economic inequalities leading to inadequate access to basic resources, such as housing, healthcare and social welfare services (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 328) which is the case in Giyani. This socioeconomic disadvantage has been found by Gilbert and Selikow to be associated with a variety of unsafe sexual behaviours and experiences, especially for females, but this does not exclude males.

With unemployment and problems fulfilling social roles, Silberschmidt asserts that male identity and self-esteem have become increasingly linked to sexuality and sexual manifestation. Multiple-partnerships have thus become essential for masculinity and self-esteem (2001: 657). On the other hand, a lack of economic independence among young Tsonga men and women proved to be a key driver of multiple-partnerships in Giyani. A lot of the male and female participants who admitted to engaging in multiple-partnerships came from impoverished backgrounds, were not financially independent, and some of the older participants only studied up to grade twelve and did not further their studies at any college or tertiary institution. The impact of this financial situation on both young men and women will be shown in the chapter, starting by how it affects women then moving to discuss how it affects men. With regards to the women, this either makes these young women susceptible to sharing their boyfriends with other women and doing nothing about it, or engage in multiple partnerships for financial support. This is what Gilbert and Selikow (2011) term transactional sex, arguing that where women have little access to resources, often their only way to obtaining those resources is

transactional sex (Gilbert & Selikow, 2011: 329). Transactional sex also gives rise to a vocabulary that describes men as ‘ministers’ of transport, fashion, education and the like. Depending on what services the men can provide.

There is definitely a strong link between poverty and engaging in multiple-partnerships. However, this is not to say that there are no other factors which contribute to engagement in multiple-partnerships.

A lot of my female participants agreed being wholly or partly financially dependent on their male partners. When asked about their reasons for engaging in multiple-partnerships, poverty played a role to some extent. Mellissa for example told me that:

“I come from a very poor family. My parents cannot do everything for me. It is even difficult for me to ask them for things because I know what they give me is all they have”.

She continued:

“At first when I started dating it was never really about the money. But I was introduced to this whole new world and got to realise that a man can actually take care of you. He can provide for you financially so I thought to myself why not”.

Basani’s story was also very similar to that of Mellissa, she told me that:

“My mother works in Johannesburg and got herself a boyfriend that side. She hardly ever comes home and it seems like she has forgotten that she has kids. She hardly sends us money for food, clothes and everything. So me having boyfriends ensures that I do not go to bed hungry. One will buy me airtime, perfumes and other things, and there are those that I bring home for sleep overs that buy me groceries”.

I probed further and asked if there was no adult at her home to take care of them, or to even allow her to bring men for sleep overs at the family house. To my surprise she replied no. She stated that:

“It is only me and my two sisters left in the family home and they basically live the same way that I do. You have to fend for yourself. The things that I get are enough to take care of me and not them. Sometimes we help each other but if you want the nice things like clothes and cosmetics you have to hustle them yourself. Of cause I share with them sometimes but it won’t be the same as getting it by themselves”.

Nsovo stated to me that she lives with her grandmother and they depend on her grant for survival.

“I live with my grandmother and she is a pensioner. We depend on her social grant for survival. And you know how grandmothers are. They never understand that you are a woman and you need to look good. Once she buys all the necessities at home the rest she does not care about. How I do my hair in this circumstance? How do I buy make up?”

She continued:

“I have to find myself a man to take care of me, and sometimes I even end up helping out at home with the money that I get from him. And to tell you the truth one boyfriend is not enough in my situation, because whenever I demand things from one person I feel like I am being unfair to them. So it is nice if one gives me money this week, and the following week I ask money from the other guy. As much as these relationships are for financial gains at the same time you do not want to show these men that it is like that. You want to make them believe and feel loved”.

As stated above, being in a relationship for/or in exchange for money or other basic goods is referred to as ‘transactional sex’, implying a short term or long term encounter for short term or long term financial or material gain. As indicated by the responses above, a number of sexual relationships were described that included ‘monetary’ advantage. Some short term and some longer term. This applies mostly to females than males.

Mixo stated that:

“I think we get blinded by money and this often leads to cheating”.

In similar vein, Nyiko stated that:

“There are no jobs so I keep on looking for the one who has some money. The one that will be able to give me some money”.

The female participant’s financial status has also opened up space for blessers and blesses. Makhoba (2016: na) writes that recently the term blesser has surfaced to explain another kind of transactional sex relationship where a man or a woman “blesses” their partners with money and sponsors their expensive lifestyle. Some of the girls in the area admitted to dating and sleeping with older men in exchange for money or goods. Most of these men are people’s husbands and fathers. This supports Makhoba’s (2016) observations that Some blessers are married, and have girlfriends/boyfriends on the side that they bless, others are single with “a

lot of money to throw around and cannot settle for one steady girlfriend”. These men are able to take care of them and it makes the relationship easy because from the female’s perspective, there are no strings attached. These men have wives that they go home to every night, and they prefer the relationship to be private and less known as possible to protect their families, images and their social standing. This in turn favours the females because the less people know about the relationship, the greater freedom they have to explore relationships with other men. Some of these relationships may even be genuine relationships since the financial aspect is already covered by the blessers. It is a similar kind of situation with dating a young man who has paid *lobola* and already has a wife.

It was further communicated to me that unlike “youthful” relationships that I would observe at local braai and chill areas, and the recently opened club, these relationships usually take place at night in a private location. So a great deal of secrecy takes place in order to maintain the relationships because once the wife finds out, or the blesser’s kids know about it, then the relationship would have to be terminated. And the financial and material gains would be lost. Surprisingly, the relationships with blessers are not based on some sort of competition to dethrone the wife, or get the wife to move out of her matrimonial home or divorce her husband, or to win the “main” partner status, unlike the relationships discussed above under *lobola*.

Clearly being unemployed results in needs for basic items such as food or money. Multiple-partnerships and sexual exchange thus provides a means for survival for a good number of female youth in Giyani. The concept of economic advantage thus also contributes a great deal in selecting sexual partners on the basis of what they could bring to a short or longer-term relationship, in a context where there is little underlying commitment beyond sex. Choosing to be in a partnership with a man seems to be largely dependent on financial and material gains. These young women choose their partners based on their financial standing and ability to take care of them. One unable to provide the financial support needed by the young women could risk being cheated on with a partner who can. This supports Silberschmidt’s assertion that traditionally, poor men were despised, while rich men were admired and this remains the case today (Silberschmidt’s, 2001: 662).

Surprisingly, from my male participants there was no single one who mentioned being in a relationship with a woman for financial or material gain. No male participant discussed depending on a woman to make ends meet or to take care of the situation at home. Instead, the concern is more towards being able to be the provider than being provided for. This has a

cultural significance to it. A man is expected to be the head of the household and the provider. A man who is unable to provide for himself or his family, and is financially dependent on a woman is seen as not being a real man. This could be the explanation for my finding. Or it could be the fact that a lot of women in the area do not have financial means to be able to take care of their boyfriends.

Changes in the economic status of women may help to reduce the dependency on men, and thus multiple-partnerships. Research has shown that educated, and financially independent women are less likely to be cheated on (Hunter, 2005: 396). This is because they are more confident about leaving such relationships—this was also communicated by women and men who I spoke to. Women who do not need financial support exercise their agency in relationships. Even given the dynamics discussed above, it is highly unlikely that educated and financially independent women will stand being cheated on. A shift in class also comes with different ideas about relationships. It is common for young women who stood being cheated on to stand their ground once they become financially independent. Also, when someone in their family finds a job and is able to provide and support the family, ideas about relationships change and suddenly what girls could endure they can no longer endure any further. This was made clear by a story of a young woman I interviewed by the name of Tumi. Tumi and her now ex-boyfriend met when they were teenagers. Tumi was just sixteen years old when they met and they have been dating for ten years now. She comes from a big impoverished household and has 7 siblings. Her ex is financially stable and comes from a well off family. He works in Johannesburg and rents an apartment that side. Since the beginning of their relationship her ex-boyfriend has always been unfaithful. She endured his cheating ways for so long. Her ex-boyfriend took her to school and paid for her studies. Once she obtained her degree she left him. In her own words:

“I stayed with this man for so long while he mistreated me. I only stayed for so long because he took care of me, and I could not just leave the relationship without benefitting. Imagine walking out of the relationship empty handed after everything he put me through. You have to be clever”.

She continued:

“I heard stories of how he lives with another girl in Johannesburg but I did not say anything. He sent me money to support myself every month so that made up for my heartbreak. I can

take care of myself now and buy my own things and I do not need him. As far as I am concerned that relationship is over”.

Men also seem more interested in women they can support rather than independent women. This is maybe in part because it allows them to do their dirty deeds. Some men cannot stand the financial independence of women because these women will always challenge them. For some men, empowered women represent a loss of power and authority. Culturally, men have been ascribed the roles of head of households, protector and provider. The current social and economic conditions in Giyani make it difficult for many men to achieve the desired masculinity such as securing jobs, marrying, fathering children, or establishing their households.

