

# **I-lobola in Contemporary South Africa: Perspectives and Experiences of Young People**

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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**  
**DECLARATION OF PLAGIARISM**

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## **Abstract**

Marriage continues to be an important aspect of life for people around the world, it is a respected way of family formation and a way for two people to unite including their families. In South Africa, it is often expected among Africans that there is a payment of i-lobola before the actual marriage. I-lobola continues being a cultural practice that is common in South Africa and other African countries. However, over the past few decades there has been some changes in i-lobola and the focus has shifted from uniting families to financial gains.

The aim of the study was to shed insights into the practice of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa. Data was collected using in-depth interviews with 20 participants, 10 males and 10 females between the ages of 18 to 24 years. All participants were students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban.

The interviews suggest that i-lobola is widely recognized among young people and it still holds cultural significance. Participants emphasized that the significance of i-lobola was to unite two families however as the years progressed, people lost the meaning of i-lobola as they were commercializing it. Participants stated that there was a relationship between i-lobola and marriage because the payment of i-lobola is a practice that must be followed for a marriage to be recognized. The interviews suggest that high i-lobola payment is one of the reasons people are cohabiting. Participants stated that some families used the virginity status of the girl and her educational attainment in order to determine the amount of payment for i-lobola. Participants had different attitudes regarding i-lobola, with some still arguing that i-lobola should continue being practiced because it is part of their culture, while others stating that it should be stopped because it has lost its significance.

The study recommends that man's achievement should also be considered when determining the value of i-lobola. Since families use i-lobola for financial gain, it is recommended that before i-lobola negotiations commence, both families should advise individuals who are about to get married about the importance of true love and proceed with the negotiations once they can see that both individuals understand the importance of marriage. The study of i-lobola should be replicated with older people. This may help in getting a better understanding

of the purpose of i-lobola. Conducting a study on the elderly may create an understanding on the origins of i-lobola as the elderly acquire knowledge regarding the significance of i-lobola.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

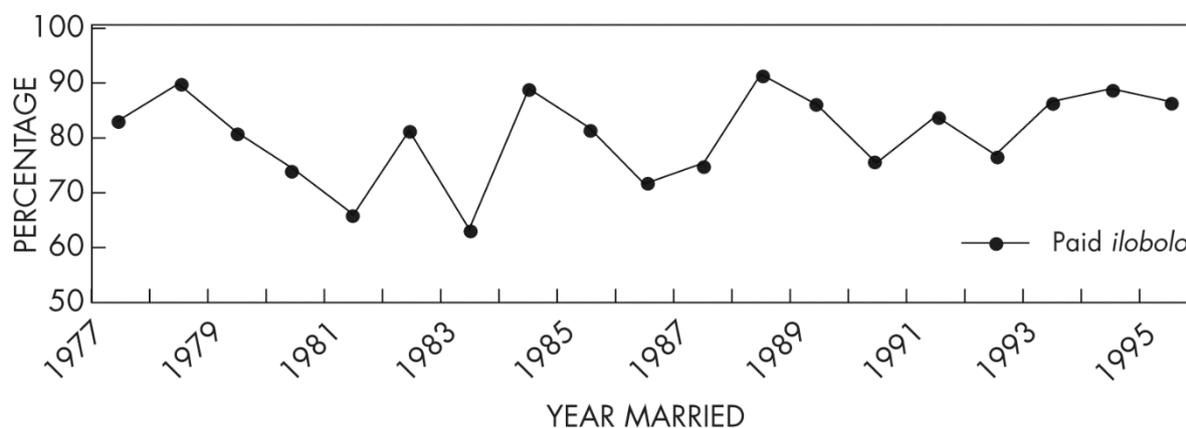
### 1.1 Background

Marriage is highly valued among Africans as they believe that it is essential for stable family formation (Shangase and Maharaj, 2019). Marriage is considered a sign of maturity and gives women the responsibility of caregiving for the home and family (Shangase and Maharaj 2019). In Africa, marriage plays an important part in family formation. In some cultures, the process of marriage involves the payment of bridewealth. I-lobola, bride price and dowry as it is called by different names among different ethnics groups in Africa, is a cultural practice common among Africans, it is the first step involved in the process of getting married. I-lobola is a marriage custom that “involves the provision of gifts to the parents of a bride, usually in the form of cash or livestock” (Ansell, 2001:1). In the South African context, i-lobola is an important aspect of uniting two families and it is deeply embedded in cultural and spiritual norms.

In many African cultures, the process of marriage includes a series of activities and negotiations, which includes the exchanging of gifts between the families. Marriage is the joining together of a man and a woman as husband and wife (Anderson, 2013: 2). Marriage is not simply regarded as the union of two people, but the union between two families. There is an acknowledgment of the value that the female brings to the union, this process of formalising her transition from one family to another being referred to as i-lobola (Mwanda, 2016). There have been many debates around same sex marriage being legal in most countries and in South Africa therefore same sex marriage cannot be excluded. Therefore, “marriage is the union of two people (whether of the same sex or of opposite sexes) who commit to romantically loving and caring for each other and to sharing the burdens and benefits of domestic life” (Girgis, George and Anderson, 2011:246). This denotes that marriage is not only about males and females creating a union rather it is to unite two people who love each other. Marriage provides for the continuation of human life and family formation. There are different forms of marriages recognised across the world. This is inclusive of monogamy whereby there are two people in the union, usually the husband that has one wife (Fortunato and Archetti, 2010). Polygamy is whereby a man can marry multiple women (Thobejane and Flora, 2014).

Changes in marriage patterns over the years have been well-documented. Scholars such as Palumuleni (2010) has documented changes in marriage patterns in South Africa and stated that the changes are caused by increased educational opportunities, urbanisation and modernisation and participation of women in the labour force. Similarly, Posel and Rudwick (2014) state that low marriage patterns among African women are caused by economic constrains such as high cost of bride wealth that is linked to high unemployment rate. According to the 2016 Community Survey there has been increase in the percentage of persons who had never been married from 47, 7% in 1996, to 48, 9% in 2001, 50, 8% in 2011 and 56, 5% in 2016. Marriage has consistently declined, from 39, 5% in 1996, to 34, 5% in 2001, 32% in 2011, and finally 28, 3% in 2016. In contrast, the proportion of cohabiting persons has increased from 5% in 1996 to 8, 3% in 2016 (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Posel et al. (2011) in their study used the province of KwaZulu-Natal, within South Africa, to document the changes in marriage patterns pertaining to the payment of i-lobola. Their study showed that there has been fluctuations in payment of i-lobola from the 1977 to 1995 in KwaZulu-Natal refer to (Figure 1.1). This means that as the payment of i-lobola decreases so is marriage patterns as the payment of i-lobola is linked to marriage. They argued that there has been a decrease in the number of marriages in KwaZulu-Natal compared to other provinces and in particular, Africans as to other races (Posel et al., 2011).

**Figure 1.1: Marriage patterns with payment of i-lobola in KwaZulu-Natal**



Source: Posel et al. (2011)

## 1.2 Defining i-lobolo

*Ukulobola* is a Zulu term that describes the entire process of marriage negotiations between the families of the bride and groom. "Ilobolo is a gift in the form of cows or money or both that the groom's family gives to that of the bride" (Rajuili, 2004:2). It is one of the long-standing traditions practiced among Africans in South Africa, including the Zulu and the Xhosa tribes. The meaning behind the practice of i-lobola is that it acts as a symbol to unite two people in a relationship (Heeren, Jemmott III, Tyler, Tshabe, and Ngwane, 2011:74). Different ethnic groups have different cultures and norms that they conform to, thus the way i-lobola is practiced may slightly change from each group, but similarities may be noted also and the entire meaning embedded in the practice which is to unite two families.

The words i-lobolo and i-lobola are used in this thesis to define and highlight the practice of bride wealth and the actual process of payment. I-lobolo is the amount given, which can be in the form of cows or money, while i-lobola is the process of paying i-lobolo. I-lobola is defined as a bride price, being a common cultural practice among **African** people. A bride price is the amount of money or goods paid by the groom, or his family, to the parents of a woman he is about to marry (Juing and Sánchez-Barricarte, 2012). The payment of i-lobola is believed to contribute to the establishment of healthy social relationships, as it brings two families together. The payment of i-lobola consists of an exchange from both families, the groom's family gaining a daughter and wife, while the bride's family also gaining a son, and they are compensated by the payment of i-lobola through money. However, the meaning and significance of this cultural practice has changed over time. Some argue that i-lobola is misused, this being due to the lack of understanding of its original purpose and function, which has resulted in it losing its significance and meaning (Rajuili, 2004). The payment of i-lobola in some cases means that the couple may live together thereafter.

This traditional practice has served to symbolize the transition to adulthood, the legitimacy of a marriage, and many other aspects of social identity and relationships. After colonisation in South Africa marriage payment was five herds of cattle and it included gifts such as blankets, hoes and baskets of grain (Ansell, 2001). Ansell (2001) states that since the arrival of the colonial settlers, i-lobola has been interpreted by Western observers in many ways. I-lobola can be understood as compensation for the expense of a girl's upbringing, including her education and the loss of her services, the union giving the couple rights to property and ownership. Rights to labour and land may be transferred through the practice, as well as material goods

(Ansell, 2001). Posel and Rudwick (2011) states that the payment of i-lobola is made in instalments which must be finalised before the couple can get married. The economic aspect of i-lobola was not regarded as the primary purpose of the practice, and in traditional Zulu culture, for example, a man who could not afford i-lobola could be permitted to ask the father of the bride to agree to the marriage on the basis that the cattle paid for the groom's first daughter would belong to the father-in-law (Dlamini, 1994 cited in Posel et al., 2011). I-lobola is a requirement for getting married in some cultures.

Despite efforts to regulate and influence the practice through customary law in the colonial era, the practice of i-lobola is continued among those who believe in it. More recently, globalisation, modernisation and urbanisation have led to global economic changes that have had an impact of the cultural and social aspects of many societies. The consequences of globalisation have affected many cultures, and often changed the way in which people interact. Baecker (1997) states that culture is the shared meaning between groups of people that is developed on how individuals interact with each other. Modernisation theory describes how countries move from being traditional to modern societies, which results in them no longer practicing the traditional ways of doing things and adopt modern ways of living. Within this context, the young people's views on i-lobola and the associated cultural practices have changed. Arguments on i-lobola and the high cost of i-lobola has been stated as the reason for people delaying getting married and choosing to cohabit. However, it has undergone changes as communities have adapted to the influences associated with modernization and market forces, with payment by cows now often being replaced by payment in cash. Many young people who live in urban areas do not have access to cattle, while some families prefer to receive cash.

### **1.3 Defining culture**

The growing influence of science on the way people engage with the world, and the increasing availability of and desire for material goods, influences people's behaviours. Culture is seldom static, but changes when individuals adapt to a new social, political, economic and physical environment. I-lobola in South Africa is a common cultural practice amongst Africans. "Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people" (Spenser, 2008 cited in Spenser, 2012:2). The definition above indicates that while cultural practices

apply to everyone in a group, each person needs to decide to what extent they will adhere to the associated practices. I-lobola is a practice that is valued in many African countries, including South Africa. It is one of the traditional practices involved in the process of getting married and is regarded as an important part of culture “Culture, as it is understood, entails a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies” (Idang, 2015:98). However, cultures adapt to the surrounding circumstances, and may vary within a country and have different effects on traditional practices, including i-lobola. These peculiar traits include people's language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion and dancing, as well as social norms, taboos and values (Idang, 2015).

Modernisation has also impacted on cultural practices, including i-lobola, as well as the movement of people from rural to urban areas following the introduction of democracy in the country in 1994 in the search of employment. The kinship and meanings shared by groups of people was diluted as people move away from their traditional family, which resulted in them adjusting to the environments they found themselves in. This is reflected in the different opinions people in rural and urban areas have about i-lobola and to what extent they practice it. McDonald (1991), states that culture is created and re-created by individuals as it forms parts of who they are and what they will be. Marriage in most societies is perceived as a central piece and is rooted in cultural practice as it is way of family formation, with i-lobola as one of the fundamental requirements for getting married (Pauli and van Dijk (2016). Getting married amongst Africans is part of culture and is valued thus the practice is taken as high priority and the procedure must be followed according to cultural rules and norms, as there could never be marriage without the payment of i-lobola (Posel and Rudwik, 2011). If a man wants to get married, he is expected to pay i-lobola by doing this he is showing his commitment to marrying according to the values and principles.

