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Understanding customary practices and fatherhood: intlawulo, masculinities and relational power

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Abstract

This paper examines the practice of intlawulo and its implications for theorising fathering and masculinity from an African perspective. Based on in-depth interviews with isiXhosa unmarried fathers, the article outlines how fathering practices are shaped by customary practices that include relational negotiations with maternal and paternal families that can generate tensions along the lines of lineage and seniority. By drawing on Mfecane's (2018) African centred theories of masculinity and on existing theories of provider and responsible masculinities, and, by recognising the role of maternal kin in negotiating fatherhood, we consider how women and maternal kin are active agents in the construction of alternative masculinities. The findings highlight how the process of intlawulo supports a move toward alternative masculinities in which values and practices of patience, flexibility, respect and concession are integrated into masculinities and form a necessary part of becoming a father.

1. Introduction

This paper explores how customary practices define and shape fatherhood and constructions of masculinity among amaXhosa men of South Africa. Whilst Xhosa notions of masculinity centre on the practice of ulwaluko (Mfecane, 2018:204), what makes an isiXhosa father a father within his cultural context? Using this question, Mfecane (2016:206 citing Jackson & Balaji 2002:22) pushes us to explore multiple meanings of becoming and being a father, and new ways for theorising masculinity. The customary practice of intlawulo[1], whilst often conceptualised as a fine or 'paying damages' is better understood as a way of bringing families together whereby the father acknowledges responsibility of fatherhood to maternal and paternal kin, and maternal kin accept the father as part

[1] The term is referred to as intlawulo in isiXhosa and inhlawulo in isiZulu. Throughout the paper we will use the isiXhosa spelling unless we are referring to cited work where the isiZulu term is used.

of the child's life regardless of his relationship status with the mother. In many black Southern African communities, historically the father's family would pay damages to the girl's family as part of the intlawulo process (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001; Hunter, 2010). This was often a one-time payment of cows or the cash equivalent. As with any cultural practice, however, the practices of intlawulo are 'long-standing, complex, and changing' (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2001:152). Despite the practice being prevalent across Southern Africa (Nkani, 2017) and a key part in the process of becoming a father for many men, the customary practice has surprisingly received little scholarly attention in masculinity studies. The primary goal of this paper is to examine the concept of intlawulo and its implications for theorising fathering and masculinity from an African perspective. Based on in-depth interviews with isi-Xhosa unmarried fathers, the article outlines how fathering practices are shaped by customary practices that include relational negotiations with maternal and paternal families along the lines of lineage and seniority.

The article draws on three sets of literatures on masculinities and fathering. Firstly, it draws on Mfecane's (2016; 2018) African centred theories of masculinities which argue that masculinities are both socially constructed and influenced by unseen elements of personhood, as encapsulated in traditional African thoughts. It secondly links this theoretical work with literature on how forms of masculinity, specifically in relation to fatherhood, have to be re-thought in contexts of unemployment, poverty (Hunter, 2010) and the contradictory contours of male power in post-apartheid South Africa (Ratele, 2013). Thirdly, it incorporates into the discussion on masculinities and fatherhood, the emerging body of literature regarding the role of maternal kin in negotiating fatherhood (Madhavan & Roy, 2012; Madhavan, Harrison & Sennott, 2013; Swartz, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld, 2013), to consider how women and maternal kin are active agents in the construction of masculinity (Talbot & Quayle, 2007).

In doing this, we argue that, in theorising fatherhood specifically in relation to amaXhosa, we need to pay attention to lineage since it is the principal way through which the child's belonging, and the outsider status of the father, is understood. Secondly, we argue that, whilst acknowledging that patriarchal structures in the African continent inserted by colonial powers (Oyewùmí, 1997; Nzegwu, 2006) positioned men in positions of power, customary practices such as intlawulo can position maternal kin and women in positions of relative power when negotiating the father's role in unwed parenting, particularly in the post-apartheid period. Thirdly, we emphasise that becoming a father is a process that involves multiple social actors and intlawulo is a critical entry point where it can be denied, negotiated or facilitiated. We argue that when it comes to contemporary fatherhood amongst many fathers in South Africa, lineage and seniority play out

in the cultural negotiations of becoming a father but also in shaping patient, responsible, and flexible alternative masculinities.