Like stated in one of my interviews:

“Independent women have that sense of not needing us men because they can do things for themselves you see. They do not take nonsense from anyone and I think they know that this puts them at an advantage. That is why you find that most of the guys dating independent women are faithful. It’s like you have hit the jackpot but am not sure if that is the life want for myself. Independent women are too controlling”.

Many young men do not work and some are still wholly dependent on their mothers and fathers for financial support. As such they may feel that women have taken roles that were previously ascribed to them, resulting in uncertainty, insecurity and anxiety. And as a way of asserting their masculinity, multiple-partnerships become a scapegoat (Reid & Walker, 2005: 10). In this context, multiple-partnerships become a mechanism through which to reinforce male power and authority. Some men become frustrated and angry when they can no longer live up to traditional forms of masculinity, such as providing materially and financially, which in some cases may also lead to them reacting violently to their partners.

Silberschmidt’s presents a similar argument, stating that today’s “sexual networking” and multiple-partnerships are not the result of some traditional “permissiveness”, but they are the result of a breakdown of traditional norms and regulations surrounding sexual behaviour. Multiple-partnerships seem to be the tool to acquire self-esteem, a tool of domination and control over women as well as a legitimate way of manifesting masculinity; a sentiment also shared by Hunter (2005: 389). The high value placed on men seeking multiple-partners increasingly filled the void left by men’s inability to become men through previous means. If you cannot be a successful breadwinner, you can be a successful seducer (Silberschmidt’s,

2001: 667-668). Also, the financial situation also impacts on men in that they are unable to pay *lobola*. The inability faced by men to pay *lobola* thus mean that they are unable to establish a family unit that some men take pride in and this causes great anxiety for them and feelings of impotence.

This chapter has explored whether multiple partnerships in historical perspective inform multiple partnerships today. In doing so the chapter has looked at cultural practices that have been cited as contributing factors to the trend of multiple partnerships today. The practices include *lobola*, *ku phanga*, virginity testing, female genital mutilation, male circumcision and polygamy. Besides *lobola* in which actual multiple partnerships are being structured in the light of this very common practice, and *lobola* being the social real in which these multiple partnerships operate, other practices were not cited by participants as having influenced their decision to engage in multiple partnerships. As such, I have argued that that the term “it’s our culture” is used loosely to rationalize and/or legitimize risky sexual behaviour by the youth. This means that the “culture” that they draw on, and claim to be old, to normalize and justify multiple-partnerships is quite recent and invented. The chapter also shows that the invocation of tradition to justify, or normalise, contemporary multipartnership sexual practice, are “simplistic”.

The chapter has however revealed that engagement in multiple partnerships is closely tied to the economic circumstances of the actors for example dependency on men for financial support for women, and lack of economic opportunities for men to assert their manliness thus rendering them impotence. What is important here is how these relationships are conducted under certain circumstance not only why they are conducted.

These multiple partnerships do not just happen but they have spaces in which they are initiated and played out. Spending time at the local braai and chill area as well as the local club shed light and helped me grasp the context in which these relationships come to being. It also shed light into how the socio-economic economic circumstances of actors can decide one’s fate in terms of relationships. All these factors are explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

SPECTACLE OF THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season is arguably the most anticipated holiday of the year. It is the time when rural areas, especially Giyani as a case in point becomes alive and vibrant. People attach a different meaning to this time beyond that of religious significance. Good It is a time to see and be seen. It is like people spend the whole year preparing for this time. It is the time when you notice the gathering of people who are based in Giyani full time, and those that work in different cities and are only home for the festive season. During lunchtime, almost every day, people gather up at different local braai and chill areas, and during the night at a local club that recently opened. These places become very packed by those with cars and those without cars given a derogatory name “Jonnie Walkers” to refer to them. It becomes a time where people show off their cars, clothes, money, and that they have made it in life.

Men’s Practices of Multiple-Partnerships

Young men working and studying in Johannesburg become celebrities during this time. Partly because young men stuck in Giyani aspire to be like them. They are seen as having money and thus it makes “sense” to hangout around them during the festive season. They are the ones who buy drinks for their peers who are stuck in Giyani, and this is done in order to prove themselves. To prove that they are living well in Johannesburg and making a fortune. Those still studying will make up bursaries only known to themselves so as to claim money and status they do not have. Even those that struggle to make ends meet in Johannesburg and are based in places like Alexander and only do odd jobs get to enjoy the celebrity status. As far as they are concerned, they live well in Sandton and work for the most luxurious companies.

They command respect from their peers and send them around to braai meet for them, get them drinks, and to even wash cars for them. The peers are even sent to organise girls in return for a six pack of beer. This I noticed while I was doing my observations at Man’ombe braai and chill area. Guys were seated in different groups, some outside their cars playing loud music with a cooler box in sight, some in the benches found at Man’ombe, and some braaing meat by the large braai stand area. There was a clear difference in terms of appearance and clothes wise from those from the city and those based in Giyani full time. Those based in Gauteng wear branded clothes, but this is not to say that those based in Giyani do not wear branded clothes,

they have the up to date fashion items, they wear expensive sneakers and shoes. What I also noticed is that “Magayisa” or those based in Gauteng have particular prestigious drinks that they opt for. They do not just drink any beer. The drinks that were trending this festive season were Corona, Stella Artois, Miller and Heineken. These drinks are also linked to one’s status. By just observing the kind of drink one is drinking, girls and others are able to spot those they should go for, and those they should ignore. The less fortunate ones sit with bottles of what they call “N’gud”, the 750ml bottle of either black label, Amstel or Castle Lager.

The pressure to conform and have multiple partners during the festive season stems from the need to be viewed as a real man, a lady’s man. For some, this sense of pressure to conform to having multiple partners is linked to wanting to prove oneself and to confirm one’s status. Failure to conform is noted to diminish one’s status, whereas conformity and having many girlfriends is seen to increase respect from one’s peers. This is in line with Tibesigwa and Visser’s argument that the presence of social norms, whereby masculinity is associated with having many sex partners and having concurrent sexual partnerships, along with the social pressure to comply with these norms – either driven by the desire to build or maintain relationships, to be accepted, for esteem, prestige or even popularity – are important driving mechanisms behind persistent ‘sexual risk-taking’ (Tibesigwa & Visser, 2014: 02). It is during the festive season that one should make a name for themselves, a name that will have a lasting effect and have people talking for some time. It is like building one’s status so that in years to come, their reputation is still well known and respected. “Don’t you know so and so. Who drives this sort of car, and wear these kind of clothes” is usually recited, not only amongst young women but also amongst the young men stuck in Giyani that befriend these guys.

There is a recognition of alcohol as contributing to multiple-partnerships amongst participants. As it was communicated to me, a lot of these relationships are initiated during the festive season. They are also initiated in large drinking gatherings like the braai and chill area and the Quick Café, the club in the area. As communicated by one young man.

“Multiple partnerships are closely linked to the use of alcohol and meeting up in shebeens and clubs. Girls are easy when they have had a drink. By that time they are tipsy, some even want you to take them home because it is already late, so they will agree to anything. That includes agreeing to date someone”.

Indeed, as observed in my field sites, sometimes it takes only a bottle of wine to initiate a relationship, or a six pack of ciders. There is an unspoken code of initiated discussions in these

settings. Sometimes the code involves just sending a drink to a lady, or simply by winking at the desired lady or just licking one's lips. It depends on the girl's response as to whether the discussion will happen or not. A smile signals interest and that all is well. Total ignorance signals that the person is not "vibing" with you. The intoxication which comes with alcohol is not the important language here, the important language is the exchange and sponsoring of beverages, and this becomes the main concern here. While intoxication is all about losing inhibition, the exchange of beverages seems to be a rather rational language of what someone is worth, what someone can afford – it is a whole game in-itself of which everybody pretty much knows the rule and the meaning, and which pre-structures the encounter between man and women ...

One night while doing my observations at the local club, I noticed quite a number of signals being made. A friend of mine was also called outside by a wink and a nodding of the head, signalling that they should go outside. They had their discussion and came back in together after a couple of minutes. From then on it was as if they had known each other for quite some time, and to my surprise they went home together. I also got to experience the whole idea of being courted in a night club, when some guy came to sit next to me in an attempt to win my heart. I was sitting right next to my then boyfriend now husband. I was quite surprised at the guy's level of confidence. To actually approach me when my partner was right there next to me. I communicated that I was in a committed relationship and the guy did not seem bothered. Instead what he said was that we could have our relationship in secret and my partner does not have to know, it will be our own little secret. I refused. As if that was not enough, the guy went to the extent of obtaining my cell phone number and calling me the following day, asking to meet up. I only realised that this was another way of gaining some prestigious status. As it was communicated to me by my participants, and as I have written in the previous chapter, 'hitting someone with a brick', or simply taking their girlfriend from them came with some form of respect and prestige, and that is what the guy was trying to achieve.