#### **1.4 Bride wealth in other countries**

The paying of bride price has been a common African tradition for many centuries. Many cultures practice i-lobola differently however, there are also similarities. For some it is referred to as bride wealth, whereas others refer to it as bride price and in South Africa, it is referred to as i-lobola. This is associated with the giving of gifts to the family of the bride. In some cultures, the bride also gives gift to the groom family. There are three types of marriage

payments in African countries. These are uxorial payments, viroral payments, and mutual exchange, where bride wealth is identified as viroral payment (Ogbu, 1978).

The Gonja payment in Ghana consists of a minimal amount of 13 shillings and 12 kola, this being equivalent to R0.50 in South African while it is regarded as a small amount, it is supplemented by courting and the giving of gifts to the future bride and her parents. The payment of bride wealth is an essential part of the marriage procedure as it severs "*to stabilize a marriage, as a physical symbol of the marriage union, as a source of income and as a source of esteem for the bride and/or groom*" (Ng'ang'a, 2018:6). Among the Lowiili, a tribe in Ghana, there is payment required which is needed to "legalize" the union. In addition, payments amounting to 3 cows, 1 goat and 20 000 cowrie shells is made during the time of the marriage and the last payment should be made when the bride joins her husband (Fuseini, 2013).

In India, bride price for marriage can be classified into two broad categories: transfers from the bride's family to that of the groom being broadly termed 'dowry', while from the groom's side to the bride's being termed 'bride price' (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016). Dowry in India is a form of inheritance that the groom takes with to her marriage; it is passed down from one person to another, from parents to the daughter (Tambiah et al., 1989). Dowry is defined as wealth given to a daughter at her marriage as a contribution to the practical life of the newly married couple (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016). Dowry is defined as wealth given to a daughter at her marriage for contributing to the practical life of the newly married couple (Laiphrakpam et al., 2016). In Thailand, bride wealth is from the groom's family to the bride's family as a form of appreciation, unlike dowry which is given by the bride's father to the groom's family in other cultures (Laiphrakpam et al., 2016). Dowry is a transfer of the girl's wealth to the grooms; she may take her wealth given to her to share it with her husband. One may articulate that the common factor found is that it is about sharing wealth with a partner. Bride price and dowry are both similar to i-lobola in that they are both negotiated before marriage by families involved, though the other is a form of money and the other can be both money and property (Laiphrakpam et al., 2016).

Bride price in Thailand is frequently called 'ka-nam-nom' or 'milk money' to indicate the repayment for milk and nursing. There have been many changes in Thailand in both the marriage rituals and transactions, and can be money or any other valuable item, such as a diamond ring, land, a house, car or bank account. The changes associated with the modern lifestyle has greatly affected the dissolution of the bride wealth practice, which has been replaced

by a new category of marriage transaction called *sinsodthongman* (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016). *Sinsodthongman* means that as the world changes so do people progress, it is not that people are losing their culture but because of the changing trends, they are forced to adapt to the new and evolved way of doing things.

## **1.5 Motivation of the study**

Little is known about the opinions and attitudes to i-lobola among young people in South Africa, specifically university students who have been exposed to new ways of thinking about life through their academic education. It is not known if they view the practice of marriage as different from what is reported in the literature, or if they have different views to their elderly relatives. The results will provide insights into the way i-lobola is perceived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by young people who have yet to undergo marriage. It is important to acknowledge the perspectives of young people as they form a large part of the population in South Africa therefore, the focus of this study is on students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is important to study i-lobola and ascertain the perspectives of young people in university because most of these students are staying far from their homes, where cultural norms and traditions are strongly enforced. Therefore, it is going to be important to discover if their views on i-lobola has changed when they had left their homes and how this has shaped their current perceptions. Being in a new setting allows them to be exposed to different lifestyles and interacting with different people from around the world, which could influence their perspectives on life. It will be interesting to explore their views on i-lobola in the context of modernisation and investigate if this change is influenced by interaction with others.

The study aims to fill the gap on the relevance of i-lobola in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by exploring the perceptions of students on i-lobola. There has been much debate on i-lobola and controversy among young people. According to the 2016 South African Community Survey, there has been a decrease in age at first marriage from 1996 to 2016, in 1996, it was 47, 7 years and in 2016, it was 56, 5 years (Statistics South Africa, 2018). This is due to young people delaying marriages for a number of reasons including the high amounts of i-lobola payments in the context of a struggling economic situation in South Africa. It is difficult for people to secure jobs which will allow them to afford i-lobola. While there are many studies that have documented the practice of i-lobola, the meaning of it and highlighting the negatives associated with it, few studies have looked at the perspectives of university students on i-lobola. The study is situated at a university because there are diverse individuals from various settings. It

is also important to focus on young people because they are yet to get married; they are exposed to higher levels of education and this may affect their views on i-lobola. With noted changes in the decrease in marriage rate and increased level of education among young people, this study seeks to explore the perceptions of young people on i-lobola.

The overall aim of the study is to shed more insights into the practice of i-lobola among young people in contemporary South Africa.

The study objectives are:

1. To explore the attitudes of students towards i-lobola.
2. To determine the meaning and significance of i-lobola over time.
3. To explore the socio-cultural factors that affect student opinions on i-lobola

Questions to be answered in the research are:

1. Is lobola still relevant in contemporary South Africa?
2. How does the social environment impact ilobola?
3. How has the meaning and significance of ilobola changed over time?

## **1.6 Theoretical framework**

This study is underpinned by two theories, theory of modernisation and symbolic interaction, to guide the direction of enquiry and understanding of the findings. Modernisation theory contends that societies and countries pass through predictable stages of economic and social development on the path to being modern, with cultural adjustments being needed to accommodate the associated changes (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). The theory was used to understand the differences in opinions between traditional and modern attitudes to i-lobola and the factors that affect such changes in understanding its role in the cultural context both at a societal and personal level. The symbolic interaction theory was used to understand the meaning attached to the practice of i-lobola. The payment of i-lobola might have different meanings to different individuals, but this meaning is created by interacting with others. The significance of meaning is carried out by the continuous practice over generations. The theory states that meaning is formed by interacting with individuals, the meaning may be different for each individual and the meaning may change from interacting with others (Carter and Fuller, 2015). In this study, the argument is that meaning of i-lobola can change from interacting with others and this is probably caused by modernisation.

## **Modernisation theory**

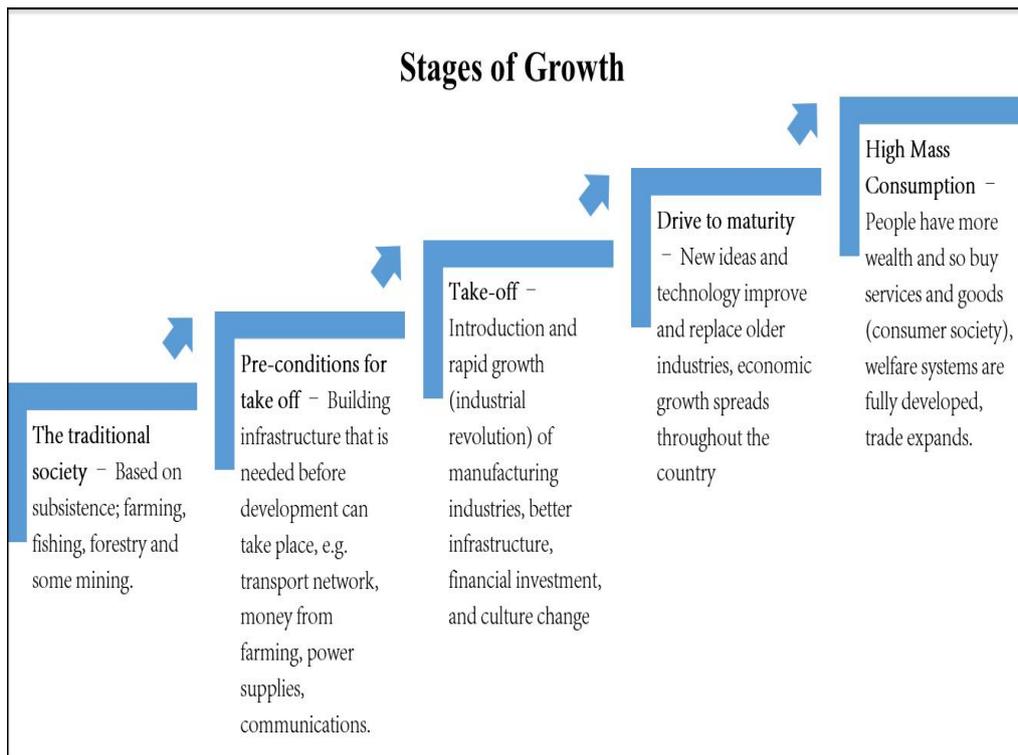
Modernization theory sets out the stages that countries tend to go through in the process of development and includes both economic and social changes.

*"Progress involves breaking the chains of traditional society and moving towards the enlightened space of modernity, where individuals increasingly take control of their social and physical environment through an ever-expanding appreciation of science and experienced high levels of material affluence"* (Nhema, and Zinyama, 2016: 152).

This means the institutions are likely to transform, change and adapt to the new order, with traditional methods and ways of doing things also adjusting as new conditions emerge. Modernization is a transformative process; for a society to move into modernity, its traditional structures and values must be replaced by a set of modern values (Reyers, 2001). This theory contends that this process entails breaking the chains of traditional society and moving towards the space of modernity (Nhema and Zinyama, 2016).

Rostow (1960), in his explanation of modernisations identified five stages that countries go through to be developed, these being; the traditional stage characterized by agricultural and hunter gatherer societies who are strongly tied to their traditional ways, and the use of technology is low which impacts on economic progress. The second stage is preconditions for take-off characterized by an increase in agricultural production, which includes improvements in agricultural equipment, thus improving the speed, efficiency and quantity of products, which results in a growth in the sector. Some of the economic features are an increase in trade, which is the result of a growing mining sector, with the demand for agricultural products increasing due to a growing population. The third stage is economic take-off, whereby industrialization starts to take place and economies expand exponentially. The fourth stage is the drive to maturity or a period of consolidation, with modern science and technology being extended to most areas of the economy, thus increasing the range of leading sectors. The stage of high mass consumption is the last stage where countries develop into capitalist systems where goods are produced in large quantities.

**Figure 1.2: Modernisation Theory**



Source: Ruccio (2018)

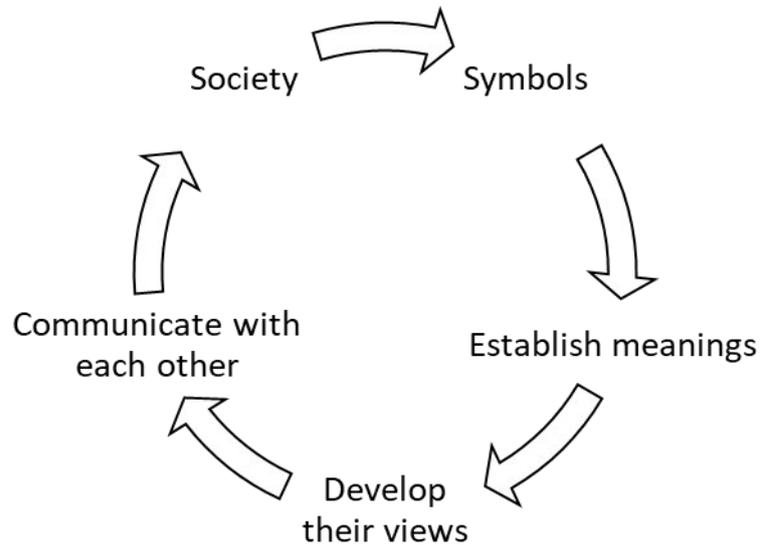
While Rostow's modernisation theory is mainly about economic development, it also addresses the social development of societies as they transition from traditional to modern ways. Its application in this study will be on the social components, which include changes in the way society behaves and adapts to modern ways of living. Developing countries are often regarded as having a more traditional focus, while developed countries are regarded as being mainly modern, the implication being that in order to develop, the poor nations need to adopt Western economic methods, norms and values (Shareia, 2015)

### **Symbolic interactionism theory**

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the relationships among individuals within a society, with communication through language and symbols being regarded as the way in which people make sense of their expansive worlds. People develop sociable constructs that are predicated on interactions with others, with those that last over time having a meaning that is generally accepted by most within the society. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in the social environment with other

individuals and focuses on the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people" (Aksana Kısac, Aydın, and Demirbuken, 2009: 902).

