A participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinity amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers

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DECLARATION

I, Obakeng Kagola, declare that:

1) The doctoral research dissertation titled, *A participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinity amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers* (full thesis) that I herewith submit at the University of the Free State is my original work and that I have not previously submitted it for qualification at another institution of higher education.
2) The sources used or quoted in this thesis have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
3) I am fully aware that I herewith cede copyright of this thesis to the University of the Free State.

Obakeng Kagola Date: 25 July 2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral work to myself. This has been quite a journey with its own moments of sadness, illness, confusion, brightness, laughter, fun and excitement. Through this process, I have learned that as human beings, we are constantly developing to being fully human. This doctoral journey has taught me that, “Every day we constantly meet our transformed selves.”

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- ✓ To my family, bo Kagola, bo Madite, bo Moholo, bo Seleke le bo Seobi, and the many other families that supported me through this journey: Thank you for your prayers, being patient with me and for giving the necessary support in the journey of this doctoral project. It is true when they say, "*Motho ke motho ka batho.*"
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ABSTRACT

Teaching in the Foundation Phase (grades R to 3) is commonly perceived as a profession designated for females. Global research, including specific studies in South Africa, indicates that male teacher involvement in the education of young children aged five to nine remains limited. Scholars attribute this lack of participation to the socially constructed notion that teaching in the Foundation Phase is exclusively women's work, reinforced by the belief that this profession primarily involves nurturing and caring activities. Additionally, the literature suggests that rigid masculine ideals and patriarchal practices contribute to men's resistance and reluctance to engage in nurturing and caring professions, as they fear being perceived as less masculine or inadequate. Moreover, male teachers in the Foundation Phase face scrutiny and questioning of their masculinity, as their choice of profession deviates from the socially constructed norms of hegemonic masculinity. Some of the male Foundation Phase teachers attempt to reaffirm their masculine identities by distancing themselves from nurturing activities perceived as soft, aiming to conform to hegemonic masculine ideals. This study was aimed at exploring the use of participatory visual methods to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The qualitative study adopted a transformative paradigm and employed participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) as its design. Two feminist theories, namely Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity and a feminist post-structural lens, guided the interpretation of the data. Six Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers were recruited as participants using snowball sampling. Data were collected through the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making. The participants were engaged in the initial stage of analysis through participatory analysis, which was followed by thematic analysis of the generated data. The findings reveal that Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers navigate their positions as men within the amaXhosa cultural context as fathers and husbands in their communities, homes and schools. Consequently, their performances fluctuate between hegemonic and complicit streams of masculinity in and around the classroom. Their understanding of nurturing is influenced by their childhood experiences and transitioning into amaXhosa cultural practices of manhood. In their early years, participants experienced a feminine approach to nurturing and care from their mothers and grandmothers. In their later years, they were exposed to fatherly and more cultural masculine forms of love and support as they navigated through the passage of manhood. The Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers who participated in this study facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms by constructing respect, care and support for self and others. This

involved acts of kindness and empathy. They further challenged patriarchal practices such as the notion that “men must be respected”, which can hinder their ability to foster nurturing environments. The study offers recommendations for policy, practice and future research. For instance, faculties of education providing Foundation Phase qualifications should enhance teacher training on pedagogical strategies that enable teachers to address sensitive topics such as gender diversity and inclusivity without feeling uncomfortable or unprepared. Research is needed in South Africa regarding the inclusion of males in the education of young children in the early years, particularly exploring learners’ perceptions and experiences of being nurtured by male Foundation Phase teachers.

Keywords: Feminist post-structural lens, male Foundation Phase teachers, Nurturing Masculinity, Participatory Visual Research Methodologies, Theory of Masculinity

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GBV	Gender-based violence
PVRM	Participatory visual research methodology

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The conceptualisation of this study was triggered by personal and socio-political situations and circumstances surrounding the roles men should or should not play as carers and nurturers in society. To begin, I share an anecdote from an email conversation between a primary school principal to my head of department (HoD) at one of the South African universities in the Eastern Cape province where I was a teacher educator. The anecdote reveals the reaction of school management to how I related to my student teachers and the learners they teach whilst doing school-based learning (SBL). Whilst assessing and observing one of my Foundation Phase[1] student teachers in one of the primary schools in Gqeberha, an incident occurred that required me to intervene, which resulted in the below communication:

> *… Mr. Kagola hugged learners and sat amongst them during the lesson he was observing, he further comforted one learner who cried due to a headache … he further accompanied the learner to the school's administrator for her to allocate the learners a bed in the sickbay … we find this behaviour as inappropriate. Mr Kagola is a promising young man with very bright future … we would like to request the next time as he comes for school-based assessments he should refrain from such acts as it has the potential to be viewed otherwise …* (school principal, pers. comm.)

Whilst this anecdote speaks of an isolated incident, it nonetheless illuminates the often-unuttered expectations of males in nurturing and caring for young children. The prevailing societal script is that in comparison to their female counterparts, men to some extent are not capable of caring and nurturing young children (Bhana, 2016; Msiza, 2021). Therefore, it gets frowned upon or becomes questionable when a man demonstrates affection towards young children. The email was riddled with compliments, complaints and reflective questions regarding my involvement in the teaching of pre-service teachers of young children as a black masculine man in the Foundation Phase context, a space highly perceived to be feminine (Bhana, Xu & Emilsen, 2020). I draw on aspects of the email mentioned above that stimulated

[1] Foundation Phase in South Africa refers to a schooling context that comprises Reception Year and grades 1, 2 and 3.

my research interest in the conceptualisation of nurturing norms of masculinity by male Foundation Phase teachers within the context of the Eastern Cape province in South Africa where the incident mentioned above took place. Moreover, my research interest was sparked by some of my own reflective questions following this incident:

- What is it that I could have done differently in such a situation? How did my caring response to the learners read?
- How do we prepare male Foundation Phase student teachers for their professional role in the Foundation Phase?
- What are the acceptable nurturing and care-work practices of male teachers in the Foundation Phase?
- How do pre- and in-service teachers and teacher educators in the Foundation Phase in the context of the Eastern Cape work towards debunking normative and often discursive constructions of being male or female in a profession perceived to be highly feminine such as Foundation Phase teaching?

In thinking about these questions and many others that emerged during the period of this incident, I realised that I did not have answers to all these questions. The only way to respond to them was to be agentic and think of ways I could engage with them. The doctoral project was subsequently conceptualised around exploring and understanding the experiences of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in relation to their nurturing and care-work practices and how that contributes to their construction of nurturing as a form of masculinity. The purpose was to think of ways in which spaces such as homes, schools and social settings could reimagine the conceptualisation of nurturing masculinities, practices relating to nurturing as a neutral character for both men and women (Bhana, 2022; Elliott, 2020a; Ratele, 2014a; Warin, 2018). Moreover, Francis (2021: 286) posits that to challenge and change patriarchal and rigid gendered practices of what it means to be feminine and masculine in spaces such as communities and schools, "sometimes painful, critical reflection, especially as it relates to developing a critical consciousness for changing self and society", is necessary. Therefore, this qualitative study set out to explore how participatory visual methodologies can be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in and around their classrooms. In this introductory chapter, I present the background to the study through a brief general discussion of the literature on male involvement in the learning and teaching of young children. Furthermore, I highlight the research problem guided

by the literature, the research question and the objective of this study. I further position myself as a researcher and present a brief explanation of the two feminist theories used as a lens to guide the study, and participatory visual research methodologies as the chosen research design. Towards the end of this chapter, I conclude by presenting the value of the study and the ethical considerations, and offer an outline of all the chapters in the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

The lack of involvement of men in the learning and teaching of learners in the Foundation Phase (grades R to 3) continues to be a global phenomenon (Bhana, 2016; Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Brownhill, Warin & Wernersson, 2016; Cushman, 2005; Msiza, 2020; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Xu, 2020; Xu & Waniganayake, 2018). Scholars such as Skouteris, Watson and Lum (2012) and Warin (2019) argue that the involvement of men could help with the diversification of Foundation Phase teaching through a mix in the teacher component in this educational phase. The diversity in Foundation Phase teaching has the potential to enable teachers to use different methods of pedagogical delivery of learning and teaching (Warin & Gannerud, 2014). Moreover, Jewkes, Flood and Lang (2015) argue that the involvement of males in Foundation Phase teaching and learning can contribute towards addressing the perception that teaching in the early years is suitable for women only and not for men. This could further encourage the emergence of different forms of masculinity (Jewkes *et al.*, 2015; Ratele, 2016). A study in Kenya conducted by Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011: 1876) explored "the factors influencing the gender imbalance in preschool education in Kenya". The researchers found that gendered division of labour is one of the significant factors influencing the imbalance in preschool education. Within the South African context, research on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers is at its emergence, with scholars' focusing on specific aspects of the phenomenon. Researchers have focused their studies on various areas within this phenomenon, including the perception of in-service teachers towards male Foundation Phase teachers (Bhana, 2016; Mashiya *et al.*, 2015; Moosa & Bhana, 2019). Furthermore, other researchers have explored how peers perceive pre-service male Foundation Phase teachers at higher learning institutions in South Africa (Mashiya *et al.*, 2015; Moosa & Bhana, 2023; Peterson, 2014; Skelton, 2012).

However, the above research on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers is limited to a few provinces within the South African context, such as Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. There has been little or no research concerning the phenomenon of male

Foundation Phase teachers in semi-rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Free State and North West. This has led to the Eastern Cape province being one of the under-researched provinces on educational, social justice research issues and, specifically, the feminist scholarship that challenges hegemonic patriarchal practices that sustain gender inequality. Moreover, the Eastern Cape province ranks the lowest on the percentage of male educators (22.7%) in the Foundation Phase (SNAP, 2015, as cited in Bhana, 2016). Moosa and Bhana (2019) posit that males are not eager to join Foundation Phase learning and teaching because of the feminisation attached to the educational phase. They further argue that the socially constructed characterisation of Foundation Phase teachers to be motherly and nurturing is another aspect that contributes to the low rates of participation of males in the learning and teaching of young children.

Furthermore, Moosa and Bhana (2018), as well as Msiza (2020), explain that because of the above characterisation, men who are already in Foundation Phase teaching as a profession are classified within the subordinate norms of masculinity. Therefore, Foundation Phase learning and teaching ends up being constructed within the realm of femininity and not masculinity, because the above characterisation of Foundation Phase teachers does not fall within the identity construction of "real men". Ratele (2015a) and Msiza (2020) state that due to the toxic forms of masculinity associated with men within the South African context (e.g. violence and aggression), it becomes difficult for men to join the Foundation Phase learning and teaching space.

Ratele *et al.* (2010), together with Langa (2020), note that South African men continue to attach their masculinities to particular activities associated with their women in their different cultures, categorising specific tasks as manly work and the rest as suited for men that are not manly and for women. Moosa and Bhana (2018: 579) propose that societies need to create practical ways to inspire "boys and men to adopt healthier, caring and pro-feminist masculinities". These masculinities will enable them to have a different approach to how they embody their masculinities and accept other forms of masculinity as equal to theirs.

Earlier in the introduction, I shared an anecdote from school management of a particular school situated in the Eastern Cape province, a typical example of the theorisation by Connell (2005) that masculinities are contextually constructed. The Eastern Cape is home to the amaXhosa ethnic group. The province is one of the provinces in South Africa where manhood is centred around *Ulwaluko,* the ritual where the boychild is taken through the rite of passage into

manhood (Mfecane, 2020). During these rituals, boys transitioning into manhood are expected to show "aggression, bravery, respect, stoicism and the abilities to listen to and to accept advice" (Mayekiso, 2017; Mfecane, 2020: 5). I discuss this in detail in Chapter 2. It might be that against this background, the management of the school found it alarming that a man could show affection and care towards a child. Perhaps this behaviour is not in line with their perceived idea of how a man should behave in any context, including that of Foundation Phase teaching.

In line with the above, Ratele (2015b) and Bhana (2016) posit that men's involvement in caring and nurturing activities has potential to disrupt heterosexist patriarchal ways of thinking about men's practices in their workspaces and social setting. Furthermore, it is argued that men's participation in nurturing spaces could spark conversations to start shifting people's thinking to moving away from dominant heteronormative ideals about manhood (Bhana *et al.*, 2020). For example, in the case of the anecdote above, the institution where I was a teacher educator decided to create an annual workshop with primary school managers on the shifting Foundation Phase labour market. This initiated courageous conversation on what it means to be a man teaching in this female-dominated context. Therefore, it became essential for me as a male teacher educator to further the conversation through my doctoral project by exploring how in-service male Foundation Phase teachers in schools, particularly in rural, highly patriarchal, conventional and under-researched contexts such as the Eastern Cape province, construct nurturing as a form of masculinity within their different schooling contexts.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

This study was inspired by the personal and socio-political situations and circumstances which I experienced as a male Foundation Phase teacher educator. From the anecdote I presented above and my positionality in section 1.5 to follow, I discuss my experiences as a male Foundation Phase teacher and teacher educator. These experiences, good or bad, have led me to reflect on how I grappled with negotiating my masculinity in a highly feminine context and how that has influenced my identity and view of the world. Moreover, I have had to reflect on how my practices and abilities of nurturing and care continued to be under the scrutiny of those around me, be it in a Foundation Phase classroom or lecture hall.

In the background above, I explored the existing literature on men involved in the learning and teaching of young children and how scholars have researched the different aspects of male Foundation Phase teachers as a phenomenon. However, little to no research has explored the

concept of how the nurturing practices of men within Foundation Phase learning and teaching influence their construction of masculinity, particularly in the South African context. Many attribute nurturing to being a feminine trait, which, as a society, has been socially constructed. With the aforementioned, little is known about how male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their schooling contexts in South Africa or particularly in a highly patriarchal and conservative space such as the Eastern Cape province. Furthermore, within the studies of men and masculinities, limited to no research has been conducted with men using participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM) to gain a deeper understanding of how men conceptualise and construct nurturing as a form of masculinity. Connell (2005) argues that masculinities differ according to men's socialisation and contextual realities. Therefore, based on the above literature and personal experiences, the following research question and sub-questions emerged.

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

Main research question:

How can participatory visual methods be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers?

Research sub-questions:

1. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase?
2. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?
3. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?

Research objective:

To understand how participatory visual methods can be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers.

Sub-objectives

1. To explore how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase.
2. To explore how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing.

3. To explore how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms.

1.5 Situating Myself

I was born in a small town called Wolmaransstad in the North West province of South Africa. In my childhood, I never spent time with my biological parents. My father abandoned my mother while she was pregnant with me, and my mother passed away when I was ten years old. I was the only child to my mother. My grandmother took in all her grandchildren due to various reasons. For example, the parents of some of the other grandchildren were either working in various distant places such as Johannesburg or Rustenburg in the mines and kitchens, and in my case, I was taken in due to my mother’s death. Therefore, I grew up in a large family of eight grandchildren, two aunts and one uncle. As we were growing up, some of the community members started approaching my grandmother, asking her to look after their children whilst they were at work during the day. Our home became a place where parents could bring their children whilst they were at work. My cousin and I were always fascinated by our grandmother’s excitement in looking after children, so we asked her why, at her age (58), she did this. She said that it brought her joy to see children grow and learn to talk and walk and do things independently. Her rationale ignited some form of desire in me to be like her and to make a contribution to someone’s life in a positive way. She encouraged us to study and supported us throughout our primary and secondary school years.

After obtaining my matric certificate, I worked at a retail store for two years to save up money to further my studies. I knew that I wanted to become a teacher because of what I had learned from my grandmother. I enrolled for a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) specialising in the Foundation Phase programme at one of the universities situated in the North West province. One thing which I noticed in my first year of this programme is that I was one of only two male students in our class of 58 first year students. This was also the same in my SBL experiences, where I would be the only male in the entire Foundation Phase department. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I received a lot of criticism and questions from principals, heads of Foundation Phase departments, teachers and parents of children at primary schools where I did my SBL. Criticism came in the form of comments such as: “Will you make it in this phase?” “This is work for women; you should be in Grade 5 and other grades,” or “Are you sure you are straight?”

After I had graduated with my teaching qualification, I became a teacher at a former Model C school[2] in Mahikeng in the North West province. The post was for a Grade R[3] teacher and the principal was hesitant to appoint me in the position. She was worried about parents' questioning why a man was teaching the grade and whether I would be able to handle the workload (learner adjustment to formal schooling, as this required patience). She had always argued that the majority of men lacked patience and a toilet routine, amongst other attributes. Having been interviewed by her and the school governing body, I was allocated the position of Grade R teacher on condition that I be appointed a female teacher assistant. I worked in Grade R for two years and then moved to Grade 2, where I spent a year and transferred with my learners to Grade 3, where I spent two years.

Whilst working at this school, I enrolled for my post-graduate studies, a B.Ed honours specialising in learner support, as I felt I needed more training in learner development and support for children experiencing learning barriers. In my Grade R class, there was a learner who was diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and I felt incapable of assisting her to learn. Part of my responsibilities whilst teaching Grade 3 was to plan life skills and mathematics lessons for the grade. A point of interest in these two years of planning life skills in Grade 3 is that my HoD always taught some of the content, such as body awareness, feelings and consent, to mention a few. She felt that those were too sensitive topics to be taught by a man. Whilst she taught my learners, I would do visual arts and would sometimes teach physical education to her class. Amongst the many challenges and moments of excitement, one memory I will always take with me of being a teacher at this school is the children's ability to remember me as their teacher. As I walked in the streets, at church and in the malls, the learners I taught would come and greet me and thank me for being their teacher. I have come to taste what my grandmother was saying about making a contribution, no matter how small.

At the beginning of year six of my teaching career, I was appointed as lecturer in early childhood development (ECD) at a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college. At the college, I lectured in the programme EDUCARE diploma and delivered content for modules such as child health, daycare personal development and didactics. This programme was offered at a college in the rural area of North West province in Rustenburg. In the two years I spent teaching at college, all of my ECD students were female. One of the memories that I

[2] An ex-Model C school refers to a semi-funded government school in South Africa during the apartheid period that would employ and enrol only white teachers and children and now in the democratic dispensation is open to all irrespective of their race.

[3] Grade R refers to Reception Year.

have from teaching at this TVET college is of when my students informed the head of the college that I was not suitable to teach them about reproductive health, which was part of the child health module I was teaching. The head of the college requested that we (she and I) team teach the unit together. At the end of the unit, she reminded the students that just because I was a man did not mean that I was not knowledgeable on such content.

At the end of my second year lecturing at the college, I was appointed at one of the South African universities situated in the Eastern Cape province. I was appointed lecturer in the B.Ed Foundation Phase programme, where I offered modules such as Reception Year, life skills for Foundation Phase teachers, philosophy of education, and teacher and child in context. Taking up this position came with a lot of changes and adjustments. The university as an institution had its own practices, such as lecturer autonomy and different modes of learning and teaching. The second adjustment was related to context in terms of language and sociocultural practices. In the North West, we spoke Setswana[4] and I then had to learn isiXhosa. Nonetheless, one of my strong characteristics is that I am a lover of languages, hence learning isiXhosa became an exciting challenge for me. The Eastern Cape as a province is quite diverse in terms of its geographic classification. Some areas are urban and others are semi-urban, whilst the majority of areas are regarded as rural, meaning that the socioeconomic status differed in accordance with context. In amaXhosa cultural practices, many people believe in Ulwaluko*,* the taking of the boychild for traditional circumcision, which I discuss in Chapter 2 in detail.

As years went by, adjusting to the context and professional space with its challenges and achievements became easy. Part of my observation in the programme was the shift in the numbers of male students enrolling for the B.Ed Foundation Phase programme. Every year, 10 to 12 male students joined the programme. A colleague of mine came up with a community of practice for the male Foundation Phase students, a space where they could share their experiences and challenges and motivate each other. In reflection, I realise that one thing they experienced that was similar to my pre-service teaching year was the criticism. For them, it was worse, though, as they spoke about their choice of career playing a critical role in the making of their identity and how their relationships were affected by their career choices. My personal experience in the context shared in the anecdote and many other challenges in my teaching career, and the reflections of my male Foundation Phase pre-service teachers over the years,

[4] South Africa has 11 official languages that are linked to diverse cultural groups and geographical areas. Setswana is the dominant language used in the North West province of South Africa by the baTswana, whilst isiXhosa is used predominantly in the Eastern Cape province by the amaXhosa ethnic group.

ignited further interest in teacher identity construction, in particular male Foundation Phase teachers' identity construction. Moreover, I further developed an interest in PVRM. A colleague of mine in the faculty of education where I was a teacher educator invited me to a workshop on gender-based violence (GBV) and the ethical considerations when working with vulnerable groups of people such as victims of GBV. The facilitator presented some of her participants' collages and explained how one participant, who had experienced GBV several times, enjoyed creating the collage and that it to some extent had led to the participant's ability to voluntarily share her experiences. This workshop and particularly the collage stayed in my mind for a while. This experience made me to reflect on the visual arts activities I used to do with my Foundation Phase learners when I was a teacher of Grade 3. I used to think of these exercises as a process of expressing, which to some extent healed ourselves (me and my learners) whilst doing the activities.

Since this workshop, I attended many others on the use of different participatory methods. I asked experienced colleagues if I could sit in on their lectures when they used these participatory methods in their teaching for me to practically learn how to facilitate a participatory visual method activity. I gained confidence in facilitating PVRM methods and found my research interest in teacher identity, in particular understanding how male Foundation Phase teachers' practices influence their construction of nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. Scholars have argued that an individual's present and past experiences contribute significantly to their creation of their forever-shifting identities and in how they develop themselves (Osgood, 2012; Spivak, 2023). With the above in mind, I, as a researcher using two feminist lenses, had to constantly reflect on my multiple shifting identities of those being researched and of myself as a male Foundation Phase teacher and a researcher. I had to learn how to be mindful of the tensions, possible power dynamics and contradictions that could surface.

1.6 Clarification of Concepts

1.6.1 Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers

Within the context of South Africa, the Foundation Phase forms part of primary school learning, which starts from Reception Year and goes up to Grade 7. Therefore, the Foundation Phase is regarded as a phase of schooling starting from Grade R (also known as Reception Year) and ending at Grade 3. (The learner composition in this educational space would be children ranging

from 4–5 to 8–9 years of age.) A Foundation Phase teacher is responsible for the planning, learning and teaching, and the holistic development of the learners through the implementation of the curriculum, as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (South Africa. DBE, 2011). The Foundation Phase teacher is responsible for teaching four learning areas, namely home language, first additional language, mathematics and life skills. A Foundation Phase teacher is an individual who is trained to teach learners in Reception Year (Grade R), together with grades 1, 2 or 3, has a professional teaching qualification, and has registered with the South African Council of Educators.

For the purposes of this study, a Xhosa male Foundation Phase teacher refers to a person who identifies as male and belongs to the amaXhosa ethnic group. The amaXhosa ethnic group is one of the largest ethnic groups in South Africa that has its own anthropologically defined cultural heritage and rituals (Mfecane, 2020). The Xhosa male Foundation Phase teacher should have already qualified as a Foundation Phase teacher and have been teaching in the Foundation Phase in the context of the Eastern Cape, as outlined in Chapter 4.

1.6.2 Gender

Gender is widely produced through discursive practices and material conditions, and through activities we choose to do. These activities can be in the home or in sporting activities which are socially constructed as feminine or masculine and which could to some extent symbolically be assigned to males and females (Bhana *et al.*, 2020; Martin, 2011). Paechter (2003: 76) and Notshulwana (2020) explain that through interactions, people constitute and validate gender; moreover, "certain concepts become reified as symbolic artefacts and practices", creating contextualised understandings of masculinities and femininities. Therefore, one could argue that gender is contextually bound within relational and social interactions (Bhana *et al.*, 2020; Blaise & Taylor, 2012).

In this study, gender is viewed as a social construct instead of the biological sex difference of being male or female (Cranny-Francis *et al.*, 2017; Mayeza, & Vincent, 2019). Understanding gender as a social construct means that there are different kinds of social roles, attitudes, attributes, behaviours, norms and values regarded as appropriate for females and males in a particular societal setting. Therefore, understanding gender as a social construct means to shift from the stereotypical understanding of femininity and masculinity as homogeneous and singular but to regard them as plural and fluid (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Cranny-Francis *et al.*, 2017; Paechter, 2003). With this view, gender is conceptualised as something people actively

do. This suggests that there are many ways of doing gender in different social settings. In addition, there are multiple streams of femininity and masculinity which are often influenced by or intersect with other identity markers, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, race and sexuality, to mention a few. Therefore, individuals may identify and perform gender expressions in multiple ways (i.e. masculine, feminine, masculine femininity or feminine masculinity, and transgender, to mention a few). In addition, there are possibilities of gender-identity shift and change over a period of time and due to the influence of different contextual realities (Mayeza, 2017; Paechter, 2003).

1.6.3 Xhosa man/male

Having understood gender as a socially constructed phenomenon instead of the biological sex difference of being male or female, it becomes important to clarify the interchangeable use of "man" and "male" within this doctoral thesis. Acknowledgably, there are distinct differences between the two terms. From a biological perspective, male is typically associated with the sex assigned at birth; it is based on physical attributes, which include chromosomes and genitalia (Cranny-Francis *et al.*, 2017). Conversely, the term "man" is a sociocultural construct that is not limited to but includes gender identity, roles and expectations associated with masculinity within a specific cultural and historical context. The differentiation between male and man highlights the distinction between biological sex and gender identity, emphasising the social and cultural construction of masculinity (Bhana *et al.*, 2020; Blaise & Taylor, 2012; Mfecane, 2016). For example, within the amaXhosa sociocultural context, a man is a male person who embodies a mark of manhood (Ntombana, 2011), irrespective of their other identity markers. (I discuss this further in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.2). It is for this reason that throughout this doctoral thesis, I use the terms man and male interchangeably.

1.6.4 Heteronormativity

In this study, I have embraced the concept of gender as a social construct, therefore informed by this positionality I adopt Bell's (2009: 15) definition of heteronormativity as "a powerful but often unmarked set of assumptions, practices and beliefs that constantly reinforce the normalness and naturalness of heterosexuality as the only normal, natural form of sexuality". Heteronormativity, conceptually, refers to a set of norms, expectations, and assumptions within society that presume heterosexuality as the norm and ideal form of sexual orientation. It reinforces the idea that there are only two distinct and opposite genders (male and female), and these genders are expected to conform to specific roles, behaviours, and expressions.

Heteronormativity assumes that everyone is or should be heterosexual, erasing the existence and experiences of those with non-binary gender identities and non-heteronormative sexual orientations. Therefore, in this study heteronormativity is understood as one the dominant discourses that perpetuate traditional gendered performance of activities based on the binary understand of male and female in workspaces such foundation phase teaching.

1.6.5 Nurturing

Nurturing can be defined as the process of providing support, care and guidance to promote the holistic development and well-being of individuals (Elliott, 2020a; Hanlon, 2012). This doctoral study was aimed at exploring the construction of nurturing streams of masculinity amongst Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. In this context, nurturing would therefore refer to the ways in which Xhosa male teachers engage in caregiving, emotional support and modelling of positive behaviour for young children in the early years of learning. This is further discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

According to Chothia, et al., (2016), a theoretical framework provides a clear understanding of existing theories and concepts in research by referring to previous research work done relevant to the present study. Moreover, through a theoretical framework, the researcher employs a particular theory to help underpin the phenomenon being studied. The present study used two theories, the first being Connell's theory of masculinity and the second feminist post-structuralist theory.

Connell (2005), in her theorisation of masculinities, posits that the theory seeks to work as a lens that seeks to understand ways of differentiating between the different streams of masculinity that exist within a context, and the forever-changing aspects within the different categories. She coined the categories of masculinity as hegemonic, marginal and subordinate streams of masculinity. Furthermore, Connell (2005) argues that masculinities are performed differently according to the context; therefore, there is no singular version of masculinity but rather multiple streams of masculinity that exist. Moreover, Hearn and Kimmel (2006: 56), in agreement with Connell, postulate that "masculinities do not operate or exist within the social and cultural vacuums but rather are constructed within specific institutional settings", such as schools, churches and communities of practice, to mention a few. One could therefore argue

that different norms of masculinity are constructed according to cultural histories, society and politics.

The second theory that this study adopted is feminist post-structuralist theory, which is informed by Foucault's (1981) theory of post-structuralism. English (2010) mentions that when the theory is applied accordingly, it may be considered as a part of feminism. Grieshaber (2007: 871) postulates that feminist post-structuralism acknowledges that the development of individuals is centred around their social world and that there are "a number of gendered ways of knowing and being that depend on the social context and the meaning circulating within a set of social relationships". Moreover, feminist post-structuralists pay attention to the experiences of groups of people who are positioned within a particular social setting where language, discourse, agency and power relations result in multiple conflicting ways of meaning-making (Jackson, 1997; Weedon, 1987). It is also argued that people's subjectivity is formed by their cultural and historical influences, and there are ample possibilities of recreating or rewriting them (Weedon, 1987).

The two theories were used to understand the phenomenon under study, namely how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. The first lens presented is Connell's theory of masculinity, which was instrumental in providing an account or base for the multiple forms of masculinity that exist within different contexts. Moreover, the theory was helpful in understanding how men in different contexts constitute, construct and negotiate their gendered identities. The second theory, feminist post-structuralist theory, was used as it offered the possibility of enabling the male Foundation Phase teachers in this study, and myself as the researcher, to start thinking about how the multiple discourses that exist in and around their classrooms influence and shape their construction of masculinities. The use of these two theoretical lenses was important. It provided a unique opportunity to understand the intersectionality of a broader substratum of masculinity construct, irrespective of context, whilst simultaneously engaging with male Foundation Phase teachers' notions of nurturing in a predominantly female context.

Whilst the above two theories are Western theories and are used in this study that is aimed at understanding the construction of masculinities within an African context, it is also important to acknowledge that knowledge production is constantly evolving and dynamic in nature. Although there are critiques against Western feminist theories (see Mfecane, 2020), in this doctoral project, their usage has enabled possibilities for critical engagement with data analysis,

adaptation and refinement of the study. By applying these theories in a South African context, I was able to reflect on their applicability and to contribute to the ongoing conversation on men and masculinity studies and the development of gender theories that are more inclusive and contextually relevant. Therefore, employing the two theories in studying the construction of nurturing streams of masculinity amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers provided a critical, intersectional and globally informed theoretical framework for analysis.

1.8 Research Design and Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Its intention was to engage Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in their conceptualisation of nurturing as a form of masculinity within the Eastern Cape province. Qualitative research methodology refers to various strategies and techniques in researching, mainly working with people's accounts, views and ideas, lived experiences, perceptions and opinions regarding a particular issue or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The qualitative research approach was chosen to understand how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers conceptualise nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their schools' context in the Eastern Cape province.

The study is located within the transformative paradigm. This refers to a humanistic worldview, with researchers in this paradigm believing that knowledge and reality are not impartial but influenced by people's lived experiences within a particular context (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Furthermore, the transformative paradigm creates space for researchers to concentrate on participants' lived experiences within a particular context and to use the data to make meaning. The transformative worldview aims to understand the subjective world of human experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Prachi, 2015). It permits the researcher to actively interact with the participants through various methods, such as dialogue, visual effect creation representing participants' thoughts, writing and research data recording (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The study adopted PVRM as its research design. According to Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019), researchers using PVRM as a research design are interested in people's first-hand experiences of a particular phenomenon. Moreover, Mitchell, De Lange and Moletsane (2017) argue that the PVRM approach refers to hands-on methodologies that intend to start conversations that mobilise people at the grassroots level, allowing for reflexivity. PVRM as a design was appropriate for this study because of the nature of the research question and the aim

to explore in detail the participants' understanding of their conceptualisation of nurturing as a form of masculinity.

For this study, I actively engaged with participants using participatory visual methods such as photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making to generate data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), the transformative paradigm permits the researcher to study a particular situation without prior knowledge of theory. Therefore, themes and ideas emerged from the data generated using the above participatory visual methods. According to Mayaba and Wood (2015), participatory strategies, such as photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making, create space for participants and the researcher to engage in meaningful research and active dialogue about a phenomenon they all share. These participatory methods enabled participants in this study to make meaning of their lived experiences of being male Foundation Phase teachers in a highly feminised field and to consider how they conceptualise nurturing as a form of masculinity.

1.9 Value of the Study

The study aimed to contribute to theory in the field of teacher education, specifically gender and education, men and masculinities studies. Specific focus was placed on Foundation Phase teacher identity in South Africa, specifically in the Eastern Cape province. Having deliberated earlier about the paucity of research on male Foundation Phase teachers, it was deemed necessary to understand how the socioeconomic, cultural and structural norms around manhood contribute to the development of male teacher identity. It was also deemed necessary to understand the kind of men who choose to disrupt normative constructions of Foundation Phase teaching as a feminine space and work suitable for women only. Understanding these complexities has the possibilities to provide multiple understandings of how nurturing and care work is carried out by Foundation Phase teachers in and around their classrooms. Moreover, this study used PVRM to explore how male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate a deeper understanding of nurturing as a form of masculinity, which could lead to a broader conception of nurturing in the context of Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. This participatory study has the potential to contribute to improving practice by emphasising methodologies and pedagogies that value participants' voices and engage participants critically with the aim of transformation either of the participants or of the researcher. This has implications for teacher education programmes in heeding the call to attract more males into the Foundation Phase.

1.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethics is concerned with the way researchers conduct themselves throughout the entire research process (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011; Thomas, 2009). Ethical considerations must be emphasised in any research that involves human participants and there should be respect for the truth and participants' human dignity. Before entering the field for data generation, ethics approval was sought from the University of the Free State's Ethics Committee and subsequently granted (see Appendix A). Conditional approval was granted pending the permission of the provincial department where the research was conducted. Thereafter, I asked for permission to conduct the research from the Eastern Cape provincial Department of Education and the school principals, respectively, which was subsequently granted (see Appendices B and C). Participants were asked to sign written consent forms after the introductory session explaining the study and what would be expected of them (see Appendix D). Participants were informed that participation was voluntary.

I further explained to the participants that they were not obligated to participate in the study and that they could withdraw at any stage of the study without adverse consequences or victimisation. Participants were treated with the utmost respect and dignity throughout the study. I also explained to them that the study would be conducted under strict confidentiality and that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the study. Pseudonyms were used to represent the names of the participants. I informed the participants that the data generated would be used for only this research. Confidentiality in the data generated was ensured by asking the participants to sign a confidentiality clause, which is a commitment by participants not to divulge any information discussed throughout the research process. Furthermore, visual ethics was considered, meaning that participants were informed about the methods they could use to create their photovoice and collages so as to not infringe upon their anonymity. During the weekend data generation retreat, participants were trained on the process of taking a photograph depicting their positionality in and around their classrooms. They were also informed of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act (4 of 2013) (South Africa, 2013) and how to remain compliant with the Act whilst creating the collages (not showing people's faces; asking for people's consent to take photos of objects that do not belong to them). I also showed participants examples of the compliant photovoice pictures and collages of a totally different study to guide them before commencing with constructing theirs.

1.11 Layout of the Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter provided an introduction to the study through a brief discussion of the literature of the involvement of men in the Foundation Phase. It also identified the research problem and question and the objectives of the study. Moreover, the chapter provided a brief discussion of the research design and methodology adopted for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides an evaluation and review of existing research relevant to the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers. It starts with exploring the available literature on the navigation and construction of masculinity in South Africa. It further presents research themes related to the involvement of men in Foundation Phase teaching. Themes include male Foundation Phase teachers as father figures or role models, male Foundation Phase teachers and pedagogies, diversity in Foundation Phase teaching, and paedophilic perceptions towards male Foundation Phase teachers. Since the study is located within the field of education and the unit of exploration is male teachers, a discussion on teacher identity is presented broadly and later focuses on Foundation Phase teacher identity.

Chapter 3: Theoretical frameworks

This chapter presents the two theoretical frameworks used in this study as the lens guiding the research project. The two theoretical frameworks, namely Connell's theory of masculinity and feminist post-structuralist theory, together provided a comprehensive theoretical approach on how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms.

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design

Guided by the research question, in this chapter, I present a detailed account of the research approach, paradigm and methodology and its relevance to the research question, aim and objectives of the study. For this study, I selected PVRM as the research design, as it is positioned within the qualitative approach to research. I further discuss the three data generation methods used in the study, namely photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making. Important to note in the chapter is the reflexivity in the data generation section, and further where I discuss my positionality as a researcher before introducing the participants.

Chapter 5: Presentation of the participatory visual findings

In Chapter 5, I present the data generated from the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making from the six participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. This chapter complements the methodology chapter, in which I explained the research process and revealed the richness of the data generated for analysis.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the findings

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study as themes in line with the research question and sub-questions guiding the study. I discuss how participants in this study constructed their masculinities, their understanding of nurturing, and how they facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms.

Chapter 7: Synthesis of the findings, recommendations and implications

In this final chapter, I reflect on the methodology used in the study, and also present a brief review of the entire research project as well as my personal and professional reflections as a male Foundation Phase teacher educator. The second part of this chapter provides the summary of the findings, related conclusions and the implications of the study. It further describes the contribution of the study. In conclusion, I discuss some limitations of the study as well as the direction for further research.

1.12 Conclusion

This introductory chapter briefly presented literature on the involvement of men in the teaching of young children, which led to the presentation of the research problem of the study, the research question and the aim of the study. This chapter further offered a brief explanation of the two theoretical frameworks used to guide the research and the PVRM methods used in this study to generate the data with participants. The value of the study and ethical considerations were also discussed in the chapter. Lastly, the chapter presented the order of the following chapters to follow. Chapter 2 of this study will discuss in detail the literature in relation to masculinity construction, Foundation Phase context and nurturing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I provided the background and rationale for the study. In addition, the problem statement, the research purpose, the research questions, the location of the study, the research design and the methodology were discussed. This chapter presents a review of related literature. Bertram, and Christiansen, (2014) postulate that a review of the available literature places the research currently undertaken within the context of multiple research projects conducted previously. The review of literature further critiques and summarises the existing available literature to provide a meaningful understanding of the research phenomenon being studied and further provides space for further research. Therefore, in this study, the literature helps position the study within studies of men and masculinities and how nurturing as a form of masculinity is constructed within the context of Foundation Phase teaching. Moreover, this chapter provides an analysis of the work done around the involvement of men in the learning and teaching of young children and how their practices influence their construction of the self. The study explores how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms in the context of the Eastern Cape province. Therefore, the current chapter provides a review of related literature categorised according to the following themes informed by the main research question:

- An exploration of masculinity constructions;
- An exploration of research related to the involvement of male teachers in Foundation Phase teaching;
- Teacher identity; and
- A conceptualisation of nurturing masculinity.

2.2 Exploring Masculinity Constructions

2.2.1 Navigating masculinity within the South African context

Research around the construction of masculinities within the context of Foundation Phase learning and teaching in South Africa is a fairly new phenomenon. Therefore, it becomes

imperative to review the available literature on the emergence of masculinity in South Africa. The intention is to navigate and locate the study in the field of men and masculinities. Additionally, the purpose of navigating masculinity in the South African context is to understand the constructions of masculinity and the discourses that emerge in different contexts, including that of Foundation Phase teaching. Moreover, the purpose is to locate the debates concerning men's placement in creating an inclusive and equitable working environment in contexts socially constructed as feminine, low status and which are regarded as care work, such as Foundation Phase teaching.

Men and masculinities scholars argue that the colonial and apartheid epoch contributed immensely to the construction of masculinity in the South African context (see Langa, 2020; Morrell, 1998; Ratele, 2014a; Sideris, 2003; Tenge, 2006). Furthermore, Langa (2020) and Siziba (2021) posit that we need to acknowledge the role played by race, class and ethnicity and that our past serves as a backdrop to the construction of different contextual streams of masculinity in post-apartheid South Africa. During the colonial and apartheid era, whiteness was the dominant identity marker; as such, white men were dominant over black men, women and children (Heckler, 2019; Morrell, 1998). Moreover, the construction of hegemonic masculinity was centred around violence, stoicism and hegemony (Langa, 2020; Morrell, 2001a; Ratele, 2014b).

During the apartheid era, white Afrikaner masculinity was constructed as dominant and in direct contrast to that of people of colour (Heckler, 2019; Vincent, 2008). This resulted in the relegation of black men's masculinity to subordination. Important to note is that during this colonial and apartheid epoch, hegemonic masculinity was linked to whiteness, which led to white people referring to black men as "boys" and white men as "real men" because of the colour of their skin (Morrell, 2001b; Ntombana, 2011; Ratele, 2013a; Tenge, 2006). According to Ndangam (2006) and Ratele (2014b), the positioning of black men within subordinate norms of masculinity opposed to white men led to them resorting to violent behaviour as a coping mechanism to deal with the inequalities and injustices imposed on them by the apartheid regime. Ratele (2014b) explains that during the colonial and apartheid era, people of colour, particularly black men, were treated as objects, as opposed to being treated as fully human. Botha and Ratele (2016) posit that socioeconomic factors, for instance wealth, decent working conditions and income inequality, played a pertinent role in black men's sense of manhood. Therefore, economic starvation and maltreatment had undesirable implications that led to black

men developing aggressive and hetero-patriarchal streams of masculinity (Morrell *et al.*, 2013; Ratele, 2015b).

According to Shefer and Ratele (2011), multiple streams of masculinity have been continuously researched and categorised in post-apartheid South Africa. The literature on how masculinities are constructed in this post-apartheid context shows how norms of masculinity are constructed in various spaces by men, women and children, be it in business and political organisations, sociocultural spaces or educational institutions. For instance, Mathews, Jewkes and Abrahams (2015), together with Ratele (2013b), postulate that boys and men are positioned by women, other men (including non-heterosexual men) and children in their various contexts in relation to the hierarchies of masculinity (Burchardt, 2018; Ratele, 2014a). For example, central to hegemonic masculinities within a social context such as homes is the characterisation of man as provider, protector, emotionless and head of the household. These tenants of hegemonic masculinity lead to certain men being on the highest level in terms of streams of masculinity, rendering them as desirable and envied, successful and ultimately powerful (Burchardt, 2018; Mathews *et al,* 2015; Ratele, 2014a). Moolman (2013) and Chikovore *et al.* (2016) argue that this is because of the sustained patriarchal structures in societies which position women and children in subordinate positioning in relation to men.

The above is visible within societies such as the amaZulu ethnic group, one of the largest populations in the country, found in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. Carton and Morrell (2012), Chikovore *et al.* (2016) and Hunter (2005), in their respective studies, state that some of the amaZulu ethnic groups constructed and achieved hegemonic masculinity through the accumulation of many cattle, polygamous marriage and the successful creation and leading of homesteads. For men in the amaZulu ethnic group, the richer they are and the more wives they have, the more they become in control of the labour and esteemed as household heads (Chikovore *et al.*, 2016; Hunter, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity for most men in South Africa continues to be centred around the masculine ideal of being a provider, protector and head of household, which defines a man as a person who can economically provide for his family and in particular his female partner/s. This further positions such men within an authoritative status in the household and community (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017; Ratele, 2014b). Moreover, men in most contexts like to construct their masculinities through practices and activities (Bhana, 2016; Ratele *et al.*, 2010).