Another night of observations left me puzzled and short of one friend, someone I had considered my best friend since high school. I asked her and my partner to accompany me to the club for research observations. We would treat it as a fun night out. We got there and found ourselves a table, and ordered a couple of rounds of cocktails. As the night progressed, my partner went to sit with his friends who arrived shortly after us. My then best friend and I sat together and I was busy with my observations. Watching people dance, people's girlfriends with other guys, and guys I had trusted to be faithful in relationships simply cheat on their

partners. At around 10pm I decided I had enough of the sweet stuff and decided to order ciders instead. That did not go down well and I ended up vomiting and feeling dizzy. I demanded for my partner to take me home so I could rest. Driving home, I demanded that he dropped me off first because I really was not feeling well, I had not had alcohol in a while so maybe that also contributed. My partner dropped me off and on his way to dropping my then best friend off she demanded to go back to the club. Upon arriving there, she started following my partner around.

Just to give a brief background of my then best friend, she comes from a middle class household, and one of the people stuck in Giyani. Her and I always get together every time I go home. Within 30 minutes of arriving home, laying on my bed, I received messages from people alerting me of “what was going on”. Apparently, my then best friend started making moves on my partner and followed him around, throwing herself at him. From what I was feeling that time I thought I was dreaming or something. I only got to attend to the matter in the morning. I was left confused and at that point only realised that what I was researching and asking people about all this time actually happened to me. In this case I can say my friend was trying to challenge my “main” girlfriend status, and did not care about being the “other”. She was prepared to burn bridges just to be in a relationship, and in Giyani youth terms, hit me with a brick to gain the respect and status of having dethroned someone of their main girlfriend status.

Upon sitting down with her trying to figure out what happened the only explanation that I got was that I was in a happy relationship, things are going quite well for me and she has been envious of me for quite some time. I also learnt from my partner that it was not her first attempt, and he refrained from telling me because he did not want to cause tension between the two of us. All this while what I had failed to realise was that my partner was the perfect boyfriend candidate to many of the girls in Giyani. He was based in Gauteng, only came home once in a while and ultimately by default that makes them think he has money and is able to take care of himself. He is considered a “Moreki” because he is able to buy drinks for himself in those kind of settings, by that time he got around with his parent’s car which is another plus, and he was in a committed relationship which most girls are quite impressed with. So basically by inviting him to my observations I was shooting myself on the foot, and “advertising” him. To cut the long story short, my ex best friend and I are distant friends now, and only exchange greetings. This shows the social tension which is involved in this practice. People are prepared to risk and lose relationships to fulfil their desired “ideal” sort of relationship. Also the information above

shows that the relationships do not just happen by chance but that there is a real logic to it – Judgement and reasoning as to who to pursue and for what reasons.

The pressure to appear successful and be accepted is so high that during the festive season a lot of the young men in Giyani hire a car before they go home in order to appear relevant and to leave an impression. What people fail to understand, and the question that is thrown around a lot is how someone can afford an expensive car while they live in a four room house, or while their mother and siblings are suffering back home. People question why one would not establish and extend their home rather than buy an expensive car. What makes people more suspicious is that the young men come back with different cars every year. The question is what sort of job could they possibly be doing in the cities that pay so much for them to be able to purchase a car every year. As communicated to me by Themba, a twenty five year old permanent resident of Giyani. Themba has two sisters from his mother's side, and six other siblings from his father's side. His mother is his father's second wife. However, tragically she passed away while he was still in high school. Themba's father does not have a permanent job. He does temporary jobs whenever an opportunity comes up. Through government bursaries Themba was able to study further and he works at Giyani Standard bank. Through the money that he earns he has been able to extend his four room home into a decent house, renovated it and bought decent furniture. He also supports his sisters. Themba is not married. His sole focus t the moment as stated by him is getting his sisters through school and finishing up the renovations at his home. During our interview, Themba stated that:

“A lot of these guys are just like us if not worse than us. At least I come from a decent home, and a decent house. I don't need to have all the luxurious stuff but my heart is happy knowing that my home is well taken care of”

He continued:

“what is the point of having expensive clothes, an expensive car and flashing money around when your home is not well taken care of? You will even be embarrassed to take those girls you are so desperate to please home because the lifestyle you project when we are out drinking is different from the lifestyle at home.

Themba was brought up in a very poor yet traditional manner and in a traditional family which explains why his focus would be taking care of home first than trying to impress his peers and the girls of Giyani.

Another participant by the name of Vali shared similar sentiments. Vali is twenty-nine years old and comes from a decent home with two three siblings and two working parents. Vali is not married and does not have a job. He still depends on his father and mother for basic necessities. The anxiety in his response showed that he felt threatened by Gauteng men. They possessed something he did not have, and the economic situation of the area makes it difficult to attain certain things such as a car, nice clothes and a house.

He stated that:

“We know that a lot of the guys are just chansas, they live just like us in Gauteng. They just come here to give some of us a hard time and take our girlfriends with rented cars and borrowed clothes. We know their business now. They forget that it is a small world and people talk”.

Both these responses reveal that there is another story out there of what is important and that is probably much more influenced by the idea of a good household – but the festive season is a moment of performance – and it is not meant to last long term, it is fleeting but maybe cathartic because of its intensity. It is one thing to actually have something to compete with the Joburg guys (like a proper home and family) such as Themba, it is another thing to have to pierce through their performance because one is actually threatened by them such as Vali.

From these responses I was able to distinguish between the two types of young men that are found in Giyani. One that lives for the establishment of their households and views manhood in that sense, and the other who lives for the moment and views manhood as having multiple partners and being respected by their peers because of the possessions they have. Men who stay behind in Giyani obviously have much more to fear when the festive season comes as they are competing on the same ground as the Joburg guys. Meanwhile the household guys who have done well for themselves and live comfortably with their families get overshadowed by the excessiveness of the festive season spectacle, but they don't necessarily get outdone because their financial standing is not a performance but actual reality. Once the festive season is over, they still maintain their status and possessions.

“Magayisa” cause so much stir and anxiety not only during the festive season but every time they visit home. Relationships are shaken and young men based in Giyani become nervous because most of them get cheated on this time, and some lose their girlfriends altogether. The envy on “magayisa” is heard from the responses of these young men every time you ask about them. A number of incidences in which these young men have lost their “main” and “other”

partners to “magayisa” were communicated to me. Money and possessions as was stated, is the root of all this evil. Not being able to provide for the girls means that one must always be prepared for what is to come when “magayisa” are around. As Makwakwa stated:

“I once lost a girlfriend to a “gayisa”. I had never felt so worthless and stupid in my life until that incident. I had always assured myself that our love was strong to overcome anything. Until I lost her”.

It is ironic that now, in the context of losing their girlfriends young men are suddenly referring to “true love”. This is a real turning point of how these relationships clearly have two sides to it, and allow woman quite a bit of choice and freedom which turns to be quite threatening to men.

Makwakwa continued:

“We grow up knowing that to enjoy life we must plough together, so that when we reap the produce, we reap something we worked together on and can be proud of. But it seems like all these girls are not interested in the hard work, they just want to come and find a farm full of mealie meal and reap”.

This is important and shows the pressure on man and how indeed their masculinity is in crisis and how women refuse to play along with this.

In similar vein, Joe stated that:

“Such issues just add to the depression that we already have. One is stuck here with no job opportunities. We know we have to fend for our girlfriends but the situation here does not allow. It’s not that we do not know or we do not want to, but it is tough. Then someone comes and steals your girlfriend. That is emasculating, and we cannot all move to Gauteng now can we? Some of us do not want to. This is home”.

This section shows the fragility of the men – their anxieties and their depression. It is common for human beings to come up with alternatives in order to deal with their unfortunate circumstances, and in this case the fragility of the men and their masculinity at crisis. As such it is no surprise that some of these young men subscribe to the fuck boy movement which is again a kind of subjectivity which implies that the men are in charge and drive the multiple partnerships, in order to assert their manliness and claim back their power.