**Figure 1.3: Symbolic Interaction**



Source: Habiba (2018)

Symbolic interaction is about having shared meaning among individuals about places, space, people and events. Symbolic interactionists are interested in the circumstances in which people question, challenge, criticize, or reconstruct meanings, as they interpret the world through symbols but stand back and think of themselves as objects (Hustedde, 2009). The meaning of a situation is not fixed but is constructed by participants as they anticipate the responses of others (Hustedde, 2009). Therefore, with regards to i-lobola, cows become symbols of appreciation, the language of appreciation since livestock symbolises wealth in family. According to Blumer (1969) "human forms 'meaning' in two ways: it is something attributed to objects, events or phenomenon, and is also a 'physical attachment' that is imposed on events and objects by human" (Aksana, 2009: 903). Social interactionists argue that one-way people build meaning is by observing what others do, by imitating them and following their guidance. It is common for the young to look up to the elders for guidance, and in this way create meaning based on what they see being done, and through their interaction with others. Consequently, meaning is created as a result of the interaction between people and this allows them to pro-

duce some of the facts forming the sensory world (Aksana, 2009). Carter and Fuller (2015) define symbolic interaction as how individuals make sense of their unique world based on common institutions that have an impact on their lives, and how they interpret the subjective viewpoint. Meanings arise out of communications with different people and within societies and are persistently made and reproduced through interacting and association with others (Blumer, 1969 cited in Carter et al., 2015:1-2).

With regards to i-bolola the theory seeks to understand whether new interactions in a modernised world affects and create new ideas and new meanings attached to i-lobola. The study explores how interactions have changed over time and shaped young people's views on i-lobola and its associated cultural practices. Meaning comes from interactions with others and society and are interpreted by a person when dealing with things in specific circumstances. As much as young people are modernized and live in a technologically improved world, the traditional values and beliefs they have held from a young age do not disappear easily. This makes it easy to identify a person or a group of people, as they share common values that connects them, and enables them to interact with members of the same group without having to identify themselves. The symbolic interaction theory was created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals. Therefore, in this study i-lobola is a symbol which carries much weight amongst African people who practice it. The meaning embedded in the giving of cows, and honouring the family and ancestors, is what makes this practice stand out and it holds cultural and spiritual meaning. This is evident in that without i-lobola there would be no marriage, which means that it is important and acts as a foundation for such a union.

## **1.7 Structure of Dissertation**

This dissertation is composed of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction chapter that provides the meaning attached to i-lobola. In addition, it provides a brief description of bride wealth in other countries. It also outlines the main study objectives and the theoretical framework that guides the study. Chapter two reviews the literature on i-lobola from a historical perspective, the changes in meanings over time, and the influence of modernisation on its relevance. Chapter three discusses the methodology employed in this study including the study location, data collection tools and techniques of data analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter four presents the main

findings from the interviews. The last chapter provides a summary and discussion of the main findings and makes recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Over the past century the practice of i-lobola has undergone a number of changes. This study aims to provide insights into the practice of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa. The chapter describes and explores the concept of i-lobola and its role in customary marriages as well as changes in the practice of i-lobola in South Africa. The chapter also looks at international literature on bride wealth.

#### **2.2 Global overview of bride wealth**

Marriage plays an important part in family formation and it is still cherished as a joyful occasion. It is believed that it will continue being practiced over the next years though there is an increase in the number of people who are opting to not marry.

The payment of bride price is not unique to South Africa. Bride price practices also occur in other countries, such as Ghana, Kenya, India and Thailand, each of which will be reviewed to contextualise the practice in South Africa. Some cultures have commercialised the practice, while others have tried to maintain the intention of family bonding. The practice is not only in South Africa but also in Africa and other parts of the world, it is sometimes referred to as bride wealth and bride price.

In Ghana among the Lowiili, the transactions flow from the male to the female's family. Same as i-lobola in South Africa it moves from the groom's family to the bride's family, with a small payment of 350 cowries, which is regarded as all that is needed to legalize the union. Cowries are little shells that are assigned valued to them and they are common in Asia and West Africa (Johnson, 1970). In addition, payments amounting to three cows, one goat and 20 000 cowrie shells should be made during the time of the marriage, the last of these are usually at the time the bride joins her husband.

Ng'ang'a (2018) states that in Nairobi, Kenya, bride wealth carries significant meaning, as all the groom's family members must help him pay, while the bride's family hopes to benefit from it. This means that bride wealth is not only about the bride and groom, but the families involved in the process. The value of bride wealth has changed, with women being empowered through employment and education, and recognising themselves as equal partners to their husband, not simply possessions who were required to work on their father's farm and only moved when they were married, moving from one state of dependence to another (Ng'ang'a, 2018).

In India, bride price for marriage payments occurs in various forms, but can be classified into two broad categories: transfers from the family of the bride to that of the groom, broadly termed as "dowry," or from the groom's side to the bride, broadly termed bride price (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016). Dowry is defined as the wealth given to a daughter at her marriage to contribute to the practical life of the newly married couple (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016).

In Thailand, bride wealth is from the grooms to the bride's family as a form of appreciation. Dowry is the transfer of the girl's wealth to the groom, which she may take and shares with her husband, thereby having a say in what happens to the items or money transacted. In the bride wealth transactions, the groom is expected to pay the girls' father, the women having no say in what happens with the money paid. Dowry is similar to i-lobola in that it is negotiated before marriage by the families involved, and can be in the form of money, items and property.

## **2.3 I-lobola in SA context**

### **2.3.1 I-lobola amongst other tribe in South Africa**

The practice of i-lobola is widespread amongst different tribes in South Africa. The practice of bridewealth is known as lobola amongst Zulu and Xhosa; bohadi, boxadi and bohali in Sotho or mala in Venda (Hammond-Tooke, 1948). Amongst the Sesotho tribe, the practice of i-lobola is called bogadi whereby approximately eight cattle are given to the family of the bride by the family of the groom (Solway, 2016). The practice involves the passing of material wealth from the family of a man to the bride to be family. The fathers of the two families involved meet to discuss the amount of bogadi. Hammond-Tooke (1948), argues that there

could never be a marriage without the payment of bagdi and the children involved may not be claimed by the husband unless bogadi is paid.

Bride wealth is called manywalo amongst levode speaking people. Munywalo, the bride-price or the institution as a whole, and nywala-exchanges, the process of transferring bride-prices from the groom family to the bride family (Krige, 1939). It is a practice common among Lovedu people located in the northern province of South Africa. It involves the exchange of cows in the process of getting married. Marriage among the Venda is regulated by a complex legal and social system, the chief feature of which is the passing of bride-wealth (thakha) from the family of the man to the family of the woman (Hammond-Tooke, 1948). The total number of cows agreed upon by the families is not usually handed over at once. Though the practice is called thaka it is preferable to use the term Mala. Mala verb which means the process of taking a wife and paying bride-wealth for her (Hammond-Tooke,1948).

#### **2.4. Customary marriage**

The Customary Marriage Act 120 of 1998 was passed following the transition to democracy in South Africa. The law strives for the recognition of customary marriages in South Africa. Prior to the passing of this act, a woman was seen as a minor and she was given less status than her husband in the marriage. “*A customary marriage is a marriage that is entered into according to the customs and traditions of indigenous African people in South Africa*” (Law, Race and Gender research unit, 2012:1). In the pre-democracy era, cultures and races were spatially segregated through the apartheid system of separate development, with South Africa being divided into culturally controlled regions. Under the apartheid system, the governments had control over Bantu occupied spaces therefore they were able to decide how marriage and other rights were to be administered. Customary marriage is the marriage that is in accordance with traditional practices which form part of the culture of the people.

I-lobola is a common practice amongst many South Africans, as it forms part of their cultural identity and is what distinguishes them from other cultural groups. Customary marriage only entails a traditional ceremony, with i-lobola alone not resulting in a marriage being concluded, with other process and procedures needing to be observed, as stated by the customary marriage act. Being married traditionally means it does not include the signing of a legally recognised certificate at the time of marriage, which forms part of a civil marriage. A tradi-

tional leader must conduct a traditional wedding, as they play an important role in traditional societies, particularly in rural areas. The act gives all marriage partners equal rights to property and enables land ownership by the wife on the passing of her husband, thus replacing the tradition of only male relatives being able to inherit possessions and property. The newly amended customary marriage law in 2019, provides for the equal recognition of woman in polygamous and monogamous marriages.

In 1869, the Natal Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone, formalized the amount of i-lobolo to 10 cows for everyone, 15 for the chief sisters, and 20 for the daughters of a chief (Posel et al., 2011). By fixing the price of i-lobola, Shepstone may have intended to make marriage easier or more widely affordable (Poselet al., 2011). I-lobola is seen as an act of thanks to the parents of the female for bringing her up well, with the mother receiving one of the 11 cows for keeping the girl a virgin. In instances where the bride is no longer a virgin the 11th cow is not provided, which also raises concerns as it brings shame to the bride's family, the mother being blamed for not raising the child well. Some of the features of i-lobola that have changed are that the negotiations are now done by women, which traditionally would be done by men. Rising levels of education and increased economic opportunities for African women, as well as changes in marriage preferences, are some of the reason people delay marriage (Marphatia, Ambale and Reid, 2017). In South Africa age at first marriage is rising with many opting not to marry. There has been a decrease in number of registered customary marriages between 2013- 2017. Age at first marriage from 2013-2017 changed for both sexes with males ranging from 33 to 34 years and females from 27 to 29 years (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

## **2.5 Marital patterns and trends**

### **2.5.1 Changes in bride price practices over time**

The practice of i-lobola has changed over the years, with increasing emphasis being attached to the value of i-lobola payment rather than the meaning and value of i-lobola. In some instances, i-lobola has been turned into a monetary scheme, the high cost of paying i-lobola being the reason people do not get married, which results in many couples cohabiting. Men in particular, specifically those in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), view paying i-lobola as their cultural duty, with the payment instilling a sense of pride and respect (Posel et al., 2011). Regardless of context, i-lobola serves a multiplicity of purposes within Southern African societies, such

as distributing material resources, establishing relationships within and between lineages, maintaining social control and constructing social identity (Ansel, 2001).

The cost of i-lobola amongst South African is equivalent to 11 cows which equates to R10 000 per cow an estimate of R100 000 for 11 cows. The price has increased with the change from traditional to modern cultures based on capitalist principles. Posel and Rudwick (2011) highlights that marriage rates among African women have decreased in KwaZulu-Natal compared to the rest of South Africa. Marriage patterns among Africans are distinctive in that couples are typically older (Posel and Rudwick, 2011). According to Statistics South Africa (2017). According to Statistics South Africa (2017) 2 588 customary marriages were registered at the Department of Home Affairs, indicating a decrease of 34, 9% from 3 978 customary marriages registered in 2016.

In China, due to families only being allowed to have one child, the preference for male children has resulted in a shortage of females for marriage (Hesketh, Lu and Xing, 2011). The bride price is therefore closely related to the availability of brides due to the difficulty involved in finding a wife, with the bride prices having consistently risen since the 1980s (Jiang et al., 2012). Men therefore face a double standard process, whereby he does not have enough money to pay for the bride at the time of asking, and by the time, he has enough to pay for the initial price he has a challenge of paying double for the bride price (Jiang et al., 2012). The paying of double means the groom will have to pay even more since the price would have increased the time, he has gathered all the money asked of him the first time. Jiang et al. (2012) points out that poor males in rural areas are faced with two vicious cycles of the poor-bare branch-poorer cycle and the second one being inability to pay the bride price—bare branch—need to pay a higher bride price cycle. In these two cycles, they note that the first cycle of poverty prevents men from finding a spouse as they are already earning what they can to sustain themselves, with little left to save to pay for a wife and therefore do not have money to pay the bride price. They therefore postpone getting married until they can afford to save enough but failing to pay the asking bride price at the time of request puts them at a disadvantage. As time passes, they are required to pay more, which they struggle to do, as it has taken them so long to raise the original price, delaying the possibility of marriage due to them being unable to pay the ever-increasing amount, thereby perpetuating the cycle. *"Bare branches' are those men who are over a certain age but, involuntarily, have been unable to find a spouse to get married, and thus have no wife and children, like a bare branch without*

*leaves*" (Jiang et al., 2012:3). The bare branches are those males who are above 40 years old who have been saving up for marriage, usually from poor rural areas, where they can neither find nor afford a wife.