The scholars cited above share some of the practices men use to validate their masculinities. For example, the work they do, their dress sense and the ways they walk and talk are some of the important features in creating and sustaining hegemonic-ideal streams of masculinity (Ratele *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, nurturing and care work and household domestic activities such as cleaning and cooking are seen as activities suitable for women and not men (Bhana, 2016; Ratele *et al.*, 2010). The above is regarded as hegemonic ideals or streams of masculine representation or actions which might be culturally and contextually informed or bound (Connell & Messerchmidt, 2005).

Another aspect of masculinity construction within the South African context is related to men who construct different streams of masculinity, such as being regarded as soft or subordinate, and who perform any other norm of masculinity different from the dominant ones (Levon, Milani & Kitis, 2017; Ratele *et al.*, 2013a). Men who perform such versions of masculine identity are treated as non-entities. A study by Rich, Nkosi and Morojele (2015) points to the treatment men in the North West province of South Africa receive who do not consume alcoholic beverages, smoke cigarettes or use drugs or who seldom socialise with other men who are positioned as powerful and influential. These men are often called derogatory names such as *setlatla* (a fool) or *sagata marukgwana* (a low-class man) or ever ridiculed or insulted. The above aligns with Ratele's (2015a) earlier emphasis that masculinities are constructed and performed for others to validate. Moreover, the above makes visible what Connell (2005) has highlighted, that in hierarchies of masculinities, there will always be men who want to position themselves within dominant and powerful positions of masculinity.

Furthermore, another aspect of masculinity construction in South Africa is initiation (circumcision) of young boys and its contribution to masculinity. Initiation, in particular traditional circumcision, remains an important aspect of exploration when dealing with literature on masculinity. In South Africa, more than 200,000 boys undergo the traditional initiation process yearly (Mkhaliphi, 2022). The reason for such high numbers is because many of the South African ethnic groups believe in this ancient cultural practice. These ethnic groups include the amaXhosa, baSotho, baTswana, Ndebele and Tsonga, which groups believe that the practices of traditional initiation are linked with the accepted projection of versions of masculinity within the different contexts or social settings (Ncaca, 2014). Scholars such as Kiguwa and Siswana (2018), Moolman (2017) and Ncaca (2014) have researched how men who are traditionally circumcised construct their masculinities and to what extent new masculine identities are attained and performed from the initiation as opposed to uncircumcised

men or those who took the medical route to circumcision and women. Kiguwa and Siswana (2018) and Ncaca (2014) argue that, to some extent, the rationale behind traditional circumcision may be multifold, but most importantly, it is to teach young men how to be dominant over others and to be powerful men. One could argue that the above makes visible that in South Africa, the majority of men validate and continuously perpetuate versions of hegemonic norms of masculinity that are dominant within that context.

Langa (2020) conducted an interesting study on how boys in townships[5] construct their masculinities close to attaining three decades after the fall of the apartheid era in South Africa. Like Connell (2005), Langa acknowledges that masculinities are contextual and multiple. Langa found that young men tend to succumb to the pressures of performing contextual conceptualised dominant streams of masculinity within their different communities. He suggests that young men have to be versatile enough to fit into different social groups of men, be it academic, Christian boys or *tsotsi* (gangster) boys, amongst many other groups that exist within a particular context in the townships. Langa (2020) and Siziba (2021) argue that such multiple performances of masculinity are embedded in academic achievement and violence as hegemonic markers of men's identity.

Moreover, Langa (2020) also found that the majority of the young men associated their construction of manliness with the implications of their "absent fathers, present mothers". Statistics have shown that close to 70% of black children are raised by a single mother or a step-father who provides only financial support (Langa, 2020; Statistics South Africa, 2018). One of the major contributors to father absenteeism is the migration to cities for better employment opportunities, which leads to men developing a provider masculine identity (Clowes, Lazarus & Ratele, 2010). Migration by men to cities in pursuit of better employment opportunities has a historical implication within the South African context. With the enforcement of apartheid in 1948 came the exploitation of African and South African material resources such as gold (Morrell *et al.*, 2013). This led to the migration of black men from their homesteads, where they relied on agricultural barter trading, to cities where there was gold (Clowes *et al.*, 2010). They were driven by the desire to pay *lobola* (bride price) in order to marry and possess women. In addition, to sustain the social notion that a man must provide for

[5] Township within the context of South Africa refers to underdeveloped areas that were formed in the 19th century until the apartheid period ended (Donaldson *et al.*, 2013; Langa, 2020). These townships were racially segregated and reserved for people of colour (Langa, 2020). Donaldson *et al.* (2013: 114) argue that South African townships developed an "iconic image internationally as the core of where the struggle for freedom was waged". However, after the dawn of democracy in South Africa, townships have transformed from homogeneous to differentiated urban landscapes.

his family, black men had to settle for cheap labour for the mines to sustain their patriarchal ideals of what it means to be a man in a context that has relegated blackness to subordination (Morrell *et al.*, 2013). Today, in a democratic South Africa, men desiring to work far from their families is still a dominant feature in men's trajectory to become real men. Gibbs *et al.* (2015), together with Langa (2020), postulate that the continued desire for men to provide financially for their families continues to be one of the major reasons for absent fathers and present mothers in the upbringing of their children.

The various notions of masculinity are linked to power. The above literature shows how young men within the South African context manifest power through the construction of masculinities through contextual, cultural practices and violence. Langa (2020) and Ratele (2014b) state that South African men who enact and display different forms of masculinity from those of hegemonic masculinities find themselves being under the threat of marginalisation, subjugated or, even worse, regarded as insignificant. Connell (2018: 336) posits that "within masculinities, there will always be those who want to assume the dominant and powerful positioning". What Connell theorises is visible in Walker's (2005) study on masculinities in one of South Africa's biggest cities of employment, Johannesburg. It was found that men who do not party, drink alcohol extensively and associate with others who regard themselves as powerful are always relegated to subordinate forms of masculinity. These men further stand a chance of being labelled in derogatory terms.

An interesting turn in conversations around constructing different streams of masculinity within parts of the South African context has emerged. Men in provinces such as Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape have started conversations around rethinking streams of masculinity construction in their different cultural contexts. Similar to Ratele's (2014b) proposal, President Ramaphosa (Ramushwana, 2022) in his address at the launch of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign urged men to start conversations and think of ways to construct caring, nurturing and pro-feminine masculine ideals that would work towards ending GBV against women and children. Men and traditional leaders in contexts such as the Eastern Cape have adopted the task to engage men in conversation and created projects such as Isithebe Samadoda and EziNgcanjini Mens Project in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and the Sarah Baardman district. These projects create spaces for men to talk on sensitive topics such as men and boys against GBV, men as partners and not heads or providers, men as protectors and lovers, and many other issues that affect men.

Streams of masculinity in the South African context are historical; however, since the dawn of democracy, there has been a shift in ways that masculinities are constructed. According to Langa (2020), Ratele (2014b) and Bhana (2016), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996) (South Africa, 1996) has been instrumental in the shift of masculinities, as it aims to address the injustices of the past, which include social justice, gender equality and equitable redistribution of opportunities, to mention a few. Furthermore, Langa (2020), Morrell *et al.* (2012) and Ratele (2015b) state that education, poverty and unemployment are also key contributors to the construction of masculinities. Therefore, the aforementioned has shown that streams of masculinity are forever evolving with men.

South African norms of masculinity are not fixed; therefore, streams of masculinity are continuously reproduced by men's ever-changing socioeconomic, educational, social and cultural conditions (Moosa & Bhana, 2018; Ratele, 2015a). In addition, these masculinities are frequently under reconstruction and evolve with time, given the different contextual realities men find themselves in (Ratele, 2015a). Furthermore, Moosa and Bhana (2018: 579) propose that there should be diverse and effective ways of inspiring "boys and men to adopt healthier, caring and pro-feminist masculinities", which will enable them to have a different lens to ways they embody their masculinities despite their positioning.

With the review of South African literature on masculinity construction, this section has provided a discussion of how masculinities play an important role in creating a particular form of order or to discard such behaviours. This may involve supporting violence in social spaces or the construction of a gendered labour order. The above literature on the construction of different norms of masculinity provides an understanding of the existing forms of masculinity to which the present study aims to contribute. By focusing on how male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing forms of masculinity in their everyday lives as male teachers in a highly feminised educational phase, the above has afforded the study a background. Having provided the above background on masculinity construction within the broader South African context, I would like to bring the reader closer to the context in which the study is conducted and explore how masculinities are constructed within the context of the amaXhosa ethnic group. Therefore, in the next section, I present a brief discussion on Xhosa masculinities.

2.2.2 Xhosa masculinities

The present study explored how male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity within a particular context in South Africa, the Eastern Cape province.

Therefore, it becomes important to zoom in closely on how masculinities are constructed within the context of the Eastern Cape province as the original context of the indigenous amaXhosa ethnic group largely residing in the Eastern Cape. Scholars such as Mfecane (2016, 2018, 2020), Ntombana (2011), Qambela (2016) and Siswana and Kiguwa (2018) have written vastly on Xhosa masculinities and how the making of a Xhosa man is centred around a tradition or ritual that has been practised for more than 200 years. Mfecane (2016: 204) explains that notions of Xhosa masculinities are centred around the process of Ulwaluko (the rite of passage): "Xhosa young boys undergo the process of Ulwaluko*,* … boys are secluded from society for a period of three to six weeks". The process of Ulwaluko*,* which transitions Xhosa boys to real men, begins "with a specific act of inserting a cultural mark of manhood into the body" of the initiate boy (Mfecane, 2016: 206; Ntombana, 2011).

The insertion of the body mark is aimed at teaching bravery and endurance to the young initiate and to further achieve hegemony (Mfecane, 2018; Qambela, 2016). Soga (1931, as cited in Mfecane, 2020: 5) notes that during the three- to six-week period of isolation from the community, the initiates are taught about what it means to be a man in the amaXhosa culture and the "mysteries of manhood". Mayekiso (2017) posits that during this three- to six-week period, initiates experience severe pain as their circumcision wounds heal, the intention being to teach endurance. Xhosa initiates are further taught how to properly dress as newly initiated men, how to safeguard and be responsible for their circle of manhood, as well as "strength, bravery, respect, stoicism and the abilities to listen to and to accept advice" (Magodya, Andipatin & Jackson, 2017; Mfecane, 2020: 5). According to Magwaza (2009), Mdedetyane (2019) and Mfecane (2018), after completion of the three to six weeks of the Ulwaluko process, the Xhosa initiates are reunified with the community officially through a celebration ceremony. Now, the initiates are regarded as men and not boys. Ntombana (2011) states that this positioning allows the newly initiated men to marry, actively participate in community discussions and rituals, and possibly build a homestead for themselves. Within the amaXhosa culture, a man is commonly defined as an initiated person, meaning that hegemony is therefore achieved through the existence of a mark on a male person's body (Mfecane, 2020; Scott, 2021). Males who have not undergone the process of Ulwaluko are therefore positioned as boys, regardless of their marital or socioeconomic status, educational level or age (Dlamini, 2020; Mfecane, 2020).

Magodya *et al.* (2017) and Tenge (2006) emphasise that teenage boys and some young adults tend to succumb to the pressures of undergoing the process of initiation, due to stigmatisation

and being positioned as boys and not being welcomed in the circle of legitimisation. In their study, Magodya *et al.* (2017) found that due to peer pressure, uninitiated youth tend to be easily influenced by the privileges of those initiated; others undergo the initiation process secretly without the knowledge or consent of their parents or guardians. It has been argued that the pressure to succumb to Ulwaluko emanates from a fear of being ostracised, marginalised or socially excluded by the society and family members in the case of homosexual boys or youth within the amaXhosa culture (Mavundla *et al.*, 2009; Qambela, 2022). Two studies conducted within the Eastern Cape province found that queer boys are pressured by their family members to go through the process of Ulwaluko in order to get rid of their homosexuality, whilst also protecting their family standing in society (Mashabane, 2018; Ntozini & Ngqangweni, 2016). Moreover, Ntozini and Ngqangweni (2016) assert that queer initiates in most instances are vulnerable men who take up the subordinated positioning of masculinity within the context of Ulwaluko. Ngwane (2004: 403) hypothesises that schooling and democracy within the context of South Africa, "which is associated with modernisation and social justice, is often seen to be in conflict with and threatening the male initiation rite". Bhana (2013) and Ratele (2015a) assert that there is a disjuncture between dominant cultural practices and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which perpetuates human rights and social justice. An example of this disjuncture is homosexual men who are forced by their families to undergo Ulwaluko, meanwhile not having any interest in heterosexist cultural notions of manhood. Mashabane (2018) states that heterosexual men tend to view the discourse around human rights as being problematic to their masculinity from a cultural perspective. Connell (2005), in her study, argues that different social contexts define the kind of masculinity that is dominant as hegemonic, and other streams of masculinity as subordinate. Therefore, within the amaXhosa ethnic group, manhood is sustained through the rite of passage. Moreover, masculinities are constructed through multiple social channels, and men's identities are also formed through different societal and institutional practices and norms.

The above discussion provided an explanation of how masculinities are constructed within the amaXhosa culture. The aim was to provide the reader with an idea of how masculinities might be constructed within the social context of this study. Given this background, the focus of the present study is on how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity. Therefore, in the next section, I discuss how masculinities are constructed within the context of South African schools.

2.2.3 Masculinities in the South African schooling context

In the discussion above, it is argued that masculinities are constructed in multiple ways and contexts. An additional element to the construction of masculinity explored in this literature review is that of the South African educational setting. According to Connell (2001), Bhana and Mayeza (2016) and Ratele (2015a), educational institutions play a critical role in constructing streams of masculinity. Furthermore, Mayeza (2017) and Morrell (2001b), in their respective studies, report that masculinity construction in education remains under-researched, in particular in the primary school setting (grades R to 7). Bhana and Mayeza (2016) studied a group of primary school boys in the KwaZulu-Natal province to investigate how they constructed gender relations of power and express masculinities on the school playground. They found that the schoolboys position themselves as "real boys" in the school playground, where being a real boy is inseparable to violent "performances" of masculinity.

Also in KwaZulu-Natal, in primary schools located in Mariannhill township, Moma (2015) found that boys choose to participate in sports that are perceived to be rough and that require strength for them to be regarded as strong physically and more masculine than other boys and girls. This leads to the reproduction of hegemonic streams of masculinity in their sporting activities in the school. Bhana and Mayeza (2016) argue that this can be seen as the reproduction and expressions of hegemonic masculinity on the school playground. Moreover, Bhana (2009, 2016) and Moosa and Bhana (2018), in their respective studies, found that teachers, notably those in Foundation Phase learning and teaching, tend to replicate existing hegemonic masculinity values and streams which perpetuate gender inequality. These values and streams of hegemonic masculinity are visible when teachers assign duties to children and the differentiated behavioural expectation from both girl- and boychildren both in and around classrooms. An example would be the assigning of classroom cleaning duties to girls and the task of removing furniture in the classroom to boys.

Bhana (2009), in her study in KwaZulu-Natal, found that male teachers influence learners' interaction. She found that boys, when they are among male teachers, position themselves in hegemonic ways of being boys, behaving in this manner to get over the fear of being perceived as weak by teachers and other learners in the school. According to Okeke and Mtyuda (2017) and Petersen (2014), teachers play an important role in the development of the identity either of self, peers and learners they teach, meaning that they do not operate in isolation. Teachers can either perpetuate dominant discourses, such as gender inequalities, that are predominant in

the community they exist in or challenge them in a way that aims to change those discourses (Msiza, 2020).

Literature also shows how in institutions of higher learning, masculinities are constructed in relation to career choices men choose to study. Bhana and Moosa (2016) and Petersen (2014) studied the choices made by male pre-service teachers at two institutions of higher learning concerning which educational band to teach in. They have found that male students associate teaching older learners in the intermediate and senior bands as more suitable for men. The argument was that, in these grades, teachers are more intellectually capacitated, and that teachers in the above bands are regarded more highly than those involved in the teaching of children in the Foundation Phase, which they regard as care work (Bhana & Moosa, 2016). In the same vein, Petersen (2014) has conducted a study in one of the South African universities located in Johannesburg, one of the biggest cities in the country. It was found that men tend to disassociate themselves from Foundation Phase teaching as a career choice as it does not resonate with what it means to be a man. Male participants in both studies argued that Foundation Phase teaching is more of a feminine than masculine occupation. In other words, these males engage in "oppositional gendered discourses", reinforcing power dynamics and construction of streams of masculinity that have inequitable gendered outcomes.

Given the paucity of research on masculinity and Foundation Phase teaching in South Africa, the next section of the literature review explores the existing and growing international body of scholarship on this phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers. Therefore, I start the section by exploring the themes that emerged in literature on the involvement of men in the learning and teaching of young children in the Foundation Phase.

2.3 Exploring the Global Conception and Perspectives of Male Foundation Phase Teachers

Worldwide, there is a growing contribution in the involvement of men in the Foundation Phase of learning and teaching (grades R to 3). The most visible theme in the literature seems to be centred around how research has been divided transversely around gender lines. In many countries around the globe, there have been calls for and recruitment of men to be involved in the learning and teaching of young children in Reception Year (Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; O'Keeffe, 2018; Xu & Waniganayake, 2018). In countries such as Australia, England, Ireland and New Zealand, much research has been done on this phenomenon of men teaching in the

early years of schooling. Therefore, the following discussion aims to engage the literature on how scholars around the globe have engaged with the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers. In this section, I draw your attention to the relevant themes, starting with male teachers as “father figures” or “role models”.

2.3.1 Male Foundation Phase teachers as father figures or role models

The learning and teaching of young children in early childhood education (ECE), including the Foundation Phase (grades R to 3), is an educational space that is female-orientated worldwide (OECD, 2019). In countries such as Australia, China and New Zealand, to mention a few, governments have initiated campaigns aimed at recruiting men to take up teaching positions in the early years of learning, with the purpose that these males serve as “role models”, “disciplinarians” and “father figures” to boychildren (Knight & Moore, 2012; Skelton, 2002; Warin, 2018: 3). Scholars argue that the above initiative is premised on the assumption that the boychild in the Foundation Phase is being feminised by the highly woman-oriented space of learning in the early years (Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Warin & Adriany, 2017). Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011), as well as Warin (2019), share similar sentiments, that the inclusion of males in Foundation Phase learning and teaching would help academically underachieving boys to perform better. Additionally, Brownhill *et al.* (2021) posit that that the boychild in the context that has male teachers as role models or father figures has higher chances of developing alternative positive norms of masculinity important for improved schooling and childhood socialisation. The aforementioned is visible in Australia, where in 2002, the government published a strategic recruitment policy document titled, *Male teachers strategy*. The aim of this policy document was to identify, recruit and retain Australian males and to also recognise those who were already teaching and are role models to children in the early years of learning in Australia (Knight & Moore, 2012).

Scholars in gender studies in the early years of learning have problematised the above rationalisation for male involvement in Foundation Phase teaching (see Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Knight & Moore, 2012; Martino, 2008; Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2012). According to Martino (2008) and Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012), recruiting male teachers in Foundation Phase teaching premised on gender, social statues or ethnicity is highly problematic. It is argued that if males are recruited for the purpose of role-modelling or father-figuring, this poses a possibility of perpetuating the re-gendering of Foundation Phase learning and teaching and the sustenance of societal patriarchal values. Moreover, Brownhill

et al. (2021), Kagola and Khau (2021) and Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012) argue that the re-gendering of this educational phase plays a critical role in the attainment of gender equality universally. It further perpetuates traditional gender binary and gender roles. Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2012) propose the de-gendering of learning and teaching in the early years, which implies thinking and moving beyond the perceived feminised teaching in the Foundation Phase. Scholars have postulated that in the teaching and learning of young children, it is required that all teaching staff members need to embody positive role-modelling in their pedagogy of care and education for children in and around their school settings (Bhana, 2016; Burn & Pratt-Adams 2015). Warin (2019), in his study, explores best practices from Norway, one of the longstanding countries to have successfully managed to recruit and retain males in the early years of learning. They could achieve this because their strategy was premised on providing children with diverse learning environments and an experience of being taught by male and female Foundation Phase teachers, irrespective of their ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

Another interesting critique on the assertion of male Foundation Phase teachers as role models is that there is no clear definition of it and there is no clear understanding or description of what male teachers as role models should do, especially in the context of Foundation Phase teaching (Brownhill *et al.*, 2021; Hurd, Wittrup & Zimmerman, 2016). Martino (2008) and McGrath and Van Bergen (2017) argue that, within traditional socially constructed definitions of what a role model is, the role has been granted to parents. However, contemporary researchers have challenged the idea of parents and teachers as role models to learners and have identified peers, social media influencers and television personalities to be role models (McGrath *et al.,* 2017; Ruggeri, Dorussen & Gizelis, 2018). It is anticipated that recruited male teachers need to perform similar streams of masculinity, in a homogeneous way. Scholars have postulated that in most instances, the expected modelling of male Foundation Phase teachers by policy makers does not always offer the desired characteristics or features needed by the majority of boychildren in diverse classroom contexts (Brownhill *et al.*, 2021; Knight & Moore, 2012; Warin, 2017). Moreover, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that masculinities are not fixated, homogeneous or rigid but rather fluid.

The phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers as father figures has been criticised in literature. It has been argued that, globally, many children in the Foundation Phase are raised in single, female-headed households and therefore they need father figures in the form of male teachers (Fray & Gore, 2018; Lesser, 2016; Moosa & Bhana, 2019). In a New Zealand study,

China and White (2011, cited in Hernández, 2016) came to a similar finding that male teachers who position themselves as father figures to children in the early years of learning do this because of the social pressure from female teachers or parents of learners in their classrooms. Hernández (2016) and Lesser (2016) further posit that some male Foundation Phase teachers do not want or wish to position themselves as role models or father figures. This is because they do not have an understanding of what it entails to be such; male teachers only want to be regarded as teachers who offer learners pedagogy of care and education.

The above researchers' finding found expression in my master's study on the employability of male teachers, indicating that school governors would employ males to fill in the space of absent fathers in children's lives and not because they are qualified Foundation Phase teachers (see Kagola & Khau, 2020). Bricheno and Thornton (2007: 383) and Walker (2007) postulate that children are agentic in their role of seeking role models or father figures; therefore, the physical absence of the father does not necessarily imply that children in this context do not have father figures. Walker (2007) posits that children tend to look closer to home in relatives or neighbours for their father figures as opposed to their male teachers. Therefore, the recruitment of male teachers premised on male role-modelling and father-figuring is a discourse to re-gender Foundation Phase teaching as a profession and poses a challenge to the attainment of gender equality and equitable distribution of labour (Brownhill *et al.*, 2021; Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Knight & Moore, 2012).

2.3.2 Male Foundation Phase teachers and pedagogy

In the United Kingdom, it is argued that the majority of men's pedagogical strategies to deliver the curriculum to children in the early years of learning tend to be more energised and fulfilling in ways (Mills, Haase & Charlton, 2008; Patrick, 2009). Scholars have indicated that some female teachers tend to be more sceptical and careful when engaging learners in exploratory activities, leading to learners' not exploring or being exposed to their full potential (Lahelma, 2000; McGrath & Sinclair, 2013; Mills *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, teachers and parents believe that males are better sportspersons and disciplinarians in comparison to females (Cruickshank, 2020; Francis & Skelton, 2001). There is an assumption that through the involvement of males in the learning and teaching of young children, boys especially, inversely, are granted the opportunity to reconstruct their masculinity (Cruickshank, 2020).

However, many scholars have argued that this rationalisation of men as better sportspersons and disciplinarians only perpetuates the discourse of rigid continued reconstruction of

hegemonic masculinity in the early years of learning. Moreover, Mallozi and Campbell Galman (2016), together with Wernersson, (2015), think differently about the involvement of men in the delivery of content in the Foundation Phase. They posit that it is important to have both male and female teachers in this educational phase, as it may create space for the exploration of diverse pedagogical practices, rather than to think one approach is better than the other. Furthermore, teachers in general are positioned differently as they present the curriculum differently, irrespective of their gender (Wernersson, 2015). According to Bhana (2016), Brownhill *et al.,* (2016) and Moosa and Bhana (2020), the fundamental aspect of teachers in the learning of children, especially in the early years of learning, is to contribute positively to the creation of an inclusive and enabling learning and teaching environment. Therefore, in their interactions with the children, it becomes important for teachers to make sure that learners receive the best learning experience that is not limited to one understanding of the world around them but provides multiple learning opportunities and perspectives.

In addition to the above, Bhana (2016), Msiza (2020) and Wernersson (2015), state that the inclusion of males in the learning and teaching of young children has the possibility of perpetuating more stereotypical gendered practices and behaviours. This is so unless this inclusion of men in the educational space is used to gain a deeper understanding of the multiple diverse pedagogical practices. The goal herein will be to further encourage reflective practices amongst teachers and to foster gender-sensitive practices that could assist in making Foundation Phase teaching a commendable profession for all (Wernersson, 2015). Some researchers have contributed positively regarding drafting of policies by governments and policy makers on the inclusion and retainment of male Foundation Phase teachers. The rationale here should be embedded in recruiting teachers who are committed to making commendable change in Foundation Phase teaching as a profession (Bhana, 2016; Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Kagola & Khau, 2021; Moosa & Bhana, 2020; Wernersson, 2015). Moreover, the males that are recruited to teach in the Foundation Phase should be individuals who are willing to contribute positively to the holistic development of the young child (Mallozi & Campbell Galman, 2016). This is possible through collaborative efforts on pedagogical practices and by creating an inclusive learning environment (Bhana, 2020; Mallozi & Campbell Galman, 2016). Lastly, Foundation Phase teachers should work with others towards making a positive impact on all children, so that they become responsible citizens in the future (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Mallozi & Campbell Galman, 2016; Moosa & Bhana, 2022).

2.3.3 Diversity in Foundation Phase teaching

Despite the many continued calls by governments for the recruitment and retainment of more male Foundation Phase teachers, patriarchal gendered discourses continue to construct Foundation Phase teaching as "women's work" and as a "feminine" context (Bhana, 2016; Davies & Hoskin, 2021; Moosa & Bhana, 2019; Msiza, 2021). The patriarchal gendered discourse of Foundation Phase teaching as feminine work has created certain concerns relating to men's suitability and involvement in the teaching of young children (Davies & Hoskin, 2021; Moosa & Bhana 2022; O'Keeffe, 2018). The discourse of Foundation Phase teaching as women's work continues to persist in modern society worldwide, leading to possible consequences for men who choose to become teachers of children in the early years of learning (Davies, 2021). Amongst the concerns highlighted in the literature is that of male Foundation Phase teachers' sexuality being under constant scrutiny and the reproduction of heterosexism in schools (Kagola & Notshulwana, 2022; Msibi, 2018; Wernersson, 2015).

According to Mizzi (2016) and Sargent (2000), in their respective studies, school principals, management and governors have a particular heterosexist idea of how a male Foundation Phase teacher should display his masculinity. Participants in these studies shared that a man should act like a real man in the way he dresses and walks, enjoy domination over others and exhibit normal definable characteristics of a man different to that of a woman. The above research proves Msibi's (2019) point that schools are sites that constantly reproduce heterosexism through creating heteronormative expectations of what male Foundation Phase teachers should be like. Davies (2021) and Msiza (2021) posit that schools as heterosexist sites play a key role in the emasculation of men identifying as non-heteronormative. An example of the above can be seen in Msiza's (2021) research with male Foundation Phase teachers in Mpumalanga province of South Africa, who found that males distance themselves from any work that seem to be regarded as soft or that could identify them as gay. Therefore, the men in Msiza's study take up hegemonic forms of masculinity to remain on top of the hierarchy of masculinity within a feminine context of Foundation Phase teaching.

Moosa and Bhana (2019) and Msibi (2019) postulate that the construction of Foundation Phase teaching as a woman's work and schools as sites that reproduce heterosexism has huge implications for the attainment of a diverse Foundation Phase context. These researchers argue that due to the policing and constant scrutiny of male teachers in the Foundation Phase, male teachers who are same-sex desiring tend to keep their true identities to themselves or lead a private same-sex life due to the gatekeeping that is in the context (Moosa & Bhana, 2019; Msibi,

2019). Scholars have argued that the production of hetorosexism in schools denies the teachers and learners the opportunity to have authentic relationships and experiences with people of diverse sexual identities (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; King, 2009; Msibi, 2019). Moreover, a heterosexist schooling context and the labelling of Foundation Phase teaching as women's work have a particular bearing on the creation of an inclusive learning and teaching environment for all. In addition, it takes away the opportunity for learners to experience an environment that is inclusive of all identities, including heterosexual and same-sex desiring, without worrying about being relegated to subordinate streams of femininity or masculinity or being marginalised in any way (Kagola & Notshulwana, 2022; Moosa & Bhana, 2022; Msiza, 2021).

2.3.4 Paedophilic perceptions towards male Foundation Phase teachers

Scholars worldwide have found that questioning men's suitability to disrupt the gendered distribution of labour and the continued disassociation of men from Foundation Phase learning and teaching as a profession through paedophilic perception and stigmatisation is embedded in patriarchal gendered discourses (Mathwasa & Sibanda, 2021; Moosa & Bhana, 2022; Msiza 2021; Warin, 2019; Wright, 2018). According to Mathwasa and Sibanda (2021) and Wright (2018), worldwide, women have dominated in the area of learning and teaching of young children. This is because of the socially constructed notions by the public that women are more suited to teaching, nurturing and caring for children than men, which is one of the reasons found to be a barrier for men interested in pursuing a career in Foundation Phase learning and teaching. Nevertheless, literature has indicated that male Foundation Phase teachers already in the field continuously face challenges such as being perceived as more likely to physically abuse children. Compared to their female counterparts, males are more likely to abuse children because of the perceived assertion of being disciplinarians (Bhana 2016; Warin, 2019; Wright, 2018).

Moreover, Cruickshank (2019), Wernersson (2015) and Wright (2018) posit that another concern in the involvement of men in the learning of young children is centred around male Foundation Phase teachers as possible suspects of posing a "sexual danger or threat" to learners in the early years of learning. The above is premised on the assumption that they are male and further on how masculinities are characterised as violent and aggressive within the public sphere (Dworzanowski-Venter, 2017; Mathwasa & Sibanda, 2021; Ratele, 2015a). Mathwasa and Sibanda (2021), together with Msiza (2021), argue that there seems to be double standards when engaging with issues of men and childcare. Men are recruited to address the gender

inequalities that exist within Foundation Phase learning and teaching. Moreover, in communities and homes, men are valued and appreciated as grandfathers, fathers, uncles and brothers; however, in the Foundation Phase setting, men are viewed as possible suspects of physical and sexual abuse and coercion (Dworzanowski-Venter, 2017; Stern, Buikema & Cooper, 2016). Men have been accepted as teachers in other educational bands, such as intermediate and senior phase; however, their inclusion in the learning and teaching of young children in the Foundation Phase is viewed with suspicion and scrutiny (Mathwasa & Sibanda, 2021).

Scholars in contexts such as Queensland in Australia and in Canada have argued that paedophilia is interpreted and understood differently according to context. For example, McGrath and Van Bergen (2017) posit that Australian communities found it to be apprehensive for a man teaching in the early years to put his hand on a child's lap or to hug them. Similarly, researchers have found that in the Trinidad and Tobago context and in South Africa, male Foundation Phase teachers are to some extent restricted from changing the diapers of children and touching and cuddling them (Cruickshank, 2020; Joseph & Jackman, 2014; Msiza, 2021). As argued earlier in this section, the suspicion is centred around the positionality of masculinities. Moosa and Bhana (2022: 524) and Pruit (2015) have pointed to the socially accepted "heterosexualised male violence", which positions men interested in the teaching of young children as paedophilic threats. Moreover, the binary logic positions care and nurturing within the realms of one particular human trait and not of both masculinity and femininity. An example is the gendered characterisation of men as disciplinarians and providers and not as care providers who are able to show emotions (Moosa & Bhana, 2020; Okeke & Nyanhoto, 2021; Plank, 2019).

Another factor that is visible in literature involves how men globally have been perpetuators of GBV, particularly against women, children and other men who do not conform to heteronormative practices (Bhana, 2016; Cruickshank, 2019; Ratele, 2015a). Therefore, this moral panic from communities has turned to position men who are eager to teach in the Foundation Phase as suspects of paedophilia. There is a belief that they might have intentions to sexually abuse young children or threaten the comfort of young children because of the perceived nature of what it means to be a man (Cruickshank, 2019; Okeke & Nyanhoto, 2021). The above is visible in my earlier study about parent members in primary school governance (see Kagola & Khau, 2020). The parents were hesitant to appoint men to teach young children due to the belief that other parents might not be open to the idea of men teaching their children

because of scepticisms and the violence surrounding the construction of manhood. Furthermore, Cruickshank (2019) found that certain parents have instructed principals where male teachers are employed that the male teachers are not to do "motherly" activities such as nappy changing or even to give children a back tap during resting time. The perception here is that male Foundation Phase teachers might be tempted to molest children.

Scholars in South Africa and around the globe have arrived at similar conclusions regarding the societal panic of male Foundation Phase teachers being paedophilic and the factors influencing the sustenance of the Foundation Phase being a feminine space. According to Lesser (2016) and Warin (2018), male Foundation Phase teachers are faced with the mammoth task of the abovementioned challenges in their duty as teachers. It is therefore proposed that male teachers need to adopt strategies to counter the gendered stereotypical order and not to succumb to the perceived idea of male teachers as paedophiles. Lesser (2016), in his study, found that a male Foundation Phase teacher introduced Bluetooth hugs and kisses; he would stand a meter or two away from the learners and send the hug or kiss through the air.

An additional strategy found to be useful is the open-door policy, where when a male teacher has a girl learner/s in his classroom, "another colleague [must be] present during interactions or [he must] either leave the door open" (see Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Warin, 2018). Furthermore, in developing strategies to stay clear of suspicions of paedophilia, Warin (2018) posits that building learner resilience is an important aspect to teaching in the early years. He therefore suggests that when a young learner is upset and about to cry in the male teacher's classroom, the teacher must kneel to the level of the learner, communicate with the learner verbally rather than physically touching them, and, importantly, keep eye contact whilst doing so. Although these are recommended strategies, researchers such as Buschmeyer (2013), Cruickshank (2019) and Warin (2018) strongly argue that part of the pedagogical practices of teaching young children is embracing the "human touch" or "human presence" through being able to touch children and in return them being able to reciprocate the touching. However, the suspicion that male Foundation Phase teachers are paedophilic in their intentions has the potential to deny learners the ability to experience an inclusive learning environment. It further makes it difficult for male Foundation Phase teachers to carry out their professional responsibility and obligations.

Having discussed current research related to the involvement of male Foundation Phase teachers, in the next section, I briefly discuss how teacher identity is constructed in general and

later zoom into how Foundation Phase teacher identity is constructed. This is done to further locate the study within current discussions on Foundation Phase teacher identity discourses.

2.4 Teacher Identity: A Professional and Cultural Construct

2.4.1 Teacher identity in general

For decades, research on teacher identity has evolved and been influenced by various aspects of human life and has become an important area of research (Barrett, 2005; Day 2002; Mahlo, 2017; Olsen, 2008; Verbeek, 2014). According to Chong, Low and Goh (2011), teachers' constructions of gender, sexuality and personality, to mention a few, play an integral role in the development of their identities as teachers. People's subjectivity often influences the ways in which they construct their identities. Therefore, the way teachers are perceived within a particular context, such as schools or social settings, influences how they position themselves in relation to others and the self (Chong *et al.*, 2011; Pausigere & Graven, 2013). Moreover, Jansen (2001) and Osgood (2012) posit that the foundational aspects of teachers' identity are rooted in teachers' beliefs, knowledge and experiences with which they enter their classrooms, and this is often regarded as "self-knowledge". This self-knowledge informs and influences their identities and has an effect on their pedagogical delivery in classrooms (Jansen, 2001). Teacher identity has been, and continues to be, widely researched, hence there being multiple conceptualisations of what it means to be a teacher (Pausigere & Graven, 2013). Researchers in the context of education seem to agree with Olsen's (2008) definition (see Hanna *et al.*, 2019; Jones & Kessler, 2020), which speaks to the fact that teacher identity is fluid and changes over time and is oftentimes influenced by context and the individual's personal experience. Olsen (2008: 139) postulates that teacher identity can be defined as:

> … a label … for the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at a given moment.

The above definition by Olsen brings to light how identity is complex. Olsen explains that a person is inseparable from their social world, meaning that the individual's psychological and sociocultural interaction and personal history play a pertinent role in their identity formation (Cooper & Olson, as cited in Lamote & Engels, 2010).

Similar to the above, Day and Kingston (2008: 8) classified these influences of teacher identity into three categories, namely "personal identity, situated identity and professional identity". According to Day and Kingston (2008: 11), personal identity is "located outside the school context and is linked to family and social roles. Feedback or expectations from family and friends often become sources of tension for the individual's sense of identity". The quest to reconstruct our identities is constituted by what we think of ourselves in relation to others and how they perceive us. Moreover, Petersen (2014) argues that our identities are rooted within our social and cultural practices of everyday life. Furthermore, people's identities are fluid. The manner in which we relate to the environment and the people around us and the personal and professional decisions we make have a significant influence on the constant construction and reconstruction of our identities (Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Søreide, 2007).

Second, the disciplines teachers choose to specialise in tend to have a culture of their own, called situated identity by Day and Kingston (2008: 11), which "is located in a specific school context and is affected by the surrounding environment". This means that colleagues, administrative staff and learners in the school environment can influence or be influenced by the teacher's own lived experiences, for example being learners in their own schooling days (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

The last category refers to professional identity, which is the "social and policy expectations of what a good teacher is and the educational ideals of the teacher" (Day & Kingston, 2008: 11). In this category, policies such as CAPS in South Africa (South Africa, 2011) play a role in the development of teacher identity. For example, the policy posits that teachers need to prepare lessons that are underpinned by approaches that are critical to learning and take into consideration the learner's conceptual strategies of learning. Moreover, it states that teachers should be agents of change through the promotion of political redress, social transformation and critical and active learning, the above being "general aims" of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) that need to be embodied by teachers (South Africa, 2011: 4–5). Therefore, the concern of professional identity is on teachers' responsibilities and how they implement policies in their active roles as teachers, and on the development of teacher professional identity.

This section provided an understanding of how teacher identity is understood and constructed in general. It did not explain specifically, however, how teacher identity within the context of Foundation Phase teaching is constructed, as the focus of the study is on masculinity in the

Foundation Phase. The following section thus concentrates on how teacher identity is constructed in the Foundation Phase.

2.4.2 Foundation Phase teacher identity

Scholars have argued that teacher identity in the Foundation Phase has historically been positioned with the situated category in line with Day and Kingston's (2008) dimensions of teacher identity (Bhana, 2016; Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Chikoko & Msibi, 2020; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Robinson & McMillan, 2006). Day and Kingston (2008) argue that the situated category is dependent on a particular characterisation of the discipline and its practices. These practices and discipline-specific requirements are influential during their pre-service time and even when the teacher is a fully qualified teacher (Chikoko & Msibi, 2020; Goldstein & Lake, 2000). According to Brownhill *et al.* (2016), Foundation Phase teaching has been classified as feminised work. Moreover, Bhana (2016) argues that classifying Foundation Phase teaching as a woman's work has a historical underpinning to it that is linked to the gendered division of labour. Moosa and Bhana (2019) and Chikoko and Msibi (2020), in their respective studies, found that Foundation Phase teaching is linked to nurturing and care work, which many pre-service student teachers regard as a responsibility of women and not as real work.

Mashiya (2014) and Bhana *et al.* (2022) postulate that the gendered division of labour leads to hierarchies that determine which work is intellectually challenging and which is not. This leads to the assertion that teaching in the early years of learning is work that is not intellectually stimulating and assigned a low status. People expected to work in the Foundation Phase are thus required to display certain characteristics, which include but are not limited to being caring, nurturing and loving and motherly towards children (Bhana, 2016; Chikoko & Msibi, 2020). According to Moosa and Bhana (2018: 4), the positioning of the Foundation Phase identity as feminine is because of "the symbolic construction of the teacher in foundation phase as a loving mother". Brownhill *et al.* (2016) and Warin and Gannerud (2014) postulate that the perceived idea that Foundation Phase teachers teach with love strengthens and legalises the association that nurturing and caregiving work should be performed by women. Moreover, Kagola and Khau (2020) and Moosa and Bhana (2019) posit that locating Foundation Phase teachers within the terrain of motherhood serves as a discourse that perpetuates and resonates in the gender division of labour that is ascribed to hegemonic ways of being. It also perpetuates the historic ways of thinking about what constitutes women's work (Bhana, 2016). In Connell (2012) and Moosa and Bhana's (2019) opinions, such positionings are premised on the categorisation of

gender identity and roles ascribed to males and females in societal settings, leading to rigid positionings thereof.

The mothers as teachers discourse serves as a powerful measure to justify Foundation Phase teaching as being a female territory and a restrictor for men to enter the educational learning phase. According to Moosa and Bhana (2019: 62), this is an act towards reproducing an "essentialist understanding of gender". There is a need to disrupt such essentialist understandings and gendered practices to craft a different Foundation Phase teacher identity and work towards doing away with a gendered Foundation Phase teacher discourse (Bhana, 2016; Msiza; 2020). Moreover, this necessitates the need for different discursive practices, and the processes of disruption should start with creating space for an inclusive environment, with both female and male teachers in the Foundation Phase. Moosa and Bhana (2018) posit that a diverse teacher component in the Foundation Phase provides possibilities of doing away with gender inequalities, in particular gendered divisions of labour, and moving towards altering gender relations that exist between men and women.

The Foundation Phase teacher identity is underpinned by discourses such as mothers as teachers, a terrain for women, and the historical connotations that continue to dominate identity constructions in this educational phase. This understanding therefore necessitates the need to explore how men and masculinities construct nurturing, as this is an important aspect of the study. In the next section, I present a brief discussion on nurturing within men and masculinity studies and provide a definition of what nurturing masculinity could look like.