In the wake of this multiple-partnerships trend, there is what is now known as the #FuckboyMovement. A fuck boy is defined as boy who is interested in only strictly sexual relationships. A fuck boy will lead a girl on only to let her down, then apologize. Once forgiven and welcomed back into the girl's trust, he will go on to ask for seductive pictures of the girl. Fuck boys will pretend to genuinely care about the girl but always fail to prove the supposed affection. If a girl tries to stand up to a fuck boy, he will most likely deny everything and turn it all around on the girl making it seem as though the conflict at stake is her fault and he has done nothing wrong and hates when girls accuse with him for "no reason". He will always come crawling back because that is how he boosts his ego and cannot withstand the dispossession of one of his "baes" (girlfriends), because he surely has more than one. Boys like this have big ego's and cannot be trusted. They are also hard to get rid of because they say all the right things to get the girl back. Being able to persuade someone to be in a relationship is seen by fuck boys as relatively easy, even outside of the context of meeting places such as shebeens, and as stated above, opportunities are strengthened through the availability of cell phone technology. This is the discourse which is circulating about them in the area.

Based on popular media, the movement has long been popular in Gauteng for quite some time now and has just gained popularity in Giyani. This is what I term influence of the urban. People based in Gauteng take ideas and bring them home. There are quite a number of young men in Giyani now who consider themselves fuck boys, and this in a way legitimises having multiple partnerships for them. The thinking behind this is that once a girl agrees to be in a relationship with them she already knows she will not be alone. The labelling of the movement says it all. The infidelity does not even have to be communicated. Once you date a fuck boy it is quite obvious what you are getting yourself into. Like stated above, these young men are quite charming and manipulative. It easy to fall for their lies.

Fuck boys also must maintain their lifestyle. One cannot be a fuck boy and be broke. They must dress well, drive nice cars and be able to support their girlfriends. They must also be good looking and young. Some state that the fact that it is called the fuck "boy" movement (emphasis on boy), proves that it is for immature boys, and not respectable men. Here the explanation given is a myth rather than a reality.

Bongani, a twenty five year old councillor in the area stated that subscribing to the fuck boy movement mentioned to me that the movement gives them great freedom to do what they want, and they are able to date any girl they want in the area.

He stated that:

“The secret lies in your charm and being able to deceive these girls. To be a successful fuck boy one has to be firm and never catch feelings. One must take control and never show these girls that they are into them. Otherwise you are screwed”.

He continued:

“what we have realised is that these girls love trough man. It’s like the more of an ass hole you are, the more they want you. You must know the right things to say”.

This section has looked at men’s practices of multiple partnership during the festive season and how relationships are negotiated in this regard. The chapter has showed how the pressure to appear successful and be respected by one’s peer’s forms basis of this performance. This goes as far as lying, hiring cars, wearing branded clothes and the particular beer one should drink. This all goes well for joburg dwellers as they win girls during this time, but comes with anxiety and depression for permanent residents of Giyani as they cannot live up to their standards. Given these dynamics faced by these men during the festive season, how are young women active participants during this time and how are they affected by these dynamics? The following section looks at women’s practices of multiple partnerships during the festive season, and the preparations as well as their performance during this time.

Women’s Practices of Multiple-Partnerships

It is not only young men who prepare for the festive season in Giyani. Young women are as much active participants like men. They also become alive and vibrant. It is also time for them to be seen. Preparations for some start early in the year to prepare for summer bodies. They want to have flat stomachs and well-toned bodies all in the effort to look good, they want to look approachable, and above all, they want to stand out from the others. Young women start doing their hair. All different types of hairstyles, some they would not do during the year.

Young women also start preparing for the festive season by buying new “relevant” clothes. The clothes comprise of crop tops, waist high jeans, short dresses and miniskirts, heels, sneakers to name a few. Clothes from Mr Price, Jet, Pep become trendy because basically “that is what they are able to afford” says one participant. So it is no surprise to see young women wearing similar clothes at these local chill areas. In such cases it becomes a battle of who wore it best,

who accessorised the outfit better, or simply who the outfit looks better on. Adding to looking the part, the ladies have to get their hair done for the festive season. From Natural hair styles like Afro, braids and dreadlocks, to Brazilian hair weaves. Their make-up also has to be on point and by this time one must have mastered the art of drawing their eyebrows nicely.

Many young girls in the area, as young as fourteen years old take part in the whole festive season shenanigans. They even dress to look older than their age, in the hope of getting into the club, and scoring themselves a few potential men. This was never an issue when I started doing fieldwork the festive season of December 2016. It only started being a precaution when the club was shut down for illegal operation and owners had to review their licence. As stated above, girls as young as fourteen years old come to the club and hang out outside instead. As much as there is music, drinks and good vibes inside, you also find people in parked cars outside the club, playing their own music and having a cooler box in sight. These young girls as well as others will walk around the parking area until someone approaches them or asks them to join them where they are seated. One cannot help but wonder if this financial dependency on men is a behaviour that is so normalised in the area that young girls grow up aspiring for such. That they would want to look old to score themselves a man who is able to support them, and that they would even dream of going to clubs at such a young age.

The common theme at all these chill areas is the growing trend of females arriving there alone or in groups (in groups in case none of them get lucky and then they will accompany each other home. Besides, it is always better and fun to party in groups, so it was communicated). Another common theme is leaving with different people, or sitting drunk waiting for someone to offer them a lift home. Inside the club, it's a competition amongst the young women as to who is a better dancer. In their crop tops, short dresses and mini-skirts, these young women dance provocatively to attract attention, to be noticed. It is as if this club is a place where one advertises themselves or their sexual availability. The vomit outside the clubs, on pavements and others on their clothes, bears testimony to the ridiculous amounts of alcohol consumed at these venues.

Another trend that I noticed is young ladies going to the club and man'ombe without money to buy themselves drinks, with the hope of getting someone to buy drinks for them. This shows the role drinks play in the encounter between man and women So basically these young women dress up, look good, and go to these places to just sit until someone offers to buy them a drink. One participant named Ntsakisi confirmed this by stating that:

“You just have to look good, go and sit there. There is no way one will go home without any guy noticing them. Then from there he buys drinks and we take it from there. It is really easy. And guys around here love girls so much that once they see a girl alone they go crazy.”

Ntsakisi is a twenty one year old from Giyani. She lives with her grandmother and they depend on her grandmother’s government grant for a living. She finished matric and did not study further because of her financial situation. She does not work but explains that she loves having a good time. That particular night I spotted her she was wearing a pink mini skirt, black crop top and lace up sandals. She caught my attention because she looked beautiful, and when she arrived she sat with a friend on a table for quite some time with no sign of drinks on sight. After a few minutes her and her friend were joined by two guys who ordered a bottle of wine for them. I realised that she was there to enjoy herself and have a good time so instead of interviewing her I asked for her number. She was reluctant to give it to me at first and I had to explain what I needed the number for – research purposes that could benefit from her insights. Upon hearing this she gave me her number and I called her two days later to set up a meeting at her place so that we could chat.

My observation of her situation and tactics that night revealed that this is how some of these relationships develop. It was communicated by the male participants also that it is easy to get a girlfriend in club settings when they are tipsy, or simply by offering to buy them drinks. Some girls however argue that buying them drinks does not necessarily lead to a relationship. Sometimes they just use this guys for drinks. My understanding of the game was refined, and I recognised that there is always a space of uncertainty and suspension in it – to show that it is not a simple exchange. Also, it was stated that when one buys them a drink they first have to assess the man because it is not everybody who offers to buy them drinks who can actually afford the lifestyle they want to live. The kind of drinks these ladies drink range from Red and White wine, ciders such as Hunters Gold and Hunters Dry, Strong Bow and Bernini Blush. There is a particular drink however that men are supposed to buy to prove themselves and their financial status. The drink is called Ice Tropez which costs R470 for 12X275ml pack.

I have to admit that “lady’s night” which is on a Wednesday is the worst night to go to a club, especially to do observations. The club gets really packed and there is a lot going on that one cannot decide what to observe and what not to. The fact that the interactions are interesting does not help either. This night is specifically dedicated to young women enjoying themselves, and based on my observations it is safe to say that on this particular night young women are

less interested in forming relationships or having someone buy them drinks. I noticed less advertisement by these women every Wednesday night. This may be partly due to the fact that drinks are cheap for women consumers this particular night, and for every one drink you buy, you get another one free. So there is less pressure to get someone to “support your drinking career” as they put it. This is important in the sense that women are not there to be with men, but simply to have fun – this goes a long way to show that women are not simply instrumentalised in these multi-partner relationships – but that they are incredible instrumental about them too.

As part of the influence of the urban, the urban being Gauteng – Johannesburg and other cities, the #HoeIsLifeMovement has made its way to Giyani and has become really popular. It is stated that the #HoeIsLifeMovement is about women having power, especially over their sexuality and bodies. The idea behind this movement is that because of patriarchal sentiments, women, their sexuality and bodies have been marginalised in society. Societal stereotypes determine how women should live their lives and when these stereotypes are challenged, women are labelled “Hoes”. In society, there is often the normalisation of having multiple partners, women however are expected to be faithful towards their cheating partners. #HoeIsLifeMovement thus teaches young women that they can set their own agenda when it comes to relationships and their sex life. The movement challenges the policing of women’s bodies, and also challenges the idea that for a woman to be in a relationship with multiple partners makes them less valuable. Women are not just the victims in these relationships – this provides a language and an imaginary for them.