In China and southern Africa, many families are forced to take loans in order to pay for the bride price or take a long time to save to pay for some ceremonies, which then delays the whole process of marriage. For rural females, the primary factor in their spouse selection is often economics, whether a man can get married at a proper age is largely determined by his economic status. The Marriage Act 25, 1961 state that the legal age at first marriage is 18 but girls and boys under the age of 18 need their parents' consent to get marriage and if they are 15 a minister of home affairs content will be required (The African Child Policy Forum, 2013). Where he is unable to pay the required price at the appropriate time, the couples sometimes cohabit. Posel et al. (2011) maintain that the high costs associated with i-lobola are among the main reasons that people do not marry early or at all.

Masombuka (2018) contends that many South Africans maintain strong traditions that have been diluted to accommodate alternative ways of thinking that are in flux. This means that many people have adopted western ways of thinking and living that do not correspond with the traditional ways. Masombuka (2018) argues that i-lobola has been placed out of its original context, which makes it be an immoral cultural practice that violates human rights. This view has led to people misinterpreting the purpose of i-lobola and its meaning, and the value it holds among African people. It can be noted that the meaning and significance of bride wealth has changed, especially among urban dwellers. Bride wealth was meant to strengthen the relationship between the two clans involved (Ng'ang'a, 2010). The meaning of bride wealth has changed, with some regarding the practice as a way of buying the bride, which is different from its cultural meaning.

Families may now ask whatever amount they want, as i-lobola is now paid in cash, and in the process of calculating the amount, may include the bride's education, virginity and type of job when determining how much they want, with some families contending that they are going to lose a breadwinner. *"So, instead of it being about appreciation, it becomes a matter of milking as much as possible from the groom's family in the name of having a good, well-educated daughter"* (Masombuka, 2018). This has resulted in men thinking that they have a

right to treat their brides as they please because they have 'bought' their wives and can therefore regard her as their possessions as they own her. "*The purpose of lobola as a token of appreciation gets side-lined, and the lobola that the groom's family pays is seen as a price for the bride and not as a sign of gratitude*" (Masombuka, 2018). Scholars such as Masombuka (2018) and Madikwa (2012) highlight that i-lobola is a traditional practice that has long existed, and it is about showing appreciation and joining two families together.

### **2.5.2 Relevance of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa**

I-lobola is still a well-recognised practice amongst Africans and is regarded as part of their cultural practices that holds enormous cultural significance. Posel et al. (2011) affirms that i-lobola is still an extensively valued tradition amongst Zulu people and continues to be an important feature of a traditional marriage. Mazibuko (2016) showed there are two sides to i-lobola, the first is positive when the bride's family receive money and the status that comes with receiving i-lobola, and the other side is the negative where the families exploit i-lobola. Moeno's research suggests that by the late 1970s, the requirement of full payment before marriage still had not been commonly adopted in rural areas, where payment was in cattle and could be honoured many years after the marriage (Moeno, 1977). In towns and cities however, where payment was in cash, there was a greater expectation that i-lobola had to be settled before the marriage could occur. As a result, urban couples were forced to delay marriage while the man saves for i-lobolo (Posel et al., 2011).

Posel et al. (2011) argues that the difference between those in rural areas who have cows and urban areas that do not is significant, the former not having to save as they have animals while the latter having to save to pay the required cash, with payment being a requirement before any proceedings can take place. In rural areas, a man may pay the cattle later if the bride's father can see that he will be able to produce them from his livestock, which will then allow them to get married. The failure of man to produce the requested i-lobola payment by those who do not have cattle is due in part to the high levels of unemployment that prevent people from earning a wage.

A study by Shope (2006) found that after 1994, women were against the idea of i-lobola being discontinued, as it symbolised true womanhood. Many of the changes in i-lobola have been brought about by western values, such as changing from cows to money as a form of

payment. The introduction of the market economy that depended on migrant labour, specifically for the mines, has also had a considerable effect on i-lobola, with money becoming important method of payment. The symbolic meaning of the practice that emphasises relational interdependence and respect between families is threatened by the increasing commercialisation of the practice (Shope, 20016).

Rudwick et al. (2015) found that some women considered the payment of i-lobola as compensation to their parents for their upbringing. This was said by single parents who thought they deserve a high i-lobola payment as they raised their children alone. *"Even financially independent women who see value in i-lobolo may indicate that it is linked not only to providing love but also to a socio-cultural commitment to what it means to be or not to be Zulu"* (Rudwick, 2015:301). Due to the high price of i-lobola, some men do not get married due to the fear of commitment, and hide behind i-lobola payment, which can be negotiated with the bride's family. The payment of i-lobola has become difficult due to the high expected amount of i-lobola and inability of the men to pay i-lobola due to unemployment (Rudwick et al., 2011

I-lobola is regarded by some as a business practice, whereby older family members seek to make money out of their children. *"Once the man has paid the bride price the woman is reduced to the status of property because the man has paid for her"* (Sambe, Avanger, and Agba., 2013:68). The woman is then expected to be submissive to the husband because they have paid lobola for her. She becomes a piece of property, being regarded as the property of her husband's family as they paid i-lobola for her. *"High bride price affects the stability of marriages through precipitation of domestic violence, poverty (especially among young couples), dehumanization of the women and increased propensity for divorce"* (Sambe et al., 2013:65). High bride prices influence men negatively to not pay i-lobola and if they do pay it, it is interpreted as buying the wife, giving him extensive authority over her (Semenya, 2014).

There is a great deal of support for i-lobola and it is widely accepted as an important custom, but the high i-lobola payments makes marriage not affordable for many African couples (Posel et al, 2011). The significance of marriage in the African culture is relative to i-lobola and is better understood and accepted if payment is made. A marriage without payment is regarded as a sham and disgraceful, and in some cases, it is not regarded as a traditionally sanc-

tioned marriage. The significance of i-lobola cannot be compared to its non-payment of i-lobola, as it holds values and meaning that are of significance to its community. Nkosi Mwe-lo Nonkonyana, the pioneer of The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) said young men who feared marriage used i-lobola as an excuse (Madikwa, 2012). He said that i-lobola should not be an obstruction in African customs as it was not about material goods and argues only irresponsible men who do not want to get married use payment as an excuse (Madikwa, 2012). If a man has the intention to marry a woman the high price requested could not stop him because the reason it is called negotiation is because the two families involved sit down and talk about it and come up with a decision that will benefit both parties.

## **2.6 Factors that influence/affect marriage and i-lobola**

### **2.6.1 Attitudes towards i-lobola**

Khomari, Tebele and Nel (2012) in their study found that many participants contended that i-lobola has lost its original meaning and is used to barter for a wife as a business transaction not a gift of thanks. Others felt that the practice exposed women to slavery and had seen that i-lobola instalments resulted in woman living in slave-like conditions, being expected to do wife duties following i-lobola payment, failure to perform sometimes resulting in a woman being sent back home. Khomari et al. (2012) found that students perceived i-lobola as a form of assets. As it is now paid in the form of cash rather than the traditional cows, the bride's family may request any amount of money. Some use it to prepare for the wedding, but in many cases, the family uses it to better their lives, whereas the bride does not receive any money if it is paid in cash; either way the same is applied if cows are received as payment, and only the uncles who were negotiating take the money and splits it amongst themselves. Better social and economic status are what is gained from the negotiation and exchange of goods (Khomari et al., 2012).

A common issue among scholars is the commercialisation of i-lobola, with Mwamwenda et al. (1997:270) report that the students regarded it as an integral part of an African marriage, as the custom acknowledges the husband's gratitude for a good wife, her dignity and worth, and the wife's assurance of her husband's continued recognition and respect. The participant's views on bride wealth coincided with those of other educated Africans (Mwamwenda et al., 1997). Posel et al. (2014) state that while i-lobola has not been a legal requirement for a Zulu

marriage, the union cannot happen without it being paid, therefore payment is expected. The authors suggested that i-lobola should not be understood as a bride price but, more appropriately, as a child price. This view of i-lobola is seen mostly amongst polygamist marriages where a husband can seek to have a second wife if the woman he is married to is barren, he may seek to take his wife's sister since he has already paid i-lobola to that family.

Chireshe and Chireshe (2010) found that some respondents indicated that they needed the custom of i-lobola to proceed as it is part of their culture and brings about the union of two families and more importantly, encourages strong families. In their study of 45 participants, 78% stated that it should continue due to it being a traditional practice, its abolition possibly resulting in abolishing cultural practices, and not allowing people to practice their culture uninhibitedly. The respondents contended that the custom of paying i-lobola was a rip-off for the males and should not be commercialised, as it puts a price tag on the wife, and she is perceived as his property. Nearly half (49%) agreed that i-lobola regards the woman as being the property of men. The minority (22%) who were supportive of the abolishment of i-lobola noticed that the custom is inconsistent with gender inequality and that it advances sexual imbalances that makes women defenceless against mistreatment by their spouses and in-laws. The participants felt that the custom of i-lobola should be kept up in such a way that it joins families, rather than causing bad blood and friction between families and the abuse of women.

The process of getting married is stressful for those involved, as it entails many processes, including i-lobola. It was initially seen as a form of honour to the family of the bride, and involved paying in cattle, even if the groom had no animals or did not meet the required number. He could contribute what he could, has and was involved in the negotiations between the bride's father and the groom's family on how they could lower the number of cows. However, ways of doing and thinking about i-lobola have changed, with modern western culture having resulted in a shift away from a traditional practice to more modern ways of doing things. Urbanisation and western values have led to the loss of the original meaning of African practices (Khomari et al., 2012). The traditional payment of cows has now been replaced with money, the transfer of cattle being due to traditional societies being owners of livestock. Many people no longer own cattle and need to purchase them, or do not have the land to house them, which has resulted in i-lobola payment being based on the value of the number of cows that would have been exchanged. A white church wedding has also become fashion-

able, either in place of or in addition to the traditional ceremonial practices. "*The influence of changing times has altered the perceptions of lobola as African societies have adopted Euro-centric capitalistic norms*" (Khomari et al., 2012).

### **2.6.2 Educational level as one of the socio-economic facts that affect i-lobola**

Statistic South Africa (2016) shows there has been a decrease in the number of marriages amongst African males and females, this being due in part to their rising educational level. Higher educational levels being associated with low marriage rates or delayed unions, as women who become more knowledgeable about their rights want to be independent of men before they settle down or before they can get married. In general, the data show that the mean age at marriage increased with education, with marriage being the lowest among males with a higher education at 28.3% and 30.9% years in 1996 and 2016, respectively. Female age at first marriage were the lowest among those with higher education in 1996 (26.8 years) and those with completed primary education in 2016 (27.4 years) (Statistic South Africa, 2016).

A further clarification for low marriage rates concerns the issue of unemployment, which is the cause of inadequate funds to get married. Palamuleni et al. (2007) argues that education affects fertility positively, as people who acquire education are associated with better hygiene standards, which leads to lower chances of spontaneous abortion, lower levels of infertility. As education level increases, marriage pattern tends to be low and postponed, which causes a negative effect on fertility (Palamuleni et al., 2007). Shangase and Maharaj (2019), in their study, discovered that marriage was a valued institution among participants and they believed that delaying marriage was the best as they were going to be able to accumulate enough money and security and find stability, they believed it is best to focus on their education first as it will be able to give them the stability they need.

### **2.6.3 Socio-cultural factors that affect i-lobola**

I-lobola is a common practice amongst black Africans in South Africa, and is not prescribed, as culture only monitors the behaviour of an individual. "*Gender roles derived from traditional and accepted social norms remain dominant for most young people*" (Pettifor et al., 2012:2). This means that cultures can accept varying gender roles, but that the dominant African societal norms give women little or no power. The Zulu culture has strict rules governing how people behave, the values and traditional cultural roles being regarded as how things should be done, with anyone who does not conform being an outsider and sometimes even punished (Idang, 2015). Culture divides roles between males and females and is an important

determining factor for marriage and i-lobola. Culture is the central concept in anthropology that denotes man's distinctive quality, thereby setting him apart from all other life forms. Culture may be regarded as the total way of life or the design for living that is characteristic of each human society (Idang, 2015). It includes a complex integrated whole of learned and shared behaviours that stem from themes or values within an emotional matrix or ethos. Culture channels most human thoughts, feelings and actions anyone may choose to differ from their culture. It can be noted that culture and religion play an important role in shaping people's behaviours and thoughts on how they view life.