2.5 Conceptualising Nurturing Masculinity

Men and masculinities scholars argue that there is always uncertainty when engaging men on their role in nurturing and care work due to the socially constructed notions of activities associated with masculine and feminine activities, be it in their place of business, at home or in entertainment spaces (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Elliott, 2020a; Ralph & Roberts, 2018; Waling, 2019). Moreover, researchers in this field, including feminists, have problematised the positioning and various definitions of nurturing and caring as equal to femininity (Ralph & Roberts, 2018). Bacik (2004) and Elliott (2020b) postulate that the reason for such positioning is premised on the contextually dominating definitions of masculinities as constantly being in opposition to dominant characterisations of what nurturing and caring work entails. In agreement with the above scholars, Robinson (2015) further explains that, also, the definitions

of dominant streams of masculinity continue to be antithetical to that of femininity. For example, masculinity is predominantly associated with resilience, stoicism, power, violence and physical strength; on the other hand, femininity is linked with sensitivity, sexuality, emotion, compassion, nurture and care (Connell, 2005; Elliott, 2020b; Hanlon, 2012; Kreyenfeld, 2020; Waling, 2019). Thus, Elliott (2020b) posits that showing emotions – being "soft" and intimate – has always been seen as going against dominant conventions of masculinity, leading to the dispositioning of men. According to Elliott (2020a), the disposition of men to be emotionally inexpressive has negative implications for men's involvement in nurturing and care work.

Some of the implications as engaged with by Elliott and other scholars would be the relegation of men participating in nurturing work to subordinate norms of masculinity or to be seen as not being man enough (Connell, 2005; Elliott, 2020a). Moreover, as per Lynch and Lyons (2009), men can receive a negative attitude from their male counterparts for engaging in nurturing and caring work as primary caregivers, be it being treated with scepticism (questioning their sexuality), censured or ignored in social settings. However, depending on the context in which men participate in nurturing work, it is alleged that men tend to receive or are positioned within a "hero-like" type of status as a result of their nurturing and caregiving work (Elliott, 2020c). In his study about masculinity construction with men who reside in Berlin who are Australian citizens, Elliott (2020a) posits that there is a shift in how men construct masculinities. He explains that young middle-class men tend to discursively disassociate themselves from stereotypical norms of masculinity and adopt softer versions of what it means to be a man. For example, some of his participants chose to be caregivers to their parents and grandparents who were ill, being available to the emotional needs of their children and siblings. Elliott (2020b: 240) constructed the form of masculinity called "caring masculinity in the margin", which he defines as "masculinities that reject domination and its associated traits and embrace values of care such as positive emotion, interdependence, and relationality". Moreover, according to Elliott (2020b: 15), "caring masculinities are, furthermore, a critical form of men's engagement in gender equality because doing care work requires men to resist hegemonic masculinity and to adopt values and characteristics of care that are antithetical to hegemonic masculinity."

For this study, I adopted Elliott's definition of caring masculinity to help guide the navigation of what nurturing masculinity could be perceived as by the male Foundation Phase teachers participating in this study and for future research.

2.6 Conclusion

Research on the involvement of male Foundation Phase teachers and how they engage in nurturing activities in and around their different schooling contexts is still in its infancy stages, particularly in the South African context. Nevertheless, as observed from the discussion above, there is promising growth in the development of research in the field of male Foundation Phase teachers and their everyday lives in the schooling context. In my observation of the literature internationally, the field has developed. In South Africa, however, there are serious contributions to be made in research relating to understanding the teaching of young children by male teachers, how male teachers nurture, and issues of diversity in the Foundation Phase. Scholars within the South African context, such as Bhana (2016), Moosa and Bhana (2022) and Msiza (2021), have largely focused their research on Foundation Phase teaching and masculinities in contexts such as KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. Provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and North West remain under-researched on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers, their teaching and how culture and context influence male involvement on issues of nurturing and care work. The present doctoral study aimed to contribute towards understanding experiences of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, a province that is deeply rooted in its Xhosa cultural practices that are clear on how masculinities are produced, for example Ulwaluko. I aimed to conceptualise nurturing and to understand how the Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers participating in this study carry out nurturing activities in and around their classrooms and how that influences their construction of nurturing as a form of masculinity. In the following chapter, I present a discussion of the two theoretical frameworks that underpin this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented a literature review of research available in relation to the phenomenon of the study. The review comprised of key discussions and debates around the involvement of male teachers in the teaching of young children in the Foundation Phase and how masculinities are constructed within different contexts. In the present chapter, I present the two theoretical frameworks I adopted to underpin the study. Important to note is that both theoretical frameworks are located within the feminist approach to research. I begin this chapter by engaging with Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity, followed by a discussion of feminist post-structuralist theory. The theoretical frameworks were adopted in the analysis of how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity within the context of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. I also provide a rationale of how these theories were employed in this study.

3.2 Connell's Theory of Masculinity

Connell's theory of masculinity was used in this study to understand how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in the Eastern Cape province construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. According to Connell (2005), masculinities are constructed in multiple ways, within social settings, at home, in the community or the different workspaces, even during everyday live interactions. Therefore, masculinities are contextually and continuously evolving. Connell, in the theorisation of manhood, conceptualised the concept of "hegemonic masculinity", referring to it as the dominant form of masculinity in a context or social setting within a specific historical period. The majority of men work towards living up to its standards, because hegemonic masculinity is a cultural ideal in most contexts. Connell (1995) and Ratele (2015b) argue that societies regulate behaviour and practices through the creation of rules, and that which is considered masculine behaviour dominates. For example, within the amaXhosa culture, hegemony is achieved through the insertion of a mark on a male person's body (Mfecane, 2020). This means that in this context, if you are male and have not been through Ulwaluko (the rite of passage), you are not a man and will not participate in the circles of manhood, regardless of your educational background or financial, marital and social

status. In other words, within the amaXhosa sociocultural context of hierarchies of maleness, manhood is epitomised through the embodiment of the mark. Oftentimes, males who have not gone through the rite of passage are sometimes considered as not being "real men" or perceived as not being man enough, which leads to their being regarded within subordinate forms of masculinity (Dlamini, 2020; Mashabane, 2018).

Connell (2005) states that with different forms of masculinity, hierarchies become prevalent, and the highest form becomes dominant, for instance over other men, women and children. Moreover, alongside hegemonic masculinity, there are other streams of masculinity that Connell refers to as "subordinate", "complicit" and "marginal" masculinities (Connell, 2005: 77–81). Greig, Kimmel and Lang (2000) and Ratele (2014b) argue that discrimination and violence are often used to sustain the hegemonic form of masculinity that is accepted and honoured within hierarchies of masculinities amongst men and women. In contexts such as schools, the above is visible and is led mainly by boys towards girls or other boys whom they regard to be their subordinate or who seem weak (Mayeza, 2017). Moreover, Connell (2005) states that men use power, violence and force to sustain the hierarchy in their different contexts, such as in businesses, homes, churches and schools. However, within the amaXhosa sociocultural practices and rituals such as Ulwaluko*,* violence is denounced within the process of transitioning to manhood (Mfecane, 2020; Ntombana, 2011). Connell (2001) postulates that masculinities are multiple and have been produced throughout history. She further states that various forms of masculinity exist as a result of the multiple ways of learning to be a man and the performance of manhood in each context. Connell (2001) argues that culture, organisations or institutions contribute significantly to the construction of multiple forms of masculinity.

As Connell (2005)argues, alongside hegemonic masculinity, there are other streams that exist, such as subordinate forms of masculinity. She explains that these masculinities are often performed by men who do not live up to the dominant notions of what it means to be real men and that they are symbolically excluded from the dominant form of masculinity within a particular context (Connell, 2005). An example of this is the above example of uninitiated Xhosa males who are excluded from participating in circles of manhood because they have not endured pain, stoicism and bravery as they do not possess the mark of manhood. Another example of men relegated to subordinate streams of masculinity is that mentioned by Bhana (2016), Ratele (2014a) and Scott (2021) of men who are regarded as soft because of the workforce they have joined, such as Foundation Phase teaching, nursing and social work. According to Connell, these masculinities are sometimes excluded from the hegemonic notion

of masculinity because hard labour and violence remain to be key requirements of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2001) posits that discourses in different contexts about masculinity constructions often disregard or belittle the idea of normalising men portraying characteristics that are considered feminine. Furthermore, the construction of masculinities in societies is premised around the concept of a real man, one who rejects and disassociates himself from any activity or behaviour that is regarded as feminine (Alsop, Fitzsimons & Lennon, 2002; Scott, 2021). Another category of masculinities that Connell identified is that of a complicit form of masculinities. She argues that this category includes mostly men who are not completely engaged in hegemonic masculinity ideals – men who, however, tend to benefit from the patriarchal dividend that men derive from the overall subordination of women, children and other men (Connell, 2005; Ntombana, 2011).

One of Connell's major contributions is that in any given historical period, there are multiple streams of masculinity that are produced and compete with one another (Connell, 2001). For this study, the notion of complicit masculinities helps legitimise Xhosa manhood as a contested space of identity development. It leads to the understanding that there is no solid idea of what it means to be a Xhosa man in an ever-changing world and perpetuates reimagined multiple norms of Xhosa masculinity in a "hierarchy and in competition for legitimacy" (Mdedetyana, 2019: 16). Moreover, Mfecane (2016, 2020) and Ntombana (2011) provide a glimpse of the hierarchy in Xhosa masculinities, showing that the most respected and valorised stream of masculinity in the amaXhosa communities and culture is that of *indoda,* traditionally circumcised men. There is an expectation that all Xhosa-speaking males need to undergo Ulwaluko, meaning that *indoda* is the dominant stream of masculinity within Xhosa culture (Ntombana, 2011). Men that undergo the process of Ulwaluko are socially perceived to take up positions of rights to inherit property, participate in and officiate traditional rituals and make decisions in family discussions. They are allowed to start a family and be independent from their parents. However, medically circumcised males are not regarded as "real men" in the context of amaXhosa culture. Whissom (2000) and Qambela (2022) posit that the medically circumcised males may be labelled with derogatory terms such as *ooNofotyela* (hospital men) or *abadlezana* to relegate them to being subordinate. These males are perceived to have forged manhood or to have cheated the process of what it means to be a Xhosa man. Whissom (2000) posits that such a stream of masculinity can be positioned within subordinate forms of masculinity. Moreover, Scott (2021) posits that males who gain entry to hospital facilities during Ulwaluko often face stigmatisation and discrimination from peers who have completed

their process of Ulwaluko without complications. The hospital-admitted males who have undergone Ulwaluko are also perceived to be embodying subordinate versions of masculinity.

The theory of masculinity by Connell has received criticism from scholars in the field of gender and sexuality over the years (see Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Demetriou, 2001; Mfecane 2016; Moller, 2007; Siziba, 2021). Amidst all this critique, the critiques of Demetriou (2001), Mfecane (2016) and Moller (2007) are of relevance to this study. Mfecane (2016), in his critique, challenges how hegemonic masculinity is conceptualised by Connell, in relation to working with and understanding Xhosa masculinity. Mfecane posits that the concept is limiting in terms of understanding how Xhosa masculinity is constructed, arguing that the positioning of heterosexual men at the highest level of masculine hierarchy and same-sex desiring men at the lowest level is problematic (Mfecane, 2016). In supporting the above statements, he and other authors postulate that within amaXhosa society, hegemony is achieved and sustained through the physical and cultural rituals exercised on the initiate's body as fundamental markers of manhood (Mfecane, 2020; Ntombana, 2011; Qambela, 2016). Moreover, Mfecane (2020) states that a traditionally circumcised man is one who embodies the highest and most honoured form of masculinity, irrespective of his class, level of education, marital status and sexual orientation. For example, Mfecane (2018) argues that same-sex desiring men in the amaXhosa society who participate in the processes of the rite of passage achieve the same hegemonic masculinity as heterosexual men who have undergone the same process.

Another critique of relevance to this study about Connell's theorisation is from Demetriou (2001) and Moller (2007), who argue that the manner in which Connell has conceptualised hegemonic masculinity offers little explanation of the sustenance of dominance in society at various historical periods. In Connell's conceptualisation, masculine dominance is sustained by the possibilities of a clear demarcation between hegemonic masculinity and subordinate streams of masculinity, meaning that these are "excluded" from the "circle of legitimacy" within a particular context. Nevertheless, Demetriou (2001) finds this conceptualisation problematic, positing that hegemonic masculinity does not always exclude or disassociate from subordinate forms of masculinity but rather adopts some of the elements of subordinate masculinity to reinforce and sustain itself. According to Demetriou (2001), this adaptation in hegemonic masculinity consequently leads to or results in what he terms "hybrid masculinity" or "hybrid block". Demetriou postulates that this adaptation leads to the understanding of diverse practices in order to construct ways in which patriarchal practices can be sustained. Demetriou (2001) shows how hegemonic masculinity has sustained its power and authority despite various

challenges posed to it, be it women's movements or feminist approaches to deconstruct it, or the challenges posed to it by gay movements in different contexts. Hegemonic masculinity has evolved and appropriated some elements of subordinate streams of masculinity over time. This includes the acceptance of men who work in salons, nursing and psychology as real men and their work as commendable professions and not relegating these men to being soft or gay. This adaptation was for hegemonic masculinity to appear as if change has yielded to the side of the ever-changing societies that value equitable distribution of labour, social justice and equality in general (Demetriou, 2001). Moreover, Moller (2007) posits that as much as hegemonic masculinities adjust or yield towards change, the concept makes it difficult to understand diversity and complexities in the different contexts.

Demetriou (2001) acknowledges Connell's contribution in the field of gender by forging a theoretical framework that incorporates breeding of masculine power and possibilities of change, as well as thinking beyond the limitations of sex-role theory. Moreover, he asserts that Connell's theorisation should be credited for its ability to reveal that masculinities are multiple, hierarchical and historically constructed and influenced, and the power that masculinities exercise over femininities. In this study, Connell's theory was adopted because it is a central theory on men and masculinity studies locally in South Africa and internationally. Furthermore, the theory provides an account or base for the multiple forms of masculinity that exist within different contexts. Moreover, Connell's theory has provided insight into the multiple constructions of identity amongst men. It therefore plays an integral part in this study as it is aimed at understanding how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms in the Eastern Cape province.

However, the Eastern Cape schooling context may produce different forms of masculinity beyond Connell's theory, as it has been studied by other researchers in different contexts (Morrell *et al.*, 2013; Msiza, 2020; Ratele, 2015a; Ratele *et al.*, 2010). Important to note is that Connell's theory of masculinity presents a foundation from which these multiple masculinities can be researched. In this study, I add to Connell's theory of masculinity by adopting tenets of feminist post-structuralist theory, which will be discussed in the section to follow. I do this in an attempt to address the criticism highlighted above regarding Connell's theory of masculinity and to hopefully create space to engage with the complexity and diversity in the different contexts related to studying masculinities. These complexities include people's lived realities, social status and where power dynamics are concerned.

3.3 Feminist Post-Structuralist Theory

The study adopted feminist post-structuralist theory as its second lens to add to Connell's theory of masculinity explained above. I drew on the following tenets of this theory to further frame the study: language, discourse, power and agency. Feminist scholars such as Barrett (2005), Blaise (2005) and Weedon (1987) postulate that feminist post-structuralist theory in its quest interrogates that which is perceived to be common, normal or regular. Moreover, Pierre and Pillow (2000: 6) argue that a feminist post-structuralist lens "offers critiques and methods for *examining* the functions and effects of any structure or grid of regularity that we put into place, including that poststructuralism itself might create". This means that the theory recognises that people's development is always influenced by how they view the social world around them. Moreover, according to Grieshaber (2007: 8), the theory acknowledges "a number of gendered ways of knowing and being that depend on the social context and the meaning circulating within a set of social relationships". The latter plays out and is embedded in power relations within institutions and social structures such as homes, churches and schools, to mention a few. It therefore creates paths to influence what is known by individuals and the manner in which they experience the social world as gendered persons (Kumashiro, 2004; Weedon, 2004).

The work of Foucault entitled *Archaeology of the human sciences* (1970, as cited in Townley, 1993: 532), "traces the history of how language has been used to construct binaries, hierarchies, categories, tables, grids, and complex classification schemes that are said to reenact an innate, intrinsic order in the world". An example would be the binary difference and hierarchies within politics of femininity and masculinity through which women are referred to as soft and nurturing and men as stoic and aggressive. According to Blaise (2005), as well as Davies and Gannon (2011a), language is a mechanism within a social context to produce knowledge and meaning-making that leads to located discourses or discursive practices within a context. Moreover, Davies and Gannon (2005) postulate that by using language, people within social spaces are able to create values and norms that guide their everyday lives. Feminist post-structuralists Davies and Gannon (2011b: 313) further deliberate that localised dominant practices "have the power to hold normative order in place [as well as] the power to open up the not-yet-known". An example here is the perceived idea of Foundation Phase teaching as a motherly workforce only suited for women and not an admirable profession for men due to the care and nurturing that are central to the characterisation of femininity and not masculinity. Through language, what is normal and deemed right is socially produced, interpreted and sustained in discourse (Butler, 1990).

Weedon (2004: 58) describes discourse "as a set of beliefs and understandings, reinforced through daily practices, which frame a particular understanding of the way we are and our view of the world around us". As explained in the previous paragraph, through language practices, dominant discourses and localised cultural practices are reproduced (Osgood, 2012; Scott 1988). These discursive practices are historical and institutional and involve specific societal values, norms and terms that are sustained by those who have the power to communicate them (Carabine, 2001; Osgood, 2012; St Pierre, 2000). According to Osgood (2012), together with Pitsoe and Letseka (2013), the intersection between discourse, power and subjectivity aims to deconstruct, organise and regulate the role of language that is linked to the reproduction of knowledge and how that knowledge is interpreted and understood within a particular social setting. Moreover, Pitsoe and Letseka (2013: 23) argue that "discourse, as a social construct, is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication". For instance, the discourse of "men don't cry" dissociates men from being in touch with emotions, leading to the positioning of men as stoic and aggressive. The above post-structuralists posit that "once a discourse becomes 'normal' and 'natural,' it is difficult to think and act outside it" (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2013: 7). An example would be the difficulty of men taking up pro-feminine versions of masculinities due the worry of being regarded as soft and relegated to subordinate norms of masculinity. Nevertheless, Foucault (1977) offers a different theorisation in relation to dominant discourses by illustrating that when people think differently about the ways they act and communicate, a shift in changing the discourse is possible. Thus, there are possibilities to change the narrative and resist dominant patriarchal discourses that are embedded in power relations.

Post-structuralist scholars have argued that power is relationally produced (Butler, 1990; Davies & Gannon, 2005; Weedon, 2004). According to Davies and Gannon (2005), as well as Weedon (2004), power functions within relationships between different people; it is embedded in discourse and therefore it is fluid. Power intersects with discourse, language and localised cultural practices that complement each other (Ball, Goodson & Maquire, 2007). This means that dominant discourses are informed and shaped by discursive practices, and, inversely, "discourse and practice produce power" (Ball *et al.*, 2007; Pitsoe & Letseka, 2012: 12). This, then, translates to dominant discourses being in position of power. An example of this would be the social-constructed norm that women are better nurturers and carers than men. Feminist scholars such as Davies and Gannon (2011b) and Osgood (2012) postulate that post-structuralism troubles such power dynamics within dominant discourses. They note how

dominant patriarchal discourses reproduce hegemonic ideas of gender to dismantle their superficial dominance, inevitability and rationality. Therefore, the above post-structuralist perspective opens possibilities for agency. For instance, in this study, male Foundation Phase teachers, through a process of disrupting the hegemonic ideas of gender norms, begin to experience and reflect on how they have been socially constructed and reconstructed during the course of their life, therefore creating space for the emergence of agentic moments.

Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2012: 7), in their theorisation, claim that agency is something that individuals possess or not, instead of "something that is achieved in and through concrete contexts for action". Researchers have further posited that the notion of agency is an innate thing and that agency is the ability to see, seize and know moments that create opportunity for agency to happen (Davies & Gannon, 2011b; Eteläpelto *et al.*, 2013). Priestly *et al.* (2012) state that the activation of agency within individuals is in most cases dependent on material resources, relationships and localised discursive practices which are at the disposal of the individual. Feminist post-structuralism creates possible paths for male Foundation Phase teachers to see how language, dominant discourses and subjectification, influenced by power, can generate instances to bring about change either to the self or others (Letts, 2006). Davies and Gannon (2011b: 313) posit that:

> [A]gency becomes instead a recognition of the power of discourse, a recognition of one's love of, immersion in and indebtedness to that discourse, and also a fascination with the capacity to generate life; not just the endless repetition of old habituated practices, but the generation of new life-forms, life-forms capable of disrupting old meanings of gender, potentially over-writing or eclipsing them.

Therefore, agency, within the feminist post-structuralist theorisation, is to a certain extent linked to the development of subjectification (Barrett, 2005: 310; Eteläpelto *et al.*, 2013) and "lies in the capacity to recognise that constitution as historically specific and socially regulated, and thus [is] able to be called into question".

3.4 Holding Point Between the Theory of Masculinity and Feminist Post-Structuralist Lens

The involvement of men in feminine professions such as Foundation Phase learning and teaching has opened opportunities to reimagine the binary oppositional construction of masculinity and femininity (Bhana, 2016). It has further created space for thinking about

constructing an inclusive schooling environment that disrupts the hegemonic gendered construction of what characterises a Foundation Phase teacher. In South Africa and globally, scholars have described the need for an inclusive Foundation Phase learning environment and the necessary strategies in attaining such, one of them being men's involvement in the feminine-profiled context. However, it falls short of providing insights into how male Foundation Phase teachers already in the field of teaching young children negotiate, position and construct their masculine-gendered teacher identities that are influenced by the intersection between their personal and professional gendered practices, social structures and institutional culture, to mention a few (Bhana, 2016; Davies & Hoskin, 2021; Moosa & Bhana 2018; O'Keeffe, 2018).

I used the theory of masculinity and a feminist post-structuralist lens to possibly offer Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers an opportunity to start thinking of the various discourses that are visible in and around their classrooms that hamper or enable them to nurture learners as it is their professional responsibility. With this in mind, I wanted them to think of how dominant hegemonic versions of masculinity within their context influence how they negotiate, reconstruct and facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms. In so doing, male Foundation Phase teachers become more reflective about their nurturing practices. They thus put into practice what Zembylas (2003: 126) highlights: "teachers can construct new discourse and enact new performances [which can] … become political forces for changing ways in which teachers interpret educational matters and for helping them constitute new forms of teacher subjectivity."

The first lens presented was Connell's theory of masculinity, which was instrumental in providing an account or base for the multiple forms of masculinity that exist within different contexts. Moreover, the theory clarified how men in different contexts constitute, construct and negotiate their gendered identities. In this study, I aimed to gain a broader understanding of how Xhosa male teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in the highly feminised context of Foundation Phase teaching, which means that I am exploring a particular identity marker, for instance gender. Connell's theory did not sufficiently provide a holistic account of the lived experiences of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers, who are participants in this study. As such, feminist post-structuralist theory was adopted as it offers the possibility of enabling the male Foundation Phase teachers in this study, or myself as the researcher, to start thinking about how the multiple discourses that exist in and around their classrooms influence and shape their construction of masculinities (Blaise, 2005). I primarily chose a feminist

post-structuralist lens because the study focused on how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms.

I utilised both feminist post-structuralist theory and masculinity theory because it offers a useful lens that counters the essentialist perception that is rooted in biological accounts of gender, which is fixed on the perception of masculinity and femininity to nature. The combination of these theories also counters the sex-role socialisation theorisation, which views gender from a binary perspective of socialisation. Whilst disregarding the multiple ways in which men themselves construct their masculine identities. Using these theories, I was able to engage Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers on how dominant discourses influence their facilitation of nurturing. I also engaged them on how, through their everyday lives in and around their classrooms, these discourses actively influenced the construction of their ever-evolving masculine teacher identities, leading to the possibility of visualising the emergence of nurturing masculinities.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the theoretical frameworks adopted in this study. The theoretical frameworks were used to understand the phenomenon under study, which was to explore how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. The two theoretical frameworks enabled me to analyse the participants in this study's construction of nurturing as a form of masculinity and how their teacher identities evolve in their quest of being Foundation Phase teachers. Having presented the theoretical frameworks in this chapter, in the next chapter, I discuss the methodological choices made in relation to this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the theoretical frameworks of the study. In this chapter, I first present the main research question and sub-questions that this study aimed to answer. Thereafter, I discuss the research approach and elaborate in detail on the paradigm selected, methodological choices and the data generation methods that were used. Furthermore, I locate the study contextually and then explain the process followed in selecting the participants of the study. I also explain in detail the protocol I observed during the data generation, with the study adopting two methods of analysis. I then discuss the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness in the study. Lastly, I explain the ethical considerations that were followed in this study.

4.2 Research Question and Sub-Questions

The main research question of this study is: How can participatory visual methods be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers?

The following research sub-questions were formulated:

1. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase?
2. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?
3. How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?

4.3 Research Design

From a qualitative stance, as described by King and Horrocks (2010: 6), a research design can be understood as "the choice of particular research methods used during a study and their justification in relation to the research study". This means that, informed by the research question/s, the researcher chooses the appropriate design for the study. As indicated in the introductory chapter, a qualitative approach, located within the transformative paradigm and

employing PVRM, was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of how Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms.

4.3.1 Qualitative approach

This study adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research "examine[s] how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others". Moreover, I drew on the qualitative approach because of its ability to understand people's lived experiences and realities of positioning themselves within a particular context. Researchers use a qualitative approach to investigate participants' experiences or understanding of a phenomenon of interest using a variety of methods. This may be verbal or non-verbal communication or visual methods of inquiry, with the researcher (together with participants) further interpreting what they (the researcher and participants) hear, understand and see (Creswell, 2009; Grove, Burns & Gray, 2012; Mitchell *et al.*, 2017). Creswell (2009) and Maree (2015) posit that images and words could be understood differently by the participants because of their different contextual realities. Creswell (2009) further asserts that as researchers embark on a qualitative approach, their design of the methodology should have multiple data generation methods to establish the different meanings made by the participants.

Moreover, scholars have argued that qualitative research is inductive, holistic and process-orientated in nature, which is why the approach allows for flexibility in the research design, and that qualitative research "often merges data generation and analysis; this enables reflexivity and co-construction of knowledge" (Notshulwana, 2020: 63; Pithouse-Morgan *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, Mayaba and Wood (2015) posit that the qualitative approach provides the researcher and participants the opportunities to use different sources to co-create data, allowing the participants to visually construct and reconstruct their lived experiences. In doing so, the participants and researcher are afforded the opportunity to clarify and own conceptualisations of their understandings of a particular phenomenon being researched. By implementing this approach, the researcher offers the participants the opportunity to think about their own understandings and to critically engage with other participants and to reflect on all that has been discussed or visualised. For all the above to happen, researchers using a qualitative design need to be flexible in their process of data generation, as there could be changes taking place during the multiple stages of data generation. Creswell (2009) and Hammersley (2012) postulate that researchers employing this strategy should embrace the learning that comes with the design,

such as learning from the participants and remaining within the boundaries of the research questions.

The qualitative approach has also been critiqued. Scheyvens (2014), together with Taylor and Medina (2013), posits that because of human subjectivity, biases may arise in qualitative research. Therefore, the research process largely relies on the alertness of the person conducting the research to create space to tease the biases out at the beginning of the research, which biases can be from either the researcher or the participants. Communication is thus important in qualitative research. Furthermore, it is not that the findings of qualitative research cannot be generalised (Grossoehme, 2014; Leung, 2015; Malterud, 2001). Grossoehme (2014) and Malterud (2001) postulate that because the qualitative approach is not premised on statistical data and random sampling, it becomes difficult for researchers to generalise, as their research is focused on a specific context or particular group of people. Carcary (2009), as well as Leung (2015), takes the discussion further by saying that the main purpose of qualitative research is to produce rich context-specific data that aim to depict a specific group of people's lived experiences through deep rigorous research. The majority of the studies conducted within a qualitative design thus aim to co-construct new meanings and to discover many contextualised realities of the participants and not necessarily to generalise the findings (Carcary, 2009; Grossoehme, 2014; Leung, 2015).

In this study, I acknowledge the advantages and criticism of the qualitative design; however, the qualitative approach was the most suited line of inquiry to my study. I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how Eastern Cape-based male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. The study required me to employ a methodology and methods that presented my participants with the opportunity to be actively engaged in the process of data generation. This enabled the participants to provide invaluable inputs through data in the form of their lived experiences as Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers and allowed me as the researcher to be flexible in generating the data. At the core of this research was the aim to determine the way in which male Foundation Phase teachers made meaning of their lived experiences and through sharing some of their nurturing facilitation practices in and around their classrooms. More prominently, it was also to determine the relationship between their meaning-making and their own practices. Thus, the transformative paradigm was employed.

4.3.2 Transformative paradigm

According to Willis (2007: 8), "[a] paradigm is … a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field." Paradigms thus differ in accordance with their fundamental assumptions of the nature of reality (ontology), their view on the construction of knowledge and how it is legitimised (epistemology), and how knowledge is generated by the researchers in that paradigm (methodology) (Mertens 2010; Taylor & Medina, 2013). Willis (2007) argues that a paradigm serves as a guide for researchers whilst in the field.

The transformative paradigm was adopted to underpin the study. This paradigm in its ontological assumptions acknowledges that power and privilege have an influence on what is real (Chilisa, 2012; Flanagan & Christakis, 2010; Mertens, 2010). Historical, socio-cultural and political perspectives shape the multiple realities that exist. An example is sustaining the notion that Foundation Phase teaching is work suited for women and not men because men cannot nurture as much as women do. Furthermore, the transformative worldview argues that there are multiple realities that exist. Flanagan and Christakis (2010) posit that gendered versions of reality should be critiqued as they perpetuate inequality. Therefore, it becomes significantly important for participants to share their realities. In the case of this study, male Foundation Phase teachers share their experiences of nurturing as a form of masculinity, in so doing disrupting the socially constructed normative view of men as violent and unable to nurture and care for children. Moreover, they rethink their role in the gendered distribution of labour when it comes to Foundation Phase teaching.

The transformative paradigm epistemologically is concerned with the relationship between the researcher and the participants and the subjectivism thereof (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Mertens, 2010). The paradigm positions the relationship as transactional, which allows for the co-creation of knowledge, thereby viewing the process of creating knowledge as empowering, emancipatory, multidimensional and non-static, for both the participants and the researcher (Mertens, 2010). Furthermore, it positions the participants at the centre of the research process. Therefore, through this study, I aimed to create a space for male Foundation Phase teachers to reflect on and share their experiences of facilitating nurturing in and around their classrooms through conversations centred around participatory visual methods, discussed later. Hence, it was important for me to bring my participants into one space in which they could engage so that we could explore what a nurturing male Foundation Phase teacher could look like and to bring about change to self or the participants as they become aware of their and other's practices.

Taylor and Medina (2013) assert that the methodological assumptions of any paradigm are concerned with the researcher choosing and implementing a well-organised methodology and research approach. Mertens (2010) methodologically argues that the transformative worldview does not only frame the understanding of our realities but also understands that subsequent methodological decisions need to be reframed as well. Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (2005: 6) posit that any research methodology needs to "be dialectical in nature to transform ignorance and misunderstandings". It is believed that when the researcher and participants engage in different methods of data generation, there is growth in understanding and there is an element of change in either the participants or researcher, whilst in pursuit of generating knowledge and multiple realities (Yamile & De Lange, 2023). Therefore, the transformative paradigm encourages PVRM to enable the researcher and participants to co-create knowledge in a reflexive way and to enable the researched group of people to think critically about their lived realities and how they require possible change.

In locating the study within the transformative paradigm, this worldview has enabled me and the participants to explore how they facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms as male Foundation Phase teachers and how that leads to a particular form of masculinity. It is for this reason that I have situated my study in the transformative paradigm. In the next section, I discuss PVRM.

4.3.3 Participatory visual research methodologies

The present research is located within the qualitative approach and further positioned within the transformative paradigm. This study, then, drew on participatory visual research methodologies (PVRM), which is a methodology that considers "research-as-intervention" and has the potential to facilitate social change to self (the researcher) or others (participants). It has been argued that PVRM may be defined as a hands-on methodology that encourages conversations that are courageous and that it has the possibility of mobilising people at the grassroots level to think of ways that promote social change (Mayaba & Wood, 2015: Mitchell *et al.*, 2017; Yamile & De Lange, 2023). Researchers that undertake research using participatory visual methodology argue that research is done as a means of empowerment with different visual methods of data generation, such as collage-making, drawing, photovoice or stories, self-films, sculpture, poetry and drama, to mention a few (Kagola & Khau 2020; Mitchell *et al.*, 2017; Msutwana, 2021; Notshulwana & De Lange 2019; Yamile, 2021). According to Khau, De Lange and Athiemoolam (2013), as well as McCarthy and Muthuri

(2018), the above participatory visual methods can possibly enable participants to make evident what they know and, in making visible what they know, they reflect on their experience and knowledge.

Black *et al.* (2018) argue that because of the exciting methods used in PVRM, participants have fun and take ownership of the research process. Moreover, participants tend to see the research process to its end because of the sense of ownership created (Mitchell *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, scholars have argued that participants engage in fruitful conversations that empower them and lead to them analysing their self-knowledge, thinking of ways to challenge social inequalities, as well as allowing them to voice their views and opinions (Black *et al.*, 2018; Kagola & Khau, 2020; Mitchell *et al.*, 2017). In their reflection of using PVRM, Notshulwana (2020) and Msutwana (2021) note that there are high possibilities for generating rich and relevant data through visual artefacts such as collages and photovoice photographs. These researchers and Black *et al.* (2018) posit that using these visual methods in small groups provides participants and the researcher space for meaningful conversations whilst being unaware that they are engaging in the first layer of participatory data analysis. I further elaborate on the use of participatory data analysis later in the data analysis section.

Employing participatory methods such as photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making in the research process allow participants to reflect on the phenomenon being researched in their lived experiences and to start thinking of action to take moving forward (Cornell, Kessi & Ratele, 2022; Mitchell & Sommer, 2016). Participants with similar experiences get the opportunity to share their lived experiences visually using participatory methods and also to tell how they experienced them. For example, in this study, the participating male Foundation Phase teachers had to share how they facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms. Men's involvement in nurturing spaces such as the Foundation Phase, along with men talking about their experiences in this highly feminine educational phase, is a sensitive issue to some people. Therefore, participatory visual research methodologies enabled the participants to make visible aspects of their nurturing acts which might have been difficult for them to verbalise without producing participatory artefacts from photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making. These participatory visual effects sometimes serve as a representation of the difficult responses that are not easy to be spoken, especially when doing participatory research with marginalised groups (Mayaba & Wood, 2015; Mitchell & Sommer, 2016).

Blackboard and Lindegger (2015), as well as Yamile and De Lange (2023), have identified challenges of using PVRM, which include material technological devices for data generation and time consumption. In many instances, researchers provide the participants with materials such as newspapers, magazines and other print media to produce a particular participatory artefact. Kagola and Khau (2020) and Mayaba and Wood (2015) found that sometimes, the materials provided could be foreign to the participants, leading to participants' not being able to produce their preferred participatory artefact. Furthermore, other researchers tend to bring cameras, printers and video recorders for participants to use for the purpose of data generation, forgetting that some participants are technologically challenged and are shy to vocalise it, leading to participants' being uncomfortable in the data generation process (Blackboard & Lindegger, 2015). In terms of time consumption, using methods such as photovoice and collage-making requires participants to think long and hard about what they would want to have as part of their participatory artefacts. It is advised that the researcher must bring materials that are friendly and familiar to the participants and to allow participants to use technological equipment that is user-friendly to them using participatory methods such as photovoice and self-films. They must also encourage participants to relax and to take their time to think and be as creative as possible or as they want in their creation of the participatory artefacts (Black *et al.*, 2018; Blackboard & Lindegger, 2015; Khau *et al.*, 2013).

In this study, PVRM was purposefully employed with an understanding of its ability to grant co-ownership of the research process between the researcher and the participating male Foundation Phase teachers. Further understanding that nurturing as men is an uncomfortable topic to converse over, therefore, the participatory visual method embedded in this methodology would be the best way to spark conversation amongst male Foundation Phase teachers. Mayaba and Wood (2015), as well as Micthell *et al.* (2017), are of the opinion that participants partaking in this methodology have an influence on the research process. In this study, participants could share their thoughts and reflect on their untiring acts with an intention to influence each other's thinking of the concept of nurturing masculinity in and around their classrooms. Moreover, the participatory visual research methodologies provides an opportunity for collaborative teamwork amongst the participants, with the aim of creating a space where all participants feel they belong and their contribution is valued (De Lange, 2008; Michell *et al.*, 2017). For the purpose of generating rich data, I organised a weekend data generation retreat and invited the participating male Foundation Phase teachers (see Appendix E). I used the following participatory visual methods for the data generation process during the retreat: photovoice,

metaphor-drawing and collage-making. These participatory visual methods enabled me to engage fruitfully with participants on their construction and facilitation of nurturing masculinity in and around their classrooms. PVRM was chosen because it allowed me and the participants to share stories of nurturing in the Foundation Phase and to reflect on self and each other's experiences with the hope of transformation whilst engaging with the PVRM methods (De Lange, 2008; Mayaba & Wood, 2015).

4.4 Research Context

The present study took place in the Eastern Cape – one of the nine provinces in South Africa. The Eastern Cape province is one of the three most rural and poor provinces amongst the nine provinces in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2020), the Eastern Cape is estimated to have a population of 7,600,000 people. The Eastern Cape was formed in 1994 out of the amaXhosa homelands of the then Bantustans of Transkei and Ciskei, together with the eastern portion of the Cape province as a result of the dawn of democracy in South Africa, from a lengthy period of colonisation and the apartheid era (Hamann & Tuinder, 2012). This rural province is positioned on the south-east coast of the Republic of South Africa, with the Western Cape province on the western side, the Northern Cape and Free State provinces on the northern side, and the kingdom of Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal province on the northeastern side.

Eastern Cape as a province is divided into eight districts: Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Buffalo City Metropolitan, Chis Hani, Joe Gqabi, OR Thambo, Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan and Sarah Baartman. This rural province is diverse in nature, dominated by rural communities, with some areas being classified as urban and others as metropolitan cities. The Eastern Cape has a variety of South African ethnic groups and cultures, including those of the Afrikaners, Basotho and Batswana, English, amaZulus and amaXhosa people. Since this province was created from the amaXhosa homelands, the dominant cultural ethnic group is that of the amaXhosa. The amaXhosa ethnic group has its own norms, practices and values that they live in accordance to.

The participants in the study were male Foundation Phase teachers from various primary schools in four different districts of the Eastern Cape province. The majority (about 70%) of the participants in this study were from rural schools; therefore, for ethical reasons, I disclose only names of the districts and nearby major towns or cities close to them geographically. The districts and towns where the participants of this study were from are Amathole (Mthatha),

Buffalo City Metropolitan (East London), Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (Gqeberha) and Sarah Baartman (Makana) (also see Figure 4.1).

Due to the nature of the research methodology and process, participants had to be in one place for the data generation, as discussed in the next section. The participants of this study were, however, scattered all over the four districts of the Eastern Cape province. As the researcher, I visited them at their different locations or schools and realised that we had to meet in one place for the data generation to be successful. I then negotiated with them for a weekend data generation retreat, from Friday until Sunday, in one location. The participants agreed, as they were interested in this study and wanted to participate in it. I organised accommodation, food and transport for the weekend data generation retreat. The participants and I met in East London, seeing that it was central to everyone. See Appendix E for the itinerary of the weekend data generation retreat.

Figure 4.1 shows a map of the Eastern Cape province with cities and towns in the Eastern Cape province. The purpose is to provide a visual picture of the province and an idea of where the participants of the study are geographically located.

Figure 4.1: Map of the Eastern Cape province

Source: Wikimedia Commons (2020)

4.5 Introducing the Participants

Globally and in South Africa, the majority of teachers in the Foundation Phase are female, and little is known about how the few males teaching in the feminised educational phase navigate and construct nurturing as a form of masculinity. Msiza (2021) posits that the phenomenon of men teaching in the Foundation Phase is under-researched in South Africa, especially in rural contexts such as the Eastern Cape. Bhana (2016) and Msiza (2020) posit that the voices of men teaching in the early years of learning in South Africa are not often heard in the literature. The present study aimed to contribute to the ongoing discussion regarding men's involvement in the teaching of young children by exploring how Eastern Cape-based male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. It is for this reason that only male Foundation Phase teachers were considered to participate in this study.

The present study employed a qualitative approach. As such, a sampling method was needed to select participants from a particular group of people to generate rich and focused data. I initially chose purposive sampling since it helps researchers to focus on specific characteristics of participants within a population, particularly those that can respond to the research question (Silverman, 2011; Strydom & Delport, 2011). However, after a period of time being unsuccessful to obtain the desired number of participants in the context of Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole, I resorted to snowball sampling, wherein male teachers those who had already agreed to participate referred me to other teachers who fit the inclusion criteria. It was through this sampling method that I managed to recruit and enrol two participants. My aim was to have a minimum of six and a maximum of eight participants. This is why I had to revert to the drawing board and choose a different method of sampling. I therefore employed a mixture of purposive and snowball sampling to reach the desired number of male Foundation Phase teachers for participation.

According to Goodson and Sikes (2001), snowball sampling is when the researcher works with an informant or the research participants to provide information or details of colleagues or other people that might fit the criteria and are possibly willing to participate in the research. Penrod *et al.* (2003) posit that what underpins snowballing conceptually is that a particular group of members of a rare population or description might be familiar with one another. For instance, in this study, male Foundation Phase teachers directed me to other male teachers that they met during the DBE workshops or who attended the same institution of higher learning.

As the study employed a mixture of sampling strategies, the inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Participants should identify as male.
2. Participants should identify as a member of the amaXhosa ethnic group.
3. Participants should be qualified Foundation Phase teachers, with at least two years of teaching experience in the Foundation Phase.

These criteria were important, as the study aimed at exploring how Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. It was important for them to have had experience in teaching in the Foundation Phase as a context of the study. Moreover, researchers using a qualitative approach seek to explore and understand their participants' lived experiences instead of generalising the findings of their research (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, having a small group of participants makes the management of the research process easy and generates in-depth and rich data.

As a teacher educator myself, I reached out to three of the male Foundation Phase teachers who graduated in the year 2018 when I arrived at the institution of higher learning I currently work at in the Eastern Cape province. Unfortunately, two had left the province and the other one was working at one of the primary schools in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole. I then visited the school where he was teaching to ask for permission from the principal to approach him and to also invite him to participate in the study (see Appendix C). I then approached Foundation Phase subject advisors in the metropole to assist with finding participants. I also had conversations with colleagues at another institution of higher learning that offers the degree in Foundation Phase teaching to point me in the direction of male teachers in the Foundation Phase. The colleagues and subject advisors could successfully assist in this regard. I drove around the province and found that the majority of male teachers employed for the Foundation Phase no longer teach in the phase but in other senior phases. I managed to recruit eight participants in total in the following districts: two participants in Amathole, three in the Buffalo City Metropole, one in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole and two in Sarah Baartman district.