In what follows, we present how employed fathers negotiate the customary practice of intlawulo upon knowledge of a pregnancy. We provide a brief outline of the context of intlawulo and fathering in South Africa before presenting the theoretical background in which the findings are located.

2. Intlawulo and fathering in South Africa

Fathers, fathering and fatherhood is no longer a neglected area of sociological inquiry in South Africa and elsewhere. There has been a growing body of work examining the ways in which men are involved in caring and their children's lives, and what this means for understanding masculinities (LaRossa, 1988; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Lewis & Lamb, 2007; Dermott, 2008). More recent publications in the US (Coles, 2009; Abdill, 2018), on black low-income fatherhood, have also moved away from the 'deficit-based language' used to describe black fatherhood, and highlighted caring, involved and responsible fatherhood.

In South Africa, fatherhood still bears the imprint of the colonial and apartheid era through the protracted disruption of family life (Murray, 1981; Budlender & Lund, 2011). The ways in which a father's involvement in domestic life was restricted through laws, the migrant labour system and migrant hostels is now well documented (Murray, 1981; Ramphele, 1993; Morrell & Richter, 2006). Over the last decade, research on fathering in South Africa has begun to uncover the ways in which both residential and non-residential fathers are involved in their children's lives (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Makusha, & Richter 2016; Morrell et al., 2016). These studies highlight the different factors which restrict a father's involvement, such as a lack of resources (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Hunter, 2010), ongoing labour migration (Rabe, 2007), decline of marriages, the rise of premarital sex, and the role of extended kin (Madhavan & Roy, 2012; Swartz, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld, 2013; Clark et al., 2015). It is understood that involvement in fathering is heavily reliant on relations with the mother and maternal kin as fatherhood happens within families and not individuals (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Madhavan & Roy, 2012; Clarke et al., 2015). Given that a father's involvement is a negotiated process between fathers, mothers, paternal kin and maternal kin (Madhavan & Roy, 2012), it is important to provide a brief outline of the changing position of mothers in relation to their dependence on fathers and paternal kin.

Whilst a more detailed overview of mothers' changing position in relation to fathers lies outside the scope of this paper, it has been demonstrated that in the more recent decades, women's changing position vis-à-vis the labour market

(Posel, 2014), state (Moore & Seekings, 2019) and migration (Hall and Mokomane, 2018), has facilitated women's changing dependence on men (Lee, 2009; Moore, 2013). Particularly in the post-apartheid era, women access more state resources separately from men (Moore & Seekings, 2019) and, unlike practices in the past, outside a recognised union or marriage. The rise of births outside of marriage and the decline of marriage (Mhongo & Budlender, 2013) have shifted the ways in which fathers are positioned within domestic relations. Moreover, the rise of female headed households to represent almost 40 percent of all households (Hatch & Posel, 2018) has also shifted the position of women in negotiating and decision making for their children (Hatch & Posel, 2018; Moore, 2020) and family members. These changes have re-positioned fathers' relationships with their children and the mother of their children.

In South Africa, a father's involvement in a child's life is a negotiated customary process and there is a growing body of literature which focuses on the significance of the payment of intlawulo in mediating a father's involvement in the life of his child (Hunter, 2006, 2010; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Mkhwanazi, 2010, 2014; Bhana & Nkani, 2014; Makusha, & Richter, 2016; Mkhwanazi & Block, 2016; Mvune, 2017; Nkani, 2017). It is important to note that this custom evolves as the people who live by its norms change their patterns of life and move between cultural expectations and state laws. Hunter (2010, 59) outlined that by the mid-1950s, with a growing acceptance of premarital sex, inhlawulo was moving from being a payment required for taking a woman's virginity to a payment incurrent for rendering a woman pregnant. The existing literature on intlawulo (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Swartz, Bhana, Richter & Versfeld, 2013; Nkani, 2017) has focussed on how the context of high levels of poverty and unemployment restrict a father's ability to perform intlawulo and subsequently restrict fathering practices amongst young and teenage fathers (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Clarke et al., 2015; Mvune, 2017; Nkani, 2017). The literature to date has prioritised teenager and women's voices and the financial component of the process.