Women in Giyani ascribe to the #HoeIsLifeMovement as a way of liberating themselves and the situations they find themselves in. A comment made by one of the younger generation participants, a woman to be precise. For most of the older generation participants and members of the Giyani community, the #HoeIsLifeMovement is just a way for women to justify their promiscuity and the fact that:

“They sell their bodies for financial and material favours. It has nothing to do with liberation from patriarchy and societal norms and stereotypes. It is just a justification of the lifestyle they have chosen”.

Ntshuxeko said this statement, and perhaps her comments come as a reaction because she is someone who’s relationship is threatened by girls who subscribe to the #HoeIsLife Movement or her comments could come as a reaction because she is someone who is in a better off

situation in which they do not find themselves in the same predicament as the young women – for example someone who is living a secure middle-class life with well anchored middle class values which allow for seemingly more honesty in a relationship.

Because of all these developments and the influence of the urban, the festive season as stated above, becomes a time of anxiety and uncertainty for guys in relationships, with the fear of losing their partners to city dwellers. Those who ascribe to this movement cannot be constrained in terms of who they date and the number of partners they have.

Concluding Analysis

Between the explanation offered by the older participants and the younger participants, it is quite clear that there is a generational conflict/shift. Young men stating that they have side girlfriends for entertainment already defeats the very essence of multiple partnerships in historical period – multiple-partnerships as alternatives of difficult circumstances but still facing the pressure to build a good household/homestead. This is not to say that people did not have multiple partnerships for entertainment in the past, but it was clearly differently rationalised. Especially now that the old ideals are under threat. Another generational shift is the celebration of multiple partnerships by the youth whereas multiple-partnerships were hidden and very secretive in the past. They came with a demeaning status, and hence sometimes fines were paid especially in the context of extra-marital affairs. Today however, multiple partnerships come with a prestigious status and demands respect from one's peers, both men and women. Clearly times have changed, and the essence of what it means to be a man has also changed. With the older generation, the idea was centrally around the household – establishing a household/homestead (the meaning of household and homestead here as encompassing of a whole universe including ancestors and cows etc.) for oneself and helping out at home. The break between these two generations lies in the language of the household then and now. Without the language of the household there is a failure, and hence the alternative of having multiple-partnerships. This failure is also imposed by the fact that there are less opportunities for young men these days, and they cannot live up to what it meant to be a man in the past, so they have to make and attach new meaning to what it is to be a man in present day.

From the responses of the older generation, it appears as if young people are not living up to the expectations from the old generation. From their responses, one can tell the sense of disappointment in what young people are doing today. It is no longer about the household. Women on the other hand also expected to act in a respectable manner and save themselves for

marriage. Those were the qualities that made one identifiable as girlfriend/wife material. Presently girlfriends are identified in clubs and by the type of clothes they are wearing and their dance moves. The festive season is just a momentary thing in which the new values and the rejection of the role of the household reign supreme, but in everyday life some of the household values are still present – probably transformed more into a middle class ideal – or in the form of mixed categories like with the *labola* wife and the girlfriends on the side. Women are being very realistic and instrumental about these relationships. My realisation having done fieldwork is that the narrative of justification is not necessarily aligned with the past. The close connection made between culture and history to justify contemporary multiple-partnerships, and by making reference to culture and old situations (how things were done in the past), tradition, as Ranger (1983: 02) terms it, is just being invented. As Bryman argues, this implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in constant state of revision (Bryman, 2004: 17). Reality is a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman, 200: 18). “Culture” then, is a response to contemporary situations which seeks legitimacy in history. good

These are very interesting insights I must say. What happens when the great festival is over? do people who hook up during the festive season stay in touch – or do itinerant men go back to girlfriends in Johannesburg – and what about the girls in Giyani – do they go back to their Giyani boyfriend. The festive season is a disruption in time and space – and leads to a rearrangement of multiple partnerships, but also a time in which its driving force is well revealed – it seems to be about being forever young, the requirements of a household are very far away – it is about a highly consumerist moment of sexual pleasure and recognition of beauty and attraction and manhood – so there is a lot at stake but this is not about supplementing building a household –

A significant feature of South African society to also consider is that marriage these days happens at a relatively older age or later stage in life as opposed to the past (with a few exceptions of those who decide to marry early and have the financial means for it). People these days even marry at the age of 40, some with the explanation that they fear commitment and they do not want to be tied down to one partner so early in life, and based on interviews with my participants, for some it is because they do not have the financial means for marriage. The pressure to marry early in life and establish a household as communicated by the older generation participants seems to have subdued over the years for both males and females. This

pattern of late marriage and/or no marriage creates a situation where most people in the 18-30 age group are likely to engage in multiple-partnerships.

As stated in the previous chapter, in some instances, multiple partnerships are sustained on the basis of understanding the 'non-main' partner status, and that this status is that of a casual or less significant partner. This subordinate status is gladly acknowledged, particularly if it is agreed to or known to exist at the beginning of a sexual relationship. This negotiation and understanding of 'other' status may include an understanding that there should be no interference with the primary relationship.

Based on the insights of the previous chapter, having a relationship with a person who is married is described as being more open and 'honest' than relationships with people who are single, and who tend not to admit that they have other sexual partners. Having another partner thus provides a cushion of support, should a current relationship end.

The notion of having 'main' and 'other' partners came across overwhelmingly as being normative in Giyani. There was an acceptance of the status of being an 'other' partner amongst some respondents, with this typically occurring where it was acknowledged at the outset of a relationship.

Judging from my interviews with participants and my observations, for most of the youth in Giyani, initiating a sexual relationship with a stranger does not seem to be particularly difficult. It is like an unwritten code. Access to relationships is usually made possible through the process of obtaining contact numbers for follow up contact. Securing a person's cell phone number is seen as the first step that will inevitably lead to a relationship.

As stated by one of my male participants:

"Once a girl agrees to give me her numbers it is already a contract. She has already written the contract and I just have to sign on the dotted lines. What is left to do is to read it and sign and it is a done deal. That is how I go about it most of the times".

Participants who shared similar sentiments stated that once they get the numbers they do not necessarily have to call, although sometimes they do. They just have to send flirty messages, or if they are lucky and the girl has WhatsApp they pursue her on the social media platform. They even go as far as putting her as the profile picture to make her feel special, like she is the only girl they are pursuing.

Nhlamulo is a well-established young man who is based in Gauteng but alternates between Gauteng and Giyani regularly. He is a tenderpreneur and has two cars. Nhlamulo also rents an apartment in Gauteng and when he is in Giyani he lives at his parents' house. Nhlamulo is married to a woman from Giyani who only studied up until matric and she is unemployed at the moment. He has a number of girlfriends that he hooks up with occasionally both in Gauteng and Giyani. He is a very proud and confident person. He is loud and likes to boast about his money and achievements. It is also easier for girls to fall for him because like I have stated, he is well accomplished.

He stated that:

“When you have the numbers it becomes easy, we chat on WhatsApp and I sweet talk my way to her heart. Put her as my profile picture so that she feels all sorts of special, like I am serious about the relationship when in actual fact I am talking to others you see”.

I asked if this has no implications for his other relationships, especially his wife when she sees another woman on his profile picture. He replied that:

“I just tell them it is my cousin. Do they have proof that she is not? It is not like I will write a sweet message like I love you to accompany the profile picture. I just put her picture as my profile picture and leave the others wondering. If they ask I simply say she is my sister and that is it”.

Nhlamulo's socio-economic status sheds light into why he is so empowered and confident about his actions never leading to great consequences.

A similar dynamic was explained by Gift. Gift aged twenty-four is also from Giyani. He was born in a family of four including his parents, himself, and his younger brother. Gift's mother is a teacher at a local primary school and his father is a police officer. Gift works for a catering business man in Giyani. He does not earn much but earns enough to take care of himself and go out every now and again. Gift is not married but he is in a committed relationship with his girlfriend of three years. He has other relationships on the side but keeps them as secretive as possible. Words from his mouth are that he has never been caught cheating and as far as his girlfriend knows she is the only woman in his life.

Gift stated that:

“See social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are too advanced these days. They let you choose who can see your status and profile pictures. With the new status feature it becomes easy cos when I put one girl as my profile picture today, I choose the option for only her to see it, and I do the same with all others. So basically all of them think they are the important one”.

Female and male participants explained that pursuing a relationship does not always have to be physical. They sometimes do it online. They explained to me that they even stalk their love interests on Facebook and pursue relationships in that sense, send them a message on messenger and initiate a conversation. This conversation often times leads to meeting up or going out. It was stated that although these relationships may be initiated online, it does not mean that they just go for any girl or any guy. For females, it was emphasised that the same qualities that they look for in a guy they meet on the street are the same qualities they look for when they are pursuing online relationships. They still need someone who will be able to take care of them, and this confirms Silberschmidt’s argument that traditionally, poor men were/are despised, while rich men were/are admired (2001: 661).