Of the eight participants that volunteered to participate in the study, only six managed to attend the data generation weekend retreat. The biographic details of the six participants are provided in Table 4.1 below, with their self-chosen pseudonyms, age, the grade they were teaching during the research process, and their years of experience teaching in the Foundation Phase. My intention for the study was to have a full representation of all grades in the Foundation Phase.

However, due to the scarcity of men in Foundation Phase teaching, I was unable to recruit teachers in Grade R. Of the eight participants who had agreed to participate in the study, the two who could not attend the retreat were teaching in Grade 1 at the time of data generation. The two participants shared with me that they had a social responsibility to attend to as they were *amakhankatha* (traditional guardians/nurses) for some of the boys who were going into the initiation school on the weekend of the retreat.

Table 4.1: Participant demographics

Participant (pseudonym)	Age	Grade teaching	Years of experience
Zama	32	2	3 years, 6 months
Camagu	28	3	3 years, 6 months
Mr Prince	36	2	5 years, 6 months
Luzuko	30	3	3 years, 6 months
Ranzo	32	2	3 years, 6 months
Lonwabo	34	2	4 years, 6 months

4.6 Data Generation Methods

The present study employed a qualitative approach embedded in participatory visual methodology; hence, the data generation methods selected had to be aligned to the study's methodology. I chose participatory visual methodology because of its ability to afford the researcher and participants the ability to reflect, provoke courageous conversation amongst participants, and encourage a nuanced look at the self and self-analysis in reflection for the researcher and the participants (Ewing & Hughes, 2008; Notshulwana & De Lange, 2019). Researchers such as Eisner (2002) and De Lange (2008) argue that using participatory visual methods has the possibility to assist participants to see, reflect and begin to think deeply and differently about their own beliefs, perceptions and ideas. For the purpose of generating in-depth and rich data, photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making were the data generation methods employed to explore how Eastern Cape-based male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms.

Table 4.2 provides a detailed description of how data were generated with participants. This includes the secondary research questions, the participatory visual data generation methods, and the prompts used. I further discuss the participatory method followed by an explanation of the process that took place during the data generation, and how I applied the methods for this study.

Table 4.2: Description of data generation

Secondary research question	Participatory method	Prompt	Type of data
How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct their masculinities?	Photovoice	Take a picture of an object that best represents you as a male Foundation Phase teacher in and around your classroom	Photographs, recording and transcripts of explanation and conversation
How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?	Metaphor-drawing	Draw a picture that best represents your understanding of nurturing	Drawings, recording and transcripts of explanation and conversation
How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?	Collage-making	Create a collage on how you facilitate nurturing in an around your classroom	Collages, recording and transcripts of explanation and conversation
	Collaborative collage	Construct a collaborative collage on what nurturing masculinities could look like for male Foundation Phase teachers	Collaborative collage, recording and transcripts of explanation and conversation

4.6.1 Photovoice

The participatory visual method photovoice was used in this study as the first data generation method. According to Lal, Jarus and Suto (2012: 181), photovoice refers to "a participatory action research method combining photography and group work to give people an opportunity to record and reflect on their lives". Moreover, photovoice encompasses the process of collecting or producing photographs and accompanying them with written captions or a curatorial statement. This method is also referred to as "photo-stories or photo narratives" (Kessi & Cornell, 2015). Berg (2008) and Carlson, Engebretson and Chamberlain (2006) posit that photovoice as a participatory method requires participants to use cameras or smartphones to take photographs of issues affecting their particular lives or to depict a particular phenomenon being researched.

Because of the participatory nature of photovoice, participants are in charge of the data generation process by being allowed to create or produce a photovoice photograph that takes up a particular form by being creative and making decisions on what they would like to see in their photographs (Cornell *et al.*, 2022). Researchers such as Olivier, Wood and De Lange (2009: 13) argue that photovoice is useful "to encourage active participation from teachers, learners and community members in identifying issues and ways of dealing with them".

Moreover, Cornell *et al.* (2022) postulate that photovoice provides space for the development of understanding and, hopefully, critical consciousness for people at the grassroots level on a particular social issue and to think of ways of bringing about change. Scholars such as De Lange (2008) and Kessi (2018), as well as Pithouse and Mitchell (2007), in their respective studies, attest that photovoice has the power to demonstrate reflexivity and collective construction of knowledge and further heightens courageous conversation amongst the participants. Moreover, Kessi (2018) posits that through these conversations, participants create contexts that make them aware of their agency to think deeply and bring about change in their everyday lives. In South Africa, photovoice as a participatory method has been effective in generating rich data and working with diverse groups of people such as youth and adults to address issues related to social change, marginalisation, stigmatisation and identity (Kessi, 2011, 2018; Moletsane *et al.*, 2007).

Suffla, Kaminer and Bawa (2012) and Msutwana (2019) state that photovoice in research is used to tell a specific story by presenting photographs around a particular topic being researched and describing the photographs. Research participants are encouraged to reflect and tell their stories to others using photovoice (Moletsane *et al.*, 2007). After participants have taken or produced the photographs and written down their meanings in the form of captions, they come together and talk about what the photographs mean. Then, the photographs, together with their curatorial statement, are hung on the wall or board to encourage reflection and critical thinking (De Lange, 2008; Kessi & Cornell, 2015; Moletsane *et al.*, 2007; Woodley-Baker, 2009). Photovoice photographs can be exhibited for participants to view and read and to reflect on each other's photographs and curatorial statements or captions so that common themes can emerge during group conversation (Emme, 2008). The written captions, narratives or curatorial statements "are an interpretation of the actual story or experience, therefore treating a narration as an actively creative enterprise both highlights and acknowledges a version of self, reality and experience that is produced through the telling" (Woodley-Baker, 2009: 28). Amongst the many fascinating attributes of photovoice is its ability to "provide a means for an investigator to gain perceptual access to the world from the viewpoints of individuals who have not traditionally held control over the means of imagining the world" (Berg, 2008: 937).

For the purposes of this study, I chose photovoice as a method of data generation, as researchers have argued that it is one of the participatory ways of introducing sensitive issues in a non-threatening way. In addition, this method is said to be one participatory visual method enjoyable to participants, especially teachers and young people (Msutwana, 2019). Photovoice

helped to create a space for the participating male Foundation Phase teachers to make visible and reflect on their positionality in and around their classrooms, and made it easy for their voices to be heard (Hunting, 2012). According to Mitchell (2015), researchers who use photovoice as a data generation method need to pay close attention to ethical issues around photovoice. As a researcher, it is important to workshop the participants on the dos and don'ts of photovoice to not contravene the POPI Act.

Participants in this study argued that, to them, they created photo-stories, because they felt that they told their stories of being male Foundation Phase teachers in and around their classrooms through the use of photographs and written captions. Having noted the views of the participants on the naming of the photovoice method as photo-stories, in this study, for the purpose of consistency, I chose to use the term photovoice. Later in this study, I recommend the need for change for future studies (see section 7.4.3). For this participatory method, the participants in this study were asked to answer the first research sub-question 1, (How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase?) in the form of a photovoice.

4.6.2 Metaphor-drawing

Metaphor-drawing as a participatory strategy was selected as the second data generation method for this study. According to McShane (2005: 6), metaphor-drawing can be regarded as a "creative linguistic and conceptual device" that facilitates making use of imagination to describe and explore, using a different image, ways of "being, feeling or doing". Furthermore, Mitchell *et al.* (2011) posit that drawing metaphors as a method of inquiry refers to research participants making a graphic representation or illustration and then explaining the meaning of the illustration to others. According to Leitch and Mitchell (2007) and Lima and De Lamos (2014), thoughts and ideas should not only be expressed in spoken words but also be represented visually. The drawing of metaphors is powerful in its ability to extract personal, intuitive and subconscious thoughts and is a means for participants to express an idea on a topic being researched (Hartel, 2014). Moreover, Van Laren *et al.* (2014) postulate that metaphor-drawing has the potential to facilitate the sharing of hidden meanings in the drawings and provides the research participants with imaginative ways of reviewing their own understandings and lived experiences of a phenomenon. Theron, Mitchell and Smith (2011) explain that metaphor-drawing has the ability to extract feelings, thoughts and memories from participants. This means that the process of thinking about the prompt or instruction – examining themselves, finding a

response, drawing the image and explaining the meaning of the image to others – provides participants the opportunity to think deeply within themselves about the social issue being researched (Beyers, 2012; Maseko, 2020; Theron *et al.*, 2011).

In agreement with Beyers (2012), Theron and Mitchell (2018) posit that drawing is naturally well received by the majority of participants, children, youth and adults, although in the field of psychology, drawing is commended for its effectiveness with children. The aforementioned researchers argue that drawing is also a powerful visual method appropriate for use with adults. A high level of participant engagement is achieved through the use of drawing and the technique does not require expensive equipment; it is done easily using a pencil or pen, colouring pencils, Koki pens and paper (Hartel, 2014; Mitchell *et al.*, 2011; Van Laren *et al.*, 2014). According to Hartel (2014: 1351), "[d]rawings offer a different kind of glimpse into human sense-making than written or spoken texts do, because they can express that which is not easily put into words."

Although there are benefits of using metaphor-drawing in a research process, Theron *et al.* (2011) and Van Laren *et al.* (2014) argue that it has the potential of making the participants feel insecure about making their drawing. Participants may fear that the drawing might not measure up aesthetically or that their drawing is not good enough. Therefore, Theron *et al.* (2011) suggest that researchers using metaphor-drawing as a data generation technique need to reassure the research participants that the quality of the drawing is not important but the content or meaning of the drawing is the important aspect. Moreover, before starting the drawing process, it is important to provide the research participant with sufficient drawing materials and to ensure that sufficient time is dedicated to the drawing activity and for the participants to be comfortable with the researcher and the research process. It is also important to later create an opportunity for participants to discuss and analyse their drawings with each other and the researcher (Beyers, 2012; Theron *et al.*, 2011; Van Laren *et al.*, 2014).

In this study, metaphor-drawing was used as a method of data generation with male Foundation Phase teachers. The method was selected as it was a low-cost method of inquiry and a powerful tool to gain maximum participation from participants, and lastly to generate rich and in-depth data. Metaphor-drawing was used in this study to generate data to answer the second research sub-question: How do male Xhosa Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?

4.6.3 Collage-making

The third and last data generation inquiry chosen for the present study was the participatory visual method collage-making. Ostby (2017) describes collage-making as the process of bringing different fragments of paper images, graphics and words together by pasting the materials on a flat surface, be it soft paper or hardboard, to portray a particular topic or phenomenon being researched. Moreover, Davis and Butler-Kisber (1999: 5) describe collage-making thus: "Uncoupled from their original context and referents, the collage images were recomposed on a new plane … the new context assuming more readily the interior shapes of mental spaces." A collage has the ability to serve as a metaphor for untold lived realities and truths of participants, further transforming graphics into new meanings and connections, from the perspective of the participant who creates the collage (Norris, 2008). De Lange, Mitchell and Stuart (2011) and Mayaba and Wood (2015) are of the opinion that the collage as a participatory visual method of data generation is able to elicit unknown feelings or hidden perceptions or truths that participants are unable to speak in words. Stuart (2010) argues that collages are a good strategy for researching sensitive topics. For instance, collages were used in a study with learners regarding their attitudes and knowledge concerning HIV and AIDS and were found to be an effective research tool.

Ostby (2017), as well as Shepard and Guenette (2010), points out that for participants, the collage-making process is a liberating and fun-filled experience. Collage-making has no rules; instead, participants are encouraged to explore and reflect on their own lived experience of the topic researched. Moreover, Pessoa *et al.* (2017) are of the opinion that in collage-making, participants bring together multiple images to depict and reflect on their context or a social issue and to think of ways to bring about change, and eventually communicate their thoughts with others. Collage-making was chosen for this study as it allowed participants to be comfortable in engaging fruitfully and sharing with others their beliefs, opinions and perceptions, which generates rich discussions on a phenomenon or topic (Khau *et al.*, 2013). In this study, collage-making was employed to answer the third research sub-question: How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classroom?

Furthermore, collages can be done in different ways: individually, where participants make their own individual collage; or collaboratively, where a group of people makes one collage depicting their commonalities (Ostby, 2017). Chilton and Scotti (2014) posit that a collaborative collage has the possibility of creating a sense of belonging amongst participants. Moreover, the above researchers point out that using collaborative collage-making as a form of

participatory visual inquiry helps the participants to share and synthesise layers of knowledge about a particular research phenomenon that the researcher and participants have been exploring for a period of time (Chilton & Scotti, 2014). According to Kapitan (2004) and Kaiser and Deaver (2013), the collaborative aspect of encouraging participants to create a collaborative collage from their respective individual collages fosters identity development as self-reflexive art for the participants and researcher. This suggests value as a therapeutic process for all involved in the research process. In this study, I utilised these strengths of using collaborative collage-making as an artistic activity for deeper engagement to enable participants to use the research process to integrate their intersubjective knowledge of how they construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms (Kapitan, 2004). The process of collaborative collage-making provided avenues for both my, as a participatory visual researcher, and the identity development; and enabled hands-on experimentation that embodied self-discoveries (Chilton & Scotti, 2014; Kapitan, 2004). Therefore, collaborative collage-making was used with participants to summarise the entire research process by asking the participants the following prompt: Create a collaborative collage showing what nurturing masculinities could look like for male Foundation Phase teachers (see Table 4.2).

4.7 The Data Generation Process

In this section, I present a detailed description of the steps I took during the data generation process in this study. Furthermore, I present an account of my entrance into the field and describe each subsequent phase of the data generation process.

4.7.1 The fieldwork

At the beginning of my study, I kept a record of conversations and notes of telephonic engagements I had with my potential participants and colleagues from other institutions of higher learning around the province. This record captured a variety of events and feelings, some participant rejections and exciting moments, such as participants volunteering to participate in the study and agreeing that I visit their schools for information-sharing and asking for permission to access teachers. As explained in section 4.5 (participant selection), it was difficult for me to get participants in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan district of the Eastern Cape province where my institution was located. I had to rely on the snowball sampling method to gain participants in other districts of the province. The following are entries I made on my record of conversations:

> **Excitement to find disappointment:** One of the participants who had agreed to participate in the study was redeployed to another school out of the district he was in. When I got to the school he was at, I was told by the principal that he had been redeployed. I called him; I could sense his sadness and the difficulty of readjusting to another environment in the middle of the year. I was sad for him and for the study, as he indicated he could not participate in the study due to the redeployment as he needs to settle in. (March 2022)

> **An exciting time to be alive:** Having visited 15 primary schools around the province and eight of the male Foundation Phase teachers agreed to be part of the study, I was excited. I remember even crying on my drive from Kieskamahoek village, one of the rural schools in the Sarah Baartman district. The reception at the school was so welcoming and heartfelt. At this particular school, two male teachers were so excited to participate; the female teachers asked to say, "When will you invite us also to participate in the research?" (March 2022)

In reflection, my exciting moments in this research journey equalised my doubt. I remember asking myself, what if these male Foundation Phase teachers do not come to the data generation weekend retreat? What if they do come and they do not get along whilst being forced to stay the whole weekend together? Or some do not feel like being part of the research process? I kept these questions at the back of my head all along with no answers to them until the Friday of the data generation when I received the last confirmation from participants that they will meet me at the guesthouse.

The fieldwork of this study took place at a data generation weekend retreat (see Appendix E), at a guesthouse central and easily accessible to all participants. I purposefully chose a data generation weekend retreat setting to minimise the distractions that would have occurred if participants travelled between their homes and the venue where the research was taking place. Moreover, I wanted to create an environment that is comfortable and an enabling space where participants could be free. I also wanted to bring the participants together under one roof to work together in a participatory way as they were scattered all over the province (Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2014). The data generation weekend retreat took place over a period of three days: Friday (5 hours), Saturday (9 hours) and Sunday (6 hours).

4.7.2 Day 1 (First group meetup; introductory session)

Before the data generation weekend retreat, I had to go around the province and introduce myself and the study to the prospective participants (see section 4.5). I anticipated having eight participants attending this retreat. However, two apologised that they could not attend, indicating that they had a social responsibility of being *amakhankatha* for a few for boys going into initiation schools that weekend. There were thus six participants at the data generation weekend retreat.

In this first group meetup, male Foundation Phase teachers who had volunteered to participate in my study gathered in the conference room at four o'clock in the afternoon on Friday. In this session, I reintroduced myself to the participants and explained to them the rationale and the importance of the study in relation to childhood education and men and masculinity studies. I also stated the main research question that the study sought to answer: How can participatory visual methods be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers?

Participants completed consent forms and individually introduced themselves to the group, with the following check-in prompt: Who are you and why did you choose Foundation Phase teaching as a career of choice? This introductory session took two hours. I took an hour to introduce the secondary questions and the participatory visual methods that would be used to answer each sub-question. Having been trained and experienced with the use of photovoice as a research method, I facilitated a workshop on the use of different participatory visual methods with the participants. The participants were very involved in the workshop, asking questions and making comments regarding the methods. I encouraged them to keep a journal for them to reflect on these methods during their alone time. This meetup session ended with dinner and informal conversations at eight o'clock in the evening. The participants and I then dispersed to our rooms in the guesthouse to rest and met for breakfast the following morning at half past seven. At quarter past eight, we gathered in the conference room to start with the first session of data generation with the first method.

4.7.3 Day 2 (Data generation)

4.7.3.1 *Photovoice*

On the morning of Day 2, at quarter past eight, the participants and I gathered in the conference room. We started the day with a check-in prompt: Today I feel like … The prompt was used as

an icebreaker to check on the participants' feelings and to try to make them feel comfortable in the space. The prompt was followed by a reflection of what had transpired the day before. We talked about some of the important points discussed on the use and regulation of the different participatory methods, particularly the use of photovoice as a method of data generation. Some of the points included avoiding using people's faces without their consent or preferably not at all. In this session, participants had to use digital cameras provided by me to take a picture of objects that best represent them in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms. Participants had to respond to the following prompt:

> Take a picture of an object that best represents you as a male Foundation Phase teacher in and around your classroom. After writing a caption/narrative telling your story, the meaning of the object.

Before participants could embark on this process, I showed them photovoice examples I once had to make at a workshop I attended. Furthermore, I showed them examples from the published work of Cornell *et al.* (2022). After sharing the exemplars with the participants, we then had a trial session on taking, printing and presenting their photographs to the group. The participants understood how to do the participatory artwork. I then gave them the above prompt to make a photovoice photograph. At first, I gave the participants time to think deeply on what the object could be. Once they had figured that out, they took the photograph and wrote the narrative. For this exercise, two hours were allocated (see Appendix E) to give participants ample time to look around and think deeply about the object that best represent them and to reflect on their caption. Participants could print their photographs and if they did not like them, they could take another look and take and print their photographs again until they were satisfied. In one and three quarters of an hour, participants had taken their photographs and were writing their captions. All six participants took turns to share their photographs with the group. After the presentations, the photographs were hung on the wall of the conference room. Participants had a chance to do an exhibition walk and reflect on their own positionality in and around their classrooms. The participants and I then had a group conversation about their photovoice photographs. I then scanned the photovoice photographs and saved them on my laptop. The presentations and group conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English, as participants code-switched between English and isiXhosa.

In reflecting on the photovoice session, the time used by participants and the context of the weekend retreat, I wonder if the context was not a hindrance, since participants were not

familiar with the environment. The data generation retreat was held at a secluded environment outside the participants' everyday-life context. In thinking about this, had the data generation been done at a common place for them, such as a school or in a classroom, they might have used less time finding the objects or found more meaningful objects that might best represent them. Nevertheless, at the weekend retreat setting, participants managed to use the time allocated for this activity and did not feel that they were rushed. Mr Prince even reflected on the process by saying: "*Heee, it is interesting and scary at the same time … looking at yourself and thinking about how others see you … and choosing an object that best represent that ….*" This made me think of my own time as a male Foundation Phase teacher, wondering which object could have best represented me, and it was a very interesting learning curve for me. For the participants, participating in this study afforded a moment of self-reflection and taking ownership of their lived experiences. It would be understood as something that is empowering, because participants were more like authors of their own stories (Howes & Miles, 2015).

Furthermore, participants felt that the participatory method should not be termed photovoice but photo-stories, as the photographs were a depiction of their everyday lives and, through them, they told their everyday stories. Luzuko mentioned that, "*this name photovoice, it seems like something difficult; if you say photo-stories, it sounds easy … and personal because we are talking about our lives in the classrooms*". This comment made me reflect on how research methods can be intimidating to people and how that can influence the participant's participation in the research process. Moreover, the male Foundation Phase teachers participating in this study's identity was self-constructed, co-constructed and further reconstructed as they actively narrated, interpreted and reflected on their photographs and what they meant (Cornell & Kessi, 2017). I noted the views of the participants and my own reflection on the name photovoice and photo-stories as a method of data generation. However, for the purpose of consistency in the doctoral project, I chose to use the name photovoice and later recommend the need for change of name for future studies (see Section 7.4.3).

4.7.3.2 *Metaphor-drawing*

Having engaged in the first phase of data generation through the use of photovoice, we took a 15-minute break and converged back in the conference room to continue with the next method of data generation, namely metaphor-drawing. I explained the importance of metaphor-drawing to participants and how the quality of the drawing is not important but the content and explanation thereof. I provided the participants with A3 sheets of white paper, different colour

pens, colouring pencils, Koki pens and erasers. The participants made a drawing of their understanding of the concept of nurturing by following this prompt:

> Draw a picture that best represents your understanding of the notion of nurturing. Put a caption on it.

I gave the participants 30 minutes to think deeply about what nurturing means to them and to draw a metaphor that best describes their understanding of nurturing. I also encouraged them to write a caption on their drawings. When the participants were done, they presented and explained to the group what the metaphor meant to them in their understanding of the concept of nurturing. A group conversation ensued after the presentations. The presentations and group conversation were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English, as participants code-switched between English and isiXhosa. I then scanned the pictures of the metaphor drawings and saved them on my laptop. Furthermore, just as with the photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings were also exhibited on the wall of the conference room for the purpose of a gallery walk. Following this, just after one o'clock, we took a break of a few minutes to have lunch and took a walk along the beach to refresh, get fresh air and a bit of sunlight.

When reflecting on the process of metaphor-drawing as a participatory method, participants argued that it was difficult for them to follow the instruction of drawing because they are used to instructing learners to do so, yet now it was their turn. However, on the bright side, they said that it was fun doing the drawings and playing music in the background, as it made them more relaxed. For me, it was interesting how some drew similar metaphors and had different interpretations of their metaphors. I asked them about the similarities in their drawings, as the majority inclined towards an agricultural depiction of nurturing in their metaphor drawings. Some said it was because of the pressure of having to perform like others. Luzuko and Mr Prince said they wanted to "*present a common understanding*", more like doing a common drawing. One of the challenges of metaphor-drawing is that it can sometimes be very competitive or discouraging in case it is to some extent centred around sameness or providing a common understanding through the drawings. This is why, before we started, I informed participants that the drawing does not matter, but what is important is what the metaphor means to them and what meanings they attach to it in relation to their understanding of nurturing. Perhaps if we had had a bigger conference room, where participants were unable to see each other's drawings prior to presentations, they would have had different ideas in their metaphors.

When we were done with the metaphor drawings, we took another break for a few minutes and continued with the last data generation method, collage-making.

4.7.3.3 *Collage-making*

We came back into the conference room at around three o'clock in the afternoon. I introduced the participants to the booklet called *Hamba Thobekile* from the project Girls Leading Change and shared an article written by me and a colleague on using collage-making as a participatory visual method (Kagola & Khau, 2020). The purpose of sharing all these examples was to provide the participants with multiple examples of creating a collage, as I had found in my previous studies that there is no one way of doing it. The participants then had to create individual collages depicting some of their memories of facilitating nurturing in and around their classrooms guided by the following prompt:

> Create a collage on how you facilitate nurturing in an around your classroom. Write a caption of what the collage means.

The participants were given one hour and thirty minutes to create a collage and write a caption on it. I provided them with A2 hardboards, glue, scissors, a variety of newspapers and magazines, and newsletters. When they had finished making their collages and had written their captions, they presented their collages to the group. Thereafter we hung the collages on the wall and had a gallery walk. Before the gallery walk, I asked the participants to keep the following questions in mind:

- What do you see and hear?
- What is happening in these collages?
- What is the same?
- What is different?

After the gallery walk, the participants and I had a group conversation guided by the above questions and I further probed them on specific images on the collages and their meanings. I probed further to ensure that neither other participants nor I were attaching our own understanding and meanings to what participants said or visualised in their collages. I then scanned the collages and saved them on my laptop. The presentations and group conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English, as participants code-switched

between English and isiXhosa. We retired to our rooms at eight o'clock in the evening, leaving the photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings and individual collages on the walls, for participants to reflect on and do individual exhibition walks during their spare time.

In reflection, the participants were overwhelmed by the process of creating a collage in that some indicated that going through so many magazines and newspapers was tiring, and others could not decide on which pictures to use as they were many. For example, being shocked with the many magazines and newspapers, Camagu said: *"Yhooo, so many things to go through; yhooo; I can't; nyane (for real), I can't.*" This made me realise that this process could be overwhelming, even though to some it might be fulfilling. Other participants could not find some of the pictures they were looking for and became irritated and to some extent disappointed that they were unable to make visible what they wanted to say, or that their ideas might not be represented correctly.

The issue of visual representation can, to some extent, be a hindrance to the research process and participants. This means that the participants might be limited in terms of visualising their thoughts or views due to limited materials provided by the researcher. As a consequence, some of the important information might not surface or be made known. Another aspect of limited visual representation related to collages would be the inability to find the ideal image to represent a particular idea. This might reduce participants' confidence in presenting their thoughts and lead to participants not expressing themselves confidently in this process. Therefore, in trying to mitigate these challenges related to visual representation, I encouraged participants to look for pictures on the internet, save the pictures and send them to me. I then printed the pictures on a Word document for them to have their desired final collage. On my side, it was interesting to see how many art effects the participating male teachers had to produce visually and the deep, rich engagements that took place in the group conversation.

4.7.4 Day 3 (Wrapping up)

On Sunday morning, we converged in the conference room for the last session of data generation. We did a group exhibition walk, looking at the photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings and individual collages. Before we began the exhibition walk, I made a brief presentation on the purpose and importance of the data generation process and the methods of inquiry used for this study. I further reminded the participants of the probing questions, which were as follows:

- What is common in all these artefacts?

- What can be taken away that does not resonate with nurturing as a form of masculinity and why?
- What is different?

Participants walked around the conference room, making notes for about seven to ten minutes. From there, we had a group conversation led by the probing questions above. After that conversation, I asked participants to create a collaborative collage based on the following prompt/question:

> From all these artefacts, make a collaborative collage that could depict what nurturing masculinity could mean for Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. Write a caption for it.

In this session of data generation, I provided the option of an A1 white sheet or an A2 paper hardboard to create a collaborative collage. The participants took snippets from their own individual collages and from newspapers and magazines to contribute to their collaborative collage. Furthermore, participants negotiated with the rest of the group as to what the picture they had selected meant and why it should be included. They also had to explain how it contributes to the creation of a simple, clear collage that represents all of the participants on the aspect of male Foundation Phase teachers constructing nurturing as a form of masculinity. The negotiation took two hours. What further prolonged the session was the writing of the caption, as participants grappled with the wording and what the words meant. The collaborative-collage process and group presentation were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated into English, as participants code-switched between English and isiXhosa. I then scanned the pictures of the collaborative collage and saved them on my laptop.

The participants reflected that they learned so much about each other and how their negotiation skills improved through the creation of the collaborative collage. Some posited that they felt like they belong and did not fear that their views will not be taken seriously. My account of the collaborative collage is how it created a sense of teamwork amongst the participants and how they took ownership of the research process and defined what constitutes nurturing masculinity.

4.7.5 Data transcription and translation

The Monday morning after the data generation weekend retreat, I listened to the audio recordings and looked at all the pictures I took of the participatory visual artefacts (photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings, and individual and collaborative collages). The purpose was to label each item and store them on three external hard drives, which I put in a locked drawer

in my office. In the data generation conference room, I made two separate audio recordings; therefore, I had to listen to each recording and select the one with the best sound.

Since I am not an native isiXhosa speaker, I had to ask an assistant to transcribe and translate the recorded data. I provided the audio recordings to the assistant and gave detailed instructions regarding how I wanted the audio to be transcribed and translated. The instructions included that the audio be transcribed verbatim. Furthermore, if anything was inaudible, I asked the transcriber to indicate this in the transcript and to record the time on the transcript. I could then go back and listen to determine if I could make out the inaudible sections, based on my familiarity with the process, or search through the other recordings to find better quality recordings for those particular sections. Furthermore, data in isiXhosa had to be transcribed in isiXhosa and then translated to English. I requested that the transcriber avoid the use of direct translations, as I might lose some of the important information relevant to the study.

In Chapter 6, I make use of quotes from the transcribed recordings in the results and findings. These are the words of the participating male Foundation Phase teachers in the present study. In the next section, I present the strategy used to analyse the data.

4.8 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2007), as well as Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011), the analysis of data depends on the nature of the data collected. Moreover, Creswell (2007) postulates that researchers using a qualitative approach often use multiple methods of data generation, which leads to a variety of data that need analysis. Scholars describe data analysis as a process of organising, sifting through and making sense and meaning of the data. In the process, researchers discover patterns and develop understandable statements of meaning for the purpose of converting the data into findings (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Schurink *et al.*, 2011).

In this study, the participants participated in the first layer of the data analysis when they presented, wrote captions and engaged in group conversations to explain their photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings and collages. This process is called participatory analysis, and the audio recordings of it were later transcribed and translated for a second layer of analysis (Nind, 2011). I then consolidated all the data generated from the multiple participatory visual methods. I identified and adopted thematic analysis as the best strategy to use for the second layer of data analysis. According to Gibson and Brown (2009: 4), thematic analysis is the "compilation of gathered data into common themes which will be analysed and compared in

terms of their correlations". Braun, Clarke and Terry (2015: 82) posit that one of the interesting attributes of thematic analysis is that it "is flexible in that it specifies analytical procedures, especially coding and developing a theme from the data. It can be used to address any research question within qualitative research". During thematic analysis, the data are described in rich detail and the process is not a linear one and therefore the researcher needs to adopt a process that will help them analyse the data easily. Creswell (2005) posits that the strategy the researcher uses should grant them flexibility, because during the analysis process, the researcher moves back and forth within the entire data set.

For the purposes of this study, data analysis was carried out in accordance with Tesch's steps, as mentioned by Creswell (2005). This involved the following steps:

Step 1: To immerse and familiarise myself with the depth and breadth of the data, I repeatedly and carefully read all the transcripts and listened to the recordings from the group conversations and made notes on the possible emerging themes.

Step 2: All possible themes from the photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings and collages, their accompanying captions, and transcripts from the group conversations were listed. Those similar themes were grouped together and arranged into columns, such as main and sub-themes and categories. This process was underpinned by Connell's theory of masculinity and the feminist post-structuralist lens.

Step 3: The themes were subsequently coded, and the codes were written next to the relevant paragraphs of the text. The most descriptive categories were identified, and all related themes were condensed into these categories. The codes were then arranged in alphabetical order.

Step 4: The data fitting each category were grouped together and preliminary analysis was done.

4.9 Trustworthiness

The term trustworthiness is important in qualitative research and is used to address the research issues of validity and reliability. According to Koonin (2014), trustworthiness is essential to any research project in order to validate all the researcher's findings. As pointed out by Gibbs *et al.* (2007), qualitative validity ensures that the researcher examines the correctness of the data by utilising specific methods, whilst qualitative reliability shows that the researcher's approach is reliable compared to other researchers and other studies. Trustworthiness in a

qualitative inquiry aims to support the argument that the findings of the inquiry are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that to ensure trustworthiness in a study, credibility, conformability, transferability and dependability criteria should be adhered to.

4.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is taken as a path to the internal validity of the data (Patton, 2002). Guba (1981: 79) argues that credibility (truth value) is considered to be "how one can establish confidence in the truth of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects with and in which the inquiry was carried out". Credibility can be established in many ways in research (Creswell, 2009; Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004).

In this study, I ensured the enhancement of credibility through the use of different participatory visual methods. Participatory methods of exploring social issues are well known for their effectiveness. In addition, the use of participatory visual methodology in a qualitative approach created opportunities for multiple iterations of returning to the artefacts, allowing the participants to frequently reexamine and reflect on the meanings that they made. Furthermore, the research methods in this study are well recognised in participatory action research and were appropriate for the phenomenon being studied. The process helped participants in clarifying meaning as individuals and as a collective, and I further facilitated member-checking throughout the research process.

Another aspect in this research that heightened its credibility was the relationship that I established with the participants through my visit to their schools. In addition, the introductory session created a sense of familiarity, comfort and safety from the beginning of the research process. To ensure credibility, I encouraged prolonged conversational engagement amongst participants. Moreover, I did a rigorous review of the literature and examined it to frame the study's findings and conclusions. Lastly, I held frequent conversations with my supervisors to reflect on the research process and to recognise biases, as they are experts in using participatory visual methodology and the phenomenon being studied. These supervisory conversations were instrumental to me as an emerging researcher; they were thought-provoking and enabled me to think of possible alternatives in the research process. For example, it helped me to create a clear research design, think critically around the generation of rich data, and engage on the link between my theoretical framing and the literature and how that can be used as a lens to view my data.

4.9.2 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to freedom from bias in the research process and findings (Creswell, 2009; Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). According to Yeh and Inman (2007), it is important for researchers to be forthright regarding their biases or assumptions and to further justify their rationale for their decisions taken throughout the research process. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulate that confirmability includes audit trails that give another person a chance to cross-check the data and confirm the findings.

As a male Foundation Phase teacher myself, I came into this research with an insider perspective in relation to the phenomenon of the study. I taught in the Foundation Phase for several years. I taught in an urban school and come from the Setswana culture, even though my parents were Xhosa natives. This experience gave me some level of understanding of where participants' viewpoints and inputs emerged from. In this study, I chose to use different participatory visual methods that enabled me and the participants to tap into the type of data the study needed. Furthermore, the methods enabled agency in the research process through reflexivity amongst the participants and myself. Research on masculinities in feminised spaces such as Foundation Phase teaching can sometimes be a sensitive research area of study.

Scholars such as Guba (1981) and Yeh and Inman (2007) emphasise the importance for researchers to explain key biases at the beginning of the research and how they intend on dealing with their biases. In Chapter 1, I positioned myself as a researcher attempting to comply with confirmability. Furthermore, I kept asking the male Foundation Phase teachers involved in the study to reflect on their experiences of the research process as it progressed. Moreover, Krefting (1991) and Shenton (2004) posit that in order to comply with confirmability, there should be an audit or "audit trail" in the study. To comply with this criterion, an independent coder was appointed to recode and verify the results and to confirm whether the same themes were evident. A consensus discussion between myself and the independent coder took place to finalise the results, which is in line with confirmability principles.

4.9.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the "degree to which the findings of a specific inquiry may apply to other contexts or with other people" (Guba, 1981: 70). Transferability in qualitative research is similar to external validity in quantitative research (De Vos, 2005). However, due to the small sample size of participants in qualitative research, transferability is often contested. Jensen (2008), as well as Lincoln and Guba (1985), suggests that qualitative researchers must provide

a richly detailed description of the context to assist other researchers to make decisions regarding a study's transferability. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that it is the responsibility of the reader to ensure transferability; this is informed by the fact that the researcher cannot predict the context in which the findings may be considered or transferred.

The present study was conducted in South Africa in the rural province of the Eastern Cape as the context. There is literature that suggests that masculinities are contextual. In fact, masculinities are a global phenomenon, and schools as a context tend to perpetuate and reproduce dominant forms of masculinity that exist within a particular social setting. I have provided an account of the context of the Eastern Cape province where the participating male Foundation Phase teachers are from. The purpose was to enable the reader to make decisions about how my findings could be transferred. I provided a detailed description of my research design and what underpinned the choices taken, the implementation process and the results which tie back to the literature. Lastly, I faced some challenges in this study, such as the paucity of male Foundation Phase teachers in the province and others. I, therefore, to the best of my abilities, tried to address all challenges that emerged from the beginning of the research process.

4.9.4 Dependability

Dependability is necessary to "determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects in the same context" (Guba, 1981: 70). According to Shenton (2004: 71), the research design may be perceived as a "prototype model", where when others repeat the same design, they stand a high possibility of reaching the same findings and conclusions. Moreover, Shenton (2004) further posits that this criterion can be achieved when processes, small and trivial, within the study are reported in detail. Overlapping research methods, namely photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making, which more or less require the same engagement from participants, were employed. Dependability strategies used included a dependability audit (when another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail used by the investigator in the study) and dense description of research methods. It also included peer examination (at the proposal defence, where discipline and methodological experts checked the research plan) and a code-recode procedure (done after coding a segment of data) (Krefting, 1991).

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) and Thomas (2009) view ethics as a researcher's conduct and their respect for others. They argue that ethical considerations must be emphasised in any research that involves human participants. This is very important because there should be respect for the truth and a person's human dignity. In this study, before going into the field for data generation, I applied for approval from the University of Free State Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). I further wrote to the Eastern Cape Department of Education to obtain permission to conduct the research in the province (see Appendix B). Moreover, I asked for permission from school principals to approach Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in their schools (see Appendix C). I also asked permission from the respective participants. The participants in this study were provided with detailed information about the research study before they could give written informed consent during the recruitment process and upon arrival at the data generation weekend retreat (Ogden, 2008a) (see Appendix D).

In this study, I employed an approach that aims to do the least possible harm and the most good to the participants and the researcher (Mitchell, 2011). I made an arrangement with an independent counselling psychologist to be available for the participants, who may have needed the counselling as a result of any possible risk that might have arisen due to participating in the study. According to Ogden (2008a: 796), the risk to participants can be described as the "chance or probability that harm or injury may occur either in the course of the research or as a consequence of the research". Harm might occur emotionally due to talking about their experiences as male teachers in the Foundation Phase and cultural issues relating to the construction of masculinities within a context regarded as feminine given its sensitive nature (Ogden, 2008b). In this study, none of the participants requested the services or support of the counselling psychologist appointed; after each data generation phase, I held a debriefing session which gave the participants time to reflect, and it seemed to have been sufficient.

During the data generation, I also observed participants' non-verbal communication whilst they interacted with each other in discussions in each phase. The purpose was not to push them to respond when silences occurred during probing and practising the principle of equality between researcher and participants, which positions the participants as the pioneers in participatory research (Clark & Prosser, 2012; Low, 2008). I did this in an effort to not breach confidentiality and to avoid possible invasion of privacy of the participants. Pseudonyms selected by the participants were used throughout the report. This study [in]directly aimed at transformation,

either in the researcher, participants or readers. Therefore, copies of the findings will be shared with participants' respective schools, with the aim of continuing the conversation in their different contexts.

At the end of each data generation phase, I engaged with the participants on how their graphics (photographs and collages) and metaphor drawings would be used in the study. Miller (2021), in agreement with Wang (2006), posits that it is important to discuss authority, responsibility and participant anonymity when using the research method photovoice with youth people. I discovered that their view applied in the photovoice data generation in this study. I became proactive in the photovoice phase of data generation by having a conversation with participants about visual ethics. This was influenced by Cornell and Kessi (2017), as well as Miller (2018), on their work on how to use photovoice in ways that were ethically sound and safe for the research process and participants. The participants took photographs of objects that made it not easy for them to be recognisable; however, in the same breath portraying the message they wanted to put across. Furthermore, in the back-and-forth conversations, I negotiated with the participants on which photographs were to be included in the study. They were more than happy for me to use all the photographs they had taken.

From a personal reflection I realised that through this research process, I learned that ethics are not static. There are aspects of situated ethical conditions that involves the ongoing negotiation and awareness of the evolving perspectives and needs of participants in the undertaken. Situated ethics are not static set of rules but a living, dialogical process that requires continuous reflection and adaptation. What emerged in the field was the importance of fostering an ethical relationship with male foundation phase teachers that goes beyond initial informed consent. It involves being open to unexpected ethical dilemmas, maintaining flexibility in research design and its methods, and respecting the agency of participants in shaping the research process.

4.11 Conclusion

The research question of the present study was aimed at exploring how participatory visual methods can be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. The question necessitated a research approach that is qualitative and participatory in nature. Moreover, the question also led to the use of the transformative paradigm, which in turn influenced my decision of employing participatory visual methodology as a research design. The underpinnings of participatory visual

methodology enabled me to explore how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity through the use of participatory visual methods such as photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making. Simultaneously, it enabled the participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers to reflect on their positionality and construction of nurturing in and around their classrooms. In this chapter, I provided an account of the paradigm underpinning the study, the methodology and methods, as well as the criteria for trustworthiness. I further explained the importance of ethics, in particular how, in this study, visual ethics was addressed, thereby providing assurance of the authenticity of the research process. Therefore, in the next chapter, I present the participatory visual data as produced by the male Foundation Phase teacher participants in this study in attempt to answer the research sub questions.

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATORY DATA PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the research design and methodology. It discussed the data generation process involved in engaging Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers to generate data using three different data methods. In this chapter, I present the data generated from the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making performed by the six participants. The findings relate to the main research question that was formulated as:

- How can participatory visual methods be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers?

The data generated during the weekend retreat with participants were informed by three research sub-questions. The visual nature of participatory research and the rich data generated led me to the decision of presenting a chapter with the participatory visual artefacts that participants produced. The reason for making such a choice is that I aim to enable the reader to see the participatory visual data sets in totality and to further provide an understanding of what the research approach with participants yielded. Moreover, I also share these visual artefacts with the meanings the participants attached to them (i.e. captions). Through the presentation of the participatory visual data in this manner, I am already engaging in Step 2 of analysis, which involves categorising the visual artefacts and their meanings into chronological similarities. This strategy of presenting the artefacts in a way of chronological similarities assisted in creating codes and themes that I present in the next chapter of findings and discussions. The data offered here are representations of the participants' understanding of how they constructed nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms at the time of the study.

5.2 Data Presentation

5.2.1 Participants' construction of masculinities (photovoice)

In the first phase of data generation, photovoice (see section 4.6.1) was used to explore the first research sub-question: How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase?

In responding to the question, participants responded to this prompt:

Take a picture of an object that best represents you as a male Foundation Phase teacher in and around your classroom. Write a caption/narrative telling your story, the meaning of the object.