There is, however, mixed evidence on the extent to which men who do not perform intlawulo are restricted in their access to children. Some research indicates that intlawulo does not automatically grant the father and his family access, as access is based on a willingness to perform ilobolo (Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Makusha & Richter, 2016; Nkani 2017:114). Others argue that families are beginning to involve paternal kin in childcare, and a child can be incorporated into paternal lineages even in the absence of intlawulo (Hunter, 2006; Mkhawanazi & Block, 2016). Bhana and Nkani (2014), drawing on research conducted in an urban township in KwaZulu-Natal, suggest that women-headed households tended to be more flexible by allowing the involvement of the young father after the birth even though inhlawulo had not been paid. In line with how we understand living customary law as an evolving and, considering the small

samples from which findings are generated, one can expect differences in families' approaches to the process across region, community, generation and province. Moreover the absence of data from unmarried nonresident fathers who are separated from their children's mothers is also likely to leave a gap in what we know about the process.

An overwhelming focus of the literature to date has focussed on the detrimental consequences of the cultural process by focussing on firstly the financial restrictions that the customary process places on father's involvement with children and secondly on the role of the extended family in limiting a father's access to their children (Clarke et al., 2015; Makusha, & Richter). Much of the literature fails to consider how lineage and seniority are key aspects to understanding fathering. The subordination of a genitor or father rests in his position vis-à-vis the lineage in question and the seniority in question, and not in the biological sex of this person. The literature tends to conceptualise inhlawulo as a process that emasculates fathers under depressive economic family circumstances. There is very little research on the process of intlawulo, specifically from the perspective of involved fathers who have completed the process, and how they understand the process to shape their practices and social relations to the child, maternal kin and paternal kin. A focus on employed fathers' experience of intlawulo is necessary to counteract or expand ideas of alternative masculinities and to understand how the structures of power are enmeshed in principles of lineage and seniority. By focusing on employed involved fathers, the paper explores how masculine norms, culture and materiality interlock to shape hierarchies of lineage and gender, thus shaping fathers' involvement with their children.

3. African centred theories of masculinity and fathering

Masculinity theorising (and specifically in the context of fathering) has indeed been dominated by knowledge and experiences of Western society (Connell, 2014). Ratele (2008) has argued that what it means to be a man in Africa is often internally inconsistent across cultures as well as within cultural settings, and paying attention to these differences makes it possible to find alternative masculitines and shift the gaze from negative, violent, unchanging sets of traits. This paper contributes to a growing body of theorising masculinities from men in the Global South (Groes-Green, 2012; Ratele, 2013; Mfecane, 2016, 2018). In doing so, the paper also contributes to existing theories of masculinities in fathering studies, most notably, concepts such as provider masculinity (Hunter, 2010) and paternal responsibilities (Mvune, 2017).

In research on masculinities in Mozambique, Groes-Green (2012:93) developed the concept of "philogynous masculinities to refer to male narratives and gender configurations, as elusive or limited as they may be, which divert from predominantly misogynous masculinities and which delineate forms of manhood that favour female subjects' rights to agency, security, respect and well-being in gender equitable ways." Extending this work to focus on lineage and seniority, rather than gender per se, reveals that forms of manhood in this context are mediated by membership in extended families, across seniority and in specific class contexts, and reveals how men as genitors are findings alternative masculinities to maximise security for themselves and their children.

Drawing on the work of Mfecane (2016, 2018) which argues for African-centred theories of masculinity that are grounded on popular conceptions of personhood in African contexts, this paper looks specifically at personhood as fundamentally relational, meaning it is achieved in social interaction rather than in isolation. Whilst families are the primary sites for engendering communitarian persons, for communities and for living customary law, this process is also negotiated and can have meanings for a man's relationship to a child. Moreover, Mfecane (2018:296) argues that another feature of personhood essential for understanding fathering is how personhood is acquired through participation in or performance of 'rituals of incorporation'. In the South African case, this imbeleko is completed to formally welcome someone into his or her family or clan which provides ancestral belonging and protection. Communities have ways of integrating children born outside of a recognised union so that the children's kinship and belonging is not questioned or contested. For example, children are often given the surname of their mother, and paternity is sometimes attributed to the maternal grandfather.