Over the years, i-lobola as a custom has lost its value for a variety of reasons. Culture works to create order in society by putting rules and customs as a means of sustaining the group. Matope et al. (2013) argue that culture can reinforce gender inequality through the standards that are established as a way of creating order in a society. Posel (2014) argues that i-lobola, although it is not a legal requirement, has persisted. Khomari et al. (2012) observed that while some believe that i-lobola as a cultural practice is fair, many feel that it should be regulated to protect participants from exploitation. The argument then is that if it can be regulated it can be changed, as it is not a fixed practice across cultures or regions, it carries varying values amongst those who practice it, with questions being raised as to whether it should continue, as it risks the commodification of women (Khomari et al., 2012).

According to Dlamini (1983), the traditional Zulu culture allowed a bridegroom to give what he could afford, although it was a matter of honour to give as many cattle as possible. It was believed that giving many cattle was a sign of honour, and showed that the groom was wealthy, which meant the bride would not go hungry as the groom is capable of taking care of her. Traditionally, women have no place in the process of i-lobola negotiation, with the male members of the two families making the exchange. I-lobola transaction also carried the qualities of bringing stability to the new marital union by symbolic means through the exchange of resources in the bride's name. There have been arguments that i-lobola seems to isolate women, as they are not involved in the process of getting married. Cattle were the main means for the payment of i-lobola because they are ritually linked to the ancestral spirits of the clan, the payment symbolising approval by ancestors, as their accepting the whole process of getting married.

## **2.7 Fertility and childbearing**

### **2.7.1 Fertility**

Some argue that woman who have had i-lobola paid, and those who are married, do not have control over their fertility, their reproductive desires being largely shadowed by their in-laws. They are expected to give birth at the time demanded by their in-laws who paid i-lobola. By paying i-lobola, the man and his family gain full rights to the woman productive states, which can result in them being exposed to health scares, including HIV, sexually transmitted infections and domestic violence (Horne et al, 2013). However, little research has been done about the extent to which i-lobola puts woman at risk of contracting HIV. It has been shown how married people are exposed to childbearing after getting married as they are expected to produce children for their husbands and the family. Family Protection and security are what is uncovered in married families (Shangase and Maharaj, 2019). Therefore, it is expected that when a female receives i-lobola they are automatically are expected to bear children especially if the bride does not have a son, she may have to give birth until a son is born. Early marriage has been shown to expose women to long periods of childbearing therefore a large family size is seen, whereas late marriage results in fewer years of exposure to the risk of pregnancy and thus resulting in a smaller, completed family or no family at all (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1995).

## **2.8 Gender based violence**

### **2.8.1 Gender-based violence**

Mangena and Ndlovu (2013) argue that the payment of a bride price is one of the traditional beliefs that in many ways encourage the violation of women's human rights. However, the commercialization of i-lobola has resulted in many family problems, such as domestic violence. Cultural differences between a man and woman are based on the biological division among them (Connell, 2002:8). I-lobola has been associated with gender-based violence against woman, with the men saying that the payment of i-lobola makes them entitled to treat women as they wish. Matope et al. (2013) state that the commercialisation of i-lobola has been criticized, as it has lost its value and men use it as a justification to exploit and control woman. "*Gender-based violence is rooted in socio-economic, inequality, and takes many forms: physical, emotional and sexual abuse- sexual assault, rape, spousal violence and violence between intimate partners*" (Motepe et al., 2013:192).

I-lobola transaction is carried out between the woman's paternal male relatives and the man's male relatives, with the bride having no say in the exchange, nor do the few women who witness the proceedings (Matope et al., 2013:194). As a result, most women in marriage have little bargaining and economic power due to the unequal power relations (Matope et al., 2013). A study done in Zimbabwe showed how the men who paid lobola for their wives were abusing them, with one man being quoted as saying. "*I paid ten cows, 1000 Zimbabwean dollars when I married my wife in 1983, she does not work and I do everything for her, as I do for my children so I discipline her now and then to remind her of her place*" (Matope et al., 2013:195). This shows how men feel entitled to mistreating their wives because they have paid i-lobola for them, thus they perpetuate violence as a reminder that they own them, which results in the woman not having any power nor control over their lives. It is argued that i-lobola encourages woman to stay in abusive relationships because of the fear of leaving and the shame it will bring into their lives if they left their abusive husbands. Mesatywa (2014) argues that traditional system contribute to woman abuse as act of violence are kept family secret and not reported because of fear of shame and causing mayhem within the family.

Laiphrakpam et al. (2016) argue that there has been a change in dowry practices, where they have witnessed an increase in the number of cases of woman being abused. The act of dowry has changed from its cultural roots to a compulsory one for the bride's family, with some grooms and their families being greedy and wanting materialistic possessions on demand. This can include large demands, which if not met after marriage, results in 'dowry death', this being young ladies being killed or driven to death by harassment over a disagreement in dowry payments (Laiphrakpam et al., 2016). This shows how the practice of dowry has been commercialised and men want to marry girls to increase their wealth.

## **2.9 Summary**

The traditional practice of paying bride price, or i-lobola, was intended to join two families in appreciation for the woman who was going to be taken as a bride. This practice has occurred in many traditional cultures, where the binding of families is an important part of kinship development. In rural Zulu culture, this took the form of cattle, which were not necessarily paid before the marriage was formally recognised. However, it has been discovered that the practice has changed from payment of cows to money. This has led and turned into a quick mon-

ey-making scheme, where the families see an opportunity to enrich themselves. As much of the positives of i-lobola have been documented as to unite families and help in the process of family formations, negatives have also been documented which include gender-based violence, domestic violence and exploitation of the practice.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

I-lobola is a common practice among South Africans. It holds traditional and spiritual values and it is believed to lead to honourable marriages. A man who has paid i-lobola is seen as responsible as this proves his manhood, as well as indicates that he is capable of taking care of his family. The overall objective of this study are to shed insights into the practice of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa. The following chapter is going to outline the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter will describe the study area and the study sample. This chapter will also outline the data collection and analysis processes. Lastly, this chapter outlines the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

#### **3.2 Study area and population**

This study was conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is one of the nine provinces in South Africa which is situated in the south east part of the country. In 2019 the population in Kwazulu-Natal was estimated at 11, 3 million which constituted to 19, 2% of the total population in the country (Statistic South Africa, 2019). The province population group is divided into four main groups that are Africans, Coloured, Whites and Indians. Africans were the largest population group and they constituted to 87.6% of the total population followed by Indians with 6.9%, Whites at 4.1% and Coloureds at 1.4% and (Statistic South Africa, 2019). The main language spoken in KwaZulu-Natal is isiZulu. The province is diverse in terms of cultures as these four racial groups all have different cultural practices.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal consists of five campuses in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It was formed on 1 January 2004 because of the merger between the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017). Since it is a merge of the two universities it brings about the antiquity of both these campuses. The University of Durban-Westville was established in the 1960s as the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay (University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017).

The study was conducted at the Howard College campus. Howard College campus was the best suited area for this study because there are a copious amount of African students. Howard College has diversity in its student population and there are local, national and international students. Howard College is situated in the area of Berea and offers astounding views of the Durban harbour. Howard College Campus offers a full scope of degree choices in the fields of Science, Engineering, Law, Management Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences, Architecture and Nursing.

**Figure 3.1: Map of Howard College**



Source: Google maps (2019)

**Figure 3.2: Map of Howard College**



Source: Google earth (2019)

### **3.3. Research design**

In order to address the objectives of this study qualitative methods were used to obtain in-depth accounts of experiences in the real world (Golafshani, 2003). Qualitative research looks at how social institution work, how they have come to be, how people in a society function, and the meaning behind those functions. It focuses on the importance of meaning rather than the statistical meaning of things. “Through qualitative research, a wide array of dimensions of the social world can be explored, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of research participants” (Mason, 2000:1). This approach was important for the study in order to gain insights on the perceptions of i-lobola among young people in contemporary South Africa.

The advantages of qualitative research include the use of a small sample size, which saves money when embarking on a project. Detailed data can be collected from different sources, which results in a variety of information being obtained on the same topic. Qualitative methods have open-ended questions, to the responses may result in new questions being raised for investigation. The data can generally be regarded as representing the participant’s experiences as it involves them expressing their opinions and feelings (Austin and Sutton, 2014).

A qualitative approach may be useful for this study however, there are some limitations. The main disadvantage of qualitative methods is that the findings cannot be generalizable due to the small sample size. Since the researcher seeks opinions and feelings of participants, the data can be overly comprehensive, with large quantities of data needing to be analysed to distil relevant information (Austin and Sutton, 2014). Qualitative methods are also time consuming to gather, sort and analyse, and the researcher may have a personal bias that influences their interpretation of the data. Qualitative research is criticised for being subjective to the researcher personal views and biases, based on the researcher's personal views. "Qualitative research is good at simplifying and managing data without destroying complexity and context" (Atieno, 2009:16).

Qualitative research in this study aims to obtain a detailed description of the topic being investigated which is to explore the perspectives and attitudes of African males and female students on i-lobola in South Africa. Qualitative research is useful for this research as it will help to understand the attitudes of students about i-lobola. The research aims to explore the perceptions of students on the relevance of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa. The research purpose is to find deep knowledge about issues and the find solutions.

### **3.4 Sampling strategy**

The study was conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the Howard College campus, and included 20 African males and females' students, aged 18-24-years-old who were registered at the university. Non-probability sampling was used in the study. With nonprobability sampling not all elements in the population will have an equal chance to be included in the study sample (Etikan and Bala, 2017). Snowballing method was used to get participants for the study. Snowballing method involves the procedure done by utilizing networks. In snowballing method potential respondents are identified, interviewed and further asked to recommend others for the study and this process continues till the purpose of the researcher is achieved (Showkat and Parveren, 2017). Snowballing method was best for the study because the method serves to identify potential student in a population and the method allowed for the research to use their own judgment to choose participants. The first participant was identified by using the random selection method and that participant then referred the researcher to oth-

er potential participants. In order to be eligible for the study, they had to be a registered students. Any student who agreed to participate was invited to be interviewed. Both males and females were recruited as some were referred through chain referral. For this study, the focus was only on African students.

### **3.5 Data collection**

In-depth interviews were used in this study because they provide detailed data on the person thought and behaviours since they occur one on one basis. *“In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation”* (Neale and Boyce, 2006:3). In-depth interviews are used to establish the perception and opinions of participants or a group of individuals. Pereira et al. (2004) states that the objective of in-depth interviews is to profoundly investigate the respondent's perspective, emotions and points of view, and can be utilized to obtain fundamental data.

In-depth interviews are useful to obtain detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours, or to explore new issues in-depth. *“In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation”* (Neale and Boyce, 2006:3). Questions for in-depth interviews consist of open-ended options, which look for explanatory rather than one-word responses (Appendix 1). The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed and later analysed using thematic analysis.

The in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data through an interview guide which consisted of 10 questions. Socio-demographic information about each participant was recorded such as age and gender. Each question was open-ended, with several prompts being included to guide the researcher to ensure that the participants provided data relevant to the study and did not go off topic. The interviews were conducted at the campus in a venue that was not currently in use to ensure the safety and privacy of the participants. Other participants were interviewed in their individual places they were in within the Howard college campus including cafeteria, lecture rooms where some participants were sitting with no lecture in session. The in-depth interviews were recorded on the cellphone, first they were translated and then transcribed. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

However, before the interviews began the participants were required to sign an informed consent after having the study was explained to them to ensure that their participation was voluntary.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data, which was grouped into themes for easy and better interpretation. Objectives were explored within each theme. Thematic analysis is the process of grouping data into similar topics for easy interpretation of the data acquired (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis was used to obtain the opinions and personal experiences of participants and grouped into themes. The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). The procedure of thematic analysis involves grouping similar information into putting labels and thinking about the collected recorded tapes, which are translated and then coded. Coding involves grouping data according to discovered labels as per findings through the listening of interviews. Boyatzis (1998) state that topics are created from the produced codes and during the process coding subjects are created.

The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to become familiar with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, and then proceed with the write up (Braun & Clarke's, 2006 cited in Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Becoming familiar with the data, this step involved gathering data from the study and taking notes from early impression. As interviews were in progress the interviewer took down notes and remembered what happened during the interviews this includes expression and tones of the participants. Generating codes involves reducing data into small portions that will make meaning easy. It is grouping and generating already existing data and giving of y code for easy interpretation of the result. Searching for the researcher looks for themes, these are common names and ideas among what the participants had said and grouping them into groups for better interpretation of the result, this also makes the data gathered easy to understand.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical procedures must be followed to protect participants and ensure confidentiality and anonymity. “Research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborate work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness” (Resnik, 2015:2)

Ethical approval was obtained from the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix 2), and the gate keeper’s letter obtained from the registrar to conduct study on the Howard College campus (Appendix 3). The researcher then proceeded to recruit eligible participants. The study was described to each participant at the start of the interview, after which they were required to sign a consent form that detailed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any stage. An information sheet about the study and a signed copy of the informed consent form was given to the participant to take with them (Appendix 4). No names or other identifying details of the participants were recorded nor are they reported on in any document.