The photovoice photographs represent the participants' self-construction and positionality of masculine identities in and around their classrooms. The participants presented their photovoice photographs to each other. The photographs depict the type of Foundation Phase teachers they are. Their stories display various behaviours, Foundation Phase teacher characteristics, sexualities and gender. The study included six participants and each participant produced one photograph. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to protect the identities of participants. Having obtained participants' permission, I first present the photovoice photograph that each participant produced (see figures 5.1–5.6), alongside the participant's written caption/narrative of what the photovoice means.

5.2.1.1 *Camagu*

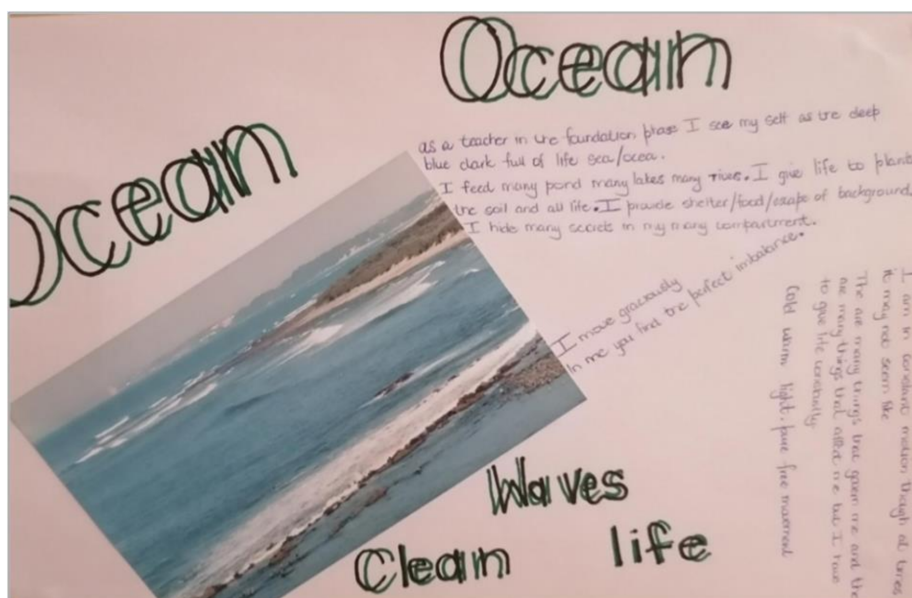

Figure 5.1: Camagu's photovoice photograph

As a male teacher in the Foundation Phase, I see myself as the deep blue dark full of life sea/ocean. I feed many ponds, many lakes, and many rivers. I give life to plants, the soil, animals, and people. I provide shelter/food/an escape from all backgrounds. I hide many secrets in my many compartments. I move graciously, in me you find the perfect imbalance. I am in constant motion, though at times it may not seem like it. There are many things that govern me and there are many

things that affect who I am, my spirituality, my fluid sexuality, and my manhood. At the core of it all, I have to give life constantly.

Camagu in his caption describes himself in and around his classroom as an ocean, a source of life to his learners. As a male Foundation Phase teacher, he saw himself as multifaceted, playing many roles, such as provider, protector and enabler for his learners. Camagu's depiction of himself is somehow similar to that of Zama and Mr Prince in assuming the role of being a provider and protector of children in and around their classrooms. Camagu acknowledged his strengths and witnesses in the form of "*perfect imbalances*". He further acknowledged that his identity shifts as it is influenced by many aspects of his life, such as his sexuality, constructions of manhood in his context, and the policy frameworks guiding teacher attributes. Camagu's perception of himself in and around his Foundation Phase classroom is similar to that of Zama, as he saw himself as more of a protector and provider of warmth to his learners. Zama acknowledged the fact that he is not a biological father to his learners, but has a responsibility to guide, teach and protect them.

5.2.1.2 *Zama*

Figure 5.2: Zama's photovoice photograph

I am a man, a father to my biological children and husband; at work, I regard myself as a hen that hatches eggs. I am responsible for making sure that all my learners get equal treatment from me and each other. I have to make sure I cater to my children's different needs, learners have different multiple intelligences. As when the chicks come out of the shell, so as my learners, some will be

> *excelling, some have moderate performance, and others underperform. Regardless of their performance level I should strive to show them love and fatherly affection. I am conscious of the fact that what my work entails has a possible impact on how other teachers and community members see me as a man; what comforts me is the fact that in the end I contribute positively to a child's life.*

Zama realised how his positionality changes according to the different contexts he finds himself in and immerses himself within that position. Zama and Mr Prince's positioning is similar; however, it is different from that of Camagu. Zama acknowledged his gender and his heterosexual lifestyle of being a man and head of a family, which plays a major contribution in his identity in and around his classroom. His analogy of the hen to some extent provides him the opportunity to expand his positionality in the school setting to be that of a caring teacher who guides learners and meets their different intellectual needs. He acknowledged that his learners have different educational needs, and that it is his responsibility to help the learners overcome their barriers. Zama further mentioned the aspect of "*love and fatherly affection*" in his teaching or presence in and around his classroom, leading to him being conscious of how his masculinity might be constructed differently in the community and in the school setting. What Zama, Mr Prince and Ranzo have in common in their depiction is the constant shifting positionality and how they were aware that their masculine performance is always under scrutiny and that they are conscious of it regarding being accepted by the community. Mr Prince acknowledged that he is first human before anything else, which helps him to be able to care for the children in his classroom and to present the curriculum in an environment that is conducive to learning.

5.2.1.3 *Mr Prince*

Figure 5.3: Mr Prince's photovoice photograph

> *I am a husband, father, and human being before anything. As a male Foundation Phase teacher, I see myself as an insecticide and manure for the plant that I grow, which is my learners. This picture of a plant illustrates inside into my everyday life and how other people see me. My everyday activities of how I take care of my learners, and in terms of making sure that the plant [my learners] will be taken care of by ensuring that you give insecticides, which is the curriculum, and ensuring that plant is growing on good soil, which is the school environment, that which I make conducive for them. So as a man, in my class, I need to ensure that I provide my learners with comfort, protection, and support. Therefore creating an environment where children can grow and develop skills that they can use in their lives for them to become responsible citizens. I am a man and I love teaching young children in the Foundation Phase, even though sometimes I might be seen as soft, and kind, and others see me as someone who does not have anything better to do; however, I cannot imagine teaching other grades.*

Mr Prince brought to the fore an aspect of humanness that allows for possibilities of a multifaceted approach to his positioning in and around his classroom, which is somehow similar to Camagu's construction of self. Moreover, he was aware of his role in the development of his

learners, as he referred to himself as "*insecticide and manure*" and the need for him to create an enabling environment that is conducive to learning. Mr Prince's depiction is closely related to that of Ranzo, in that they both saw themselves as individuals expected to create an environment suitable for learning. Mr Prince talked about how in creating a conducive environment, he further needs to "*take care of ... with comfort, protection, and support*" as some of his everyday activities he does naturally. However, Mr Prince was also aware of the fact that as a male teacher, his masculinity is on display for others to scrutinise and to question his intentions of being a Foundation Phase teacher. Contrarily, Ranzo saw himself as a versatile, multipurpose and accessible male teacher to assist learners with all their needs; however, with limitations.

5.2.1.4 *Ranzo*

Figure 5.4: Ranzo's photovoice photograph

> *Most of the time, stones are everywhere and everyone or most people know where to get the stones. That is the best description of me in and around my classroom, I believe my learners should know where to find me whenever they need me and however they need me. By this I mean educationally, and emotionally, support. Like a stone, I am multipurpose used and loyal; where you left you will find me there, unless someone moves me, like the principals do move us to another phase. Teaching in the Foundation Phase form is a serious job that requires one to be versatile in many approaches you use in your classroom. But*

sometimes there are things I can't do, maybe those things are my limitations as a man in the Foundation Phase.

In understanding his positionality in and around his Foundation Phase classroom, Ranzo used a stone as a representation of himself. He explained that stones are available and easily accessible to everyone and can be used for multiple purposes. Ranzo referred to his responsibilities, such as supporting the educational and emotional needs of the learners, which is similar to what other participants said above. He further reflected on how his work is valuable and it requires teachers that are adaptive to the Foundation Phase environment, and made reference to approaches teachers should have at their disposal. Ranzo also realised that as a male Foundation Phase teacher, there are limitations to his existence in Foundation Phase teaching and that there are things that he cannot do in creating an enabling environment for learners. Ranzo mentioned being a teacher that is versatile in their approaches. His depiction is similar to that of Luzuko, who referred to himself as a formal clown that uses different methods of engaging learners in their endeavours to acquire skills.

5.2.1.5 *Luzuko*

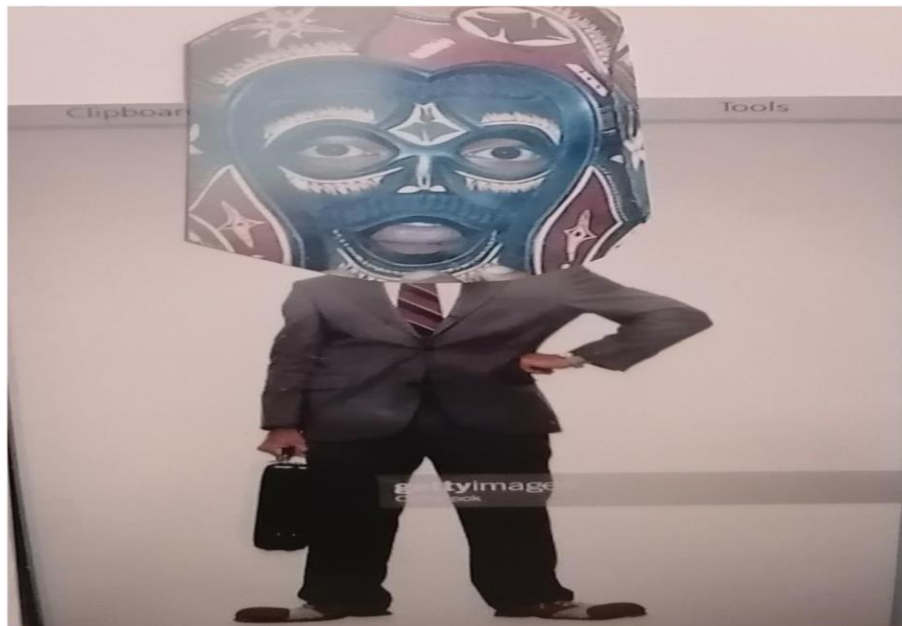

Figure 5.5: Luzuko's photovoice photograph

A formal clown best describes me in and around my classroom, as it is known for being playful. I am more playful but highly educational in my playfulness. You will notice that the clown is wearing suit or formal clothes that suggest seriousness and me as a man in the Foundation Phase. Part of my identity is that

> *I am a man and that plays a big role in who I am. The first two things people see in me as they meet me for the first time are that I am black and that I am a man. As time goes on, they get to know the fun, playful and loving person I am irrespective of my sex and skin color. So, in decoding the stereotype I choose to be playful; so in a nutshell, I am fun, and playful most of the time and I try by all means to create an educational space that is conducive for all my learners.*

Similar to the rest of the participants, Luzuko aimed to create an educational atmosphere that is conducive to learning, even in his positioning as a formal clown. Luzuko further regarded his positioning in and around his classroom as playful in a way that is educational, which is similar to what Ranzo regarded to being "*versatile in your approaches*" as a teacher. Moreover, participants Zama, Mr Prince and Ranzo acknowledged their maleness and that it is an important identity marker for them. Luzuko further pointed to the fact that the first two things people see in him are his ethnicity and gender, which are two important identity markers that contribute to his masculine identity construction. Luzuko also allowed people such as colleagues, parents and learners to get to meet the real him behind the formal clown and that they learn to know each other. He posited that part of the reason he chooses to be playful in his pedagogical approach is to debunk stereotypes surrounding men not being able to teach in the Foundation Phase. Similarly, Lonwabo, in his depiction, posited that he regards himself as a tool for reincarnation either of himself or of the learners.

5.2.1.6 *Lonwabo*

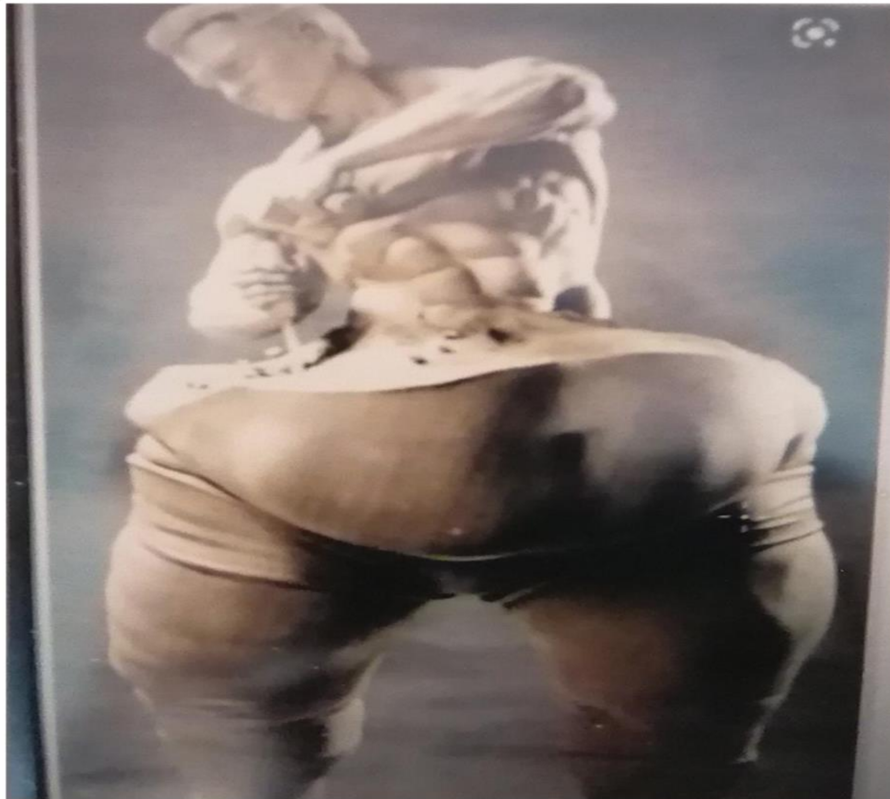

Figure 5.6: Lonwabo's photovoice photograph

> *How I see myself as a man in the Foundation Phase is that I am constantly changing, crafting myself. The Foundation Phase is motherly in nature, which means for me that I need to transition towards being that motherly man that my children need in the classroom. So, when I enter the school I need to leave some of the ways of what it means to be a man in society that does not go with being a motherly man. Since I spent more time in school, I forget some of the behaviours, I am forever influenced by my colleagues and learners that come into my class every year. For my learners this picture means as they enter the education system, they become better people than they were before. They become more knowledgeable than they were and my teaching influences and shapes their behaviour. So the picture represents constant reincarnation that as a teacher I am under and so are my learners.*

Lonwabo positioned himself as a person who is easily influenced by the context he finds himself in, such as the Foundation Phase teaching or social setting. Similar to Camagu, Lonwabo posited that he is forever in constant motion, changing to suit the context of Foundation Phase

teacher identity. Lonwabo did not disrupt the identity construction of Foundation Phase teachers as motherly, like Luzuko, who chose to decode stereotypes. Lonwabo stated that there is always constant transformation that takes place as he is in and around his classroom. This is because of his interaction with his colleagues, learners and the curriculum he delivers to the learners, and the other way around. He further aligned with what Zama, Ranzo and Mr Prince posited, that they tend to want to create a learning experience that can influence the learners' development positively.

5.2.2 Participants' perceptions of the notion of nurturing (metaphor-drawing)

Through the use of photovoice, the scene had been set for the research and the participants had conversed on how they position and construct their masculinities in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms. The participants were now ready to engage in the second phase of the research. The participants in this study used metaphor-drawing (see section 4.6.2) to respond to the second research sub-question: How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?

To answer this question, participants had to respond to this prompt:

> Draw a picture that best represents your understanding of the notion of nurturing. Put a caption on it.

The six metaphor drawings that were generated are presented in figures 5.7–5.12. I present the participants'drawings together with their captions.

5.2.2.1 *Camagu*

Figure 5.7: Camagu's metaphor drawing

> *Nurturing for me refers to moulding; what came to my mind was moulding a clay pot, which in my case could symbolise how I develop the learner in my classroom. Nurturing includes love, care and planning. I think nurturing also includes being careful not to ruin the learner,one has to be kind, softly, and but also show tough love.*

In Camagu's understanding, nurturing refers to a process of moulding the learners in his classroom and the fact that the process of moulding requires a person to be careful to not damage the clay. In his case, this refers to the Foundation Phase learners in his classroom. Lonwabo had a similar understanding to Camagu's regarding nurturing as a journey.

5.2.2.2 *Lonwabo*

Figure 5.8: Lonwabo's metaphor drawing

> *To me, nurturing is like a process or a journey, which means you will have to sacrifice your well-being sometimes and take care of your child or learner. An example of nurturing would be how I holistically develop learners in our classes. I also think it's also modelling good ways of being a person, like how to be kind and show empathy to others.*

Lonwabo referred to nurturing as a journey that includes sacrifices, care and protection. He further thought nurturing is closely linked to modelling positive ways of being a good person. This is aligned with Luzuko's understanding of nurturing as protecting, supporting and being mindful of how one guides a learner.

5.2.2.3 *Luzuko*

Figure 5.9: Luzuko's metaphor drawing

> *What comes to mind is that nurturing is related to protecting, supporting, being careful of how we guide learners in our classroom. Sometimes it also means letting the plant experience the rain, sun, and wind, which might be good or bad. Showing the learners all sorts of love and care. By this I mean letting them experience all human feelings. Lastly, the excitement of the blossoming plant or child in my classroom.*

Luzuko understood nurturing as being closely related to protecting and supporting. Like Zama and Lonwabo, he regarded nurturing as guiding learners in their journey of learning. Moreover, Luzuko and Camagu also recognised that there is an element of tough love that learners need to experience or to let learners fend for themselves. In agreement with Luzuko is Zama, who postulated that nurturing is a process of guiding through moulding and assisting the learner in their development.

5.2.2.4 *Zama*

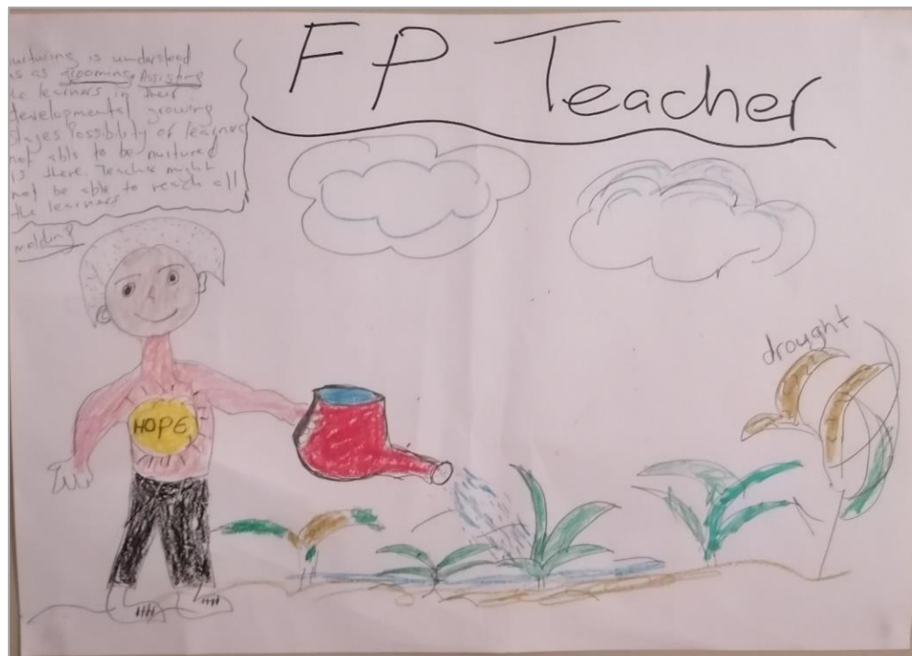

Figure 5.10: Zama’s metaphor drawing

> *Nurturing, developing and assisting the learner in totality. Being the person who provides hope to the child during times of drought in their lives. Also, learners come with experiences in the classes, for example of hunger, less love at home and others. We must mould their experiences, ideas, and knowledge and make sure that learners are able to survive in the real world and learn from their childhood experiences.*

Like Camagu and Luzuko, Zama also regarded nurturing as a process of moulding and providing assistance in ensuring learners develop to their full potential. Furthermore, Zama posited that teachers should be symbols of hope to children during their difficult times. Zama recognised the knowledge that learners bring to the classroom as something that requires nurturing for their survival in the real world. This is similar to Mr Prince’s perception of nurturing as taking care of learners, scaffolding the knowledge they bring and augmenting with them new knowledge to what they already know.

5.2.2.5 *Mr Prince*

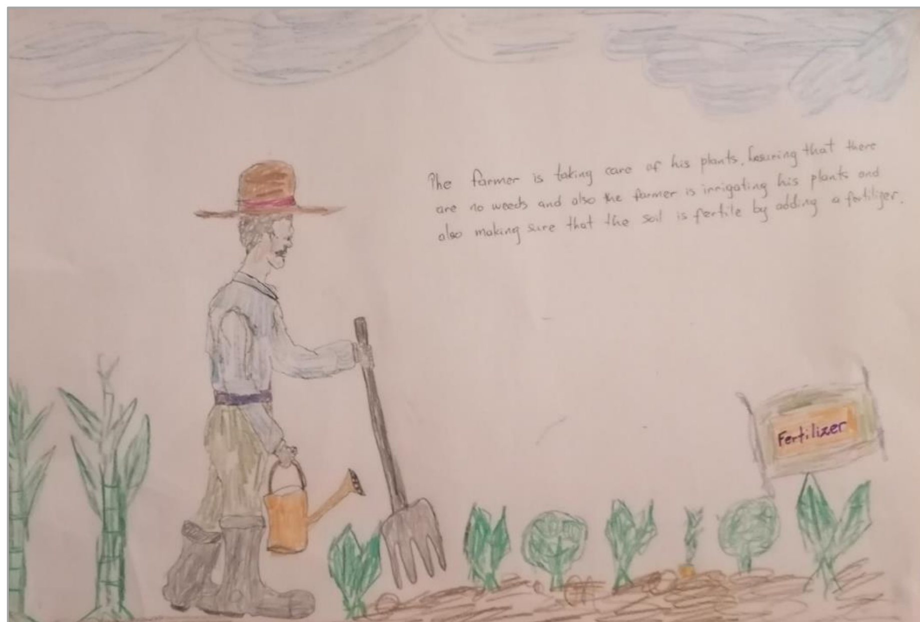

Figure 5.11: Mr Prince's metaphor drawing

> *In my understanding, nurturing would be taking care and showing love, scaffolding learners' knowledge they bring and giving them new information. The farmer is taking care of his plants ensuring that there are no weeds and also the farmer is irrigating his plants and also making sure that the soil is fertile by adding fertilizer.*

Taking care, scaffolding knowledge that learners bring and providing them with a new source of information are what Mr Prince regarded as nurturing. He further used the analogy of a farmer looking for weeds in the garden, which could be linked to his reconstructing learners' understanding of a particular concept. His analogy of a farmer is similar to that of Lonwabo and Ranzo in that nurturing is a process or a journey to developing something or someone.

5.2.2.6 *Ranzo*

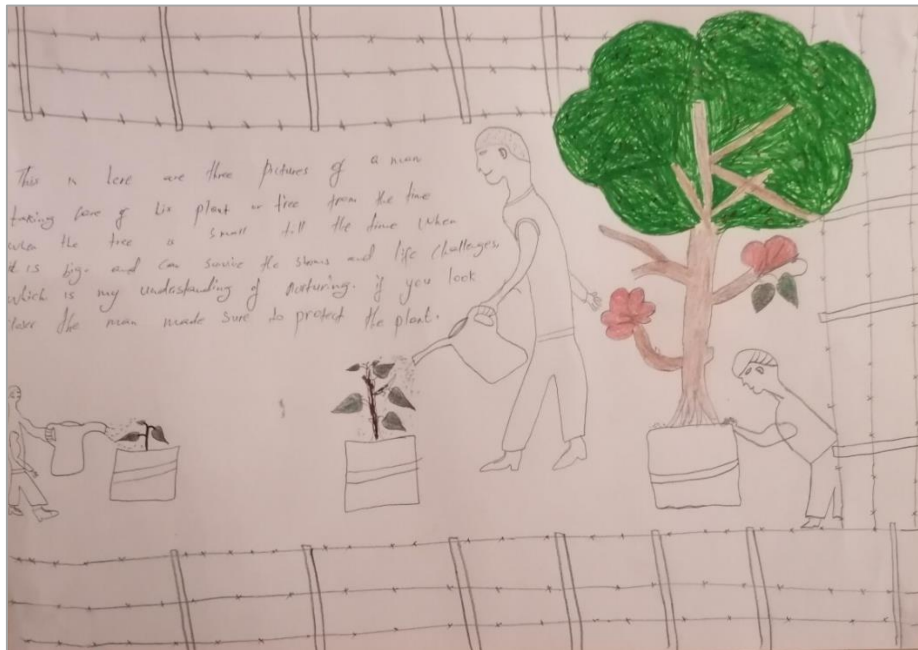

Figure 5.12: Ranzo's metaphor drawing

> *My understanding of nurturing, in the case of my learners, means that I must take care, equip and prepare my children for real-life challenges. Nurturing is patience, being strong emotionally and being willing to endure a lot of things. If you look closer, the man made sure to protect the plant. Here are three pictures of a man taking care of his plant or tree, from the time it was small until it is big, and it can survive the storms and life challenges.*

Ranzo's assertion is similar to that of Lonwabo, Luzuko and Mr Prince in that he regarded nurturing as taking care of, equipping and preparing his learners for real-life experiences. It is also similar to Camagu and Luzuko's view that nurturing is a process, with Ranzo adding that it requires patience, strength and endurance.

5.2.3 Participants' facilitation of nurturing in and around their classrooms (collage-making)

After the participants had deliberated on their perception of the notion of nurturing, we proceeded with Phase 3 of the data generation process, collage-making (see section 4.6.3). This process was used to gather data to answer the third research sub-question: How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?

Participants had to respond to the following prompt:

Create a collage on how you facilitate nurturing in an around your classroom. Write a caption of what the collage means.

The following six collages were generated (figures 5.13–5.18). I present the participants' collages together with their captions.

5.2.3.1 *Zama*

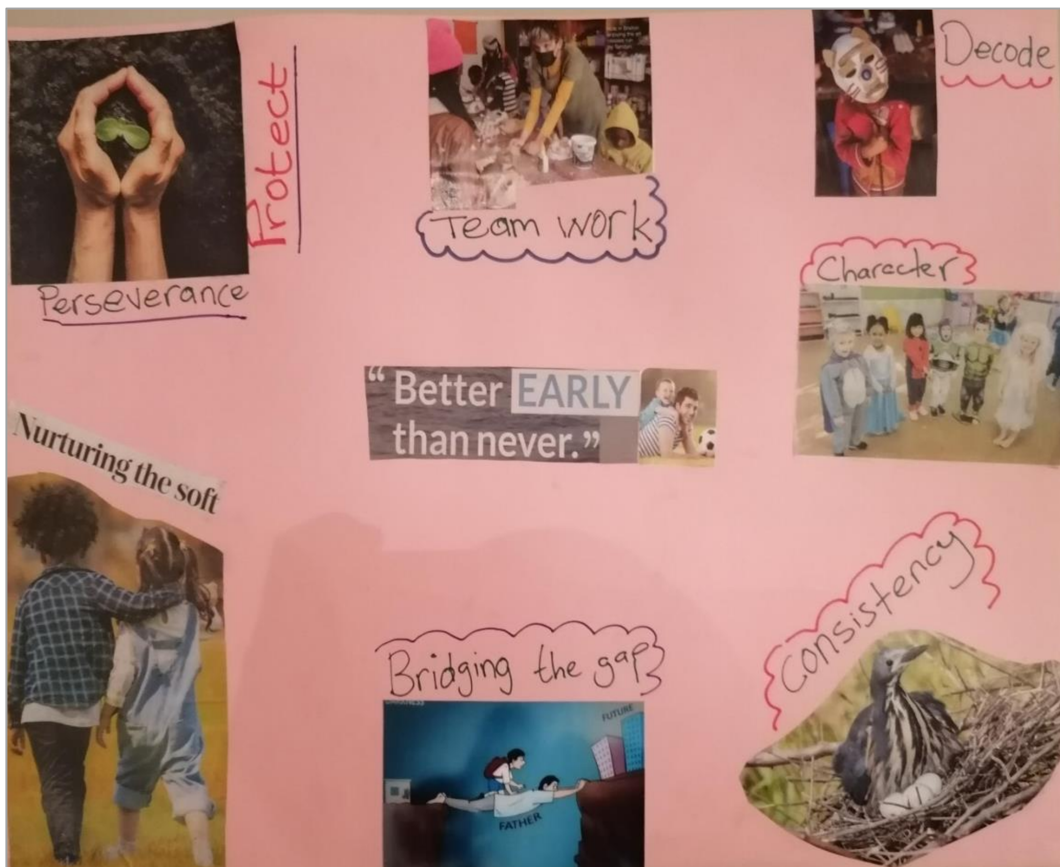

Figure 5.13: Zama's collage

I strongly believe in collaborative teamwork, like in isiXhosa we say, "Umfazi ozalelela omnye" (meaning that it takes a village to raise a child). So, in my nurturing acts or facilitation, I believe my role is to mould those soft minds that come with unstructured knowledge. I am responsible for constructing future leaders or citizens that are responsible, so I need to preserve and protect my learners from bad things and be consistent in the rules we set in the classroom. Lastly, as a man, I think I am limited in how I love, care for, and support my learners intentionally and otherwise.

Zama, like Mr Prince and Ranzo, recognised the collaborative effort that takes place when raising a child. He did so by referring to the Xhosa idiom *Umfazi ozalelela omnye* and Ranzo (below) to "*Umntwana ngowesizwe sonke*". Mr Prince, on the other hand, offerred an explanation regarding parental involvement in the learning of children. Furthermore, Zama touched on his responsibility as a teacher that is committed to developing citizens that are responsible as they grow up in communities. He regarded himself as a preserver and protector of children, just like Camagu in his caption. Zama regarded his facilitation as being rooted in loving, caring and supporting learners directly and indirectly. Like Ranzo and Mr Prince, his gender played an important role in his facilitation of nurturing in and around his classroom.

5.2.3.2 *Ranzo*

Figure 5.14: Ranzo's collage

> *I like to believe that we are like construction workers; we construct children's knowledge of themselves, others and the world they live in and need to take care of. There is a Xhosa saying that says, "Umntwana ngowesizwe sonke" (A child is born for the community). For me, children are like a suitcase; we are the ones who provide them with information, we need to be careful not to fill their bags with rotten information. As a man teaching in the Foundation Phase, I mould my*

learners to be able to realise we are different as people and that we have different needs. We should respect each other. I want to think I am enabling my children in my teaching, because I come up with creative and exciting ways of teaching through that I switch on their light for them to see the future as something bright and exciting to look forward to.

Ranzo regarded himself as a construction worker in his facilitation of nurturing in and around his classroom. Like Zama and Mr Prince, he acknowledged the role played by others in the context of education and posited that teachers need to be cognisant of the information they provide to learners. Ranzo shared similar sentiments with Zama, Mr Prince and Lonwabo; however, he recognised the diversity that exists in and around his classroom. Ranzo, Lonwabo and Mr Prince had similar ideas of creating an enabling environment for learning and teaching.

5.2.3.3 *Mr Prince*

Figure 5.15: Mr Prince's collage

My experiences of nurturing in and around my classroom are around enabling space for my learners to get to achieve their dreams. Being that teacher who supports his learners to be ambitious about their future. Teamwork with parents, it is important. Being the man in the Foundation Phase, I know some things I

cannot do, but working with parents, we can achieve a lot. I also show my learners love in different ways by buying the achiever of the week sweets or something or bringing a cake for the birthday learner. For me, it's the small things we do for our learners, being there to listen to their stories and complaints. Sometimes being the father figure that learner needs. Being the person who encourages them to do more in their schoolwork and extramural activities in the school or community.

Mr Prince and other male Foundation Phase teacher participants in this study recognised the importance of community involvement in the development of the learners in and around their classrooms and the role their gender plays in their facilitation of nurturing in the school setting. Like Lonwabo, he saw himself as a supporting structure and a team player in the development of his learners. He acknowledged how his gender limits him to do other nurturing things. However, he posited that through collaboration, a lot can be achieved. Mr Prince regarded himself as a role model and used compensation as a strategy to motivate for high achievement and positive mannerisms.

5.2.3.4 *Lonwabo*

Figure 5.16: Lonwabo's collage

> *I think my nurturing acts start at the beginning of the year when I receive learners in my classroom. I try my level best to create a comfortable learning environment for my learners, like attending to their needs, playing and trying to create safe space for them. I do know that they might not have any experience of being taught by a man, so I am aware of the fact that they may be afraid or feeling somehow. So being kind and reliable is part of my acts, like having individual or group discussions with my learners about their lives and their feelings and making sure that I mould them to be better people by providing fruitful learning experiences in my teaching of the curriculum.*

Lonwabo, Mr Prince and Ranzo were very much aware of the immense role their gender plays in their everyday lives as male teachers of young children. Lonwabo explained that he tries to create an environment that is comfortable for learners through conversation and meaningful learning experiences for learners. This is similar to Zama and Ranzo's recollection of their nurturing experiences in and around their classrooms. Lonwabo and Luzuko's recollection points to cooperative learning as the main strategy of their facilitation of nurturing. Luzuko explained that learners need to be supported emotionally and physically.

5.2.3.5 *Luzuko*

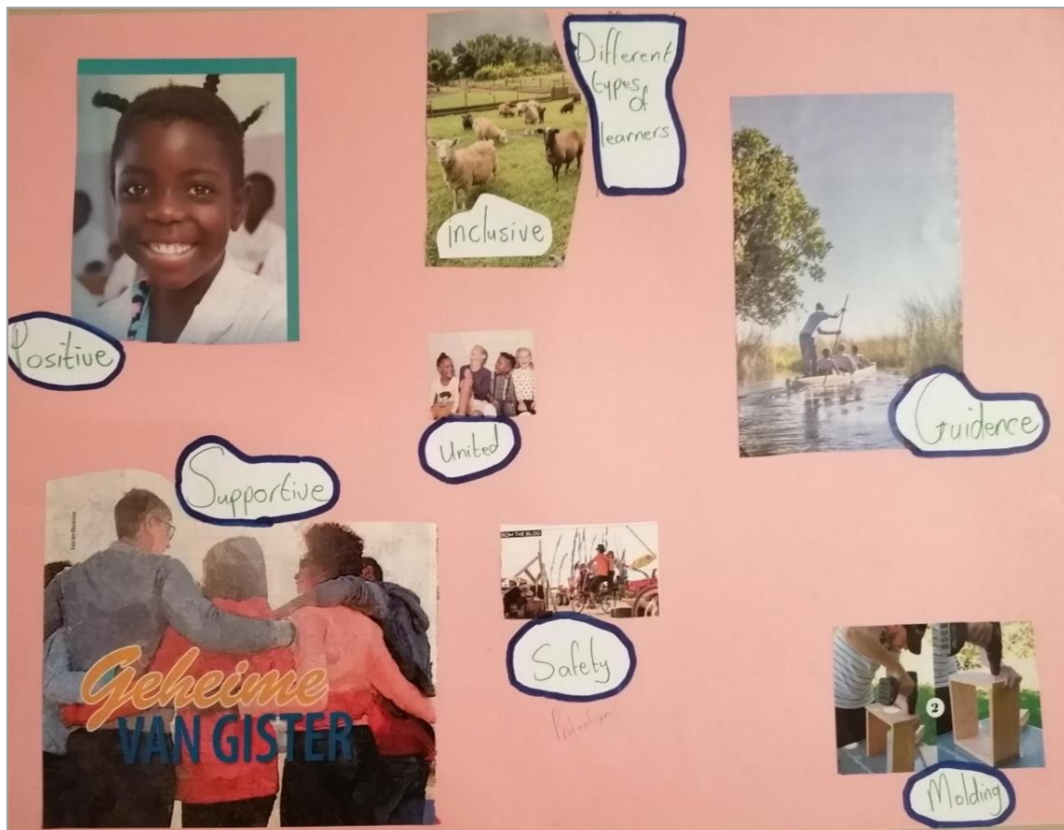

Figure 5.17: Luzuko's collage

> *You know, these kids go through a lot in their lives, walking long distances, poverty at their homes, and health issues. For me, I think I provide support to my children, be it emotionally, or educationally. As teachers we try and make the school a safe place for the learners and guide them. I like to tell them to help one another, work as a unit, and have positive attitudes towards their learning and their lives in general. I am a man and it is sometimes difficult to show the love and support the women can show, but I always tell my learners, those that I taught before and the new ones I have in my class, that I love them, even though sometimes it is hard for me to show it.*

Luzuko recognised the different challenges children experience in their everyday lives and how, as a teacher, he handles those challenges in his facilitation of nurturing. Moreover, just like the other participants in this study, he centred his nurturing acts around being a supportive structure for the learners. Like Lonwabo and Mr Prince, Luzuko realised that his gender contributes to the limitations of his showing love and support to his learners. He indicated that women and men show love differently and acknowledged that it is sometimes difficult to show love.

Luzuko's reflection of his facilitation of nurturing in and around his classroom is somehow similar to that of Camagu, who spoke about the complexities of nurturing

5.2.3.6 *Camagu*

Figure 5.18: Camagu's collage

> *Nurturing for me is very complex; sometimes letting your child get burned or eaten by the hyenas is nurturing, it is showing tough love. I sometimes let my children explore things in the classroom like breaking the classroom rules and letting the entire class decide on the punishment. For me, this teaches my learners that everything you do has repercussions, good or bad. As I travel with them on this journey of learning, they spent the whole year with me, it is sometimes difficult for me to show love, empathy, and compassion as it might be interpreted wrongly by other teachers, other learners, and parents. Even though I am a homosexual man. Anyway, I teach them to be in touch with all their feelings, always look for the bright or good in others, but be very careful, and I provide a safe space for them.*

Camagu posited that there are many ways to nurture children. In his caption, he argues that part of his nurturing acts is to expose learners to both negative and positive outcomes of their

actions. He gave an example of breaking classroom rules and the results thereof. Like his fellow participants, he explained that his sexuality plays an important role in his facilitation of nurturing. He stated that it might be interpreted in a different light from that which it was intended for. Camagu posited that he is careful in his teaching of learners to be in touch with their feelings. Like Lonwabo, Luzuko and Mr Prince, creating an environment where learners feel safe and cared for is part of his journey of nurturing in and around his classroom.

5.2.3.7 *Collaborative collage*

After the participants presented their individual collages, they created a collaborative collage. In this activity, participants negotiated with each other on the commonalities of their facilitation of nurturing in and around their classrooms. The collaborative collage is presented in Figure 5.19, with the caption presented beneath the figure.

Figure 5.19: Collaborative collage

> *As male Foundation Phase teachers, we acknowledge that our manhood will always be a barrier that is constantly questioned. However, we regard our facilitation of nurturing as a continuous process and a journey. We aspire to be agents of change through moulding, supporting, encouraging, loving, and caring in our everyday practices in and around our schools. Further, through protecting and supporting our learners from misconceptions and challenges they*

face, be it educationally, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Being mindful of the socially constructed barrier in our teaching, we collaboratively mould children with the hope of co-constructing responsible citizens and problem solvers.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the data sets of the participants' rich perspectives on how they construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms. This chapter complements the methodology chapter, in which I explained the research process, and reveals the richness of the data generated for analysis. In the following chapter, I provide a discussion of the findings in line with the three research sub-questions that respond to and answer the main research question. In discussing the themes, I use existing literature to recontextualise the findings, also drawing on the two theories adopted to frame the study, namely Connell's theory of masculinity and the feminist post-structuralist lens.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The present study explored how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their classrooms in the Eastern Cape province. In this chapter, I present the findings from the three phases of data generation in an attempt to respond to the main research question: How can participatory visual methods be used to explore nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers? Therefore, in presenting the finding of this study, I draw on the excerpts or verbatim quotations of the participants' photovoice photographs, metaphor drawings, collages and transcribed group conversations. Some of the data presented in this chapter were taken from captions from the participatory methods presented in the previous chapter and the transcribed data from the group conversations. The quotes from the captions of the participatory methods are coded with the participant's name followed by the first letter of the data generation method, for example **Lonwabo (P)**, and those from the group conversation data will show only the participant's name. The letters used in this chapter for captions will thus be as follows: **P** – photovoice, **MD** – metaphor drawing and **C** – collage.

It is important to note that the themes are presented to provide a storyline; therefore, these themes are meant to position the multiple lived realities of the participants in this study as not homogeneous. The participants in this study showed some similarities and differences in their own positioning and in how they interpreted their lives. Their participation in this study, to some extent, showed nuanced ways of how teacher identities in the Foundation Phase continue to be shaped by their context, individually and collectively. In this chapter, I present the findings and discussion through the different themes and a conclusion that will lead to the next chapter.

6.2 Discussion of the Findings

The diagram below (Figure 6.1) shows how the themes and sub-themes in this chapter are directly linked to the research sub-questions and participatory methods, together with the theories underpinning the study. The diagram also show how the theories underpinning the study played an important role in the development of the themes .