Mfecane (2018:297) described that the ceremonies are not just public celebrations but carry significant symbolic meanings about participants' relationship with their families, communities and ancestors. As Mfecane (2018:297) argues, the recipients are transformed spiritually, behaviourally and in terms of their moral virtue. Among amaXhosa, ilobolo ensure than certain rights to a child were tranferred to the father's family (signified by the child's adoption of the father's isibongo or clan name). According to Hunter (2010), as premarital pregnancy became more common, just paying inhlawulo in KwaZulu-Natal typically became enough for a child to take a father's surname. There is contrasting evidence as to whether a child can take the father's surname without ilobolo or intlawulo being paid. Some evidence from studies in KwaZulu-Natal indicate that inhlawulo offers the father an opportunity to formally acknowledge paternity and give the child kinship rights into his paternal family (Madhavan, 2010). However, amongst amaXhosa, the process does not offer an alternative to ilobolo, which is the means through which a child belongs to his paternal family. Our findings demonstrate that amongst the amaXhosa participants, performing intlawulo does not change

the child's belonging, and the child does not belong to the father's lineage or clan as imbeleko was not performed. The practice of intlawulo was seen as a means of securing moral legitimacy and connection with the paternal family, and of demonstrating respect.

In theorising amaXhosa masculinity in terms of fatherhood, we need to pay attention to lineage and seniority since it is the principle way hegemony is achieved. A father will assume outside status until ilobolo is performed; prior to this, a father by performing intlawulo serves as an indicator of commitment and care.

The literature on masculinities and fathering in South Africa has repeatedly emphasised the role of provider masculinity (Hunter, 2010) and paternal responsibilities (Mvune, 2017) as the means through which good fatherhood is achieved. In relation to intlawulo, an excerpt from a participant reminds us of how the process of achieving manhood in terms of fathering in a cultural context is understood, as Mkhwanazi (2014:111) outlined by drawing on the story of Lunga:

> [W]hen Lunga's father heard that his son had impregnated a girl, he assumed his role as an elder and guided his son on how to behave. He insisted that Lunga has to take responsibility for his actions and honour the cultural ideal of paying inhlawulo to the girl's family. Lunga's father was a man, in the sense that he had undergone initiation; Lunga had not. Thus, while Lunga's father may have been in a position to help Lunga pay inhlawulo, his insistence that Lunga should do it on his own so that he learns to be 'a man' was an attempt to teach Lunga the values of manhood — looking after one's family, being responsible, being diligent and showing respect for elders. To raise the money needed, Lunga left school and took up employment. As a dutiful son, Lunga did what he was told.

With the decline of marriage and the inability to perform ilobolo, intlawulo becomes another way of obtaining respect, involvement and inclusion for many men. Despite high levels of unemployment and structural inequalities, ideals of fatherhood and constructions of masculinities continue to be linked to breadwinning (Bhana & Nkani, 2014) and provider status (Hunter, 2010). Mvune (2017:135) outlines that even for teenage unemployed fathers, as noted in Lunga's case above, providing is an important part of masculine identity but it also goes beyond materiality to include care and protection.

Understanding contemporary fatherhood allows for insight into the ways in which amaXhosa men see themselves. The literature on masculinities and fatherhood in South Africa focuses on financial responsibility and a provider status which are unobtainable for many. By drawing on the experiences of a group of employed

fathers who have performed intlawulo, we can move away from the monetary component of the process and examine other forms of masculinities as the fathers negotiate fatherhood.

4. Hearing Men's Voices

A qualitiatve study was conducted to explore employed fathers' experience of intlawulo. The research was approved through an institutional ethics review process. The research explored the experiences of employed men's performance of intlawulo and their involvement in fathering. Eight unmarried fathers, all located in a township on the outskirts of Cape Town, were involved in the study. A snowballing technique was used to identify fathers, and the study had specific criteria for inclusion in the study. The fathers had to identify as isiXhosa, be between the ages of 18-40 years and have performed the intlawulo process within the last 5 years. Some fathers had mulitple children and had gone through the process several times. In such instances we focussed on their experience of the process in relation to the youngest child but also were attentive to their experience with older children, particularly in circumstances where it was recent (within the last 5 years).

We firstly approached the men with information about the research and explained to them that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and we assured them about the confidential nature of the study. The interviews were conducted in the homes of the particiapnts and were conducted in English but some interviewees drew on isiXhosa phrases. The first author, as a black Zambian woman in the field, was aware that her nationality made her an outsider fearing xenophobic attacks while her gender made her vulnerable to gender based violence. It was primarily for such reasons that she worked closely with an older respected isiXhosa man whilst in the field. However, whilst in the field, she did not feel like an outsider and she felt very safe.