### **3.8 Study Limitations**

As the study was conducted at the end of the year once lectures had been completed, therefore securing the participation of 20 students proved to be a challenge, and took longer than anticipated. Some students did not come for their scheduled interviews and additional students therefore had to be recruited. Gathering information from 20 students became repetitive. Accessing students at the university was not easy as many were occupied with attending lectures, others were not available for various reasons and others were not interested. Another limitation is the sample size of the study population. The study only focused on 20 participants both males and females, therefore the views expressed are not generalizable to the whole population. The last limitation is cultural biases since participants were Africans thus the practice of i-lobola was familiar to them.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter outline the methodology used for this research. Guided by a qualitative design this research used in-depth interviews to obtain the data needed for this study. The interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed to obtain the data for this study. This chapter ad-

dressed the study sample as well as the data collection methods. This study also addressed the ethical considerations as well as the limitations of the study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The aim of the study was to establish the perspectives of students towards the practice of i-lobola. Qualitative methodology was applied through face-to-face in-depth interviews. This chapter begins with the presentation of students' demographic details. It further focuses on the concept of i-lobola and its significance. Some of the attitudes and factors influencing the beliefs of i-lobola are explored and lastly, this chapter examines the relevance of i-lobola amongst young people.

#### **4.2 Demographics**

Interviews were conducted with 20 participants, 10 males and 10 females. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 24 however there was one participant who was 25 years old. The average age for males was 21 years while for females it was 23 years (see Table 4.1). From the sample size of twenty, half of the participants were undergraduates and the other half were postgraduate. As indicated in Tables 4.1 two female students highlighted that they would not expect i-lobola to be paid for them. Out of the 10 female participants, four reported that they were in a relationship and six were not. Of the 10 females that were interviewed, five reported that they were in a relationship, four were not in a relationship and one was engaged. Five males were single, four were in a relationship and one was engaged.

**Table 4. 1 Demographic details of the African male and female participants**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Relationship status</b>
1	22	Male	Yes	Dating
2	19	Male	No	Single
3	20	Male	No	Single
4	22	Male	No	Single
5	19	Male	No	Single
6	22	Male	Yes	Engaged
7	19	Male	No	Single
8	23	Male	Yes	Single (in a relationship)
9	21	Male	Yes	Single
10	20	Male	Yes	Single
11	22	Female	Yes	Single (in a relationship)
12	25	Female	Yes	Single
13	19	Female	Yes	Single
14	22	Female	No	Single
15	25	Female	No	Single
16	25	Female	Yes	Single
17	23	Female	No	Single
18	24	Female	Yes	Single
19	19	Female	No	Single
20	23	Female	Yes	Engaged

## 4.3 Understanding i-lobola

### 4.3.1 The meaning of i-lobola

I-lobola is an old practice that has been in existence for a long time, it has been passed from one generation to another. I-lobola is continuing to be the most controversial topic in the African continent especially amongst young people. From the origin of history i-lobola has always been involved in bringing together two families (Scheidler, 2010). Cows represented gifts from the groom as a way of praising the female's parents whom he wants to take as a wife. It is when the groom thanks his future in-laws for giving birth to his wife who will give him children that will carry on his father's name (Scheidler, 2010).

It is firstly important to understand participants' understanding of the practice of i-lobola. All participants had an understanding of the practice of i-lobola. Most participants described i-lobola as a way of uniting two families who wanted to build a relationship. I-lobola is a custom that involves two families who are willing to build a relationship, this is done through the payment of cows by the groom's family to the bride's family. Participants indicated that i-lobola is not only about paying cows however, it also involves spiritual and cultural rituals for the families as well as the individuals getting married. Participants had similar definitions and understanding of i-lobola and its purpose. They emphasized the importance of understanding the meaning of the 11<sup>th</sup> cow and when it is paid. The 11<sup>th</sup> cow is only paid if the bride is still a virgin and when her virginity was taken by the groom. Their comments are as follows:

*"I-lobola is bringing families and communities together. It is a way of showing respect and that your child will be well taken care of in her marriage. It is when the groom and his family provides gift to the bride's family as a way of symbolizing that they want to marry and take care of the bride."* (Female, P7)

*"I-lobola is when a man pays 11 cows for the woman that he loves and wants to marry. The 11th cow is only paid if the woman is still a virgin. If the groom is the one who took the brides virginity, he is responsible for paying the 11th cow. However, if the bride's virginity was taken by another man, the groom does not pay the 11th cow."* (Female, P2)

*“I-lobola is a way of uniting two different families in isiZulu ukwakha ubuhlobo (building a relationship).” (Male, P2)*

I-lobola is part of the cultural requirements when getting married. Many participants highlighted that i-lobola is a practice of uniting families. They emphasized on the understanding of the 11<sup>th</sup> cow and when it should be paid.

#### **4.3.2 The importance and significance of i-lobola**

Most participants agreed that i-lobola is important for marriage as it forms the basis of getting married and is the foundation of the remaining ceremonies that ought to happen before getting married. Some participants stated that i-lobola is a traditional practice that has been introduced by their forefathers, therefore it should be carried from one generation to another. They regarded i-lobola as part of who they are, what distinguishes and sets them apart from other cultural groups in South Africa.

*“I-lobola has always been there, it is a core foundation of everything that unites a male and a female. In order to get married i-lobola must be paid and other rituals should follow after. This is showing the importance of paying i-lobola.”(Female, P5)*

There were certain participants who viewed i-lobola as not being a necessary part of the marriage process. This is because participants felt as if i-lobola was a way of building a relationship among families. If the families had a relationship before, there would be no need to pay i-lobola.

*“I-lobola is not important because in my point of view i-lobola allows families to build a relationship. If families had a relationship prior to the process of i-lobola there would be no need to pay i-lobola. It is only important because these two families do not share any relationship. Even though most African countries practice i-lobola, there is no need for i-lobola if families have a relationship.” (Male, P9)*

Participants felt that i-lobola is important for marriage because it is a practice that was introduced by their forefathers. It holds significant value and meaning and it should be carried from one generation to another.

### **4.3.3 Importance of ilobola for marriage**

Most participants agreed that i-lobola is important for marriage as this signifies the union between two people involved and it also acts as a way of showing the bride's father that the groom will be able to take care of his daughter once they are married. The practice was an essential part of marriage negotiations, the wedding itself and was known to retain significance for the duration of the marriage (Posel et al., 2011). Participants stated that they were informed about the importance of i-lobola at a young age and that in order to get married; i-lobola must be paid.

*“I-lobola is an important part of marriage as it builds a relationship between families. I-lobola also shows how the man is committed to the bride. It becomes difficult for the wife to leave the man if she can see the effort and what the man went through in order to pay i-lobola.”* (Female, P2)

*“I-lobola is very crucial as it is part of my culture. I was enlightened about the importance of the payment of i-lobola in order to get married at a very young age. It is significant in bringing families together.”* (Female, P7)

From the above result, participants have highlighted the importance of i-lobola, they emphasized the importance of i-lobola in uniting two families and maintaining a healthy relationship among families. Participants reported that i-lobola and marriage should not be separated because in order to get married, you must follow the process of paying i-lobola. They highlighted that they were told about i-lobola and marriage at a young age, which is one of the reasons why they value the practice of i-lobola.

## **4.4 Traditional significance of i-lobola**

Most participants stated that i-lobola is a cultural practice which is common amongst their ethnic groups. They argued that it holds significant meaning and that it is a tradition that was practiced by their forefathers and has been passed down from one generation to another. “I-lobola is a cultural institution which plays a psychological role of demonstrating that a person is married in the full” (Dlamini, 1985: 365). For many of the young men and women, a person can only be regarded as married if i-lobola has been paid. Civil marriages are often not taken seriously if i-lobola was not paid to the bride's family. In the African culture, it is said

that if the principles of marriage and i-lobola are not followed, ancestors may be unhappy or angry. As a result challenges may arise such as, miscarriages, marriage not working out and health problems. These challenges are communicated through a traditional healer who is able to communicate with the ancestors. With regards to the significance of i-lobola, participants' comments were as follows:

*“Ilobola is a practice that we grew up knowing. It is one of the important traditions, most Africans value i-lobola because it distinguishes them from others. I-lobola can be in the form of cows or money, if you do not pay i-lobola you are not regarded as being married.”* (Male, P4)

*“I-lobola is one of the important traditions that we hold value to. It has been practiced for years in the African group. They may be certain complications if i-lobola principles are not followed. This may include issues such as miscarriages.”* (Female, P9)

Participants have highlighted the importance of i-lobola and the value it holds. Even though some people may think it is the mere sale of women, participants felt that it is part of their culture and it is a way of uniting two families.

#### **4.5 Attitudes towards i-lobola**

Participants contend that they will practice i-lobola because it is what distinguishes them from other cultural groups. It is what they use to identify themselves with, and it is within their souls to practice i-lobola. As much as they have argued that i-lobola is expensive and it is becoming commercialized, they still strongly believe that it is a cultural tradition and that they must honor their traditions. In addition, i-lobola gives a woman respect and a man is praised for being able to pay i-lobola.

*“I-lobola was practiced by our forefathers, it is something that we value. I-lobola is very close to our hearts. An example would be that for White people, if they are removed from Zimbali or Ballito they would feel as if their sense of belonging have been taken away from them. This also applies to us when the practice of i-lobola is not followed”* (Male, P2)

*“I-lobola is a cultural and traditional practice. Each race and ethnic group has their own tradition and rituals that they value and that are close to their hearts. As African we place value in i-lobola and we will forever hold our tradition to heart.”* (Female, P9)

*“When you have a cultural belief that still exists in your ethnic group, you hold value to it. With i-lobola, we are still honouring it because it is our culture that distinguishes us from others and it is one practice that will never die.”* (Female, P7)

*“When i-lobola is paid, you are respected as a woman and the man is praised for being able to pay i-lobola for his wife. This also has an impact on the family’s status.”* (Female, P1)

Participants stated that i-lobola is part of who they are and it should be practiced. It is what sets them apart from other cultural groups. I-lobola also gives men and women respect and status within the community.

#### **4.6 Perceptions of marriage and i-lobola among young people**

Participants had different views regarding the cultural relevance of i-lobola. They highlighted that i-lobola was about making money; the bride’s family often claimed huge sums of money. Participants argued that i-lobola varies across families and there is no fixed amount. They reported that families often demand huge sums of money for i-lobola. In addition, the bride and groom do not make decisions for themselves, they always follow instructions from their parents.

*“It is the love for money, people from rural areas often ask for expensive gifts from the groom’s family.”* (Female, P4)

*“Parents have more power during i-lobola negotiation, they dictate on what should happen. The bride and groom do not make decisions for themselves, they are always told what to do by their parents.”* (Male, P9)

Most female participants felt that they should receive i-lobola when they are getting married. They highlighted that the payment of i-lobola should be high if they are virgins and educated. Their comments are as follows:

*“I personally think that because I am educated my i-lobola should be high. I will be bringing a lot of income to the family as I will be earning more as compared to someone who has matric. This family will benefit from my income therefore, I think my i-lobola should be high because I will have to leave my original family and support my husband’s family.”* (Female, P5)

*“I think I should receive high i-lobola because I am a virgin and I am educated. I also have a good personality as I was raised well.”* (Female, P9).

Other participants felt that their i-lobola should be high if their husband’s value them. Furthermore, others disagreed and they stated that the price should not be based on their education or virginity.

*“I want i-lobola to be paid for me as a sign of respect to my parents. I think my husband should pay high i-lobola if he loves and values me regardless of my education and virginity.”* (Female, P7)

*“I think my i-lobola should be high because I will be performing wife duties therefore, it should be high regardless of whether I am educated or not”* (Female, P4)

Participants highlighted that i-lobola is about making money and that the bride’s family often claims huge sums of money. Other participants stated that i-lobola should be high if the bride is a virgin and educated. However, others felt that i-lobola should be high if the husband loves and values their wives.