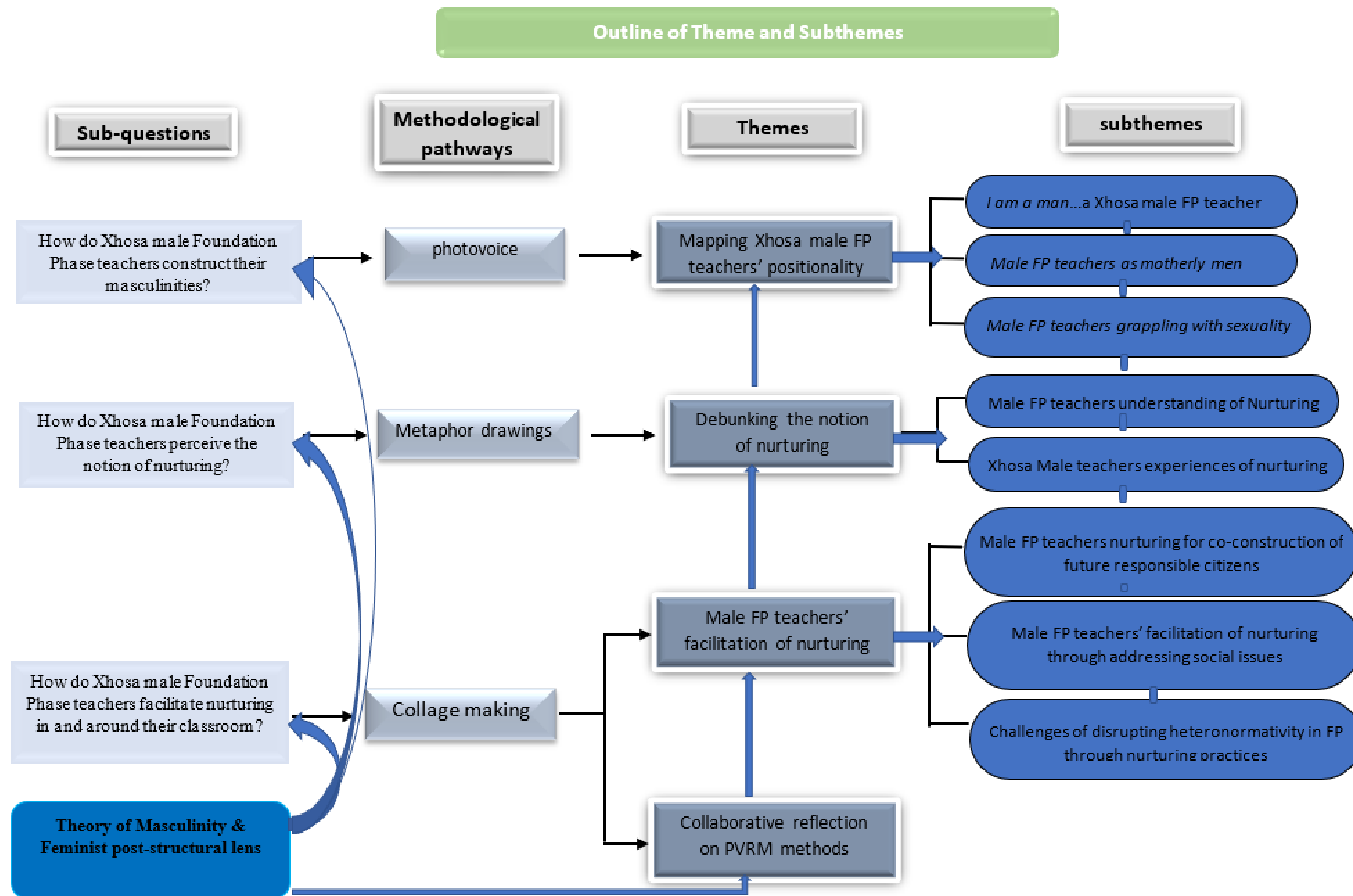

Figure 6.1: Outline of themes and sub-themes, linked with research questions, participatory methods and theories

6.3 Theme 1: Mapping Xhosa Male Foundation Phase Teachers' Positionality

In the previous chapter, I presented the data generated by participants in this study through the use of different participatory visual methods, as mentioned in the diagram above. Under this theme, I present and discuss some of the data that emerged in relation to how participants in this study positioned themselves in and around their classrooms. The discussion is divided into three sub-themes: (i) *I am a man* … a Xhosa male Foundation Phase teacher; (ii) male Foundation Phase teachers as motherly men; and (iii) male Foundation Phase teachers' grappling with sexuality.

6.3.1 *I am a man* … a Xhosa male Foundation Phase teacher

In this study, I found that some of the participants perceived and positioned themselves as men, fathers and husbands. The majority of the participants explained how they see themselves in and around their classrooms, pointing to traits located within hegemonic notions of what it means to be a "real man". It becomes visible that they sustain this positionality even when they are within a context of the Foundation Phase that is perceived to be highly feminine. Participants explained their positionality as:

> **Zama (P):** *I am a man, a father to my biological children and husband; at work, I regard myself as a hen that hatches eggs … I am conscious of what my work entails … the possible impact on how other teachers and community members see me as a man; what comforts me is the fact that in the end, I contribute positively to a child's life.*

> **Mr Prince (P):** *I am a husband, father, and human being before anything … So as a man, in my class, I need to ensure that I provide my learners with comfort, protection and support. Therefore creating an environment where children can grow and develop skills that they can use in their lives for them to become responsible citizens. I am a man and I love teaching young children in the Foundation Phase, even though sometimes I might be seen as soft, and kind, and others see me as someone who does not have anything better to do; however, I cannot imagine teaching other grades.*

Ranzo: *As a father to be … teaching in the Foundation Phase, for me, is a serious job that requires one to be versatile in many approaches you use in your classroom … It prepares me for one day when I have a family … But sometimes there are things I can't do; maybe those things are my limitations as a man in the Foundation Phase.*

Scholars have argued that the majority of men value being fathers and husbands, and at most they will tap into that experience, or assume the fatherly or husband role, to sustain and achieve hegemony (Hunter, 2005; Mfecane, 2020; Pulsford, 2014). Zama's representation of a hen sitting on her eggs shows the thin line between male Foundation Phase teachers' identities at home as fathers and husbands and in the school premises as teachers. This means that the societal script of what a man should be dictates that men should be providers and protectors, which Zama and Mr Prince ascribed to in terms of how they construct their identities as Foundation Phase teachers. In this regard, Mr Prince saw himself as someone who creates an enabling secured environment that is safe for his learners. Conversely, Zama and Ranzo recognised the contribution they make in the lives of the children they teach through being versatile in their teaching approaches, which influences their identity in and around their classrooms. Day and Kington (2008) postulate that identity is an image that people present to society regarding themselves and they constantly make sense of who they are on a daily basis. Mr Prince and Zama's narratives above to some extent position them within traditional norms of masculinity that are centred around hetero-patriarchal ways of being men in society and in their classrooms. In the group conversation, Mr Prince and other participants further added that:

Mr Prince: *I taught all my learners to call me Tata (Father)….*

Luzuko: *Mna indiku Malume (I am uncle) to the learners … Sir is too formal and does not make connecting with learners easy … Tata seems too old for me, plus I don't have my own family yet ….*

Lonwabo: *They just called me uMalume (uncle) out of the blue, I didn't mind being called sir … it has that feeling of respect … but uMalume is more social and also has the respect element in it ….*

The above quotations illustrate the ways in which socially constructed hegemonic masculine ideals that position people differently are at play when participants in this study constructed their identities within a feminine context such as Foundation Phase teaching. Moreover, the

quotations outline how the hierarchy of masculinity is produced and reproduced in and around their classrooms by emphasising that children should call them *uTata* and *uMalume*. This leads to male Foundation Phase teachers automatically assuming certain responsibility and roles associated to these socially constructed household positions in and around their classrooms. Furthermore, this highlights how men tend to assume the position of dominance. An example would be fathers being the head of their households and Mr Prince being regarded as a father to children in and around the classroom. Therefore, it suggests that when participants in this study position themselves as fathers and uncles, they seem to inscribe the notion that they are male. Furthermore, the insistence on the masculine/maleness reference could be to allude to the notion that the environment is dominated by females, and that they do not want to be associated or classified along those lines. One could therefore argue that this positionality has an implication on the perceived shift in the gender order through the introduction of men in Foundation Phase teaching (Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Warin, 2019). Nonetheless, Ranzo and Luzuko's aspiration to become fathers in the near future falls within the discourse of fatherhood. Ranzo argued that being a Foundation Phase teacher provides him with the opportunity to experience parenting and that prepares him for what is expected of him as a father. Ranzo's view is similar to that of the participants in Msiza's (2016) study in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. Msiza's participants, also male Foundation Phase teachers, argued that they enjoyed teaching young children, as it provided them with the opportunity to become fathers to children in their Foundation Phase classroom and to be better prepared to be parents to children of their own.

Participants in this study tended to be aware of their maleness within the context of Foundation Phase teaching and how their presence influenced their identity construction. Zama and Mr Prince were concerned and conscious about their manhood, and how it is constructed by others. Their view in the above quotations is an example of Ratele's (2016) view that masculinities are performed for others to validate or reject. In other words, participants in this study continued to construct their professional teacher identities as influenced by societal values and norms around what it means to be a man. Important to note is that all the participants in this study had gone through the traditional ritual of transitioning from boyhood to manhood, called Ulwaluko. This is an important traditional practice within the context in which the present study took place. A Xhosa masculinity scholar, Mfecane (2020), argues that within the context of the amaXhosa ethnic group, hegemony is achieved through the insertion of the mark on a male person's body during the process of Ulwaluko. This process is aimed at teaching young Xhosa

men stoicism, endurance and being strong, characteristics that are in opposition to attributes of a Foundation Phase teacher (Bhana, 2016; Mfecane, 2018).

The above is visible in Mr Prince's quotation about being viewed as soft, kind and having nothing better to do. It is also visible when Zama reflects on how his professional identity might have implications on "*... how other teachers and community members see me as a man ....*" This means that Zama was conscious about how his work might relegate him to subordinate streams of masculinity. Herein lies a disjuncture, tensions and contradictions between how Xhosa men construct their masculinity and how Foundation Phase teacher identity is constructed. This indicates a possible conflict between embodying the feminine teacher attributes perceived to underpin Foundation Phase teaching and compliance with the social scripts of Xhosa manhood. The above is also visible in Lonwabo's photovoice caption:

> *... when I enter the school, I need to leave some of the ways of what it means to be a man in society ... since I spent more time in school, I forget some of the behaviours, therefore I am forever influenced by my colleagues and learners ...*

Lonwabo, Zama and Mr Prince's comments validate Connell's (2005) theorisation about how masculinities are produced contextually. Participants in this study were constantly grappling with their shift in sociocultural and professional identities and how others in both spaces perceive and position them based on the nurturing and care work they do. Lonwabo recognised the multiple hats he uses as a teacher of young children and a man in the community. He was also aware of the influence the schooling community has on his behaviour and positionality as a male Foundation Phase teacher. In the same vein, Ranzo, Luzuko and Lonwabo explained how their maleness prohibits them from performing certain activities:

> **Ranzo:** *But sometimes there are things I can't do, maybe those things are my limitations as a man in the Foundation Phase ... for example, I wanted to be part of the remedial team ... but the HoD said I will not fit in there, as it requires people with patience ... she said remedial classes should be done by old women ....*
>
> **Luzuko:** *I don't like it when colleagues say, "a man must be respected," because they would not want me to participate in activities like compiling list for the kitchen in the school or assist with dishing the food .... I really don't like it ... we all did nutrition at university ....*

> **Lonwabo:** *These old women make it impossible for us to fulfil our duties ... one of my learners was crying due to an injury on his knee and was bleeding, so I rushed to get the first-aid kit ... When I was about to cut a plaster and put on the learner's open wound, she took it and said a man should not be doing such .... I was so bored, because I did first-aid training ....*

The participants in this study also shared how their maleness contributes to disadvantaging them when they need to perform certain professional duties in and around their classrooms. Lonwabo and Luzuko argued that Foundation Phase teaching is a profession dominated by women, particularly "old women". These women still perpetuate patriarchal discourses such as the gendered division of labour premised on the practice that a man must be respected and certain work should be done by women. According to the above quotations, the participants in this study felt to some extent robbed of their professional duty of caring for and showing learners affection or the attainment of an equitable working environment. On the other hand, Ranzo spoke to how his career interest of working with children experiencing barriers to learning has been shifted to being the responsibility "old women" who are soon to retire. He also mentioned the fact that society has perceived men to not be patient, hence the head of the Foundation Phase department in his school assuming that he is not patient enough to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The notion of normative gender roles is reproduced and regulated within the schooling contexts of the participants in this study. Luzuko provided an example when he mentioned the compiling of grocery lists for the school's feeding scheme and dishing of food to learners. Moreover, he argued that his expertise is not being fully utilised, as he studied nutrition during his undergraduate studies. Lonwabo shared the same sentiments with Luzuko, that their expertise are being underutilised due to their maleness and the dominant discourse of gender roles centred around the idea that "men must be respected". According to Bhana (2016) and Msibi (2019), schools as contexts that exist within communities inversely tend to reproduce patriarchal practices that promote heteronormative ways of being a man. Herein, women and children are the consumers and reproducers of hegemonic masculinities (Ratele, 2016).

The participants in this study experienced the above through the use of socio-patriarchal discourses that put them on a pedestal within Foundation Phase teaching. Discourses such as "men must be respected" have the possibility to deny male Foundation Phase teachers the opportunity to explore their capabilities to the fullest, as some of their interests may overlap

into what is perceived to be women's duties. Furthermore, it may possibly deny learners the opportunity to experience softer versions of masculinity. Learners might experience this through male Foundation Phase teachers performing pro-feminine activities, such as compiling grocery lists, cleaning and working with children that require additional care, such as remedial work in the case of Ranzo. Connell's (2005) theorisation informs us that there are hierarchies in masculinity. It appears that Luzuko, Lonwabo and Ranzo rejected aspects of hegemonic streams of masculinity, such as being disassociated with certain perceived feminine duties in their quest of being male Foundation Phase teachers. This is because of how being respected as men deprives them of doing their responsibilities, which has implications for their professional identities and duties.

6.3.2 Male Foundation Phase teachers as motherly men

An aspect that also emerged from the data generated is how participants in this study perceived Foundation Phase teaching as a motherly profession and their seeing the need to alter their masculine identity to suit the feminine profile of Foundation Phase teaching. The participants posited that children are needy individuals who require motherly attention, implicitly stating that women are naturally motherly, since Foundation Phase teaching has been constructed as women's work. In the extract below, Lonwabo (P) postulates that his identity is constantly changing and being socialised within the school context to be a motherly man. Lonwabo's experience is similar to that of Camagu, as can be seen when he particularly explained part of his caption: "*At the core of it all, I have to give life constantly.*" Camagu continued by stating that *women* "*are the ones who give birth to children biologically … I then give them life in the form of education ….*" The above created space for the participants in this study to position themselves as "motherly men". Lonwabo and Camagu stated that:

> **Lonwabo (P):** *I am constantly changing, crafting myself. The Foundation Phase is motherly in nature, which means for me that I need to transition towards being that motherly man that my children need in the classroom … I need to leave some of the ways of what it means to be a man in the society that does not go with being a motherly man ….*
>
> **Camagu (P):** *I hide many secrets in my many compartments. I move graciously, in me you find the perfect imbalance …. There are many things that govern me and there are many things that affect who I am, my spirituality, my fluid sexuality, and my manhood. At the core of it all, I have to give life constantly.*

Lonwabo and Camagu explained that their identities are influenced by many other aspects that lead towards becoming motherly men. These influencing aspects range from policy, the learners they teach and the colleagues they work with. What Camagu and Lonwabo are articulating above ties with Connell's view that different contexts produce masculinity differently. In this case, one could argue that these participants are within the realms of complicit masculinity in that in the general community, they enjoy hegemonic masculinity and its benefits (Connell, 2005; Ratele, 2016). However, as they enter the schooling environment, they reject certain privileges of hegemonic norms and perpetuate complicit streams, as it creates space for them to immerse themselves in their professional identity that is socially constructed within feminine attributes (Bhana, 2016; Connell, 2005). Elliott and Roberts (2022) state that the binary difference between masculinity and femininity has been created in such a way that there is a clear distinction between women and men's actions. They further posit, however, that within this ever-changing landscape, people start to disrupt these rigid constructions of how men and women should be, providing examples of feminine men and masculine women (Elliott & Roberts, 2022). In the group conversation, when addressing the discourse of men having to be respected, Lonwabo explained some of the things within the schooling community that do not align with being a motherly man:

> *I really did not like what uMam (female teacher) said in front of Learner X … during breaktime. I asked the HoD to go with me to talk to uMam about the incident and how that made me feel … The reason being, I know I also have the same duty as her at work … in her home it might be a different story, but here we all teachers … at the end of our conversation, uMam said she is learning something new ….*

To some extent, Lonwabo's activism in making how he feels heard created space for the colleagues that also influence his positionality within that school setting to start thinking differently about the gendered roles that they associate with. Bhana, Xu and Emilsen (2020), together with Warrian (2016), postulate that men teaching in the early years should be agentic in their cause of creating an equitable learning and teaching environment through debunking practices that perpetuate inequalities. Therefore, Lonwabo's attempt to create space for engagement with the female teacher regarding his duty in the Foundation Phase educational phase created a particular shift in the colleagues' mind about duties regarded as women's work. Lonwabo's comment allowed other participants to start thinking about how other colleagues

and learners made them battle with their motherly man idea of a teacher in the space of learning and teaching. They said:

> **Mr Prince:** *... one mam said she was disappointed at me ... I did not discipline the learners she brought to my classroom for punishment .... I told her I am not here to punish learners but teach them to be responsible citizens ....*
>
> **Luzuko:** *Two of my learners were not aware I was behind them. One said, "uMalume reminds me of my mother" ... the other one said, "He does not beat (use corporal punishment) but shouts like a uMama (my mother) ...." I could not stop laughing ....*
>
> **Zama:** *Heeee, madoda omnye makgululu (Ooow, men, one grandmother) came to my class and asked me to discipline Learner X who is in Grade 5, and I was like, "It's not my responsibility to do that ...." I had three meetings with Makhulu and Learner X ... just to bring peace between them ....*
>
> **Camagu:** *My principal asked why I don't like sports ... but interested in debate and wellness .... I started having small conversations with [him] about being different ... not all males like doing the same things.*

The participants in this study disassociated themselves from the common assumption that men are better disciplinarians and sportspersons. These male teachers are conscious of how Xhosa traditional masculinities are constructed, as outlined in the previous sub-theme. However, they chose to adopt pro-feminine ways of remediating learners' ill behaviour by engaging with learners to show them other ways of doing or being human. Mr Prince, as seen in the extract above, disappointed colleagues by choosing non-violent ways of engaging learners. He positioned himself as an agent of change through building responsible citizens who do not subscribe to violent mechanisms to teach children other ways of learning or being human. Herein, I sense that by deviating from normative masculine performance, Mr Prince questioned the true nature of socially constructed ideals of hegemonic masculine status. The deep-seated tracking of ways of masculine being was even noticed by learners, who read and interpreted Mr Prince's ways of addressing and responding to certain incidents as unusual.

Luzuko reflected on how his learners perceived him and compared him to their mothers, who do not resort to corporal punishment but rather shout at them. It is perceived in social settings that women are normally the ones who shout and men the ones who discipline children in a

subtle manner. This is why the grandmother came to request Zama to discipline a Grade 5 learner, showing how male teachers in general might be perceived to be disciplinarians, irrespective of the grade they teach. It is interesting to see how Zama assumed his pastoral role by mediating the relationship between Learner X and the grandparents.

The above provides a window into how the participants positioned themselves as motherly men. Camagu engaged the principal on how diverse people are, their different interests in schools' extramural activities and how not all men conform to the normative traditional ways of being a male teacher. The discourse of men in Foundation Phase teaching being positioned as disciplinarians and sports coaches has been well researched in literature locally and internationally (see Bhana, 2016; Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014; Moosa & Bhana, 2018; Msiza, 2021). Interestingly, the participants in this study are in opposition to the participants in Msiza's (2016) study on male Foundation Phase teachers in the Mpumalanga province. Msiza's (2016) participants perpetuated, and benefited by assuming, the disciplinarian and sports coaching role within the school context, leading to the reproduction of hegemonic norms of masculinity. He and other scholars argue that this positioning of men as disciplinarians results in positioning women as unable to discipline and control learners (Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014; Moosa & Bhana, 2018; Msiza, 2020) Furthermore, the aforementioned leads to the sustenance of unequal distribution of labour and the perpetuation of gendered relations.

Moreover, it has been argued that gendered relations play an integral role in ways men construct their masculinity and how they live up to that particular stream of manliness within societies or institutions such as schools (Connell, 2008; Ratele, 2016). For example, this study's findings show how male Foundation Phase teachers are perceived to model or perform traditional or conventional ways of being a man. An element common to the participating male Foundation Phase teachers in this study is the disciplinarian expectation, not only to the learners in the Foundation Phase but in the entire school. Another would be the expectation of male Foundation Phase teachers to be involved in sporting activities in the school. According to Cruickshank (2020) and Cushman (2005), the assumption of male Foundation Phase teachers being disciplinarians, sports coaches and the strongest members in the workplace because of the masculine identity has the potential to make life difficult for teachers. It also complicates attainment of what Mr Prince called "*contributing towards the co-creation of responsible citizens*" through learners who are willing and trying to lead non-sexist lives.

6.3.3 Male Foundation Phase teachers' grappling with sexuality

Part of the reason for using participatory methods such as photovoice is that the researcher gets the opportunity to probe further and engage participants in the meanings they make about their lives and engage them in sensitive issues such as sexuality and religion. This sub-theme thus deals with how the participating male Foundation Phase teachers grappled with the concept of sexuality and how it applied to their everyday lives in Foundation Phase teaching. Camagu (P) in his caption postulated that "… *there are many things that affect who I am, my spirituality, my fluid sexuality, and my manhood ….*" The elaborate account of Camagu's positionality below makes visible Msibi's (2018) argument that markers such as race, cultural practices and beliefs, to mention a few, play an integral role in regulating and shaping how participants view and experience their lives. The above caption sparked a reflexive moment for the majority of participants in this study and created space for mutual vulnerability in that Camagu was able to disclose his sexuality in the group discussion. He elaborated on his photovoice caption, particularly touching on the two concepts sexuality and spirituality. Camagu said:

> *I am a straight-acting gay man … I am using the words gay and man together, because ndiolukile (I have been through the rite of passage); therefore, I am a man in my culture, irrespective of my sexuality … I do not see the need to tell everyone about my sexuality … as they themselves never disclosed to me … then spiritually, I am being initiated to become igqirha (traditional healer) ….*

Here, Camagu brought to the fore other aspects of identity that are important and which influence teacher identity. First, he touched on his sexual orientation of being a homosexual man in the context of Foundation Phase learning and teaching and claimed to position himself as a straight-presenting gay man in his behaviour. Moreover, he postulated that due to his social status attained through the rite of passage, he is a man just like the rest of the participants. Mfecane (2020), in his critique of Connell's theory of masculinity, postulates that homosexuality within the amaXhosa culture does not relegate gay men to subordinate streams of masculinity. However, the non-existence of the mark on a man's body does. Camagu, in this case, reiterated Mfecane's view and also adopted what Msibi calls respectability, in that he had voluntarily participated in the socially accepted practice of Ulwaluko and that grants him and his clan the necessary respect within the context in which the ritual took place (Msibi, 2019; Ntozini & Ngqangweni, 2016).

Furthermore, by performing and maintaining macho hegemonic ways of being a man, Camagu earns respectability in his professional space and does not become relegated to subordinate streams of masculinity. One could assume that Camagu's decision not to disclose his sexuality to anyone in the professional space was not only because he did not want to be perceived differently from other heterosexual men in the schooling context. He was also securing placement (a sense of belonging) in the general Xhosa society, which is built on strong patriarchal practices and rituals. This includes but is not limited to rituals such as Ulwaluko that are underpinned by stoicism, bravery and respect. Camagu's positionality in the quotation above is similar to that of the participants in Msibi's (2019) study about same-sex desiring male teachers in the context of KwaZulu-Natal who chose to create a clear barrier between their professional and personal identities by keeping their homosexual identity private from colleagues, parents and learners. Msibi (2019) argues that some of the reasons teachers keep their non-heteronormative lives private and away from the school environment could be that teachers who do not comply with compulsory heteronormativity in schools are prone to marginalisation and homophobic attacks. Furthermore, their professionality becomes questioned. This could be a possibility in the case of Camagu, who consciously positioned himself as a straight-performing or -presenting gay man. In addition, Msibi's (2019) rationale above is visible in the extract to follow in the next page where Camagu acknowledges that people change as they get to know the individual.

Sexuality scholars have acknowledged that there are multiple ways of being gay (see Brown & Diale, 2017; Msibi, 2012, 2019; Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2013). For instance, participants in this study were surprised that Camagu is a homosexual man, as he was not feminine or dressed in women or attention-seeking clothes. Mr Prince said: "*You not like those gays on television,*" whilst Ranzo said: "*I couldn't tell you gay … you seem so calm and dressed like a normal guy.*" The two participants confused gender expressions and sexual orientation, in that they associated dress sense and feminine behavioural expressions as an indication that a man is gay. In engaging with the participants, I had to share Butler's (1990) explanation that sexuality is something that is not visible, and that gender expressions are dependent on the individual (Rossiter, 2016). During the group discussion, the participants agreed that homosexuality is not homogeneous. An example was made that there are effeminate and non-effeminate gay men, who do not express feminine traits, and some lesbians who express masculine traits, whilst others do not. There was therefore no one way of being a homosexual man or woman. I also shared with the participants the standpoints of the study in defining gender as something underpinned by

expression and not by the biological sex difference of being male or female (Cranny-Francis *et al.*, 2017; Mayeza & Vincent, 2019). According to Mr Prince and Ranzo, Camagu did not fit into the normalised script of what a gay man looks or behaves like. This proves what Msibi (2019) has argued, that when homosexual men embrace the dominant gender regime of what it means to be a man, they gain respectability not only for themselves but also for their families. Moreover, they also enjoy benefits of hegemonic norms of masculinity that are prevalent in the particular cultural context.

Another interesting feature in Camagu's narrative is that he positioned himself as a man due to the fact that he had been through the traditional rite of passage. Due to the nature of masculinities, context plays an integral role in what characterises hegemonic streams, which influences identity development (Connell, 2005). Camagu's personal and professional identities shifted between homosexuality and heteronormativity. Msibi (2019) refers to this shift as compartmentalising identity. In this instance, in and around the school, Camagu is a straight-presenting male Foundation Phase teacher and in his private time, he is a gay man. Within the professional space, Camagu managed to sustain his relationship with parents and colleagues as a heterosexual man. He stated that in the school setting, his compartmentalisation had not created any challenges for him, but rather positioned him within heteronormative ideals of manhood. Camagu stated that:

> *... none of my colleagues or parents have had any problems with me as a man in the phase ... because they do not know my sexuality yet ... people change, you know ... even one learner said one day I should marry his mother and be her dad ... I found that interesting, as I had never thought that my learners see me as a father to them ....*

The quotation above opens up opportunities to assume that Camagu as a male Foundation Phase teacher had not experienced direct homophobic attacks. This might be because of his straight-presenting character in and around his classroom and maintenance of dominant hegemonic streams of masculinity acceptable within his community and schooling contexts. Contrarily, other participants in the study, who positioned themselves as heterosexual individuals, had experienced challenges due to the stands they made regarding their practices, leading to their sexual orientation being questioned. Camago's disclosure in the group conversation led to some participants in the study sharing heterosexual experiences of being perceived to be homosexual men. Here are their accounts.

Zama (asking Camagu)**:** *Don't you ever wear skinny jeans? I gave three pairs away, because at school, my colleagues and learners said they make me look gay ... plus I like being the psychologist of the school ... every learner who has a problem comes to me for advice ....*

Lonwabo: *Yhooo ... my voice, it's soft, so everyone think I am gay because I speak soft, and I am always around my two colleagues that teach the same grade ... even one Grade 6 teacher wanted to hook me up with one of her gay friends ... who works at another school ....*

Luzuko: *Bhuti (brother), you know, my learners called me gay, and when I asked them why they think I am gay ... they were shy to say at first ... one says, "The way you shout, Malume ... it's like my mom, uTata never shout at me ...."*

The participants in this study shared common challenges with those of Martino (2008) and Msiza (2016), who in their respective studies found that male teachers in the Foundation Phase tend to be policed by teachers, learners and parents. Their characters are being observed for actions that might relegate them to subordinate streams of masculinity that are seen to be feminine, leading to them being seen as gay. Brown and Diale (2017), together with Msiza (2021), postulate that policing and reverencing do not only happen to individuals who are not heterosexual but also to those who stand to challenge or disturb a particular social order. For example, Zama, having been designated by colleagues as a psychologist at the school, assumed yet another previously perceived feminine job that within schools was done by female teachers as guidance counsellors (Bhana, 2016). Moreover, colleagues commented on his dress sense, leading to his starting to self-regulate in terms of the clothes he wore to work, that whatever he wears should not associate him with gayness.

This is similar to what Lonwabo stated about his voice being soft and Luzuko about his pitch when shouting at the children in his classroom. Participants in this study indicated that dress sense, voice projection and repeated shouting, and associated extracurricular roles that are feminine, in the case of Zama, were gay identity markers which they needed to manage and regulate. Similar findings were discovered locally in South Africa by Msibi (2012) and internationally in Australia by Cushman (2008) and King (2009). These authors all found that contexts and spaces such as Foundation Phase teaching or schooling in general reproduce dominant discourses such as the "real men" discourse because they are microcosms of society. In Australia, Cushman (2008) found that principals tend to recommend the employment of men

who will reproduce traditional ways of being men. These traditional ways require that men display macho masculine features, dress like men, enjoy patriarchal practices such as gender roles, perform masculine tasks such as sports and, lastly, express an impalpable essence of masculinity as opposed to femininity. The findings by Cushman show that men who display oppositional streams of masculine ideals to the one mentioned above stand less chance to be employed (Cushman, 2008). Furthermore, Brown and Diale (2017), together with Msibi (2012) in South Africa, found that teachers are policed on how they dress and act in and around their classrooms, leading to the possibility of learners being able to question their legitimacy as a teacher. This is similar in the case of Luzuko, where learners in his classroom regarded him as gay due to his shouting in the classroom, which caused him to police and regulate his identity.

6.4 Theme 2: Debunking the Notion of Nurturing

In the previous theme, I presented and discussed the data relating to how the participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in this doctoral project positioned and negotiated their masculine identities in their respective schools. In this theme, I present and discuss the data relating to how participants understood the notion of nurturing and their experiences of being nurtured. This theme is divided into two sub-themes: male Foundation Phase teachers' understanding of nurturing; and Xhosa male teachers' experiences of being nurtured.

6.4.1 Male Foundation Phase teachers' understanding of nurturing

In trying to configure how the participants in this study understood the notion of nurturing, it became clear that they had multiple interpretations of what nurturing means. Many of the participants in this study associated nurturing with the development of learners, which is underpinned by hope, care and love but not limited to these attributes only. The participants engaged in the group conversation by discussing the captions of their metaphor drawings. They explained how they understood nurturing and elaborated on how it intersects with care and love. Below are some of their narratives:

> **Camagu (MD):** *... in my case, it could symbolise how I develop the learner in my classroom. Nurturing includes love, care and planning. I think nurturing also includes being careful not to ruin the learner, one has to be kind, softly, and but also show tough love.*

Luzuko (MD): *... protecting, supporting, being careful of how we guide learners in our classroom. Sometimes it also means letting the plant experience the rain, sun, and wind, which might be good or bad. Showing the learners all sorts of love and care ....*

Luzuko: *... in my understanding, teaching itself is nurturing ... you cannot call yourself a teacher if you don't not love or have passion for what you do ....*

Mr Prince (MD): *In my understanding, nurturing would be taking care and showing love, scaffolding learners' knowledge they bring and giving them new information ....*

Zama (MD): *Nurturing, developing and assisting the learner in totality. Being the person who provides hope, love and care to the child .... Learners come with experiences in the classes, for example of hunger, less love at home and others.*

The manner in which participants understood nurturing as being linked to care and love is in direct opposition to how masculinities are constructed or negotiated in certain contexts. For example, in the amaXhosa culture, stoicism and endurance are at the centre of the mark of manhood. However, this does not position these male teachers as non-patriarchal, as they have shown in the extracts above how their masculinities are centred around compulsive heteronormativity. Bhana (2016), Plank (2019) and Ratele (2016) postulate that in many contexts, masculinities are in constant reproduction and are characterised by violence and aggression. Therefore, any other stream that involves caring or where any form of nurturing and affection is shown is relegated as a subordinate stream. Ratele (2016) argues that such anti-feminine masculinities centred around violence need to be liberated. Elliott (2020a) explains that one's ability to nurture encompasses many attributes, such as love, care, empathy and emotionality, amongst other attributes.

The participants in this study seemed to have a similar understanding to Elliott's description of nurturing. Moreover, a study conducted in Berlin with working-class men in caring professions showed that one does not nurture without caring or loving the nurtured person, be they male or female, and that there are multiple ways of nurturing (Elliott, 2020b). In concurrence, a participant in this study, Luzuko, postulated that teaching as a profession is nurturing in nature, leading to the assumption that everyone in the teaching profession has the ability to nurture or is a nurturer. Similarly, Camagu stated that part of nurturing is "*tough love*". Mr Prince provided

a relevant metaphor, that of exposing the nurtured to "*all seasons*", representing the good, bad and ugly, in this case exposing the learners to all sorts of love, which includes Camagu's tough love. According to Hegarty (2014), nurturing can be offered without the element of care and/or love, because nurturing has the possibilities of being underpinned by different purposes. For example, it could be driven by the socially constructed ideals of a particular profession, such as Foundation Phase teaching as a caring profession. In other specific instances, people nurture others because they feel it is the morally correct thing to do, instead of associating their nurturing action towards others with care and love. Moreover, Ralph and Roberts (2018), together with Elliott (2020a), assert that the politics of nurturing and what it encapsulates differs according to and across cultures, contexts and eras.

Participants in this study further linked nurturing to protecting and providing support to learners in and around their classrooms. In their metaphor-drawing captions explaining what their drawings meant (see section 5.2.2), the aspect of protecting and providing support was a common feature. This was particularly visible when they elaborated in the group conversation by saying:

> **Luzuko:** *Part of being a teacher is protecting learners in the school, particularly from harmful things such as playing or eating dangerous things ... or guiding them in the choices they make.*
>
> **Camagu:** *I believe that through our acts of kindness, such as buying a disadvantaged learner in your class shoes, you nurture them to do the same to others.*
>
> **Zama:** *Learners need to feel safe and protected around you so that they can be able to share their challenges and exciting times with you in the class ....*
>
> **Lonwabo (MD):** *I think it's also modelling good ways of being a person, like how to be kind and show empathy to others.*

Here, the participants showed how the historical patriarchal construction of what a man is, which is centred around the provider and protector masculine ideals, are sustained, be it in society, schools or homes. The social construction of men as providers is an eminent feature. Camagu noted that the buying of shoes is an act of kindness, which in a social context could be perceived as his duty as a man to provide and protect. Zama also played into the same plot of men being regarded as protectors. He suggested that men need to create spaces of safety and

protection where children could feel safe and to share in their successes and challenges, locating such within the realms of nurturing. In this regard, Hunter (2005) and Morrell and Jewkes (2011) posit that the understanding that men's nurturing involves being provider and protector has the possibility of positioning men as firm and superior within the context of Foundation Phase teaching. Interestingly, Camagu, in his metaphor, positioned learners as clay that is in constant shaping, which metaphor suggests that children are constantly shaped by teachers to become citizens in their adult lives. Being conscious of modelling good behaviour, Lonwabo provided an example that being empathetic towards others is a trait learners could learn from him. Adding to Camagu's acts of kindness, these are traits normally associated with femininity and not the masculine ideal. Therefore, Lonwabo and Camagu's understanding of nurturing could be interpreted as being conscious of the different modes of behaviour they present to the learners in their classrooms, which has an influence on the learners' future citizenship.

Another interesting finding regarding participants' understanding of nurturing is around their planning, journey and co-developing of the learners holistically in and around their classrooms. In Camagu, Lonwabo and Zama's metaphor drawing captions, they spoke about how nurturing includes the co-development of the child through carefully planned lessons and that it is a process that takes time. This is why Lonwabo referred to the process of journeying with the learners. Therefore, for some of the participants in this study, nurturing is a process that involves many stakeholders. This is what Camagu and Lonwabo had to say during the group discussion:

> **Camagu:** *You see on my drawing, meaning I speak about co-constructing, that means many people play a role in nurturing the learners we teach .... The parents, community, CAPS and us teaching learners how to use this which is in the CAPS.*
>
> **Lonwabo:** *Yes, and the different ways we present in the learner's life to support emotionally, physically and mentally .... I like Luzuko's idea of a "formal clown"; it speaks to the fun and interesting ways we need to nurture our learner through teaching.*

The participants explained how collaborative participation in the holistic development of the learners in their school is important. They also mentioned the different stakeholders. One can therefore say that they were cognisant of the fact that they were not the only ones responsible for nurturing. Participants also looked at the methodologies involved in the teaching of young children, explaining that they need to create a safe space and connect with learners through the

use of pedagogical methods that are fun and interesting, such as play-based pedagogies. This, to some extent, mediates the power dynamics involved in how nurturing is understood and provided. Scholars have argued that in the facilitation of nurturing and care in different contexts, it is important to pay attention to the intention of providing such nurturing and the power dynamics involved in the provision of such nurturing (Elliott, 2018; Msiza, 2020; Tronto, 2010). As such, the understanding that participants in this study have of nurturing opens possibilities for one to assume that men in any given context are able to understand and facilitate children's holistic development through nurturing. Furthermore, understanding their provision of nurturing creates opportunity to spend a significant amount of time with those being nurtured, in this case learners in and around their classrooms. This is also a significant shift in the reconfiguring of masculinities in the South African context. Men have always spent most of their time apart from their families due to patriarchal ideals, such as men needing to provide, as well as due to the scarcity of work in their immediate residential area (Ratele, 2016). The majority of men had to seek employment in cities and towns far away, leaving the women and children behind (Msiza, 2016; Ratele, 2015). This led to the socially constructed perception that men are unable to demonstrate or express their emotions related to nurturing.

The participants in this study argued that nurturing is also centred around the implementation of inclusion and acknowledgement of diversity in and around their classrooms. In the group conversation, they explained that in their facilitation of nurturing, they need to be inclusive and promote diversity in their classrooms through using pedagogies underpinned by social justice. Mr Prince, Zama and Lonwabo argued that:

> **Mr Prince:** *... we have learners that come from different backgrounds ... so we need to nurture them and make them feel that they have the right to education just like the others ....*
>
> **Zama:** *You right when you say that we need to create a space where all these learners feel like they belong ... I had to continue the conversation about being gay in my class ... because one learner told the other ones that he is gay ... so others did not want to play with him or be in the same group with him, so ... I had to teach that we [are] all people and should not discriminate ....*
>
> **Lonwabo:** *You did good, my brother ... these kids are exposed to a lot of things; therefore, we have to teach them that we are one nation, and our gender, culture*

or religion does not define us ... I think nurturing is also being able to be vulnerable and talk about these sensitive topics to children when they arise.

The three participant extracts speak to the contextual implication of facilitating nurturing in a way that promotes democratic values such as inclusion and social justice practices. Mr Prince spoke about creating equal opportunities and providing equal treatment to all learners in his Foundation Phase classroom. His base for creating an enabling space was premised on the learners' constitutional rights. This links to Zama's story of a learner who identified as homosexual in his Grade 3 classroom. Zama had a responsibility as a teacher to protect his learners and create awareness amongst them about sexual diversity. In Zama's teaching about homosexuality in his classroom, he challenged essentialist and developmental theories that position learners as sexually innocent. He is also oppositional to the participants in Msiza's (2021) study, who disassociated themselves from any work in Foundation Phase teaching that is perceived to be feminine, such as engaging in sensitive topics such as the teaching of sexuality-related content. Zama argued that part of nurturing is creating a sense of belonging. In his teaching, he disrupted and reconstructed learners' understanding of homosexual people and that they too belong and have the right to education, as stated by Mr Prince. On the other hand, Lonwabo spoke to aspects of mutual vulnerability amongst learners and teachers. He argued that it is part of nurturing to be vulnerable and engage learners in topics such as sexuality. Lonwabo added to the conversation that the media plays a role of exposing learners to these sensitive topics. As such, teachers need to be prepared to teach this content to help learners make healthier choices regarding their health and sexual conduct as they grow to become responsible citizens (Bhana, 2016; Venketsamy & Kinear 2020).

The above participant extracts from the group conversation contribute to the already existing conversation in the literature that speaks to the complexities involved in the facilitation of nurturing particularly by men. Researchers such as Bhana *et al.* (2022) and Elliott (2020b) argue that the conceptualisation of nurturing and care according to culture, religion in specific societies and the context in which it is facilitated creates multiple realities and discourses within the politics of nurturing and care work (Elliott, 2018, 2020a). The above extracts from the group conversation suggest that teachers in their nurturing facilitation should work towards creating a conducive, inclusive and egalitarian learning and teaching environment in and around their classrooms. The aim should be eliminating and disrupting compulsory heteronormativity that might discriminate or become a hindrance to the realisation of an inclusive and democratic learning space for their learners.

6.4.2 Xhosa male teachers' experiences of being nurtured

Part of the engagement in the group conversation led to participants' talking about their upbringing and how they were nurtured by others, be it their immediate or extended family or community members. Although the research did not attempt to investigate this aspect, it serves as a backdrop to how participants in this study understood nurturing practices in and around their classrooms. Participants in this study reflected on the various ways they were nurtured as they were growing up and who played a significant role in their development. Important to note is that all six participants grew up in families with both parents, a grandparent/s and possibly one or more siblings. However, socioeconomic and geographical challenges, such as unemployment in rural contexts such as the Eastern Cape, resulted in the majority of the participants' parents joining the migrant labour discourse in pursuit of better employment opportunities in cities. In the participants' opinions, their parents working in cities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town led to their not being able to fully enjoy being nurtured and cared for by their biological parents. Camagu, Mr Prince and Ranzo shared their experiences of their childhood:

> **Ranzo:** *My father worked in Cape Town, may his soul rest in peace … he came home every last week of the month …. He wrote letters to uMama every week … that man was a true romantic … in the letters, he would say how much he misses us and when he is home it felt like Christmas Day and uMama would be so happy that she can spend time to herself, and our father would take care of me and two other siblings … I wish I [had] known him more … had talks about manhood like other boys ….*

> **Camagu:** *… we all have the same story but different people to step in our parents' shoes …. My mother was the one who I spent most of my time with and my older brothers … my father was always around, but we hardly talked or did things together … in my family, we [are] only three boys and I am the lastborn … my mother said he (my father) wished I was a girl, so I thought that's why he never did stuff with me … but I am happy, as he was 100% present when I started the ukwaluka kwam (my rite of passage).*

> **Mr Prince:** *Mine is similar to yours, Ranzo … both my parents worked in Port Elizabeth; they came only month end, gave my grandmother money … spent the weekend with us, then they were gone … But my grandmother was there to take*

care of us, like feed us, take us to church and help us with homework, but as we got older, she was unable to help with homework; we had to rely on community members to assist … it takes a village to raise a child ….

Ranzo's childhood memory of being nurtured is centred around how his father was a romantic individual who made his presence felt even when he was not physically there but present through letter-writing to his wife. Ranzo acknowledged how distance played a significant role in his relationship with his father, who had passed. Ranzo and Camagu never had a strong bond with their fathers during their childhood, where for Camagu, the bond developed as he started his journey into manhood. Gendered practices of nurturing and care seem to be a common thread amongst the participants, irrespective of the multiple reasons for their fathers being absent. The above extracts show how women played a pivotal role in the participants' upbringing. For instance, the primary caregivers in Ranzo, Mr Prince and Camagu's childhoods were their mothers and grandmothers.