All the participants had a matric education and six of the eight men had a teritary qualification. All men were also employed and earned between R7000 and R25000 per month. They were all financially maintaining their children and they were all in regular physical contact with their children and they were all non-resident fathers. All the children were using their mothers' surnames and all the fathers explained that for their children to adopt their surnames, they must perform ilobola (to marry their children's mothers). The fathers all reported their experiences of co-parenting to be satisfactory with minor challenges relating to their desire for more hands-on fathering.

With the exception of two fathers who were still waiting upon the woman's family to approach their family, all the sampled fathers had paid between R6500 and

R8000. The most dominant method of payment in this study sample was a non-fixed instalment plan payable over a period of 12 months or more, depending on both families' agreement. With the exception of Thandisizwe, all the participants paid their intlawulo in instalments. The participants' identities are protected by using pseudonyms.

The method of data analysis followed the 'conceptual scaffoldings' approach outlined by Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor (2003:213), which involved three overlapping stages. The first stage involved sorting and reducing the data by generating a set of codes, but these were refined to look at the moments where alternative masculinities were taking place, such as: 'waiting, being respectful, being flexible, conceding.' In what follows, we present the findings on four specific moments of the process where 'fathering' masculinities are being shaped. The first moment is when the mother announces the pregnancy to maternal kin and material kin assess what constitutes a 'desirable father'. It is during this moment that masculinity can be understood in terms of passivity as, during the process, fathers (to be) have to 'wait', 'be engaged' and be assessed. The second moment is when maternal kin meet paternal kin and paternity is assessed. During this moment, masculinities can be understood in terms of accepting responsibility (being a man – see example from Lunga above) and being respectful towards the mother and maternal kin, with the subsequent consequences for the mother and her family. The third moment takes place following acceptance of paternity where the maternal and paternal family negotiate the payment(s) and masculinities are understood in terms of 'flexibility and conceding.' The fourth moment is enacting fathering, whereby the fathers are managing fathering from a position of outsider status according to lineage. The final part of the paper reviews how the process of an intlawulo shapes fathering practices and the understanding of masculinity from an African perspective.

5. Findings

5.1 Waiting and Patience

The literature on intlawulo has outlined the ways in which (teenage) mothers dealt with the news of the pregnancy. Mkhwanazi (2014:116) outlined how a mother's response to the news of a teenage daughter's pregnancy was often one of anger. Such news not only brought shame to the home, albeit temporarily, it also cast a negative light on the mother for not having taught her daughter 'proper conduct' (Mkhwanazi, 2014). Our research focussing on the father's perspective highlighted that the period following the discovery of a pregnancy was characterised by uncertainty. According to the custom, the father and his paternal family have to wait to be approached by the pregnant woman's family. In the

literature, Swartz and Bhana (2009:62) provided some evidence of maternal kin deciding not to engage in the process as the maternal kin, according to the father, did not see the father as desirable: 'the family is a high-class family of which I don't think they want anything to do with me….maybe im no good to them, from their lifestyle, you know. Maybe that's it'. In this study, one of the fathers, Xolani, has been waiting for a year for the process to happen: '[U]nfortunately, the parents didn't come to report it and there is nothing that I am going to do. I am not going to volunteer and go and pay intlawulo. They must come. That's how it's done'. He says that 'they can come at a later stage' when they are ready but until then, the intlawulo process cannot take place.

During this time, Xolani had access to the child but he was unable to fulfil the 'responsible father' masculine identity until such time as the maternal family decide to come. As a way of maintaining his responsibility and signalling his commitment, Xolani continued to support the child financially: 'I feel responsible because there are people out there who just don't care. They just do that and run away which is very bad. I am not like that because at least I can stand up for my actions.' Whilst Xolani demonstrated his involvement, there may be some instances, as outlined by Swartz and Bhana (2009), when the maternal family don't come. This period of waiting for maternal kin is characterised by insecurity. Fully understanding the role of intlawulo in a father's involvement in his child's life requires taking into account other parts of the process that extend beyond monetary fines. An important way to consider how alternative masculinities are shaped by the process includes considering the ways in which the fathers wait. One of the critical aspects of waiting is precisely the uncertainty – the lack of control or clarity about how long they must wait and whether the maternal family will come. During this time the fathers are persuaded to be patient as they wait for the maternal kin whilst experiencing insecurity about their involvement in the child's life.