## **4.7 Changing trends**

Participants highlighted that there has been a change in the way i-lobola is being paid. Before, i-lobola was paid through cattle and now families prefer cash. This change has been brought about by the transitioning of societies from traditional to modern societies. Since the

trends of i-lobola is changing, participants stated that some people end up cohabiting because they cannot afford i-lobola. Participants stated that the high cost of i-lobola makes it difficult for them to afford it due to the lack of employment opportunities and the struggling economy in the country. It was discovered that participants saw a link between cohabitation and i-lobola, they highlighted that sometimes they live like married people without paying i-lobola because it is expensive. In addition, other participants felt that living with their partners allowed them to better their lives while they are saving for i-lobola.

*“Well, the meaning and significance of i-lobola has changed drastically over time, in the past it was a way of uniting two families, but now it’s about affordability. Families look at factors such as whether the bride holds a Master’s degree, she does not have a child and she is still a virgin. In my opinion, I think i-lobola is no longer about traditional practices, people are now commercializing it. There are people who are cohabiting simply because they cannot afford to pay for i-lobola.” (Female, P1)*

*“In certain cases you find that people are cohabiting and living like married people because i-lobola is expensive. People choose to start their own families without going through the process of i-lobola because it is expensive.” (Female, P5)*

*“There is a link between i-lobola and cohabitation because some people live with their partners when they cannot afford to pay i-lobola. They start by doing important things such as improving their lives and then save for i-lobola. This does not imply that they are not in-love, they believe that they should get married when they are financially secure.” (Female, P2)*

Certain participants felt that the trends of i-lobola were changing, before it was more about uniting families and now it is about social status and affordability. This is because families pressurize and expect a glamorous and expensive wedding, there is also a Zulu wedding (*umabo*) which includes exchange of gifts between families. In addition, participants highlighted that back in the days the bride performed wife duties only when the wedding ceremony has been held. Recently, there has been a new trend where the bride performs wife duties after the payment of i-lobola.

*“Yes, the trends have changed because people have different perceptions regarding how a wedding should be. The groom is expected to pay around R100 000 and still contribute towards the wedding. Families pressurize the bride and groom to have a big and glamorous wedding. This can be very costly for both the bride and groom. Some of the costs include food, transport and venue. On top of that there is a Zulu wedding that usually takes place the day after the white wedding. Therefore, getting married is becoming expensive.” (Female, P2)*

*“The trends of i-lobola are changing because the only thing that people care about is money. It is like they are selling the bride. Before, the bride was allowed to leave her home once the wedding ceremony has been held but now there is a new trend where the bride is expected to perform wife duties after the payment of i-lobola.” (Female, P6)*

*“Before, I think i-lobola was about uniting families, it was all about family values. Now, i-lobola is about social status and what you can afford.” (Female, P8)*

The decline in the recognition and the value of cultural practices was reported by some participants. They highlighted that the process of i-lobola was all about social status and affordability. Families expected a big and glamorous wedding that is expensive.

#### **4.8 Should i-lobola be stopped or not?**

Participants had varying opinions on whether the payment of i-lobola should come to an end or not. The majority of the participants argued that as much as people say that they practice i-lobola because it is their culture, some people exploit the process to enjoy the financial gains. However, a few of the participants held the view that i-lobola should not be stopped as it is a cultural requirement. Their comments are as follows:

*“I do not think i-lobola should be stopped. We are living in a free country and everyone has a right to practice what they believe. Even though there are people who exploit the practice of i-lobola, it should continue because some people hold value in this practice.” (Female, P1)*

*“No it should not be stopped because it is a tradition. It is something that is practiced within a particular social or ethnic group. Some people believe in it therefore I think they should be allowed to exercise what they believe in.” (Male, P2)*

*“I-lobola should not be stopped because it is a cultural requirement. As Africans, I think if we get married legally with no i-lobola, it means that culturally you are not married because you are not recognized as a wife by the ancestors.” (Female, P1)*

Some female participants felt that i-lobola is not important and that it should be stopped. They highlighted that people should be allowed to practice what they believe. Participants emphasized that the meaning of i-lobola has been lost, and some are using it for financial gains. Furthermore, they highlighted that i-lobola does not necessarily show their worth therefore, there is no need for i-lobola.

*“My opinion regarding i-lobola is that it should be stopped. This is because some people are using i-lobola for financial gains, they do not care about the meaning of the whole process. I honestly believe that there is no need for i-lobola, if people love each other they should get married.” (Female, P1)*

*I think i-lobola should be stopped because the main focus is now on the finances. People expect many things in the whole process, families pressurize the bride and the groom to have a big wedding. I-lobola amount is continuously increasing rather than decreasing, this is showing that people only care about the money than the actual meaning of i-lobola. (Female, P2)*

*“I would not mind if the husband wants to pay i-lobola however, I do not expect it. This is because i-lobola does not necessarily show how important I am, I still believe that it is all about love and not money.” (Female, P10)*

Participants had different opinions regarding the payment of i-lobola. Some participants felt that the practice should continue because this is their culture, while others felt that it should stop because people make it to be about financial gains.

## 4.9 Finances

### 4.9.1 Charging i-lobola

I-lobola is not a legal requirement for marriage to occur however, it is a cultural requirement. Female participants had different views regarding the amount of i-lobola. They highlighted that there is no fixed amount with regards to i-lobola, they stated that it is the female's family that benefits from i-lobola. Female participants felt that if you only have secondary education then i-lobola should not be high. Their comments are as follows:

*"I think i-lobola should be around R30 000, I would not say there should be a fixed amount. If you want to pay i-lobola you should be allowed with whatever amount you have."* (Female, P2)

*"I think i-lobola should be R50 000. It is mostly the female's family that benefits from i-lobola."* (Female, P6)

*"For an average girl with matric, no child and no house, I think i-lobola should be R20 000. It is the female's family that benefits from i-lobola."* (Female, P1)

Male participants on the other hand had different perceptions regarding the amount of i-lobola. They highlighted that i-lobola is calculated through the value of each cow out of the eleven cows that are asked. Male participants stated that i-lobola increases if the bride is from a royal family, this is because a king's child receives a higher i-lobola than a commoner. Further, they had different views regarding the family that benefits from i-lobola. Some argued that the bride's family benefit while others stated that both or none of the families benefited from the payment of i-lobola. This is because one family gets the cows while the other gets the wife; in addition, i-lobola amount is also used to pay for wedding expenses.

*"I think each cow should be R5000, this amounts to R55 000. Both families benefit because the bride's family gets the cows while the groom's family get the wife, it is equal."* (Male, P4)

*"I think i-lobola should be between R75 000 to R100 000. However, this differs if the bride is from a royal family, usually if the bride is from a royal family the groom pays*

*R800 000 to R1 000 000. I think none of the families benefit because even though i-lobola is paid by the groom, the bride uses the money to prepare for the wedding.”*  
(Male, P2)

*“For a typical girl with matric, I think i-lobola should be R30 000. The family that benefits from i-lobola is the female’s family.”* (Male, P6)

When families ask for a high i-lobola, they place the wife in a vulnerable position. This is because participants highlighted that if i-lobola was high, the husband feels entitled to the wife. Participants reported that it becomes difficult for the wife to leave their marriage if i-lobola was high. Participants felt that this places women in a position of being victims of abuse because of the high price of i-lobola. There is also a status associated with high i-lobola within communities. Their comments are as follows:

*“When i-lobola is high, the husband tends to feel entitled to the wife. This is because they feel that their wife should obey all their rules because they paid a huge amount for them. This places the wife in a vulnerable position as it become difficult for the wife to divorce the husband if she is unhappy or abused.”* (Female, P10)

*“I think the more the husband pays, the more they feel entitled to owning their wives. There is also a status attached to high i-lobola amount received by the bride and her family. Women can also become victims of abuse if i-lobola is high and they cannot easily leave their marriages.”* (Female, P9)

Both male and female participants argued that i-lobola can be determined by your educational attainment. It was noted that female participants estimated a lower i-lobola amount as compared to male participants. Female participants felt that it is the bride’s family that benefits from i-lobola, while male participants had different views. High i-lobola placed women in vulnerable positions as it becomes difficult for them to leave their marriages if they are being abused.

## 4.10 Challenges

Participants highlighted that some of the negative implications of i-lobola were that families use criterion such as education to measure the amount of i-lobola. They reported that i-lobola is becoming more about financial gains, people are losing the meaning and significance of i-lobola. Participants also felt that the issue of cows made them feel uncomfortable as they would have to explain themselves to their parents if the 11<sup>th</sup> cow is not paid, this is the virginity cow (inkomo kamama) their comments are as follows:

*“What I do not like is the fact that some families use education as a criterion for measuring the amount of i-lobola.”* (Male, P3)

*“People are associating i-lobola with money. I think this should be stopped because i-lobola is not only about money, it is a cultural practice.”* (Female, P9)

*“For some families, they lose their only daughter when she gets married. The daughter becomes more involved in her new family for example, if there is a ceremony in both her families, she would have to attend a ceremony in her husband’s family.”* (Female, P4)

*“What I do not like about i-lobola negotiations is the issue of cows. The 11<sup>th</sup> cow is only paid if the groom is the one who took the bride’s virginity. This becomes a challenge for the bride because she would have to explain to her parents as to who took her virginity. This cow is called (inkomo ka mama) the virginity cow. I think there should be another way to handle the issue of cows.”* (Female, P5)

Some of the participants felt that it becomes a challenge to get married if you do not have money. They agreed that i-lobola placed undue financial pressure on men who are financially unfit. Participants stated that when people do not afford to pay i-lobola they end up cohabiting for years trying to save for i-lobola. In addition, participants also emphasized that families do not accept getting married in court, they demand i-lobola. Some also felt the demands for a certain number of cows put particular stress on women who were not virgins or had been in relationships with other men.

*“People only get married if they are rich. This is because you need a lot of money to pay i-lobola. People who are financially unfit do not even think of trying to start i-lobola negotiation as it is very expensive.” (Female, P7)*

*“I-lobola can cause stress for some people as they have to save for years in order to pay i-lobola. For example, I know of a couple that is cohabiting because they cannot afford to pay i-lobola. Some families do not accept getting married in court, they demand i-lobola.” (Female, P9)*

Gender-based violence was one of the challenges with regards to i-lobola. Participants stated that i-lobola is one of the causes of gender-based violence. This is because they highlighted that the man feels entitled to the woman, she may be ill-treated and may be seen as inferior. Their comments are as follows:

*“Since i-lobola involves a lot of money, it perpetuates issues such as gender-based violence, ill-treatment, exploitation and inferiority.” (Female, P7)*

*“In our days, i-lobola is expensive and this creates a sense of entitlement for men. They believe that they own the woman if they have paid huge amounts of money for them. They have more power over women and dictates what women should and should not do” (Female, P1)*

## **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown results from in-depth interviews conducted with young people on their perspectives and attitude of i-lobola in contemporary South Africa. The study found that most participants viewed i-lobola as being part of their cultural requirements when getting married. They stated that i-lobola is the practice of uniting families. It was highlighted that i-lobola and marriage should be separated. Participants regarded i-lobola as a money-making scheme, where the elders of families viewed this as an opportunity to make money, whereas the whole process is meant to unite the two families involved. Families that demanded high i-lobola placed women in vulnerable positions. This is because men felt entitled and women had to obey their rules. Other negative implications for high i-lobola included: ill treatment of women, gender-based violence, feelings of inferiority among women.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings and discussion**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Marriage is a universally recognised union that is widely practiced. Marriage has significant meaning across societies, and it continues to be upheld as an important cultural practice. Among Africans the payment of i-lobola is an important requirement for marriage to occur. I-lobola symbolises respect and is a way of uniting two families. The overall objective of this study is to provide insights into the practice of i-lobola among young people. For this study, in-depth interviews were held with young men and women attending a university in Durban. This chapter discusses the major findings of this study in relation to literature which examines marriage within a cultural and global context. This study draws on the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism and modernisation to shed insights into the practise of i-lobola in contemporary South African societies among young people.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perspectives and attitudes of young people about i-lobola. The researcher explored awareness of i-lobola among the study population. All of the study participants were aware of the practice of i-lobola as well as the cultural significance of it. The interviews suggest that young people view i-lobola as a way of building a relationship between the two families involved. A study conducted by Mazibuko (2016) also suggest that i-lobola serves as a way of uniting two families the traditional African way and it also serves as a symbol for women to move to another family legally. Other participants defined i-lobola as the amount of cows paid by the groom or his family to the family of the woman he wishes to marry. Scholars such as Juing (2012) have defined the payment of bridewealth as the amount of money or goods given by the groom or his family to the parents of a woman upon the marriage of their daughter to the groom (Juing, 2012). This study revealed that i-lobola emphasises the important of culture. Similarly, research from Juing (2012) and Mazibuko (2016) highlight the significance of the cultural aspect of i-lobola.