The way these relationships are negotiated and arranged is in a sense that the time taken between meeting someone and initiating a sexual relationship is not particularly that long. In some instances, within a few hours or a few days after meeting.

When I asked most of the participants how long after being in a relationship does it take for them to take the relationship to the next step, one male participant stated that:

“It doesn’t take more than three days. Then I ask her to visit me. We will sit and chat and I know that we will end up leading to something”.

One female participant replied that:

“It’s just a few days. Like if we meet over the weekend sometime during the week maybe we will take the relationship to the next step”.

This made me think that indeed these multiple partnerships don’t just happen for the sake of having multiple-partners but there is more to it. It seems as if it is well known that honesty in a relationship is a difficult thing to come across, and people change partners constantly. A person can be replaced in an instant. So there is pressure to sort of “seal the deal” or “cement” the relationship with sexual contact.

These multiple-partnerships are also readily sustained in contexts where people are mobile, where you find that sometimes the guy works in Johannesburg for example, and only returns home in Giyani during the festive season. Similar to the migrant labour system described by Hunter (2005) and Delius and Glaser (2004). The pattern also includes maintaining relationships that have ended without formally breaking them off and then rekindling them at a later point, again usually during the festive season. And these relationships will occur whether or not the other person is in an existing relationship. The relationships are not necessarily called a breakup, but for the duration of mobility they are said to be “on hold” because of the distance. During this time the couple does not necessarily have to stay in contact. These relationships are relationships of convenience.

The fragility of the Giyani men and the materialism of the young women and their sense of enjoyment and pleasure are important aspects

CHAPTER 7

PERFORMING PURITY

The previous chapter has shown how multiple partnerships are performed in spaces where youth meet up to socialise. It has highlighted the investment that comes with this performance which includes looking good, driving a nice car, and the type of drinks men drink. For women this includes nice hairstyle to look the part, trendy clothes, and nice make up. The main aim for this performance is to be seen and to leave an impression, even if momentarily. What happens when the performance is done for purely different reasons and for a completely different audience? When the performance is not related to initiating multiple partnerships but to despising them? This chapter looks at the performance of purity and how it is religiously informed. I argue that the performance is done in order to achieve a religious ideal of how young men and women should behave. I further argue that the purity that is practiced is a performed process rather than an inherent or bodily trait that exists independent of the social world. These young men and women do not simply abstain from sexual activity, but they are in constant portrayal of their committed lifestyle of abstinence to their peers, elders and the community. I also show that the church has always tried to control women's sexuality.

The clearest form of this performance is the celebration of 21st birthday for both young men and women for having abstained from sexual activity. The celebrations are very big and publicised because parents are proud of this "achievement" and it is a time to boast about how good their children are. Relatives as well as family friends are invited to celebrate with the family, and after wards a huge feasting takes place. The young girls and boys prepare themselves for the celebrations and they must ensure that they look good because the event is not only about boasting but also about advertising oneself as wife or husband material. The person being celebrated is showered with gifts, money, and given words of encouragement. The parents are also celebrated for having brought up a decent child, so there is a sense of fulfilment in the celebrations for the parents as well. The celebrations are done also for Christian reasons. This is a relatively new phenomenon and indeed then can be read as a counter move in the face of a changing culture/meaning of multi-partner relationships

Christianity is a religion practised by many people in Giyani. It regulates public and some private aspects of Tsonga people's lives. They refer to religion for guidance and direction in life. Even in the past as noted by Delius and Glazer (Delius and Glaser, 2004: 101-102), most churches were clear in their view that both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity was

forbidden. For most Tsonga Christians, a relationship is not fully recognised until one gets married in a church setting and is blessed by the pastor. Before marriage, couples are seen as “passing time”. Those that follow the Christian religion believe that sexual activity before marriage is a sin, and in this sense children born in Christian households are taught to abstain from sexual relationships and relationships altogether until they are old enough and married. Multiple-partnerships and polygamy are also condemned as they go against the very notion of what Christianity is all about. Christians are expected to be monogamous and be faithful to their partners. Young women and men are encouraged to remain pure and save themselves for marriage. Their bodies are said to be the temple of God and this is recited in the bible *1 Corinthians 6:19*: “*Do you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself*”. With this scripture, Christians are encouraged to not make decisions informed by the temptations of the world, but to make decisions that will be pleasing to God.

In this regard Christianity seems to have a positive effect on young people’s lives in terms of abstaining from multiple-partnerships and sexual relationships. Some youth in Giyani value Christianity so much that they actually do abstain from sexual activity and ‘save’ themselves for marriage. I state this because some of my participants stated that the reason they did not engage in multiple-partnerships was because of their Christian background. Masana relayed to me that:

“I know a lot of girls and boys who wonder around but I do not engage in that type of behaviour. My parents would be very disappointed in me if I did. I am a Christian and that is a shame”.

Masana is twenty three years old and comes from a family of five, Her parents and two sisters. Masana has an honours degree from University of Turfloop. She is staying in Giyani full time while she looks for a job. Masana comes from a very loving and supportive family and she is very close with her parents. Her family is well off and lives comfortably. Her family is very religious and they are Christians. Since childhood her parents have always encouraged her to go to church, from Sunday school when she was young, to girls meeting where contemporary teenage struggles are discussed, and now as a young woman she is part of youth at church and does church activities like ushering and singing. Masana’s comments, values and reason to abstain may be due to her upbringing and her close relationship with her parents. Also coming from a well off family sets her apart from the other young women in that she has no pressure

to look for financial support. Growing up with both loving parents may have also contributed to the values she holds about how a relationship should be. And as revealed by her comment, the way she carries herself is to ensure that she does not disappoint her parents because there is already a pre-conceived idea of how a church girl should behave.

Another participant was of the same view, she stated that:

“I have a partner and I have been involved with a few people in the past but that is as far as it goes. We are just partners we do not do anything. I am a Christian and the only man who will deflower me is the man I will marry”.

To my surprise, not only were these sentiments coming from women as one would expect because the pressure to remain pure is mostly faced by young women than men in the community. Those are the stereotypes that society socialise young men and women to believe. But they were also coming from young male participants. Although relatively few.

Kuhlula is twenty two years old and studies electrical engineering at Giyani TVET college. He lives with his grandparents and they are Christians. His grandmother is very involved at church. His grandfather is a non-drinker and a very humble individual. They are both pensioners and they earn enough to support themselves. Kuhlula's studies are paid for by a bursary he received. His matric results were good and obtaining a bursary came easy.

He said to me:

“A lot of young men look at me and think that I am stupid because I choose to go to church instead of taverns. I am also part of the church choir. I have a few brothers at church that also partake in other church activities and those are my friends. They understand and get our purpose.”

He continued:

“I do not have time for girls. That is not my purpose in life. My purpose is to serve the Lord. When the time is right I will find myself a nice decent girl to marry. One who is from church and understands the word of God”.

Another participant, also a man of God stated that sometimes it is hard having to follow the rules that come with the religion but one has to stay strong and not give in to the temptations:

“We are men, we do get thoughts like that like any other man. But you just have to stay strong. It will be worth it in the end when we do things formally and the right way.”

The purity that is practiced is a performed process rather than an inherent or bodily trait that exists independent of the social world. It is a social construct that governs how Christians live their lives. Judith Butler's gender performance theory clearly shows this. Butler (1988) understands the body to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities, and in this case, religious possibilities. She asserts that the acts by which Christianity is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts (Butler, 1988: 521). These young men and women do not simply abstain from sexual activity, but they are in constant portrayal of their committed lifestyle of abstinence to their peers, elders and the community. This according to Butler is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and reproducing a religious situation (1998: 521).

Once committed to this lifestyle it is difficult to go back because there are high expectations bestowed on Christians, and nothing feels bad as disappointing God, one's family, the community, your future husband and the church. This is partly why Betty participants argue that:

"It is not that the Christian girls do not want to live the life that we live, but the problem is they have set quite a high standard for themselves, of being good girls. And they feed off being praised by our parents. We are seen as the rebels and they are seen as the holy ones."

Betty is one of the well-known party girls of Giyani. She comes from a Christian family but chose to deviate from the norm. Her mother is a school principal and her father is late. People in the area say she is bipolar because of her behaviour. How loud she is, how she dates different men in the area, young and old, single and married. She also likes picking fights with young women and on many occasions has been found fighting for men with their girlfriends as well as their wives.

She continued:

"But I tell you, not all of them are able to live up to such standards. Some of them have kids out of wedlock, and we later find out that they are just like us."