5.2 Being responsible and respecting elders

This is the stage where the acknowledgement of paternity is either acknowledged or denied by the man identified to be responsible for the woman's pregnancy. Mkhwanazi and Block (2016:280) argued that, given that early childbearing was seen to bring shame to both the girl and her family, the refusal to pay inhlawulo was humiliating. Mkhwanazi (2014:116) argued that the denial of paternity or refusal to pay damages was common. In some cases, the father's family would insist that inhlawulo be delayed until the baby was born and a resemblance to the father was established. Whilst we acknowledge that men can and do deny paternity in instances, the employed fathers in this research outlined how they experienced the next stage of the process, in cases where paternity was not denied. One participant explained the process that he went through:

> She was taken to my family to find out and they came very early in the morning, even before you even wake up, you will hear the knock, then you will hear 'we are here with' this particular girl, they call her name, 'and is so and so here? Is [Xolani] home?' and then they say 'yeah he is home.' Then they will go and wake up. If you are sleeping outside, they will go and wake you up and then you come and gather your elders, your fathers, your uncles; if you don't have uncles, your brothers.

The involvement of the elders through this process and in this manner where maternal kin come knocking, early in the morning, highlighted significant aspects of the process, including showing respect for maternal kin, as the participant is responsible for calling his elders and responding. A key part of the process involves the gathering of elders of both families, as Victor outlined: 'It is just a communication and connection between the two families, showing some respect.' There is respect for the mother's family and the mother: 'when you impregnate a girl, it means you have disrespected her parents so you have to pay' and, as Xolani stated: 'once you impregnate a girl, you have disrespected her father's wishes and robbed him of his dignity and pride.'

Swartz and Bhana (2009:67) argued that failure to accept paternity, if responsible, or to make an arrangement to pay, means that the father is guilty of disrespect, which itself can carry a fine. In such instances a father would be unable to attend the mother's house. As Nyambe reported:

> I am not that kind of person who just goes there [mother's house] just because I want to see my child because I respect that family. Also, because I know that I did damage her, I did make her pregnant and because I know that I didn't pay the full fine, I just can't go. That family doesn't know me at all – they just know me from the pictures and phone calls only.

Furthermore, Nyambe associated the failure to perform the process as a cause for many societal ills: 'This lack of communication that we see in our families, it's creating these issues and we have all these undiagnosed problems that are arising from there.' As Mfecane (2018:297) wrote, knowing the biological father and performing rituals such as imbeleko gives people access to ancestral protection and guidance. This is facilitated through the acceptance of paternity and the communication of two families, and possibly avoids long standing difficulties that may be encountered when a biolgoical father is not known.

Accepting paternity is also about a man taking responsibility. Just like Lunga and his father explained, the fathers in this study also spoke about the acceptance of paternity as a way of accepting responsibility. As Thomas outlined:

> It's something that one has to make sure that you understand and know that it's not only about money but about taking responsibility of your actions because once you make someone pregnant you need to take responsibility. So it's something that you can't run away from, you have to understand it and follow it.

Responsibility here is not linked to financial provision or providing in the sense of breadwinning, but in respecting the values of manhood as a father, i.e. being responsible and respecting elders.

5.3 Flexibility and Conceding

The process of negotiating inhlawulo is also characterised by uncertainty, as the terms of the payment are not fixed and involve negotiations around what this payment will constitute and how it will be made. Nkani (2017:111) outlined how, in the context of KwaZulu-Natal, the fine can include a charge for the cleansing of all virgins in the area (ukugeza izintombi), a goat (ingeza muzi) to cleanse the household, a cow (inkomo yomqhoyiso) which is 'damages' for the loss of virginity and which is for her mother, a cow for her father for humiliating him in public by getting her pregnant before marriage, and lastly a goat for cleansing her father's homestead. The charges indicated the communal significance of intlawulo. Mkhwanazi (2014:116) outlined that in 2001–2002, inhlawulo ranged from R2500 to as high as R10000. Similarly, in this research we found that intlawulo ranged from R3000 to R8500. There was some evidence that the payment of inhlawulo depended very much on the economic context of the father, and some families were accomodating of the social and economic conditions that restricted the ability of a father and his family to pay (Nkani, 2017). In such instances maternal kin may allow the father access to his child, while payment was deferred until the economic situation improved (Nkani, 2017). In our findings, the participants spoke about how the assessment of the 'fine' also related to the mother's characteristics such as the educational attainment of the mother or whether she was a breadwinner or a first-time mother, as alluded to by Thomas: 'they were saying that because it was her first time being pregnant and because she was the breadwinner at the house, that is why they end up to that R5000.'