Regarding the participants' fathers, they played the role of provider and nurturer only when they were around during the weekends, which was not sufficient for their children to get to know them and have character-building conversations. For instance, Mr Prince wished to have known his father and have courageous conversations about manhood just like other children in the community. However, due to the discourse of men as providers, their fathers (i.e. Ranzo's and Mr Prince's fathers), as well as many other men in South Africa, had to migrate to cities for employment opportunities, leaving the women and elderly behind to look after the children and their homestead (Bhana, 2016; Rabe, 2018; Ratele *et al.*, 2010). For Camagu, one could argue that his father was physically present yet not emotionally available as he had hoped for a girl but had another boy. The father was disappointed, which led to his being unavailable to nurture Camagu. However, his father provided financially and later started engaging with him as he was about to start his process of Ulwaluko, which I discuss in the next paragraph. An assumption could be made that Camagu's father started the engagement due to his social responsibility as a father and also his respectability in the community. According to Ntombana (2011), certain socio-patriarchal cultural practices perpetuate certain standards for families in the community. For instance, a father who participates in and guards his boychildren's rite of passage processes is respected and the family is held in high regard in the community. One might think that the communication and expressions of interest in nurturing Camagu into manhood could have been to sustain the family's status in the community, considering Camagu's non-heteronormative sexual orientation. On the other hand, Mr Prince referred to

communal relations to nurturing. He argued that due to the absence of their parents, community members aided him and his sibling in attending to certain nurturing responsibilities, such as assisting with homework. For the participants in this study, it is evident that the absence of their parent/s was due to migrant labour, which led to their being nurtured by mostly women in their childhood lives. The migration of men due to employment has in the majority of contexts led to the relegation of nurturing and childrearing to women, particularly biological mothers and grandmothers. This is because of the socially constructed idea that women are inherently soft and nurturing and have the ability to care for children (Finch & Groves, 2022).

Another aspect that emerged from the data regarding participants' experiences of being nurtured regards their journey of Ulwaluko. Participants reflected on the nurturing practices they received before and after their rite of passage:

> **Zama:** *Before I went on the journey of ukwaluka (being initiated into manhood) ... my father, mother and grandparents sat me down to give me advice and teach me what it means to be a man in our clan ... we had also had small conversations, like your heart-to-heart talks, with my father and grandfather ... I was 17 years at that time, that's when I bonded more with my elders ....*

> **Luzuko:** *For me, it was when my father and family had to choose ikhankhatha (traditional nurse) for me ... making the family meetings about me .... During the three weeks entabeni (in the mountain), I enjoyed being visited by my dad, uncles and male cousins who have went through Ulwaluko and we had interesting conversations ... for me, those were memorable times and I learned great lessons that I still refer to in my life today ....*

> **Lonwabo:** *We [are] often told not to talk about what happens during those three weeks ... however, Ulwaluko starts at home way before the three or four weeks .... For example, the council of the elders meeting to talk to me about the do's and don'ts ... I learned a lot ....*

> **Camagu:** *Yes ... I really felt the nurturing when my wound was not healing as fast as it was expected too ... my father and ikhankatha worked together and took care of me and during that time, they would talk about being patient, kind and respectful ....*

The participants in this study referred to their process of rite of passage to manhood, a critical period in the lives of Xhosa boys transitioning into manhood (Mfecane, 2020). The participants talked about how the process does not start only when the initiate goes to the bush but already during the preparation that takes place. For example, Zama and Luzuko mentioned the appointment of a traditional nurse, a person who will stay with the initiate for the entire duration in the secluded place. Mavundla *et al.* (2009) posit that the traditional nurse is a man who has undergone the Xhosa traditional ritual himself and is well known in the community for providing good care and nurturing to the initiates. The *ikhankhatha* is appointed by the father guided by the family. His responsibility includes dressing the wound of the initiate with traditional wrapping that is made of leaves and herbs called *isichwe* (Dlamini, 2020; Mavundla *et al.*, 2009). The participants further elaborated that the process starts with a series of courageous conversations around what it means to be a man in the Xhosa context, including a man in different clans. The conversations held prior to the seclusion period include discussing issues of respect to self and others and learning to be kind, as mentioned by Zama and Camagu. Participants mentioned that these talks took place in informal settings and times, such as when taking walks and drives with other respected men in the community, as mentioned by Zama.

Part of the rite of passage in the amaXhosa culture includes character-building conversations with the initiate by elderly men of the village, the *ikhankhatha* and other men in the family (Mavundla *et al.*, 2009; Mfecane, 2016, 2020). Participants expressed how these conversations were important to them, as they created some kind of comfort to them as initiates during that time. The journey of Ulwaluko can be lonely, as mentioned by Luzuko, and there could be complications, such as the wound taking longer to heal, resulting in the initiate needing support beyond that of the *ikhankhatha.* This was visible in Camagu's case, where his father had to intervene, and that made him feel cared for. Moreover, the rite of passage created space for most of the participants to be nurtured and learn from the experience. For example, Lonwabo shared how, in the courageous conversations with elders, he learned a lot about what to do and not to do. This included not allowing anyone to touch or see the wound except for the *ikhankhatha* or trusted family members. Camagu and Lonwabo argued that the reason for not allowing anyone to touch or see the wound was to teach them hygiene and self-respect.

Moreover, amongst the many things young men are taught in the rite of passage is the need to protect the cultural ritual by not disclosing what happens there, as Lonwabo stated in his extract above. What Lonwabo shared is similar to what Ntombana (2011) postulates about the protection of ritual and how newly initiated men are expected to not share some of the processes

that take place during the rite. This includes the language initiates learn and use during this period. Due to the sacredness of this ritual, only certain members of the family are expected to participate in pre- and post-Ulwaluko processes (Mfecane, 2020; Ntombana, 2011).

In the analysis of this sub-theme, participants disclosed some of the dominant aspects about the nurturing they received during the process of rite of passage, a central one being that the people involved were mostly men. The data show gendered patterns of how the participants were nurtured and cared for during this critical period in their lives. For example, Zama was appreciative and enjoyed bonding time with his father and grandfather. In addition, Luzuko mentioned: "*During the three weeks entabeni (in the mountain), I enjoyed being visited by my dad, uncles and male cousins who have went through Ulwaluko and we had interesting conversations ....*" I noted that all participants in this study enjoyed nurturing and care practices that are male-led and -performed. However, the participants were silent on the involvement of their mothers and grandmothers, except for Zama, who indicated that his mother formed part of the delegation that had a pre-rite of passage conversation about what it means to be a man in their clan. Literature has shown that women are involved pre- and post-Ulwaluko. Their participation includes pre- and post-conversations with the initiate and other elders; however, amongst other rules, women are not allowed to make their voices heard during the seclusion period but to prepare food for the welcoming ceremony (Magodyo, *et al.*, 2017; Venter, 2011).

6.5 Theme 3: Male Foundation Phase Teachers' Facilitation of Nurturing

The previous two themes presented and discussed how the participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in this study constructed, positioned and negotiated their masculinities in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms in the Eastern Cape province. I further engaged on how they understood the notion of nurturing and their experiences of being nurtured. In this theme, I present and discuss how participants facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms in Eastern Cape province schools. The theme is divided into three sub-themes: Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers' nurturing for co-construction of future responsible citizens; male Foundation Phase teachers' facilitation of nurturing through addressing social issues; and child abusers and molesters' discourse as a hindrance to nurturing in the Foundation Phase.

6.5.1 Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers' nurturing for co-construction of future responsible citizens

The participants in this study postulated that part of their nurturing practices included preparing learners to become citizens that are responsible and well informed about their rights and responsibilities. The participants centred their nurturing practices around Xhosa idioms that speak to a sense of belonging within a community and that makes it every person's responsibility to nurture children in the community they are born in. The use of Xhosa idioms is visible in the extracts from Zama's and Ranzo's collage captions below. The participants argued that it is their task to nurture learners in and around their schools to be responsible citizens from an early age. They noted that:

> **Zama (C):** *I strongly believe in collaborative teamwork; like in isiXhosa, we say "Umfazi ozalelela omnye", meaning that it takes a village to raise a child .... I am responsible for constructing future leaders or citizens that are responsible ....*

> **Zama:** *... in my Grade 3 classroom, the first topic I teach my learners is rights and responsibilities found in the CAPS documents .... This is to teach them to be responsible for each other and their studies ....*

> **Ranzo (C):** *I like to nurture children's knowledge of themselves, others and the world they live in and the need to take care of it. There is a Xhosa saying that says, "Umntwana ngowesizwe sonke" (A child is born for the community).*

> **Luzuko:** *One thing I hate with all my heart is filth, like dirty classrooms or papers around the schoolyard .... It makes me mad ..., and our learners don't care about their own environment .... So, I teach my learners that a clean environment helps the mind to think ... like, they need to be responsible ....*

The idioms mentioned by Zama and Ranzo feed directly into the views of researchers, who argue that schools are microcosms of the broader communities, where certain norms and values are reproduced (Francis & DePalma, 2015; Msibi, 2019). In this regard, Zama and Ranzo posit that it is their responsibility to construct leaders in the learners they teach. Furthermore, as is evident in their idioms, the responsibility also rests on the community: *"Umntwana ngowesizwe sonke (A child is born for the community)*" and "*Umfazi ozalelela omnye (meaning that it takes a village to raise a child)*". Zama confirmed that a collaborative approach to nurturing learners

is important and that it helps with the development of responsible citizenship in the learners. Ranzo and Luzuko engaged with this viewpoint by arguing that in their nurturing practices, they work towards enabling learners to be aware of the self, others and the environment around them. The participants indicated that they teach and nurture learners to be aware of their rights and responsibilities and how this influences the environment. Zama and Luzuko did this through environmental education, teaching learners how a clean environment has an influence on the individual's productivity and mindfulness and champions responsible citizenship. The participants in this study shared a similar view to what Bell (2016) speaks about, namely transformational teaching that promotes education for sustainable development in the 21st century. Bell (2016) argues that teaching and learning should be purposeful in that there has to be a particular change either to those who are taught or those who teach. Bell further postulates that teaching for sustainability and responsible citizenship creates an opportunity for capacity and develops individuals and communities that would make healthier, safer and economic choices for the prosperity and development of the individual or communities (Bell, 2016). Bell's view is visible in the participants' collaborative-collage statement (see Figure 5.19); as they speak about the similarities in their nurturing practices, they emphasise the need for learners to be responsible in their actions.

Another issue that emerged in the data is that of pedagogies used in Foundation Phase learning and teaching to foster nurturing amongst male Foundation Phase teachers. Luzuko, Ranzo and Camagu discussed how they use diverse and innovative ways of teaching learners in their Foundation Phase classrooms. Here, Luzuko and Camagu stated that:

> **Luzuko (P):** *I choose to be playful; so in a nutshell, I am fun, and playful most of the time and I try by all means to create an educational space that is conducive for all my learners.*
>
> **Camagu:** *oMiss (female teacher), they will tell you that they don't have the time to do experiments, which my learners love; and I think in doing all their fun experiments, they become comfortable with me … oMiss, they always ask me where I get the energy … which is why some parents would say they want their kids in my class, because oMiss is forever sitting down in class ….*

In the views of participants in this study, part of facilitating nurturing involved ways in which content is prepared and delivered. Luzuko, in his photovoice caption, argued that he intentionally chooses to be playful and to incorporate fun activities in his lessons to create a

learning environment that is conducive, where learners can be free and be able to express themselves. Similar to Luzuko's caption is Camagu's comment in the group discussion that female Foundation Phase teachers in his grade tend to avoid teaching certain activities, indicating that they do not have the time and energy to teach such activities. Camagu provided an example of conducting experiments, such as the measurements found in mathematics and integrated in the life-skills curriculum. Camagu suggested that, as a result, some parents recommended that their children be placed in his classroom, because female teachers in the Foundation Phase teach whilst sitting down. These participating male Foundation Phase teachers to some extent reproduced and believed in the socially constructed idea that men have to be feared and intimidating to children. This is why they resorted to playful, experimental and fun activities to teach and create a conducive learning environment for their learners. The above is validated by Luzuko's view: "*So, in decoding the stereotype, I choose to be playful; so in a nutshell, I am fun ....*" This means that he might have experienced fear and intimidation elsewhere, which he chooses to mitigate through his nurturing practices.

On the other hand, Camagu faced sexist comments made by parents at the beginning of the academic year. The sexist comments were made by parents who complained that female teachers in the school teach whilst sitting down; one could assume that these parents regarded female teachers in this context as lazy. This comment in Camagu's extract above suggests that male Foundation Phase teachers are expected socially to perform that which is not regarded as feminine. It also suggests that they must be subject to nurturing streams of masculinity that are more linked to hegemonic male ideas by doing experiments in a certain (fun) way and always standing in the classroom. The above experiences by participants are also made visible in Hjalmarsson and Löfdahl's (2014) study, conducted in Sweden, and Msiza's (2016), in South Africa in the Mpumalanga province. These scholars found that in their trajectory of constructing a different form of masculinity whilst in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms, male teachers in the Foundation Phase need to perform non-feminine acts of being. For example, they need to be active in their teaching and learning and not be as lazy as their female counterparts.

Linked to the above conversation on pedagogical implications influencing male Foundation Phase teachers is the oppositional practices shared by Ranzo, Zama and Mr Prince. Here, the participants engaged on collaborative ways of planning for learning and teaching in order to produce a responsible citizen in their implicit facilitation of nurturing. The participants discussed what Warin and Adriany (2017) call "gender-flexible pedagogy" for learning and

teaching in the Foundation Phase. The scholars argue that due to the deeply rooted gendered practices associated with Foundation Phase teaching, it is important for men to teach alongside women to work towards a gender-flexible pedagogy aimed at possibly debunking the gendered ideal that Foundation Phase teaching is women's work. According to Warin and Adriany (2017), this includes the use of collaborative teamwork and flexible ways of performing gender in and around the school through team teaching. In this regard, the participants in this study provided practical examples of the gender-flexible pedagogy mentioned by the above scholars. The participants deliberated that:

> **Ranzo (C):** *I come up with creative and exciting ways of teaching ….*

> **Ranzo:** *I sit down with my colleagues and we share ideas on how we can teach some of the content, and the teachers like some of the ideas I come up with … sometimes we also teach together ….*

> **Zama:** *We plan lessons together in my current Grade 2 … that's another form of collaboration towards nurturing children in our classrooms … they get same content and learning materials … children are treated equally … planning like this did not happen in Grade 3 ….*

> **Mr Prince:** *I love how my new HoD sets up Friday meeting for us to discuss the weekly lessons; she likes to ask me what I found difficult and what I enjoyed teaching … it's a good way of making sure we have implemented and contextualised the content … I am always excited to share and hear what others think … which may help improve my teaching ….*

As seen in the above extracts, the participants made explicit some of their pedagogical practices and shared them with colleagues to gain feedback and improve on their own teaching. Moreover, one could assume that they were aware of how the society has positioned them as active compared to their female counterparts, hence the need to sometimes teach together. One could also argue that team teaching with their female colleagues is a sign of how they are positioned within the amaXhosa culture as "men". This notion recurs in participants' photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage captions. Statements were made such as "*as a man, I think I am limited*" and "*I am a man*", meaning that participants were gender conscious and sensitive towards reproducing gendered ways of nurturing children. Ranzo, Zama and Mr Prince expressed how, in their planning, they learned from sharing their ideas on teaching

certain content and how others were welcoming of their thinking. This led to their learning from the experiences of others. The accounts of these participants are similar to those of the Swedish male participants in Warin and Adriany (2017), who were open to the idea of being flexible in their methods of teaching in their kindergarten classrooms. The participants in this study implicitly expressed their facilitation of nurturing of the self through sharing best pedagogical practices and through collaborative planning.

6.5.2 Male Foundation Phase teachers' facilitation of nurturing through addressing social issues

The participants in this study drew on the different socioeconomic statuses of learners in their classrooms, emphasising that before one can deal with the curriculum, they first have to work on the sociological aspects of the learners in their classroom. The participants further acknowledged the different backgrounds from which the learners in their classrooms come, which could become a barrier in creating a space for optimal participation from the learners in the classroom. They noted that:

> **Luzuko (C):** *You know, these kids go through a lot in their lives, walking long distances, poverty at their homes, and health issues.*
>
> **Luzuko:** *... this makes me so sad every time I think about it .... As a teacher, you can't teach a learner that is tired in the morning ... last year, I had a learner who was always tired in the morning and when I asked her, she said they wake up at four o'clock in the morning and they walk to school ... it's a very long walk for them, her and her two other sisters ... when I visited the home, the living conditions were bad .... The mom said she is happy that her children are in school and they get feeding scheme ... it broke my heart ....*
>
> **Ranzo:** *Bhuti (brother), earlier, Luzuko said teaching itself is nurturing ... I have learners in my classroom that comes to school hungry and feeding scheme only serves them at 10:30 ... the whole morning they sitting there hungry and cannot concentrate ... I had to buy soft porridge, the one you mix with water, just for my learners to have something to eat before I teach ....*
>
> **Mr Prince:** *What you guys are saying is my every-year challenge ... my wife knows we don't burn clothes or throw away food ... in our budget, we have an item of R700 called 'For others' to buy learners cake on their birthdays, because*

others have never experienced that, while others, their parents do bring cake to school for their children ... I mostly use that budget for the learners in my school ....

With the dawn of democracy in South Africa, people thought the injustices of the past would be addressed through education. However, South Africa has been a democratic country for three decades yet inequalities still persist. This is visible in rural contexts such as the Eastern Cape province, where the participants of the study were born, raised and employed. In the above extracts, the participants showed how their professional duties intersect with their social responsibilities, which they also stated earlier by using Xhosa idioms. Participants further showed how they facilitated nurturing and care in their teaching and interaction with the learners. They did this by means of involving themselves with learners' socioeconomic issues, such as poverty and differentiated financial backgrounds of the families from which their learners come. Nonetheless, what the participants portrayed here could somehow be located within hegemonic ideals of masculinity, such as men being providers and protectors.

A common perspective in the literature on dominant streams of masculinity in social settings is that a man must provide for their family and children. An example here would be the fact that Mr Prince and Ranzo felt the need to budget and provide children in their classrooms with food and possibly cake on their birthdays to mitigate the emotional stress of learners whose parents cannot afford to buy them cake on their birthdays. The participants in this study, to some extent, had taken the task to respond to the socioeconomic issues of learners in their classrooms in addressing issues of poverty and learner transport. Earlier, I argued that the positionality of participants in this study as "men" plays an integral role in their professional identities. Herein, they worked towards debunking normative constructions of masculinities in and around their schools through providing alternative streams of masculinity that have the possibility of locating them within the complicit masculine ideal of what it means to be a man. They did this whilst still being caring and nurturing towards the learners in their classrooms. Ranzo demonstrated this by making sure that he had soft porridge that you just mix with water in his classroom, leading to the assumption that men cannot cook but can still be providers and nurture children. Mr Prince, on the other hand, stated that in his household, he and his wife make provision in their monthly budget for the learners in his classroom so that he can buy them cake for their birthdays. He does this to alleviate the possible shame that learners might have, thus providing for their emotional needs. Participants' attempt to nurture and care for learners' sociological challenges, such as poverty, is a rare contextual practice within how hegemonic

notions of masculinity in South Africa are constructed. One could argue that due to the time participants spent with learners, in their facilitation of nurturing, they might implicitly have adopted a professional teacher identity that goes beyond their primary role of delivering the curriculum. In addition, they might have positioned themselves around their pastoral role of nurturing and caring for learners in and around their classrooms, as seen in the participant extracts above.

Another social challenge that participants experienced in their pursuit of nurturing is that of parents who are teenagers and abuse alcohol. Participants in this study pointed to the fact that where teenagers become parents due to teenage pregnancy, this often results in learners or children being neglected. This was particularly the case with the participants' learners whose parents were teenagers. The participants pointed out that the neglect comes in different forms, one of which is poor hygiene. Children of these parents would be coming to school unbathed or their uniforms would not be washed or would be torn. Furthermore, these parents struggle financially to buy their children new uniforms or shoes when the old ones are worn out. The participants in this study explained that it becomes their responsibility to buy these learners uniforms or to give them their own children's uniforms. This is what was said:

> **Camagu:** *I think three or so of my learners who their parents are teenagers, their grandparents take care of the learners ... one of the grandmothers said they don't have money to buy shoes for this one learner. I bought him the shoes, because the grandmother spoke to me and I felt I must do something ....*
>
> **Lonwabo:** *We [are] in the same boat, Camagu, my brother. In my case, the teenage girl takes the child support grant and buys alcohol with it ... she dropped out of school and now she drinks every day ... the learner come to school sometimes not bathed and sometimes she does not come to school the whole week ... I had to drive to the learner's home one day to fetch her and the mother was having a bottle of beer ....*
>
> **Zama:** *Our primary school is next to a secondary school. Last year, a Grade 6 girl got pregnant ... As I mentioned earlier, they made me a psychologist of the school (laughing). I had to have a meeting with the parents and the pregnant learner together with the school management team. The learner told us the boyfriend is in Grade 9 in the school next to ours ... we later had a meeting with the parents and both learners; they both agreed to the creation of the baby ....*

> **Mr Prince:** *It is no longer older men raping or sexually abusing our children and making our learners pregnant ... it's teenage boys and girls who are at it ... I wish we could do something about this high rate of teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse ....*

The participants in this study seemed to have rooted their ideas of nurturing in and around their classrooms in the patriarchal masculine ideal that men are providers. This can be seen in Camagu and Lonwabo's respective comments: "*I felt I must do something*" and "*I had to drive to the learner's home*". One could interpret that their actions were prompted by the socially constructed idea that a man must provide and protect. Conversely, one could also assume that they felt the need to fulfil the learners' rights to education and sanitation, respectively, by Lonwabo driving to fetch the learner and Camagu buying school shoes for the learner. These are both noble acts of kindness portrayed by the two male teachers. The provider positionality of the participants in this study in their facilitation of nurturing is also common in the participants of Mvune and Bhana's (2022) study. The participants in the latter study argued that men's positionality within the provider masculine ideal has a historical underpinning, particularly through migrant working, leading to men not always being associated with nurturing and care work. The participants' main argument in the extracts above is centred around the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and how it influences their facilitation of nurturing in and around their classrooms within the Eastern Cape schools context. In participants' views, many of the teenage parents were neglecting their children in one way or the other. This resulted in the participants' becoming agentic in responding to these social issues, such as learner absenteeism and providing emotional support to the learner in the case of Lonwabo.

Moreover, Zama shared with the group a case of teenage pregnancy where he had to intervene by serving as mediator in confirming that a teenager from another school was the father of the child of a learner in their primary school. Mr Prince validated Zama's view and further expressed his concern that, today, teenagers are impregnating each other, and that he saw the need to do something about the rise of teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse, which has implications for learner development. In response to Mr Prince, as seen in the next extract, Zama explained that it is difficult to do something about it as a male teacher:

> **Zama:** *Yhoooo, bhuti (brother), it was difficult for me to start the conversation in that meeting .... One of my female colleagues even complimented me by saying I am courageous to facilitate such a conversation, as a man. To think about it,*

this is an experienced teacher … I think we need proper training in order to facilitate such sensitive topics; I really felt not ready to talk about sex to parents and learners who have already done it ….

Zama argued that even his female counterparts did not have an approach on how they were going to talk to the parents and learners about the act of sex and the complex situations they find themselves in. Zama's view finds expression in a study by Kagola and Notshulwana (2022), which found that sexuality-related content in primary school is a sensitive topic to teach on and requires teachers to teach age-appropriate and context-related content and to be reflexive in their practices. Moreover, Simayi and Webb (2019) found that within amaXhosa culture, sexuality-related content is a culturally taboo subject due to the deeply rooted Xhosa patriarchal cultural practices of what should be said and done or not and by whom. Furthermore, Zama reiterated what Simayi and Webb argued, that the gender binary continues to dissociate men from engaging in conversation related to sensitive topics such as sex and pregnancy. The female teachers complimented Zama for being courageous in facilitating such conversations, providing possible solutions and reproducing a different stream of masculinity that is pro-feminine (Ratele, 2016). They also encouraged Zama to further create such spaces where it is safe to converse about such topics. However, as seen in the extract, Zama articulated that he felt unprepared to teach or talk about sexuality-related content to anyone because he was not trained in the area of comprehensive sexuality education.

Whilst engaging on Zama being courageous, in the group discussion, another social issue emerged that is linked to teenage pregnancies, namely absent fathers. The participants complimented Zama's male learner who admitted to having impregnated the female learner, because many children grow up without fathers. According to statistics, close to 60% to 65% of children are raised by single mothers or are provided for financially by their step-fathers, who do not necessarily support them emotionally (Langa, 2020; Statistics South Africa, 2018). Some of the major contributors to father absenteeism are migration to cities for better employment opportunities, death and where fathers choose to neglect their children (Clowes *et al.*, 2010; Mvune & Bhana, 2022). The participants in this study shared that in their everyday lives in their Foundation Phase classrooms, they tended to nurture learners without fathers by being father figures to them. Luzuko and Camagu shared that one does not have to have biological children to be a father figure or a role model. In agreement with the other participants, Lonwabo reiterated what he had written in his metaphor-drawing caption by further stating that

particularly those teachers who do not have children of their own can be a great example for modelling good behaviour. Participants mentioned that:

> **Lonwabo:** *These days, there are so many children without fathers in the community. In my class, I think half of the learners do not have present fathers. When we do topics like my family, that is where you see the reality that these kids do not have fathers … I think partly why I haven't had a child by now is because I think I am a father to those learners in my school … that's why I said that in what my drawing means … (referring to the caption below)*
>
> **Lonwabo (MD):** *I also think it's also modelling good ways of being a person, like how to be kind and show empathy to others.*
>
> **Ranzo:** *It's when I observe and converse with them that I realise that I am a father and role model to my learners … especially those in higher grades that I taught before … they visit my class to ask for advice and to have just general conversations ….*
>
> **Mr Prince:** *I think I am a father to fatherless learners in my school, creating a safe and carefree learning environment like Luzuko said earlier ….*
>
> **Camagu:** *I am always conscious about being a father figure as a straight-acting gay man … I am just sceptical that once they know my sexuality, they will hate me … I can be a role model, but I am not comfortable with being a father figure; like Lonwabo, chances of me having my own children are very small ….*

As seen in the extracts, participants geared up to work towards filling the gap of being role models and father figures to learners in and around their schools through their nurturing practices. The participants attempted here to enact their masculine identities differently through performing nurturing streams of masculinity in their professional and personal lives. I have shown this in the previous themes above in this thesis. The extracts above indicate that in their classrooms, participants facilitated nurturing and care through assuming the role of father figures or role models to learners in general, including those without fathers, irrespective of their sex or sexual orientation.

For male Foundation Phase teachers to position themselves as father figures or role models, as was done by the participants in this study, is not a new factor in male Foundation Phase teacher

identity construction. Scholars such as Brownhill *et al.* (2016) and Warin (2018) found that in countries such as Australia, England and New Zealand, male teachers are being recruited to teach in the early years of learning for them to be father figures and role models to boychildren in the schools. However, the participants in this study extended the rationale to being role models to not only boy learners but to all learners in and around their classrooms. The non-gendered modelling of being a father figure and role model is visible in the majority of the participant extracts above. Whilst participants in this study located some of their nurturing practices around father-figuring and being role models, one could argue that they were working towards building a harmonious and conducive learning environment. This can be seen in their example towards learners who are raised in abusive and violent environments led by fathers or men, where they want these learners to experience men from a positive image that is nurturing and caring. The above is evident in Mr Prince's, Lonwabo's and Luzuko's (P) extracts.

Moreover, in the extracts above, there is a sense that participants conceptualised Foundation Phase teaching around the notion of parenting. This is explicit in Lonwabo's, Ranzo's and Mr Prince's extracts, where they based their rationale of being father figures on the premise that the majority of the learners do not have fathers. Lonwabo and Ranzo delayed becoming fathers because they felt that they were father figures to many learners in their schools. Whilst all the other participants resonated with being father figures within the school context, Camagu disassociated himself from the role due to his sexual orientation. He feared being hated by learners once they would realise that he was a gay man. Camagu did not resonate with the socially constructed masculine idea of what being a father figure might imply, hence his disassociation. He further guarded his relationship with learners as he did not want to be hated by them. Camagu chose to be a role model of good behaviour in his nurturing practices. According to Brownhill *et al.* (2016) and Msiza (2020), when male Foundation Phase teachers are employed, they should be retained for their ability to nurture, care and create an inclusive learning and teaching environment and not be regarded as role models or father figures to learners. Camagu was mindful of the possibilities of being a role model. One could argue that as a homosexual man, he was open to possibilities of learners knowing him. This could also be understood as a steppingstone in his context as the start of the realisation of an inclusive learning and teaching environment, where everyone exists irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation.

6.5.3 Child abusers and molesters' discourse as a hindrance to male Foundation Phase teachers' facilitation of nurturing

The recruitment and involvement of men in more nurturing and caring professions such as Foundation Phase teaching has been underpinned by several rationales, depending on the context in which the recruitment is taking place. For instance, South Africa and other African countries have largely premised their rationale on disrupting patriarchal toxic streams of masculinity to create more pro-feminine and nurturing forms of masculine identities. This is also done for men to cross the gendered labour market with the aim of contributing to a gender-equitable and inclusive working environment (Bhana, 2016; Moosa & Bhana, 2018; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Ratele, 2016). There are also many other reasons, as pointed out elsewhere in this doctoral study. However, the realisation or implementation of recruiting males in Foundation Phase teaching has not been easy, as challenges and hindrances have emerged. Researchers have shown that men who cross the gender border of employment from hard labour into softer and more nurturing careers such as Foundation Phase teaching are perceived to have alternative motives, such as child molestation or paedophilic intention (Bhana *et al.*, 2022; Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Msiza, 2020; Warin, 2019).

With much research having been done around the globe regarding how male Foundation Phase teachers are perceived and positioned, less is known on how male Foundation Phase teachers themselves feel about their presence in the teaching of young children. For the participants in this study, this meant becoming agentic and reflecting on their journey of being Foundation Phase teachers. In this regard, Francis (2021: 286) argues that for the individual to grow, they need to "sometimes do painful, critical reflection, especially as it relates to developing a critical consciousness for changing self and society". This study employed the participatory method collaborative collage to elicit reflection amongst participants. Using this method, participants were able to reflect on how they in their facilitation of nurturing managed to mitigate or work around the perceived child molestation or paedophilic intention that is underpinned by socially constructed hetero-patriarchal practices centred around binary definitions of what it means to be a man. In their curatorial statement, the participants stated that:

> **Collaborative collage (Figure 5.19):** *As male Foundation Phase teachers, we acknowledge that our manhood will always be a barrier that is constantly questioned. However, we regard our facilitation of nurturing as a continuous process and a journey. We aspire to be agents of change through moulding, supporting, encouraging, loving, and caring in our everyday practices in and*

around our schools. Further, through protecting and supporting our learners from misconceptions and challenges they face, be it educationally, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Being mindful of the socially constructed barrier in our teaching, we collaboratively mould children with the hope of co-constructing responsible citizens and problem solvers.

Part of what emerged from the PVRM methods is the collaborative collage and its curatorial statement, where participants themselves do the first layer of data analysis by reflecting on their view of what is common and what are the differences in their positionality and nurturing practices. Herein, participants had to reflect on all their participatory method outputs, choose what is common and negotiate with others. I discuss methodological reflections in the next theme. What I found interesting is that all participants in this study were conscious of their masculine identity marker within a highly feminine space and how their positionality and nurturing practices open possibilities of their masculinity being under constant surveillance and questioning. This is something that I have argued throughout this chapter, that the participants in this study centre their socially contextually constructed masculine identity as their first identity marker. The aforementioned is a common theme locally and internationally, particularly in research that explores Foundation Phase teaching and the involvement of men and masculinities in the lives of young children (see Bhana *et al.*, 2022; Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Mukuna & Mutsoso, 2012; Msiza, 2020). One could assume that even though the participants in this study constructed a different stream of masculinity through nurturing and caring practices in and around their classrooms, compulsory heteronormative principles underpinned their construction of masculinity in general. These principles include the protector and provider masculine ideals socially constructed within the realms of masculinity and not femininity.

In the negotiation of what is common during the group conversation, participants talked about nurturing as a continuous process and journey, which has been a clear theme of how they understood nurturing practices within Foundation Phase learning and teaching. They reiterated some of the intersecting features of a nurturing Foundation Phase teacher. Furthermore, as in the curatorial statement above, participants further acknowledged the barriers that hamper their nurturing practices, as seen in the excerpts below:

Lonwabo: *Remember earlier, I told you guys about the injured learner at our school and what I did with the situation ... thinking about it again ... I think*

because it was one of my boy learners, I did think twice, but if it was a girl, I would have reacted differently to the old teacher's comment ....

Zama: *It has always been difficult to provide emotional care to my learners. For example, I choose to open my door all the time when talking to girls alone in my class ... at the beginning, one teacher asked me why was I alone with a girlchild in my class during breaktime ... from that question, I started opening the door so everyone can see. I love talking to children and giving them that emotional support ... but I also try to prevent being seen otherwise ....*

Mr Prince: *I am responsible for keeping second-hand clothes donated to the school ... one thing I never do is to be alone with the girlchild if they need to change clothes due to having peed on themselves or something ... even when they need help with dressing up ... they (other teachers) might think I want to molest the learners ....*

Camagu: *I never hug learners in my class ... I do Bluetooth hugs, kisses and high fives ... ku rough (it's difficult) out there, people have devilish intentions ... (laughing).*

Here, to some extent, participants showed their bias in their provision of nurturing that might be underpinned by the fear of being perceived as a paedophile. For instance, Lonwabo, in his reflection of what happened during assembly time, postulated that if it was a girl that was wounded, he would have thought twice before assisting. One could also argue that Lonwabo and Mr Prince felt more comfortable in assisting boys than girls because with boys there could be less suspicion. It is clear from the above extracts that the participants in this study constantly policed themselves so that they did not find themselves being accused of or regarded as being child molesters or paedophiles. This is prompted by Mr Prince's comment above about his avoidance of being with female learners in the changing room which he is responsible for. He worried that he might be perceived otherwise by colleagues and other learners if he is found alone with an undressed female learner. The self-regulation and policing of the participants is a strategy to not be seen as molesters and paedophiles and is further made visible by Zama, who was regarded as the "*psychologist of the school*". Zama recalled a moment when he was with a female learner in his classroom during breaktime and a colleague asked what he was doing with the learner. That experience made Zama explore alternative ways of doing what he loved, which

is to talk and listen to children. He then started implementing the open-door policy to not be seen as someone who molests or abuses children.

Similar experiences to those of the participants in this doctoral study are reported in Bhana (2022). The researcher found that heterosexual male pre-service teachers do not feel comfortable in becoming Foundation Phase teachers because of the socially constructed idea that men are violent and that they could be regarded as child molesters or abusers. Scholars have argued that fear of being regarded as child abusers and molesters is a predominant feature in the life of male teachers. This is because of the binary construction of men as violent and women as caring, which construction has implications for the attainment of a multi-gendered learning environment (Bhana *et al.*, 2022; Bryan & Browder, 2013; Heikkilä & Hellman, 2017). Moreover, participants in Bhana (2022) postulated that homosexual men are better positioned to become Foundation Phase teachers because they are perceived to be less aggressive and more feminine and therefore stand less risk of being perceived as abusers and molesters of children. In this study, Camagu's case proved to be in opposition to Bhana's (2022) findings in that he as a homosexual man had developed the strategy of "*Bluetooth hugs, kisses and high fives*" in an attempt to avoid accusations and perceptions.

6.6 Theme 4: Reflecting on PVRM Methods

In the previous three themes, I presented and discussed the data generated using the PVRM methods discussed in Chapter 4 and which data were presented in Chapter 5 of this doctoral thesis. This was done with the aim of responding to the three research sub-questions that underpin this study. In this theme, I present and discuss the participants' reflections on the participatory visual methods used to generate the data.

This doctoral study used the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making to elicit possibilities of nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. After each data generation session using a particular participatory method, the participating male Foundation Phase teachers and I reflected on the process and use of the methods. I shared some of the reflections in Chapter 4 of this study. Therefore, in this section, I present a full discussion of participants' reflections on the participatory methods. The rationale behind this is because scholars have argued that participatory methods in research are predominantly used in studies that involve children and women as participants in the field of psychology, and less is known about how men engage in

and use such methods for research purposes (Hegarty, 2016; Simpson & Simpson, 2018; Wilde, Quincey & Williamson, 2020). I found that in their reflection on the methods, particularly photovoice, as much as it was a little intimidating for the participants, it created a supportive and conducive space for them to be vulnerable to speak about their positionality. It also put them at ease to engage on their nurturing experiences. Regarding the participatory method photovoice, participants mentioned that:

> **Mr Prince:** *Heee, it interesting and scary ... looking at yourself and thinking about how others see you ... and choosing an object that best represent that ....*

> **Luzuko:** *This name photovoice, it seems like something difficult; if you say photo-stories, it sounds easy ... and personal because we are talking about our lives in the classrooms.*

> **Camagu:** *It's always difficult to talk about my sexuality with strangers ... somehow, through the conversation on how we see ourselves through photo representations was a great way to break the ice ... for me, if you don't ask, I will not tell, so when you asked me what I meant about my fluid sexuality made me to open up easily ....*

> **Ranzo:** *I like experimenting with things. This time it was about me ... It was scary, yes, but fun at the same time ... taking pictures and thinking about them in relation to me, I felt special ....*

The participants in this study's reflection on the process of positioning themselves through the use of photovoice seemed intimidating and fun at the same time. Mr Prince and Ranzo attested to this, as seen in their extracts above, when they said it was a scary process of reflecting on self, through the use of taking photographs of objects that might best represent them as male teachers in the Foundation Phase. Yamile, (2023) posits thatparticipants' identity markers are important, for instance their age, matters. An example is Ranzo, a young man, who argued in his reflection that he enjoyed photovoice as it allowed him to explore the use of a digital camera, which I provided, and comparing it to using his phone to take photos. Another interpretation of Ranzo's comment that he "*felt special*" might be linked to Camagu's view that photovoice enabled him to open up to other participants whom he regarded as strangers. To some extent, one could argue that Camagu's extract above validates what scholars such as Moletsane, De Lange and Mitchell (2017) have argued about participatory methods such as photovoice

creating space for mutual vulnerability amongst participants. In addition, using these methods leads to the creation of spaces that allow for courageous conversations on sensitive topics such as sexuality.

In reflecting on the metaphor drawing, as indicated elsewhere in this study, participants drew similar metaphors of their understanding of nurturing. In the group conversation, in response to how they had drawn the same metaphor drawings, Luzuko, Mr Pince and Zama stated that:

> **Luzuko:** *... having seen what my colleagues have sketched out, I did not want to be different but somehow similar….*
>
> **Mr Prince:** *I think this method, I just wanted to do something that looks like others ….*
>
> **Zama:** *... for me, I did that drawing as it was the closest thing in mind when I thought of nurturing ….*
>
> **Camagu:** *(responding to Luzuko) ... that's the thing, straight guys, they always what to be uniformed or the same …. I thought of nurturing in the literal sense ... (laughing).*

When we engaged on the drawings themselves, we realised that participants leaned towards a similar kind of drawing. We engaged on what could be the rationale for that. Interestingly, Camagu mentioned the aspect of gender performativity in how men are perceived to like the same things or be regarded as the same. Camagu argued that men generally like sameness, or it could also be interpreted in relation to how masculinities are reproduced for others to approve of and reproduce (Ratele, 2016). In this case, Mr Price and Lonwabo viewed Zama's sketch and felt that they should follow a similar pattern. Another view that participatory researchers have regarding metaphor-drawing is that the space where participants are gathered to generate drawings could be competitive or discouraging (Pithouse-Morgan, Van Laren & Masinga, 2019). This could have been the case above, as it was to some extent centred around sameness and providing a common understanding through the drawings.

The last participatory method used was collage-making, which participants in this study found interesting and exciting, as they were also visualising their different nurturing practices in and around their classrooms. They noted that:

> **Luzuko:** *I like diversity in how our collages are looking, different and unique.*

> **Lonwabo:** *I was a bit sad when I could not get some of the pictures I needed for my collage, but the intervention of looking them on the internet was great idea ....*
>
> **Zama:** *It's a messy process, man ... at some point, I was tired of paging through so many magazines. Worst part, Lonwabo and I couldn't find picture of men holding hands or having them on their back. Anyway, I also like my final collage ....*
>
> **Camagu:** *Yhooo, so many things to go through; yhooo, I can't, nyane (for real), I can't ... I think, next time, we could be given a few days to do it and come to present to everyone ....*

The participants' reflection on the collage-making process spoke to issues of representation, time and how exhausting it was to make a collage. For example, Camagu suggested that, next time, one should consider allowing them to arrive at the data generation venue having done their collages prior, giving them enough time to think around what they want to include in their collages regarding their nurturing practices. One could assume that since the process is so messy, as Zama mentioned, some of them forgot some of their nurturing practices. Therefore, Camagu's suggestion of giving participants a few days to make their collages could be considered for future studies. Zama also spoke about how he and Lonwabo could not find a picture of a black man holding or carrying a child on his back (refer to figures 5.13 and 5.16). Lonwabo ended up using a picture of a black woman to represent an idea of nurturing practices. What Zama and Lonwabo shared could have a negative implication for the generation of rich data, as the participants could have been demotivated due to the fact that they could not find what they were looking for in the material, magazines and newspapers provided. The aforementioned was made visible by Lonwabo when he stated that he was disappointed when he could not find the picture that he wanted in the materials provided. Luzuko and Zama were eventually happy about their collages and how they represented their ideas around how they facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms. Furthermore, Luzuko was happy about how different their collages looked.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an analysis of the data generated from the six Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers who voluntarily agreed to be research participants in this doctoral project. The study adopted PVRM and the methods of photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making as data generation sources (see Chapter 4). From the data, four themes emerged and were discussed in this chapter, with each theme having its own sub-themes. The main objective of analysing the collected data was to explore possibilities of nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers using participatory visual methods. To discuss the data generated, I sought to answer the three below research sub-questions guiding the study:

- How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct masculinity in the context of the Foundation Phase?
- How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?
- How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?

The findings of this study show that the participants in this study positioned their masculinities between hegemonic and complicit streams of masculinity. The participants' identities shifted between being men within the amaXhosa cultural context and fathers and husbands in their home and school settings. Furthermore, their masculinities were influenced by their contextual realities in and around their classrooms as they transitioned between their professional identity that is socially constructed as motherly, leading to their taking up a motherly masculine identity and having to negotiate their sexuality.