For the Christian young women and men, sexual identities are organised around the idea of virginity and purity. The way this purity is talked about it appears as if abstinence and purity so to say is intended to be on display, it must be seen, and thus on constant evaluation and policing by members of the society and of the church. In this regard, the purity of young women and men is seen as owed to the church, and the higher figure God. After all, it is the church and

the word of God that requires abstinence. In addition to being shameful, sex outside of marriage or before marriage reflects poorly on the family. In this regard the family of the promiscuous young man or woman is seen to not have done a good job in raising their child. This is why sometimes when young people are promiscuous words like “she takes after her mother” or “he takes after his father” get thrown around quite a lot in Giyani. The honour and respect of the family diminishes once it becomes known that a child from that particular family engages in sexual activity or has multiple partners. This goes as far as parents dictating who their child should date – and from which family becomes important. These sentiments are shared by most older people in Giyani and not just a special elite.

Virginitly and saving oneself is a by-product of Christians love and passion for Christ. The Christian sentiment in this line persuades young women and men to surrender their choices to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and pleasing him should be made the central aim of their lives. The bible has always been interpreted in a certain way also to fit a certain agenda. There is also so much variety within different Christian denominations which differently stress the importance of this. That is why in order to limit women from having multiple partnerships elder women were assigned to periodically test Girl’s virginitly (Hunter, 2005: 394).

“God created them and paid for their sins with his life, so abstaining from sin, especially in matters regarding sexual purity is owed to him”.

Also, regarding abstinence, emphasis is made on keeping pure for one’s future husband and wife. As such the performance of purity is an outward commitment to pleasing God and winning souls. Being a Christian and not following these rules is seen as a sin. If by any chance it is found that one is already sexually active they are banned from the church for the whole year. The ban means that they should not participate in any church activities, and when they come to church they should sit at the far back. At this time, the banned member is expected to act humble and show remorse. Failure to do so will result in a harsher sentence. I have seen this at Giyani Apostolic Faith Mission, a church I go to when I am home. A lot of Giyani residents go to this church and it caters for people from all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Adding to this, the church, Giyani Apostolic Faith Mission as a case in point should not hear of any misconduct by the member during this time because it is the time to seek the face of God and ask for forgiveness. The banning also takes place in the presence of the whole church. During a Sunday ceremony, the banned member will be asked to rise in front of the whole congregation. The pastor will then state how the member has sinned, and announce

their banning. Once the one-year period is over, the banned member is welcomed back to church in the same fashion, and can resume their church duties and other activities. The way this is done is also a performance, and the banned member is used as an example of what will happen to the others should they follow a similar route.

Being from the Church and having fallen pregnant last year outside of marriage means I would have to go through the ban myself. The fact that I got married traditionally, and did not have a white wedding at the church does not exclude me from the ban. I am no longer allowed to partake in Holy communion or any other church activities.

What I find interesting in this discourse is that although purity is expected from both Christian men and Christian women, the pressure is much more on the Christian women to remain pure and less on the Christian men. Even in performance, it is more expected from the woman than a man. The discourse seems to be more interested in women abstaining from sexual activity than men, keeping themselves for their husbands. Men are also viewed as the head of the households and women are expected to respect them as they respect the church. This made me think of the pressure bestowed on women is a result of the crisis in masculinity. A crisis to control women's sexuality and govern their bodies in order to remain hegemonic. The church has always tried to control women's sexuality – but it is more important now than before (or enacted more recently) by these parties which are being celebrated so gain we are talking about a significant shift from the understanding of purity in the historical period, to the understanding of purity in present day in these times in which man are failing and women find new ways of independence. The church in this regard is engaging actively in a process that reaffirms patriarchy and protects the crisis in masculinity. This also serves to prove that the crisis in masculinity is not only economic as Hunter (2005) and Reid and Walker (2005: 10) state, it is also cultural and religious.

Among my participants there were critiques of the church narrative. When I probed them about religion and whether they considered it at all in their acts they stated that religion is “overrated”. A lot of them were of the view that:

“Christians are as bad as anybody else in the community, the only difference between them and Christians is that Christians hide at church to make themselves look better.”

A few pastors who are said to have girlfriends all over the location were mentioned and criticised. Also young women and men who claim to be “abstinent and pure” were mentioned and criticised. One participant went as far as stating that:

“Christians are the worst of them all. They are hypocrites who do not practice what they preach. They claim to be all innocent whereas they are not”.

They even justified themselves and their actions by stating that with them at least one gets what they see, and they are never shocked nor surprised by a sudden change of behaviour. Like young men and women whom the community is proud of, who end up having “surprise babies”. They also mentioned that the pressure to remain pure and innocent was just too much because one invites the whole community to constantly check their actions. One ends up not living a free life, but a life to please other people, and a life to appear innocent.

Others who were against Christianity were just against the notion of having to worship “a foreign being” referring to God. They did not understand why some Tsonga people would choose to follow and live by the rules of “the colonizers construct”. According to some participants, colonizers were jealous of the sexual freedom black people enjoyed without any consequences and thus came with this construction of a “super being” in order to constrain black people and strip them off their sexual freedom. Hence they choose to practice their own religion and do as they please when it comes to their sexual lives.

Religion or Christianity as a case in point was also criticised for promoting multiple partnerships in a subtle way. The teaching of the man being the head of the household for example. Participants stated that it is sentiments like these that make men cheat on their wives because the bible stipulates that the man is the head. Women also stay in unhappy marriages because of these scriptures, and because divorce is seen as a sin in the eyes of God. The participants stated that Christian young men and women grow up being fed these sentiments and hence they sometimes fail to act in their relationships. One participant asserted that:

“Christian young men and women do not necessarily have to engage in sexual activity for them to accept being cheated on. These people are fed ridiculous statements like women have to be submissive to their partners, and they always preach about forgiveness. So if you cheat on a Christian girl multiple times she forgives you because the bible says forgive one another as the Lord forgave you”.

In similar vein, another participant trying to defend cultural practices as better than Christianity stated and recited the bible saying:

“A Christian girl will stay with a man she knows cheats on her because she is told by the bible that ‘Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or

to exercise authority over a man; rather she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing if they continue in and love and holiness, with self-control”.

After reciting the bible verse, the participant went on to ask me if I see that religion is just as bad as some of the cultural practices that black people love to speak so wrong of. He stated how the bible also condoned the submissiveness of women. He then said that since religion and culture are more or less in the same line, he rather practices the cultural sentiments that he is born with. Religion is confusing:

“One verse states that people should be monogamous whereas the other forces people to be submissive and stay in relationships no matter what. At least with culture you know it is clear cut and what you are doing is acceptable. You are also following the sentiments of your forefathers who have lived to see and speak about certain matters, than a colonizers construct that was used to make oppressing black people seem alright”.

As much as his response was his own view on the subject of the influence of religion on multiple-partnerships. I could not help but pick up how religion was criticised to make cultural perspectives stand out and seem okay. I could not also help but notice how culture was used to justify multiple partnerships by stating that at least with culture multiple partnerships are acceptable. This made me wonder whether Christianity was a problem because it advocates for monogamous relationships or because indeed it is seen as a “foreign construct”.

I wish to make clear that this is a relatively new phenomenon and indeed then can be read as a counter move in the face of a changing culture/meaning of multi-partner relationships. To show how this intersects with the multiple partner relationships – and how pure girls become a trophy is an interesting interface between different value systems. The discursive use of tradition as a justification against the church is important but more of a side-line – which as shown in the previous chapters further reveals that tradition is always manipulated in many ways to support a position.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The study area for this research was Giyani, a town in Limpopo Province of South Africa. The main purpose of the research was to examine multiple-partnerships and their significance to masculinity in present day Giyani. The research sought to find out what multiple partnerships are now, in relation to what they were historically, and how this history is being reinvented to justify current practices. This was done by tracing multiple-partnerships and masculinities in different historical periods. However, it is worth clarifying that the thesis did not present a periodization of multiple-partnerships and masculinities. The research also investigated and analysed the impact of socio-economic change on young men's lives, and how these young men are dealing with their current situation.

The literature review drew out themes relevant to my investigation of the shifts in significance of having multiple-partnerships in relationship to masculinity. It began with a discussion of how multiple partnerships have been studied recently, with specific focus to HIV/AIDS studies approach the study of multiple partnerships. I argue that although HIV/AIDS studies contribute to the understanding of the occurrence of multiple partnerships. They do not study multiple partnerships in entirety. What is also problematic is that these studies reduce multiple-partnerships to the idea that they are the driving forces of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. The chapter then explores the genealogy of multiple partnerships in South Africa, and how the construction of masculinity has changed over the years from being centrally concerned with building a homestead, to celebrating promiscuity and having multiple partners. The change, it is argued, came about as a result of changing economic circumstances for South African men. The reality results in what is called masculinity at crisis. Which sees the invention of tradition to deal with present realities.