As part of the process, the maternal family can hold a fairly fixed position in seeking a specific amount. Swartz and Bhana (2009, 66) outlined that the room for negotiation of the amount was limited 'my father paid R5000… he had no choice…those are the rules. They were set there by elders, so they can't just break them down.' Similarly in this study, the maternal family were reported to have more control over dictating the terms and amount of intlawulo. One father, Thomas, explained why the maternal family controlled the process as he would still have to return to the maternal family to be involved with the child:

> the elders need to reach an agreement because I am not going to pay and disappear. I will need to come back and support the child. They would assign me a specific amount maybe like 1.5 or R1000 that I need to pay every month.

All fathers spoke about the significance of the first cow (inkomo yobulungaa) meaning a cow that reconciles the families. As one father, Themba explained, it:

> is the way of creating a relationship with that family so that when you need to see your child, you will not have to stand on the street waiting for the mother to bring the child to you, but you have the right to say 'I am coming on Saturday, can I get my child'. There won't be any problems.

Nyambe was given a month to pay off the compulsory cow then the rest was in instalments, but still on a monthly basis. It took him seven months to pay it off. Xolani summarised the significance of the first cow, and intlawulo more broadly, by stating: 'as a Xhosa man, I need to do it. It wouldn't be right if I don't do it. Even if I take 100 years, it doesn't matter but I must do it as a respect to your family.'

Whilst provider masculinity links men's responsibility to financial provision, it fails to capture the essence of what it means to perform intlawulo, which goes far beyond the monetary aspects of fines, but draws our attention to the ways in which men, as fathers, are considered men through the respect they display for elders and maternal kin in doing the right thing and being flexible.

5.4 Negotiating involvement as an outsider

All fathers in the study were 'involved' fathers; all fathers regularly saw their children and paid maintenance for their children. Performing intlawulo gave the fathers a real choice about engaging with their children. The fathers, however, had to negotiate the degree of involvement, especially with maternal grandparents and, in some cases, there were limits to what they could do. Nyambe described how he could only have overnight visits with his daughter when his girlfriend's parents were away:

> They are avoiding me feeling like I am a father, or I have a family without paying lobola. They are trying to draw a solid line saying if you are going to marry my daughter, you are going to pay lobolo…even though I was supporting the child every month, giving money

As noted above, upon completion of intlawulo, the father can have contact with the child, but he is still outside the lineage of the child. In this regard, the father defers to elder maternal kin members, and not the mother of the child. Themba,

who lived with his son for the first two years, explained how the maternal grandparents decided to take the child to the Eastern Cape (approximately 900 km away). Themba tried to avoid this living arrangement but he explained how this was not possible: 'His grandparents said no, let us look after him [the child] now. They wanted him there. Apparently, he is the only boy there. There are lots of girls so they wanted him very much.' Themba yearned to change this situation but acknowledged that where his child lives 'doesn't depend on me or his mother, it depends on the elderly people [grandparents].' The hierachy and authority does not depend on gender but on lineage and then authority within lineage from senior to junior. Mtura, a father of two children, captures this sentiment vividly:

> And they said, this R5000 doesn't mean this baby belongs to you. You know amongst the amaXhosa, if you are not married, the child belongs to the mother's family. So we just created a relationship for you and your son. You can come anytime to visit and ask to get him at least for a weekend or a week if you are off or if you are on leave so you can stay with him and spend quality time with him.

Whilst maternal grandparents exercise authority in many cases, they can also act as facilitators when the father and mother of the child are no longer in a relationship. Intlawulo and the role of connecting the families ensures the fathers can continue to have a relationship with the child even if the relationship with the mother has ended, as Victor described:

> … when it comes to the child because, even if we fight with the mother of the child, I can go to the house and see my child because everyone knows that I am the father and they know that I paid the fine. And even when you have problems, you can phone the family and say we have problems like this and maybe they are gonna help you both.