I also found that the participants understood nurturing as being linked to care, love, support and provision. The participants' experiences of nurturing are mainly associated with how they were nurtured during their rite of passage, and that played an important role in how they perceived the notion of nurturing in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms. The participants facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms through a rationale of co-constructing future responsible citizens. This was done through acts of kindness, empathy and by challenging some of the patriarchal practices, such as the discourse of "men must be respected", which has the possibilities of interfering with their professional duties. Moreover, the participants in this study showed that due to hegemonic masculinity, characterised as violent and aggressive, their

facilitation of nurturing was sometimes perceived as their having intentions of child abuse, molestation or paedophilia. In this regard, they had to be agentic and use preventative strategies to deal with such perceptions.

Lastly, I showed how the participants engaged in and reflected on the participatory visual methods to provide possible future suggestions on how PVRM methods can be used when engaging in sensitive issues or studying men and masculinities within the context of Foundation Phase teaching. In the following chapter, I show how the findings respond to my key research sub-questions. I also unpack the potential contribution of the study and the implications.

CHAPTER 7: SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

I began this doctoral project with a personal anecdote that ignited my research interest on the conceptualisation of nurturing norms of masculinity within the context of Foundation Phase teaching in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa. The purpose of this doctoral project was centred around exploring and understanding the experiences of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in relation to their nurturing-work practices and how that contributes to their construction of nurturing as a form of masculinity. From my personal experience in the anecdote in Chapter 1, it became important to think of ways in which spaces such as homes, schools and social settings could reimagine the conceptualisation of nurturing masculinities. It was also important to think of practices related to nurturing as being characteristic for both men and women, for the benefits of disrupting normative patriarchal ways of being human (Bhana, 2022; Ratele, 2014a; Warin, 2018).

This doctoral project is located within the field of sociology of education, with specific focus on male Foundation Phase teachers' construction of nurturing masculinity in and around their classrooms. The study used a qualitative approach, was located within the transformative paradigm and employed PVRM as its design. The participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making were used to generate rich data with six Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers to answer the following three research sub-questions: How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct their masculinities? How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing? How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms? The data generated using the different participatory visual methods were first analysed using participatory analysis. I later thematically analysed and interpreted the data using Tesch's steps, as mentioned by Creswell (2005), to create coding and themes. In the analysis of the data and creation of the codes and themes, Connell's (2005) theory of masculinity was instrumental. It shed insights into the different alternative streams of masculinity, its challenges and how multiple contextual traditional gender norms influence the construction of masculinities. Furthermore, feminist post-structuralist theory provided a lens to understand the complexities of the multiple

discourses and the power dynamics that exist in male teachers' schools that shape their construction of masculinities, particularly nurturing streams (Blaise, 2005).

7.2 Synthesis of the Findings and Conclusions

In chapters 5 and 6, I presented and discussed the data generated through the different participatory visual methods and transcribed from the group conversation. In this section of Chapter 7, I synthesise the key findings of the study and show how these findings respond to the three research sub-questions.

7.2.1 How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct their masculinities?

Using the participatory visual method of photovoice, participants in this study seemed to adopt socially constructed positions of what it means to be a man in the context of homes and used that as a base to explain how they identify as male teachers in their Foundation Phase classrooms. In this study, I found that the participants, Xhosa male teachers in the context of the Eastern Cape province, positioned themselves as men, fathers and husbands in and around their classrooms. Other participants who did not have children or wives used Foundation Phase learning and teaching as a way to prepare them to be future fathers and husbands. The participants in this study positioned themselves as uncles and fathers, assuming positions that within a social space carry some sort of power associated with compulsive heteronormativity. This is a common finding in the literature. Mashiya *et al.* (2015) and Msiza (2021) had similar results in their respective studies with pre- and in-service teachers in contexts such as the Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa. This study found that participants were conscious of how their masculinity is perceived and influenced by others, be it the learners, teachers or community members such as parents. The participants were aware of how their presence in Foundation Phase teaching, a feminine profession, influenced how they were perceived by other teachers and parents. This led to them assuming certain responsibilities and being relieved of others that form part of being a Foundation Phase teacher.

The study further found that participants recognised how context plays an important role in their construction of manhood. The participants in this study constructed their identity around what they called *motherly men* to suit the perceived idea of a Foundation Phase teacher. They argued that pedagogy, learners and teachers influenced their masculinity construction and led to them being motherly in their practices in and around their classrooms. The participants showed how there are complex differences between being a man within the social context of

the amaXhosa culture and in the Foundation Phase schooling context. In their role as male Foundation Phase teachers, they disassociated from certain Xhosa masculine ideals that do not align with the professional identity of a Foundation Phase teacher. These ideals include being empathetic, emotional and caring. The participants in this study became agentic in debunking patriarchal practices that might release them of responsibilities that are socially constructed as women's work. Examples of these responsibilities are nursing children's wounds, compiling grocery lists and being in the school support team that works with learners experiencing barriers to learning. The participants showed agency through having courageous conversations with other teachers and parents who wanted to reinforce societal practices that reinforce *men as disciplinarians* that might hinder their male Foundation Phase teacher professional identity.

It was, however, found that as participants were challenging certain patriarchal practices, their masculinity was becoming under scrutiny in that their sexuality was being questioned. This shows how politics of gender expression played an important role in how the participants in this study constructed their identities in and around their classrooms. The participants' dress code, the way they talked and how they expressed disappointment towards learners created a shift in how they as male Foundation Phase teachers were perceived by other teachers and learners. Participants in this study policed and regulated their behaviour and expression in order to sustain hegemonic ways of being men in Foundation Phase teaching, even though their practices tended to relegate them to subordinate norms of masculinity. Some participants dressed in ways that would not create suspicion that they are gay. Others came to the realisation that they have been compared to learners' parents in terms of the binary difference of how learners' parents react to certain behaviours of learners. The participants had to resort to other ways of reprimanding learners without being perceived as harsh and shouting as compared to the learners' mothers, which might position male Foundation Phase teachers in subordinate ideals of masculinity. The sustenance of hegemonic streams of masculinity became visible in ways participants resonated with identity markers that are socially constructed within hegemonic ways of what it means to be a man, irrespective of their sexual orientation and the influence of context. The participants in this study thus subscribed to the multiple ideals of masculinity that exist within the context of the amaXhosa culture and Foundation Phase professional teacher identity.

7.2.2 How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceive the notion of nurturing?

To respond to this sub-question on how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers perceived the notion of nurturing, the participatory method metaphor-drawing was used. It became clear in the findings that there are multiple understandings of what nurturing might mean; however, to many of the participants in this study, nurturing seemed to be linked but not limited to attributes such as care and love (Elliott, 2020b). Moreover, participants argued that teaching as a profession is nurturing in its nature, leading to the assumption that everyone in the teaching profession has the ability to nurture or is a nurturer. The participants' understanding of nurturing being centred around care and love makes room for the assumption that they do not subscribe to patriarchal practices. However, this might lead to controversial views on their positionality, because how they negotiated and constructed their masculinities is centred around compulsive heteronormativity.

I further found that participants associated nurturing with providing support and protection to learners in and around their classrooms. They did this through creating spaces where learners can share in their achievement and challenges and modelling acts of kindness and good behaviour to all in the schooling context. The participants associated nurturing with the notion that, as teachers, they must be conscious of the different modes of behaviour they present to the learners as it has an influence on the learners' future citizenship.

Another finding was that the participants in this study perceived nurturing as a journey, meaning that nurturing requires time, planning (pedagogically) and working towards developing the child holistically (Msiza, 2020; Tronto, 2010). The participants argued that nurturing involves teaching through pedagogical methods that are fun and interesting, such as play-based pedagogies. Therefore, one could assume that the participants in this study perceived nurturing in and around their classrooms as being underpinned by play-based pedagogies. Their understanding of nurturing therefore opens possibilities for the assumption that men in any given context are able to understand and facilitate the provision of children's holistic development through nurturing, an aspect I address in this next sub-section.

During the discussion on the meanings of the metaphor drawings, an important aspect of nurturing that took place in the lives of the participants emerged. The participants argued that an individual provides that which they have been given, meaning that they sometimes refer to their experiences of being nurtured as they were growing up. Gendered provision of nurturing was a common finding in the upbringing of the participants, who argued that their mothers and

grandmothers played a significant role in their childhood, whilst their fathers were providers due to migrant labour and other sociocultural reasons. The participants' fathers were nurturers on a part-time basis, only when they were around during weekends, which was not sufficient for their children to get to know them and have character-building conversation.

Another common finding was the communal relations to nurturing. Participants shared that due to the absence of their parents, sometimes both mother and father, community members aided them and their siblings by attending to certain nurturing responsibilities, such as assisting with homework.

Lastly, the participants shared their memories of being nurtured in their pre- and post-processes of Ulwaluko (the rite of passage). The process is an important identity marker in the lives and making of Xhosa masculinity. The participants, irrespective of their sexual orientations, stated that they were nurtured through gendered courageous conversations before going to the mountain and also whilst being in the process. The conversations were centred around self-love, respect, patience and stoicism. In this process of Ulwaluko, participants argued that they were in the care of other men, namely *amakhankhatha* (traditional nurses) and other respected men of the different communities they resided in. These men nurtured them through teachings of what it means to be a Xhosa man and took care of them whilst their wounds were healing. The participants explained that the above to some extent served as a backdrop to nurturing others in and around their classrooms.

7.2.3 How do Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms?

For this last sub-question, collage-making was used to elicit how participants in this study facilitated nurturing in and around their classrooms in Eastern Cape province schools. It became evident that the participants' facilitation of nurturing was geared towards co-constructing responsible citizens that are responsive to the self, their community and the environment in which the grow up. The participants posited that producing responsible citizens through nurturing requires multi-stakeholder participation that is inclusive of community members. This was visible when they referred to Xhosa idioms that are centred around how a child is born for and nurtured by the community.

Another aspect that emerged from the data is how participants facilitated nurturing through their preparation and delivery of content. Participants indicated that in the co-planning and team teaching of certain content with their female counterparts, they facilitated nurturing and that

they intentionally thought of fun and exploratory exercises to create a free and comfortable learning environment. The above finding suggests that due to the deeply rooted gendered practices associated with Foundation Phase teaching, the participants in this study associated their nurturing practices with collaborative team teaching with their female colleagues. The hope here was to work towards a gender-flexible pedagogy aimed at possibly debunking the gendered ideals that Foundation Phase teaching is women's work (Warin & Adriany, 2017).

Another interesting finding regarding how participants facilitated nurturing is how they located their facilitation of nurturing around addressing socioeconomic issues learners in their classrooms face. These include issues such as poverty, teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse, which lead to learners' constitutional rights and personal needs being neglected. The participants resorted to providing learners with soft porridge for food and cake on the learners' birthdays. It was found that the majority of learners in the participants' classrooms come to school with empty stomachs and others feel ashamed on their birthdays as their parents cannot buy them cake. This finding, to some extent, shows how socioeconomic challenges such as poverty affect learning and teaching, in that learners are unable to learn whilst being confronted with issues of hunger or feeling ashamed. Participants resorted to the provider stream of masculinity by providing learners with food and school clothing and making sure that learners are in school during learning hours.

Another finding that participants identified is the neglect of learners due to teenage parenting and abuse of alcohol. The participants postulated that due to high rates of teenage pregnancy in their school context, some of their learners, who are teenage girls and boys, are parents, yet they themselves still require to be nurtured and cared for. Therefore, through their nurturing facilitation, they worked towards creating spaces for courageous conversations with teenage parents, teenage boys and girls who might be active in the act of sex, to try and curb the high rate of teenage pregnancy. They aimed thus, even though there are difficulties in engaging on topics such as comprehensive sexuality education due to such topics being taboo and sensitive (Simayi & Webb, 2019). The participants in this study further argued that they facilitated nurturing through modelling good behaviour as father figures and positive role models to learners in their classrooms who do not have fathers (Brownhill *et al.*, 2016; Warin, 2018). The participants located some of their nurturing practices around father-figuring and being role models. One could assume that they were working towards building a harmonious and conducive learning environment. They want to provide learners who are raised in abusive and

violent environments led by fathers or men with the opportunity to experience a positive image of men that is nurturing and caring.

All participants in this study were conscious of their masculine identity marker within a highly feminine space and how their positionality and nurturing practices open possibilities of their masculinity being under constant surveillance and questioning. The participants in this study were agentic and adaptive to the shift in their masculine identity, for example by moving from hegemonic streams to complicit norms of masculinity through facilitating nurturing in their classrooms. This was visible in the dissociation of the participants from compliance to the societal heteronormative expectations of what it means to be Xhosa men to being *motherly men* in the context of Foundation Phase teaching in order to facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms. In reflection, the participants were aware of the how masculinities are centred around violence and abuse, particularly towards women and children. The participants devised strategies to minimise chances of being accused of being child abusers in their quest to nurture learners. One such strategy is adopting an open-door policy, especially when dealing with girl learners in their classrooms. The participants found it easier to facilitate nurturing with boys than girls as there is less suspicion. One could associate the strategies devised by the participants as playing into societal heteronormative assumptions about attraction, that is men being attracted to women and not other men. The participants' understanding of sexual abuse appears to be understood from a perspective of heterosexuality, where other studies have found similar understandings amongst men. In Moosa and Bhana's (2020) study in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, pre-service male teachers argued that homosexual men were regarded as more nurturing and caring towards children and less of a threat to Foundation Phase learners. Furthermore, Davies (2021), a Canadian scholar, who identifies as queer, shared in an autobiographical chapter how he often monitored and regulated his navigation of care and nurturing practices with both boys and girls to avoid any form of paedophilic suspicions. The above two oppositional studies, including the findings in this study, when juxtaposed, indicates the gaps and contradictions around nurturing practices in Foundation Phase teaching and positionality in relation to sexual identities.

The synthesis of findings in this section responded to the three research sub-questions. In the first question, I discussed the findings and demonstrated how the participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in the context of the Eastern Cape province constructed their masculinities. The findings show that the participants positioned themselves as men, fathers and, in some instances, motherly men influenced by the Foundation Phase context, leading to

their sexuality being under scrutiny. Sub-question 2 sought to explore how participants perceived the notion of nurturing. I found that participants had a comprehensive understanding of nurturing, linking it to attributes such as care and love. Moreover, their perceptions were influenced by their experiences of being nurtured during their rite of passage, which is an important aspect in the making of Xhosa masculinity. In responding to the third sub-question, I showed how participants' facilitation of nurturing in and around their classrooms is underpinned by the desire to co-construct responsible citizens, and in their facilitation, they worked towards addressing social issues such as poverty. However, in their quest to construct a different stream of masculinity that is nurturing, the current script of how men are perceived as violent and aggressive led to participants developing strategies to minimise the risk of being accused of or perceived as having child-abuser or -molester intentions in their facilitation of nurturing.

7.3 Contribution of the Study

7.3.1 Contribution to the body of knowledge

Currently, in South Africa, there is a paucity of research on how male teachers within the context of the Foundation Phase negotiate and construct different streams of masculinity. The present study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge by providing insights on how Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a stream of masculinity in and around their classrooms. Connell (2005) and Ratele (2016) have argued that masculinities are contextually reproduced, validated and consumed. It therefore became important to share insights on how men who have undergone the rite of passage to manhood, which is underpinned by "aggression, bravery, respect, stoicism and the abilities to listen to and to accept advice" (Mayekiso, 2017; Mfecane, 2020: 5), construct nurturing streams of masculinity in the context of Foundation Phase teaching that is in binary opposition to their socially constructed masculine identity of being Xhosa men. Therefore, the study contributes contextually through providing insight on the everyday identities of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers that shift between hegemonic and complicit norms of masculinity due to the different nurturing practices they do in Foundation Phase teaching. The context of this doctoral project was the Eastern Cape, a neglected rural and highly patriarchal province in terms of limited feminist scholarly research in the country. The majority of research done on masculinity, Foundation Phase teaching and nurturing-related concepts such as care has been conducted in other parts of South Africa, especially in the KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces (Moosa & Bhana, 2020; Msiza,

2020). In this study, I have shown how rural Xhosa men negotiate, understand and facilitate nurturing, which has implications on their teacher professional identities and Xhosa manhood. Moreover, Connell (2018: 339) argues that "knowledge about gender not only has a politics, but it also has geopolitics; and this geopolitics has a history". Within the context of the Eastern Cape, just as in the rest of the country, nurturing and care work has always been regarded as women's work. With feminist political influence on the labour market, men and women have crossed the gender binary borders to seek employment in spaces that challenge the binary construction of what is perceived to be men or women's work (Bhana, 2016). This was evident in this study, as it appeared that nurturing and care work, such as Foundation Phase teaching, is commendable work for both males and females. However, it was evident that the participants in this study relied mainly on hegemonic streams of masculinity when performing certain nurturing duties, such as adopting an open-door policy when assisting girl learners in their classrooms.

As indicated earlier in this section, research in South Africa regarding the involvement of men in nurturing and caring professions such as Foundation Phase teaching is in its infancy. It is on this basis that I argue that my doctoral project makes a contribution by providing an understanding of the lived realities of male Foundation Phase teachers within highly the perceived feminine context of the Foundation Phase. My study tapped into the experiences of in-service Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers with more than two years' experience of being in the teaching profession. This means that their experiences of nurturing had accumulated over a period of time whilst teaching in the Foundation Phase. The majority of research done within the South African context focused on Foundation Phase pre-service teachers or male teachers in primary schools in other educational bands, not specifically the Foundation Phase (Mashiya *et al.,* 2015; Moosa & Bhana, 2020). The present study found that Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers associate nurturing with care, love and teaching in general, leading to the assumption that one cannot nurture without loving or caring for the nurtured (learners in the case of Foundation Phase teaching). Moreover, a significant finding is how the participating Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers in this study related their nurturing practices to being nurtured during their process of Ulwaluko. This process, aimed at teaching bravery and stoicism (Mfecane, 2020), digressed to teach the participants in this study patience and respect for self and others, which has translated into their nurturing practices in and around their classrooms. I acknowledge that the experiences and challenges faced by male teachers in early childhood education are not unique to South Africa, however, by conducting a detailed

study in the Eastern Cape, I offer valuable insights that resonate with international contexts. The specific cultural, societal, and educational challenges faced by male teachers in the Eastern Cape serves as a case study that can be compared and contrasted with similar challenges in other parts of the world.

Moreover, the findings contribute to the reimagination of different streams of masculinity, particularly in the context of Foundation Phase teaching in South Africa. Moreover, the above findings are significant as they provide ideas on thinking about different streams of masculinity. In South Africa, until now, masculinities have been perceived as violent, aggressive and to some extent toxic in societies due to the high rates of femicide, homophobic attacks and child abuse (Tsewu, 2021). The participants in this study to some extent provide a window of opportunity for societies to reposition masculinities within more nurturing and pro-feminine ways. Even though this doctoral project was conducted in a South African context, particularly in the rural province of the Eastern Cape, the global population could gain insights into the current trends of research on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers in the African context.

7.3.2 Methodological contribution

The study adopted a qualitative approach, used PVRM as it design, and was further located within the transformative paradigm. The participants were engaged in using the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making to elicit how they negotiate, facilitate and construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms. The PVRM methodology enabled reflexivity and criticality amongst the participants in this study. It further ensured that these participants could approach reflecting on their everyday lives in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms in a way that is not humiliating or belittling. This study contributes methodologically by eliciting the power of PVRM methods to enable the mutual vulnerability amongst the participants in this study. The participants were able to freely engage on how they facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms, without the fear of being judged as not being man enough. The methodology also enabled participants to engage on sensitive issues, such as their sexual orientations and how they are perceived. The PVRM methods used in this study thus eased the seriousness regarding researching this sensitive topic and created space to work with participants in a way that is reflexive, respects the participants voices and yields results (Hegarty, 2016; Yamile & De Lange, 2023).

Another contribution made in this study is that, to my knowledge, it is the first of its kind in the South African context to use PVRM methods such as photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making to explore a phenomenon such as male Foundation Phase teachers' facilitation of nurturing in and around their classrooms. Many studies in South Africa have utilised traditional methods such as one-on-one interviews, although these do not make visible the participants' experiences. Unlike these methods, the different PVRM methods used in this study provided the participants opportunity to visualise, think and reflect on their thoughts of how they position, facilitate and construct nurturing streams of masculinity in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms.

7.3.3 Theoretical reflection and contributions

This study utilised two theories, namely Connel's theory of masculinity and feminist post-structuralist theory. Firstly, Connell's theory of masculinity was instrumental in providing a lens to understanding the multiple forms of masculinity that exist and how streams differ within particular contexts (Connell, 2005). Moreover, the theory clarified how men in different contexts constitute, construct and negotiate their gendered identities. In using this theory, I was able to analyse how the Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers who participated in this study shifted between hegemonic notions into complicit streams of masculinity during their facilitation of nurturing. Therefore, applying Connell's theory of masculinity in the study assisted in simplifying the process of data analysis. However, there are certain limitations to Connell's theory, as outlined by Mfecane (2020) and others and mentioned in Chapter 3 of this doctoral thesis. A limitation that was most relevant in this study was Connell's inability to account for the contextual realities of men in the Global South. One such reality is that in the "amaXhosa culture hegemony is achieved through the insertion of the mark" on the male body and not by sexuality or financial status (Mfecane, 2020; Ntombana, 2011). Because of this limitation, feminist post-structuralist theory aided in accounting for the experiences of the participants in this study. Acknowledging the dominant discourses, power dynamics and agentic response of the participants in this study regarding their nurturing facilitation led to the imagination of possible constructions of nurturing masculinity amongst the participants.

It is against the abovementioned that I believe the two theories were pivotal for this doctoral project. Connell's theory of masculinity and feminist post-structuralist theory helped me to fully explore the research topic. These theories served as a blueprint or guide in this study. Their application was helpful in the data analysis and was critical in assisting me to explore the

realities of the participants, for example the multiple contextual realities of Xhosa manhood in comparison to the perceived feminine context of Foundation Phase teaching and learning.

7.4 Implications of the Study

An impactful study is believed to have implications and provide a particular contribution to the body of knowledge. Therefore, this study's implications are structured in this manner: implications for policy, implications for practice, and implications of the findings for future research.

7.4.1 Implications for policy

The findings of this study related to the understanding of nurturing as teaching and centred around care and love have implications for policy within the context of Foundation Phase teaching and learning. Participants in this study implicitly showed willingness to facilitate nurturing in and around their classrooms, irrespective of their learners' sex or gender identities. However, the socially constructed ideals of who should facilitate sensitive acts of nurturing marginalise men and advantage women because of the history of toxic notions of masculinity within the South African context. This study recommends the need for policy to regulate how the facilitation of nurturing could be carried out in the schooling context, especially in the Foundation Phase teaching and learning context. Policy could thus stipulate to what extent teachers (both male and female) may facilitate aspects of their nurturing acts, for instance providing for needy learners in their classrooms, supporting learners emotionally and protecting or comforting learners that are being bullied due to their sexual orientation. In general terms, policy on the facilitation of nurturing should be structured in a way that protects both learners and teachers. For instance, male teachers in the context of the Foundation Phase should not find themselves resorting to creating measures to prevent being accused of inappropriate behaviour. Policy could assist in demystifying areas about the ways and extent to which teachers can enact nurturing practices in and around their classrooms.

Another policy implication from the findings of this study is that male teachers are positioned within higher grades in Foundation Phase teaching (i.e. grades 2 and 3). The perception is that male Foundation Phase teachers should not teach the lower grades (Reception Year and Grade 1). This finding has implications on the current teacher recruitment policies of the DBE of South Africa in that they need to be develop or updated. The findings show that principals and HoDs tend to disassociate male Foundation Phase teachers from teaching in the lower grades or

participating in remedial activities in the educational phase due to their gender or sex. This flags the need for a flexible and clear policy on teacher recruitment and guidelines to retain teachers in the Foundation Phase, particularly in the case of male Foundation Phase teachers. The policy should provide guidelines that are clear and inclusive for management (HoDs and principals), together with school governance (school governing bodies), to enable smooth implementation and realisation of an inclusive teaching and learning environment in the Foundation Phase.

7.4.2 Implications for practice

7.4.2.1 *Implications for teacher professional development*

Within the South African context, teachers are guided by the policy on norms and standards for teachers. In this policy, norm number 6 is centred around teachers providing pastoral care (South Africa. DBE, 2011). This study found that male Foundation Phase teachers, in their quest to attain the vision enshrined in this policy through facilitation of nurturing practices, are perceived to some extent to have child-molestation intentions. Therefore, this finding has implications on practice. An intervention could take the form of training offered for teachers, school management teams and school governing body members, particularly parents, as they represent the community. The training could be designed to unpack what is meant by pastoral role, and what the responsibilities of teachers are in providing pastoral care through different nurturing practices. The training could also offer stakeholders the opportunity to engage in different identity markers that intersect with the construction of professional teacher identity, such as class, ethnicity, race, sexuality and ageism, and possibly disrupt the socially constructed gendered notions surrounding nurturing in society and schools.

7.4.2.2 *Implications for initial teacher education*

Linked to the findings of this study is the unpreparedness or lack of strategies to address gender and sexuality issues that affect teachers' facilitation of nurturing and care. The participants in the study explained the difficulties and unpreparedness related to their initial teacher training with regard to facilitating courageous conversations on healthier sexual reproductive health choices. Therefore, this finding has implications for faculties of education in institutions of higher learning, particularly regarding the curriculum. Specific work needs to be done to train teachers in delivering comprehensive sexuality education that is age appropriate and contextualised in order to nurture learners to make better sexual health choices, as learners develop in various aspects of their lives. This could be done through the creation of modules in

the undergraduate programme that address different pedagogical strategies that teachers can use to engage learners and parents without feeling ashamed or unprepared. Moreover, some institutions offer content related to gender and sexuality in a generic way and others as units within a module. It becomes important for institutions to bring under careful consideration the topic of how nurturing and care are expressed by both male and female pre-service teachers. Within faculties of education, particularly Foundation Phase departments should have modules that address issues of gender, nurturing and care in their B.Ed programmes. The curriculum should be specific and contextual and address such issues at a specialisation level. Institutions of higher learning that offer the B.Ed degree should provide a gender-flexible and -sensitive curriculum that prepares teachers to be fully equipped pedagogically for the ever-changing world. These teachers will be agentic and confident to engage in issues of gender and sexuality and facilitate nurturing and care in a gender-sensitive way.

7.4.3 Implications for future research

Beyond the findings of the doctoral project, much intellectual work needs to be done on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers. Drawing on the findings of this study, there are implications for future research. First, in this doctoral project, one of the participants was a straight-acting gay male Foundation Phase teacher who conformed to compulsory heteronormativity within the context of Foundation Phase learning and teaching. There is a paucity of research in South Africa on how non-conforming lesbian, gay, transgender and queer (LGBTQIA++) teachers negotiate and construct their professional teacher identities. The research could further explore how identity markers such as diverse gender expressions influence their facilitation of nurturing and care in and around their Foundation Phase classrooms.

Another important implication informed by the findings of this study is that learners' voices on the involvement of males in Foundation Phase learning and teaching and their experiences of being nurtured in this context need to be heard. Part of the findings pointed to participants' believing that some learners perceived them as soft or gay. What is missing in literature on the phenomenon of male Foundation Phase teachers and their facilitation of nurturing and care are the voices of Foundation Phase learners. However, there are ethical implications involved in research that involves children, for instance issues such as methodological challenges. I thus propose that future research could possibly employ PVRM methods such as drawing and

photovoice to mitigate the power dynamics and other ethical issues that might arise when embarking on research that involves learners.

The study further recommends the need to delves deeper into the theoretical of term "nurturing masculinities" within diverse contexts such as South Africa and its relationship with care, teaching, and education. This in-depth exploration and conceptual refinement could have significantly contribution to how male foundation phase teachers construct and interpret nurturing.

Lastly, another implication for future research that relates to the study is centred around how males come into Foundation Phase learning and teaching knowing that it is perceived to be a highly feminine profession. Future research could look into how males use their positionally and male privilege within this gendered space for professional growth. This suggestion is informed by the finding that the participants in this doctoral project positioned themselves as providers, protectors and psychologists within the schooling context. This positionality has the possibility to hinder the attainment of an inclusive learning environment that perpetuates equitable working conditions. Therefore, it becomes important to thoroughly study work politics of positionality in gendered spaces such as Foundation Phase teaching to fully understand the dynamics and work towards disrupting the patriarchal notion of assuming that men are better protectors and providers than women in their facilitation of nurturing and caring practices.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

The doctoral project had several research limitations. First, the study involved a small number of Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers as participants, who were based in rural areas of the Eastern Cape province. Therefore, the experiences of facilitating nurturing by the participants in this study cannot be regarded as universal. Second, my positionality as an outsider, a moTswana man, researching nurturing experiences of Xhosa male teachers might have been a limitation in terms of understanding practices and language interpretation.

Third, because of the paradigmatic standpoints that I took regarding the study, which is transformative in nature, in reflection, it is difficult to explicitly point out what changed in participants' professional identities or their facilitation of nurturing. However, the participants in this study reflected on their positionality, negotiation and possible constructions of nurturing as a stream of masculinity which to some extent demonstrated a criticality and agency.

This study, I adopted the participatory visual methods photovoice, metaphor-drawing and collage-making, which provided the participants the freedom and ability to express their ideas in ways they wanted to. However, the materials I provided the participants might have to some extent limited them in expressing their ideas. It would have been better if I had encouraged participants to bring some of the materials, such as newspapers, magazines, to enable more productive data generation and various ideas to be visualised.

Lastly, for future research in the area of masculinities and early childhood education there is a need delves deeper into the theorisation of the concept "nurturing masculinities" and its relationship with care, teaching, and education. Further theorisation is needed to elucidate how nurturing masculinities differ from or intersect with these concepts and, more specifically, how they are interconnected with gender, race, ethnicity, and other identity markers. This in-depth exploration and conceptual refinement will significantly contribute to the data analysis and interpretation of findings related to how male foundation phase teachers construct and interpret nurturing. Such theoretical clarity will provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play and foster a more comprehensive analysis of nurturing masculinities in the context of primary education.

7.6 My Personal-Professional Reflections

Reflexivity or personal reflection of the research journey is an important aspect in qualitative research because it provides the researcher with the opportunity to self-reflect on their personal and to some extent professional growth during the research process (Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In Chapter 1 of this study, I positioned myself as an “inside outsider” due to my experience of being a male Foundation Phase teacher (see section 1.5). Therefore, throughout this doctoral project, I had to introspect and reflect on my subjectivity as I conducted the research. During the data generation and both participatory and thematic analyses, it was difficult and exciting for me to critically analyse the data. It felt like I was reliving my former life as a male Foundation Phase teacher and rethinking how my practices and abilities of nurturing and care continued to be under the scrutiny of those around me, be it in a Foundation Phase classroom or lecture hall. Therefore, during the coding and creation of themes, I had to be accurate and concise in developing the themes and sub-themes. During this process, I had to detach my personal interpretation of the visual methods and the transcribed data. In doing so, I

was working towards interpreting data according to participants' understanding and perceptions. Moreover, as I presented and discussed the data in chapters 5 and 6, I used some of the original expressions by participants in isiXhosa with the English translation. The rationale for using isiXhosa words is that I did not want my ever-changing positionality to misrepresent the views and expressions of the participants in this project (Merriam *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, having had impromptu reflective moments with my supervisors, I became more critical in how I interpreted the data, which to some extent could have not been done due to bias, since I was also a male Foundation Phase teacher at a certain point in my life.

Having facilitated this doctoral project, I come out of the research process with a good measure of respect for the male Foundation Phase teacher participants in this study because of their agency and willingness to critically participate in a research project of this nature. Their participation resulted in generating rich and in-depth data using PVRM. This also aided the research process to flow with ease and enabled me and the participants to reflect on and rethink the nurturing practices that might lead to the construction of nurturing masculinity amongst Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers. In addition to PVRM offering implicit benefits to the participants, I also, as the researcher, have deepened my understanding of how male Foundation Phase teachers within the Eastern Cape context construct nurturing as a form of masculinity and improved my understanding of the methodology. I am currently a teacher educator interested in teacher identity and therefore am interested in using the methodology with Foundation Phase pre-service teachers in how they reconstruct their gendered professional teacher identities through creative methods offered by PVRM. On a personal note, I came out of this research having understood that with the intersection of professional practice and culture, people's experiences are different and they should not be treated as homogeneous.

7.7 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to provide a synthesis and conclusion of the study. To reiterate, in this doctoral project, I explored how Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity. Therefore, in this chapter, I first provided a synthesis of the findings and conclusions. Next, I highlighted the potential contribution that the findings make to the body of knowledge. I also discussed the implications of the findings to policy, practice and future research. Lastly, I discussed the limitations and reflected on the doctoral journey.

The study found that Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers' identities are influenced by their different contextual realities, and therefore shift between different streams of masculinity, such as complicit and hegemonic notions of masculinity. This leads to their understanding and facilitation of nurturing as non-homogeneous. However, men continue to aspire to sustain hegemonic streams of masculinity that are a hindrance to their nurturing practices, resulting in their not being able to fully embody nurturing masculinities. In conclusion, the work on men in nurturing and caring professions such as Foundation Phase teaching in South Africa remains important and crucial in reimagining different streams of masculinity that are nurturing and pro-feminine (Ratele, 2016). Moreover, the work is important in liberating masculinities from rigid hegemonic notions of masculinity and for the creation of transformational and inclusive professional spaces that embrace diversity and social justice practices.

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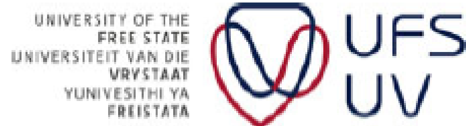
Appendix A: Ethical Approval Letter



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

10-Feb-2022

Dear Mr Obakeng Kagola

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2021/1447/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri du Plessis Digitally signed by Dr Adri du Plessis Date: 2022.02.11 10:03:12 +02'00'

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Appendix B: Permission Letter by Eastern Cape Department of Education

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

CORPORATE PLANNING, MONITORING, POLICY AND RESEARCH COORDINATION

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex, Zone 6 Zwelitsha, 5608, Private Bag X0032, Bhisho, 5605 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA:
Enquiries: **Ms. F. Pakade Tel: 040 608 7071/4001 . Fax :040 608 4372. Email:** fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za
Date: 07 February 2022

Mr. Obakeng Kagola

32 Edward Street

Richmond Hill

Gqebega

6001

Dear Mr. Kagola

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A DOCTORAL RESEARCH: PARTICIPATORY VISUAL EXPLORATION OF NURTURING MASCULINITIES AMONGST EASTERN CAPE-BASED XHOSA MALE FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHERS

1. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research involving Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers from five (05) primary schools in Nelson Mandela district under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:

   a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;

   b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;

   c. no minors will participate without the consent from the parent/guardian;

   d. it is not going to interrupt educators' time and task;

   e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;

   f. no physical contact with educators and learners, only virtual means of communication should be used and that should be arranged and agreed upon in writing with the Principal and the affected teacher/s;

   g. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;

   h. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;

Customer care line: 086 063 8636
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

i. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management;

j. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis;

k. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary;

l. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management upon completion of your research;

m. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you;

n. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form);

o. You submit on a six-monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management.

2. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there be non-compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE and/or legal requirements to do so.

3. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.

4. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Mrs. Fundiswa Pakade on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.

T. MASOEU
CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT

FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

[Type here]
growth
education

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Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

NDP 2030

Appendix C: Letter to School Principals

(DATE: 20 May 2022)

Dear Principal

We have invited XXXX of XXX Primary School to participate in the research project "Participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers". This study is being conducted by Obakeng Kagola for PhD research study.

Despite the many initiatives to attract male teachers to FP learning and teaching, there is a lack of interest from South African men (Bhana, 2016; Msiza, 2019). Few studies have explored this phenomenon; however, none have explored the concept of nurturing within FP teaching and learning. Many attribute nurturing as a feminine trait which as a society, has been socially constructed. Little is known about how male FP teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their schools in the highly patriarchal and conservative Eastern Cape province. Furthermore, within the studies of men and masculinities, limited or no research has been conducted together with men using participatory visual research methodologies to gain a deeper understanding of how men conceptualise and construct nurturing as a form of masculinity as Connell, (2005) has argued that masculinities differs according to men's socialisation and contextual realities. The above lead to want to understand how Xhosa male foundation phase teachers construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their schools, with the intension of contributing to teacher identity construction.

It is to my knowledge that Mvumeni Shenxane is a foundation phase teacher at your school Cave Ridge Primary School. With your permission, I would like to invite Mbonisel Primary School to participate in a collage making data generation process that will be scheduled at a date and time that does not interfere with their teaching duties and the data generated will take place at a safe, COVID-19 regulations compliant place in East London at the Hill Hotel. The study has received ethical clearance from UFS and ECDoE **(UFS-HSD2021/1447/22).** Please note that the names of participants and schools will be kept strictly confidential and not shared in the research report. All participation is voluntary,

and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Please be informed that I Obakeng Kagola will be facilitating the collage making data generation process.

The potential benefit of this study is to contribute to foundation phase teacher identity in South Africa and in particular of teachers in the Eastern Cape province. The male teachers stand a chance to reflect on their own positioning as teachers of young children and in relation to others (peers and parents) is so doing they become reflective and aware of how their presence in foundation phase teaching influences their own construction of self.

Thank you for taking the time to read this request to allow Mvumeni Shenxane to participate in this project. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Marguerite Muller (Promoter) or myself if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mr Obakeng Kagola
078 228 6487
Obakeng.kagola@mandela.ac.za

Appendix D: Information Leaflet and Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS
UV

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

10 June 2022

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinities amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Kagola Obakeng *2020897571* *0782286487*

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Education
Department of Curriculum studies

STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Dr. Marguerite Muller
0514019683

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to understand how Xhosa male Foundation phase teaches construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in and around their different schooling context. Reason being nurturing in foundation phase is socially constructed within femininity and not within masculinities. Therefore, it becomes important to understand how males who teach in this educational phase construct nurturing as a form of masculinity in their different schooling contexts.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Obakeng Kagola. Before I joined one of the South African university as a teacher educator, was a male foundation phase teacher in the North West province teaching grade R to 3. I am currently registered for my PhD study in Curriculum development at the University of Free State.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2021/1447/22

205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika, T: +27(0)51 401 9111, www.ufs.ac.za

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Eastern Cape male foundation phase teachers are rare to find, due to the low numbers of males teaching in this educational phase. Because of this reason it becomes important to find out how males navigate and construct nurturing in and around their school contexts. I will drive around primary school and ask if there are male teachers in schools and ask to be referred to schools that have male foundation phase teachers in the Eastern Cape province. I intend to have a minimum of six and a maximum of eight male foundation phase teachers.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The participants in this study will be asked to create collages, two individually and one collectively. The first collage prompt will be: create a collage of yourself in and around your classroom. The second prompt will be: create a collage depicting your idea of nurturing in and around your classroom. Third collage: collectively create a collage the commonality and differences of your ideas of nurturing in and around your different schooling contexts. Participants will also be given journals to write their reflection on the different experiences that they regard as nurturing that occurred in and around their schools. Please see appendix for further elaborations on the collage making process.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Yes, If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study will indirectly benefit you on how you position yourself in relation to yourself and other (peers and learners) in your different schooling contexts. Further you stand a chance of learning more about how you construct and perform masculinities in and around your schooling context and you could become reflective about that.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

In care the participants in the study feel emotional distress, there will be a psychologist on standby to consult. This is to work towards remedying the emotional distress that participant might have encountered during the data generation.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

To maintain confidentiality, your name will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give and your collage captions. I will use pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as

conference proceedings. By signing a confidentiality agreement, Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Please be informed that the anonymous data generated may be used for other purposes, such as research report, journal articles, conference presentation: A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. [Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality/anonymity, e.g. when collages are used as a data collection method. According to Kagola and Khau, (2020: 67) developing a collage is "the process of using different fragments of paper images or any other materials and pasting them on a flat surface to portray a particular phenomenon". As a participant you will be required to dialogue with your fellow male foundation phase teachers about what does the collage mean in relations to the nurturing as a form of masculinity. While I as the researcher will every effort to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the collage making process, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the group discussion will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the collage making process.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

The researcher will store hard copies of your collages and reflective journals for five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in an office of the researcher at one of the South African university for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the five period the researcher will contact the participant to collect their collage and reflective journal or grant the researcher to burn the materials

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICPATING IN THIS STUDY?

These is no incentive or payment for participating in the study.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The researcher will organize a meeting with participants of the study to share the findings and provide them with a copy of the findings.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, ______________________________ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the *insert specific data collection method*.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: ______________________________

Signature of Participant: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): ______________________________

Signature of Researcher: ______________________________ Date: ______________

Appendix E: Itinerary for Weekend Retreat

Itinerary for the data generation weekend retreat

Day 1 (Friday)

16:30 – 17:15 Checking-in

17:30 – 19:00 Welcoming and refreshments

16:30 – 18:45 Introduction of the study and the filling in of consent forms

19:00 – 20:00 Phase 1 – workshop on participatory visual methods

20:00 – 20:45 dinner

20:50 session ends

Day 2 (Saturday)

07:00 – 08:00 Breakfast

08:15 – 08:30 Recap (and reflection) on the workshop

08:30 – 09:30 Photovoice activity (depiction of self in and around the classroom)

09:30 – 11:00 Gallery walk and group conversation

11:00 – 11:30 Tea break

11:30 – 12:15 Metaphor drawing activity (understanding of nurturing)

12:15 – 13:10 Presentation and Discussion

13:15 – 14:00 Lunch and walk

14:15- 15: 45 Collage-making (facilitation of nurturing in and around the classroom)

16: 00- 18:00 Presentation, Gallery walk and group conversation

18:00 – 18:30 Consolidation & wrap up

18:30 Dinner & departure

Day 3 (Sunday)

07:00 – 08:00 Breakfast

08:15 – 08:30 Welcoming and introduction by researcher

‘So far’ (a recap)

08:30 – 10:30 collaborative collage-making (one collage that represent our views on nurturing)

10:30 – 11:00 Tea

11:00 – 13:00 Discussion

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch and departure

Appendix F: Declaration by Language Editor

Editing Declaration

Lené Kraft
Postal Address: PO Box 2313 Lichtenburg 2740
Telephone: 072 782 8990
Fax: 086 626 1773
E-mail: lene@englishproofreader.co.za
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To whom it may concern 17 July 2023

I hereby declare that I am a professional editor and have edited and proofread the following research:

A participatory visual exploration of nurturing masculinity amongst Eastern Cape-based Xhosa male Foundation Phase teachers

by

Obakeng Kagola

As a professional editor with an English major obtained from the University of Pretoria in 2003, I am also a Full Member of the Professional Editors' Guild and a member of SATI (membership number 1002503).

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lené Kraft