Qualitative-ethnographic research method was used for the study. This research method entails semi-structured interviews as the primary methodological approach to my research, focus group interviews and participant observation. The method was chosen because of its strength in revealing the hidden. The method allows for hyper-exposure of interaction of peers in performance. The sampling consisted of twenty young men and twenty young women. Ethical considerations that were accounted for included informed consent that was treated as a fundamental requirement before conducting my interviews. The research project was briefly described to the participants with emphasis placed on how the respondents' participation will

be useful to the success of the research project. Issues of voluntary participation, the right not to answer questions or withdraw participation anytime deemed necessary, Issues of confidentiality and anonymity regarding any information that the participants share were also emphasized.

Chapter four has looked at the conceptions of multiple-partnerships in the historical period from oral history interviews with the older generation participants. Data from the interviews reveal that in the past, people engaged in multiple partnerships primarily as a relief of unfortunate circumstances such as the inability to have children. The migrant labour system seems to have also contributed in that young men would go work in the cities and neglect their families. Some would even start another family in the cities. Polygamy as opposed to multiple partnerships was the ideal but since a lot of Tsonga men did not have the material means for a polygamous union, multiple partnerships and extra marital affairs thus became perceived alternatives. Also, the advent of Christianity saw a decline in polygamous unions and multiple partnerships because it advocated for monogamous unions and the idea of the “pure body”. The data also revealed that the idea of the “real man” and a desired form of masculinity was centrally around the household, establishing an independent household for oneself and having children, not necessarily around multiple partnerships.

Chapter five looked at multiple-partnerships in present day Giyani, and what essentially informs them. The chapter also considered how younger people are living up/down to the expectations of the older generation and the generational conflict that arises as a result. Finally, the chapter explored whether multiple partnerships in historical perspective inform multiple partnerships today. During my fieldwork in Giyani I found that imbalances of power in gender inequality and patriarchal practices that are discriminatory against women are amongst the root causes of the acceptance of multiple-partnerships not only by young men but by young women as well. I also found that multiple-partnerships are an interplay of individual, community, economic, cultural and religious factors interacting at different levels of society. At the individual level, I found that factors that influence multiple-partnerships include growing up in a home where you find that parents are involved in multiple-partnerships, which then becomes normalised later in life as acceptable forms of engaging in relationships. Also, from my interviews with some participants, having an absent father or a father who is not a positive role model seems to have contributed in the desire to engage in multiple-partnerships. However, it is worth mentioning that it is not always the case that children who grow up in families with either the mother or father or both engaging in multiple-partnerships will automatically engage

in multiple-partnerships themselves. Sometimes the situation becomes a protective factor which results in these children choosing not to have multiple-partnerships or staying in such relationships.

At community level, I found that factors that contribute to this trend of multiple-partnerships include the fact that multiple-partnerships are viewed by many young people in Giyani as the norm, and also the use of alcohol and the spaces in which they hang out in further perpetuates the idea of multiple-partnerships. Seeing friends engage in this type of behaviour further adds to the normalisation of the trend. This in the case of young men further adds to the celebrated idea of hegemonic masculinity.

At the economic level, factors include poverty, unemployment and changing economic statuses among men and women. Also at the economic level, participant's economic background also contributes in engagement in the trend of multiple partnerships. Youth in Giyani engage in multiple-partnerships for financial and economic support, especially those that come from poverty stricken households. They also tend to accept being cheated on because of their financial dependence on their partners. Based on evidence from my interviews with participants. It is mostly women who seem to suffer most on this end.

Cultural factors such as cultural practices were also mentioned as contributing factors to the trend of multiple-partnerships. And it is these cultural practices that the youth of Giyani mostly draw on to justify having multiple partners. Delius and Glaser however refute these assumptions as well as the invocation of tradition to justify, or normalise, contemporary multipartnership sexual practice, and term them "simplistic" (2004: 84).

Religion was also stated as a contributing factor to the trend of multiple-partnerships, and more broadly to contributing towards violence against women. The teachings of Christianity were emphasized in responses relating to religion.

Chapter 6 explores the spectacle of the festive season, how young men and women prepare for this time of the year and the extent they go to in order to appear relevant. It further explores how relationships develop and are negotiated. The chapter focuses primarily on my observations at a local club and my observations at a local braai and chill area frequented by Giyani young men and women. The responses from younger participants reveal a generational conflict with regards to reasons for engaging in multiple partnerships by both generations. The justification used by the youth that draws on history and culture to legitimise the trend defeats the very essence of multiple partnerships in historical period – multiple-partnerships as

alternatives of difficult circumstances. From the responses of the older generation, it appears as if young people are not living up to the expectations from the old generation. The data also reveals that the break between these two generations lies in the language of the household then and now. Without the language of the household there is a failure, and hence the alternative of having multiple-partnerships. This failure is also imposed by the fact that there are less opportunities for young men these days, and they cannot live up to what it meant to be a man in the past, so they have to make and attach new meaning to what it is to be a man in present day.

Chapter 7 explore how young men and women perform the idea of purity to set themselves apart from the sinful youth who practice multiple partnerships. It further explores how youth sexuality in Giyani is influenced by religion, particularly Christianity. Those that ascribe to the Christian religion condemn the practice of multiple partnerships and advocate for abstinence and monogamous relationships. These Christian beliefs are not just beliefs but also a performance that is in constant policing and evaluation by other peers, parents, the church, and the community. The data from my interviews reveal that young men and women do not simply abstain from sexual activity, but they are in constant portrayal of their committed lifestyle of abstinence to their peers, elders and the community. There is a need to be believed and hence the constant display of their beliefs.

The overall message that the research reveals is that although the youth of Giyani view culture as something which is stable across history and more real than anything else, something to which they can refer as an external legitimising force, their responses prove that the “culture” that they draw on, and claim to be old, to normalize and justify multiple-partnerships is quite recent and invented. This “culture” then, is a response to contemporary situations which seeks legitimacy in history. The history of colonialism, underdevelopment and oppression and resulting poverty and political instability that has characterized South Africa, and Giyani as a case in point, coupled with traditionally patriarchal practices, has contributed to the development of the multiple partnerships trend. Moreover, in the context of lack of job and educational opportunities, one way that men can prove their masculinity is by being sexually assertive, and this has encouraged a culture of multiple sexual partners. Only very few young men and women are able to live up to new middle class ideals. Those caught up in the middle are probably worth off, and those who do not stand much to lose are able to develop new forms of independence. This really upsets the Aids discourse of risk and promiscuity, and shows their theorisation as simplistic.

References

- Bryman, A. (2004). (2nd ed). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buis, E. R. (2011). Surviving transition in the Giyani district: the role of small-scale rural development projects in a period of rapid socio-political and economic change (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).
- Butler, J. (1988) Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*. [Online]. 40 (4). p. 519-531.
Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207893>
[Accessed: 20th October 2016]
- Courtenay, W.H. (2000). Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: a theory of gender and health. *Social Science & Medicine* 50, (2000) 1385-1401.
- Delius, P. and Glaser, C. (2004). The Myths of Polygamy: A History of Extra-Marital and Multi-Partnership Sex in South Africa. *South African Historical Journal*, 50:1, 84-114, DOI: 10.1080/02582470409464797.
- Gilbert, L. and Selikow, T. (2011).The epidemic in this country has the face of a woman: Gender and HIV/AIDS in South Africa. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, pp 325-334.
- Gilbert, L., Selikow, T.A. and Walker, E. (2010). Introduction: What is Culture? In *Society, Health and Disease in a time of HIV/AIDS*, Johannesburg: Macmillan. Pp 76-88.
- Hunter, M. (2005). Cultural politics and masculinities: Multiple-partners in historical perspective in KwaZulu-Natal. *Culture, health & sexuality*, 7(4), 389-403.
- Khunou, S. F. (2009). Traditional leadership and independent Bantustans of South Africa: some milestones of transformative constitutionalism beyond Apartheid. *PER: Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad*, 12(4), 81-122.
- Makhoba, N. (2016). Want a blesser?
Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207893>
[Accessed: 20th October 2016]
- Morrell, R. (1998). Of boys and men: masculinity and gender in Southern African studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24(4), 605-630.
- Morrell, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Changing men in southern Africa*. Zed books.
- Silberschmidt, M. (2001). Disempowerment of men in rural and urban East Africa: implications for male identity and sexual behavior. *World development*, 29(4), 657-671.
- Reid, G. and Walker, L. (2005). Men behaving differently: South African men since 1994. *Culture, health & sexuality*, 7(3), 225-238.
- Ranger, T. O., & Hobsbawm, E. J. (Eds.). (1983). *The invention of tradition* (p. 211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