The adoption and use of surnames indicate which lineage and clan a child belongs to. As Mkhize and Muthuki (2019:87) outlined, it signified to outsiders the individual's identity, clan origins, the family dynamics as well as their destiny. None of the children in our study used the father's surname, as this is a privilege that comes with performing lobolo, according to the sample of men. However, some fathers did state that depending on the families involved, some children (boys) may adopt their surname when they reach a certain age where they have to undergo a traditional ritual called *ukwaluka* which includes traditional circumcision (as outlined by Mfecane, 2018). Victor is hoping that his first-born son will change his surname before he is taken to initiation school. He believes that it is important for his child to adopt his name so that he knows his roots. In his own words he explained: 'So that he knows that he doesn't belong to the mother's family but to us. He can't use his mother's surname while I am still here because it's me who is going to take him to initiation school.'

The issues connecting fathering practices in these contexts with intlawulo are not just about the ability to care and provide financially, but they also carry significant meanings about the relationships between families, communities and ancestors. Masculinity, as it is connected to fathering, can be seen in this capacity as being shaped by the kind of ancestor that lives inside a person and forms part of an inner essence (Mfecane, 2018), something that is controlled by lineage.

6. Discussion

Research literature on the increased involvement of fathers in childcare, both in South Africa and elsewhere, is plentiful; even the literature on fathers and intlawulo has flourished over the last decade. This article has explored how fathers in a South African context experience intlawulo and how this is connected to alternative masculinities – this connection and theoretical work is less evident in the literature. By drawing on Mfecane's (2018) African centred theories of masculinity and on the literature on forms of masculinity in relation to fatherhood, and by connecting these to the roles of maternal kin in negotiating fatherhood and in shaping masculinities, the findings support a move toward alternative masculinities in which values and practices of patience, flexibility, respect and concession are integrated into masculinities.

The findings show how this sample of employed fathers respect the process of intlawulo as they indicate how the meanings embedded in the process facilitate their role in a child's life through restoring and building relations with maternal kin. Respecting the process is not measured against the acquisition of status and ability to 'pay', but it is measured against the ability to build an intimate relationship with the child, mother and maternal kin and to contribute to the security of the child, however that is secured.

The framing of masculinity in previous research on South African fathers has focussed on concepts such as provider masculinity (Hunter, 2010) or responsible masculinity (Mvune, 2017). We argue that such concepts only reveal a partial understanding of how the masculine identities of (employed) fathers may be affected by intlawulo. We do not argue that intlawulo restricts men's involvement in a child's life nor do we argue that the process rules out the exercise of individual choice and experiences. We argue that through performing intlawulo, the father's (man's) needs to be involved are exercised in service of the child, maternal family and community as a whole, rather than purely to meet the father's needs. Through this process, men, as fathers, develop alternative masculinities in which values and practices of patience, flexibility, respect and concession are integrated into masculinities.

The authors acknowledge that for many fathers, the ability to identify with provider masculinity or responsible masculinities in the current context of high levels of unemployment and poverty is unobtainable, but this paper looks at the category of employed men which makes it less likely that they face all the challenges in relation to the broader system of hegemonic masculinity. This sample shows how employed men incorporate values of patience, flexibility and concession into their masculine identity.

This paper also begins to recognise more closely men as fathers, (not fathers), as well as to consider some of the constructions of lineage, gender and seniority in father's lives, and the experiences and consequences thereof. Scholars who push us to consider the relational dynamics in shaping fatherhood, and thus masculinities, allow us to look beyond gender relations and inequalities based on sex. Whilst attention has been given to the role of maternal and paternal kin (Madhavan & Roy, 2012) in shaping fatherhood, very little of this empirical work has resulted in theorising fathering and alternative masculinities. This article goes further by outlining not only how related others shape fathering but more importantly how hierarchal structures exist, in relation to a child, based on lineage and seniority, that shape fathering practices and masculinities.

Through the building of relationships with maternal kin, the men in this study have become involved in their children's lives. The findings highlight the ways in which masculinities are produced and shaped by women (Talbot & Quayle, 2007) and maternal kin (as well as men) through the process of intlawulo. The analysis of different stages of the process featured how women construct alternative masculinities. Given that this study did not obtain the voices of mothers or members of the maternal kin, more research should pay attention to the ways in which women shape masculinities, as it is crucial to understanding the relational power involved in the process.

The authors acknowledge that the study has several limitations. Given the authors' outsider positionalities, the accounts presented here may not fully reflect the nuances of experiences. Moreover, the findings would be enhanced by including accounts of maternal and paternal kin members, which resources did not allow for. Despite the limitations, the research makes important contributions to how the process of intlawulo shapes fathering and alternative masculinities for a group of men who have the resources to perform intlawulo.

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