The study discovered that young people view i-lobola as a practice that holds shared meaning among Africans. Shared knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and artefacts are known to exist within a group that share common characteristics (Gill, 2013). The findings from this study shows

that i-lobola is a cultural practice rooted in the lives of Africans. This cultural practice plays a significant role in shaping the lives of young people. In order for a marriage to be recognized culturally, i-lobola must be paid. Studies suggest that according to African tradition, it is an obligation to pay i-lobola for a marriage to be culturally recognised (Manyike, 2018; Posel et al., 2011). The results of this study corroborates with that of other studies which suggest that i-lobola is a common traditional practice among African people. The practice of transferring cattle from the relatives of the bridegroom to those of the bride serves to legitimize the marriage and to ensure certain rights within the union (Parker, 2015). Among the African people it is recognised as a token of appreciation and acts as a legal purpose for the children born of the customary marriage (Nkosi, 2013). Reports from the study participants suggests that i-lobola would not disappear any time soon as Africans are deeply rooted in their culture and it remains an integral part of them. Posel and Rudwick (2013), state that Africans feel the obligation and commitment to maintain i-lobola as it is a way to maintain their identities within their societies.

I-lobola has not been a legal requirement for African marriage since 1932, but the payment of is widely expected to have preceded marriage in African society to this day (Posel et al., 2014). It involves payment of cows or money and it was an essential part of marriage negotiations and was knows to keep the marriage significant (Posel et al., 2014). The study discovered that during i-lobola negotiations, women from both families do not have an input because it is believed that i-lobola negotiations should be handled by men. Even if there is no man available in that family then they will ask other men, such as neighbours, to handle the negotiations.

The study found that i-lobola is important as it is the foundation of the process of getting married. I-lobola has always been practiced among Africans, and it stands as a law that one must follow. This practice should not be questioned however, it should be followed and acknowledged. Semanya (2014) states that i-lobola negotiations involves the presence of both families of the bride and groom and that it is a strict process that must be followed according to the procedures placed. Even though i-lobola is viewed as an important practice, there were participants who felt that i-lobola was not important. This is because they viewed i-lobola as a way of uniting two families that do not have a relationship therefore, if families had a relationship prior to i-lobola negotiations there would be no need for the payment of i-lobola. It was discovered that participants saw a relationship between i-lobola and marriage. This is because in order to get married the process of paying i-lobola must be followed. The study

revealed that i-lobola is rooted in culture as it is a tradition that has been practiced over the years. Dlamini (1985), further argues that i-lobola is a cultural institution that plays an essential psychological role of showing that a person is fully married. The symbolic interactionism theory argues that people build meaning by observing what others do, imitating them and following their guidance (Aksana, 2009). The importance of i-lobola was instilled in Africans at a young age. They were told that it is one of the significant rituals that should be practiced when someone is planning to get married. The process of i-lobola has been observed over the years and the elders of families had the responsibility of guiding and facilitating the process. Participants had a positive attitude with regards to i-lobola as they stated that the payment of i-lobola resulted in the woman being respected while the man is praised for being able to pay i-lobola. This also increases the family's status within the community.

This study found that i-lobola was viewed as a way of making money. Similarly, a study by Cherise et al. (2010), revealed that daughters have become a high-priced commodity and i-lobola has become a means of escaping poverty in a rapidly declining economy. The high amount of i-lobola that is asked serves as a means of sustaining the family. This study revealed that the process of paying i-lobola is facilitated by the elderly men of the families, this includes all the decisions without the bride and groom partaking in the process. The findings of this study are in contrast with that of Semenya (2014) as he found that it is the uncles and aunts who are involved in the i-lobola negotiations, they are responsible for counselling the bride and groom before they get marriage. It was discovered that the amount of i-lobola increased if the bride is a virgin and educated. This is because it is believed that if the bride is educated she will bring more wealth to the groom's family. Other participants felt that i-lobola should be high if the groom's loves and values the bride.

The study revealed that there has been a change in trends regarding the payment of i-lobola. Before, i-lobola was paid through cows and now families prefer cash. One of the reasons for this change is that the lifestyle of people is changing as they are adapting to modern values. According to Reyers (2001), much of these changes are attributed to modernisation as societies have transitioned from traditional to modern societies. Parker (2015) argues that the payment of cows has been replaced by money as people living in urban areas may not have the capacity to receive cattle since they did not have the space to accommodate them. As i-lobola is becoming expensive, people are finding it hard to pay i-lobola. This has led to cohabitation, where partners live together while saving for i-lobola. Moore et al. (2013) is in contrast

with the findings of the study as he argues that cohabitation may prevent a man from marrying a woman once they are living together, this is because they would be no need to pay i-lobola if you are already living with someone. It was observed that in the early years i-lobola was about uniting families however as the years progressed a new trend was adapted as i-lobola is now about status and affordability. Families demanded expensive and glamorous weddings.

Certain participants highlighted that the payment of i-lobola should come to an end while others felt it should not. They acknowledged that i-lobola was a form of financial gain however, they still believed that it should not come to an end. This is because i-lobola is part of their culture that they value. Other participant preferred i-lobola to be stopped, these were specifically some female participants. The reasons for female participants to argue that i-lobola should come to an end is because they feel that the practice is about exploitation and financial gains. The study revealed that the whole family of the bride often gains from i-lobola. Conversely, a study by Chireshe et al. (2010), revealed that it is usually the fathers of the bride who uses the process of i-lobola as a way of gaining money. Furthermore, participants felt that i-lobola does not necessarily determine their importance as they still believed that the process of getting married should be about love and not money. Chirese et al. (2010), on the other hand discovered that the payment of i-lobola shows how serious a man is about a woman.

Participants had varying opinions regarding the amount that should be paid for i-lobola. Female participants suggested that i-lobola should range from R20 000 to R50 000. They felt that i-lobola should be determined by educational attainment. Furthermore, female participants felt that the bride's family benefited from i-lobola. Male participants on the other hand suggested that i-lobola should range from R30 000 to R100 000. They stated that the i-lobola amount increases if the bride is from a royal family. This i-lobola amount can range from R800 000 to R1 000 000. Some male participants argued that it is the bride's family that benefited from i-lobola while others argued that none of the families benefited. It was argued that when i-lobola is high men feel entitled to owning a woman. Similarly, a study by Cherise et al. (2010) found that when the father of the bride demands large amounts of i-lobola, men feel entitled to the woman and this may place the woman in a position of being abused.

The study revealed numerous challenges regarding to i-lobola. The main challenge for i-lobola was finances, this caused financial pressure on men who were financially unfit. The

issue of finances perpetuated other challenges such as gender-based violence. Participants felt that women were inferior, mistreated and had to take orders from men. Gupta (2000) also highlighted that across cultures, there is always a distinctive difference regarding roles and decision making between men and women.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

One of the concerns was that the meaning of i-lobola has been lost. It is now more about gaining wealth than a cultural practice. It is recommended that institutions that deals with cultural matters should come together and deliberate ways in which the purpose of i-lobola can be restored, as i-lobola was meant to build a relationship between two families. I-lobola negotiators should not only consider the females achievements however, they should also consider the man's attribute.

The findings of the study showed that during i-lobola negotiations love and value amongst the bride and groom was not considered, it was only about finances. The basis of marriage is true love and understanding, this should be accorded the due consideration that it deserves in i-lobola negotiations (Olisa, 2016). Families tend to ignore true love and only focus on who can afford to pay i-lobola. This may be the reason why there are high rates of divorce and cohabitation. It is recommended that before i-lobola negotiations commence, both families should advise individuals who are about to get married about the importance of true love and proceed with the negotiations once they can see that both individuals understand the importance of marriage. It should not only be about the affordability of paying i-lobola.

The study of i-lobola should be replicated with older people. This may help in getting a better understanding of the purpose of i-lobola. Conducting a study on the elderly may create an understanding on the origins of i-lobola as the elderly acquire knowledge regarding the significance of i-lobola. In addition, the elderly have a better understanding of i-lobola than the youth that was interviewed in this study. The study will allow elderly people to voice their concerns regarding the process of i-lobola.

This study suggest that there should be clear and distinct standard that guides the process of i-lobola. The study suggests that the amount of i-lobola varies among families. In cases where the man cannot afford to pay i-lobola, there should be a flexible payment plan negotiated amongst families. This may help in decreasing the rate of cohabitation.

## 5.4 Conclusion

I-lobola is a traditional practice used to build a relationship between two families. It is an African tradition that is practiced when two people are planning to get married. It is the payment made in forms of cows or paid in cash. Elders of the families negotiate the amount of i-lobola. They negotiate the initial amount of i-lobola. The research focused on young people between the ages of 18 to 24. The study looked at young people with the aim of exploring their perception regarding i-lobola. It was important to explore the perceptions of young people regarding marriage because of the declining rates of marriage in the country. This will provide insights into why marriage is no longer favoured in society. Focusing on young people was interesting for this study as some of them are yet to go through the process of getting married.

I-lobola is widely practiced tradition in South Africa and it is highly valued among Africans. The practice of i-lobola is acknowledged for uniting two families and honouring culture. However, there were negative aspects that were perpetuated through the process of i-lobola such gender-based violence. Many also believed that i-lobola has lost its significance and it has become a way for families to make money.

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## **Appendix 1: interview guide**

**Name of Interviewer: Snehlanhla Msweli**

**Date: October 2018**

**In depth interview of 20 students 10 males and 10 student females**

### **Demographic characteristics**

How old are you?

What is your ethnicity?

Do you have a partner?

What is your relationship status?

How would you describe your relationship status?

The questions are grouped according to each theme which are to:

1. To explore the attitudes of students towards i-lobola.
2. To determine the meaning and significance of ilobola over time.
3. To investigate the relevance of i-lobola in contemporary society.
4. To explore the socio-cultural factors that affect their opinions on i-lobola

### **Attitudes of students towards ilobola.**

1. Have you heard of ilobola? Has anyone from your family practice ilobola do you see yours self-getting married the same way they did
2. What do you know and understand about ilobola?

3. How important is lobola for marriage? From your experience how much of input does the woman has in the whole process.
4. How has the meaning and significance of ilobola changed over time?
5. Do you know of instances where families got them self into debt because of ilobola, what is your view on this?

**To determine the meaning and significance of ilobola over time.**

6. What are your past experiences on ilobola?
7. What do you understand by marriage? Do you think there are linkages between lobola and cohabitation,
8. What makes lobola stand out from any cultural practice that are involved in the process of getting married?
9. Do people from rural areas and urban hold different views on ilobola. How so? Do you think families that do not practice lobola are less African or losing their culture what is your view on this

**To investigate the relevance of lobola in contemporary society.**

10. Do you consider lobola successful in the current day and time? Do you think the paying of lobola should be stopped
11. Do you think the meaning of loboa has changed over time? How so? Some people might consider lobola as a mere sale of the bride what is your view of this?

**To explore the factors that affected their opinions on i-lobola**

12. How is the value of lobola determined by who, is it ethical and morally correct to determine lobola based on your education ( had to change this question as I have already asked it above)
13. What do you like and do not like about ilobola? Do you think lobola places undue financial pressure on poor families?
14. Describe a typical lobola amount. Who are the beneficiaries of lobola (is it the guy family or the girls family)

15. If you were to get married will you pay lobola/do you expect lobola to be paid for you. Based on what basis should you be paid lobola
16. Since lobola is not a legal requirement why do you think so much value is still placed on it to ensure marriage legitimacy? If African people marry across the races should lobola apply, if you remarry or you are a widow should lobola apply
17. What are some of the positives of ilobola?
18. What are the negatives?

## Appendix 2: Gate keepers letter



7 June 2018

Ms Snenhlanhla Nompumelelo Msweli (SN 214510356)  
School of Built Environment and Development Studies  
College of Humanities  
Howard College Campus  
UKZN

Email: [snempume@gmail.com](mailto:snempume@gmail.com) [214510356@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214510356@stu.ukzn.ac.za) [Maharajp7@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Maharajp7@ukzn.ac.za)

Dear Ms Msweli

### RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

*"Ilobola in Contemporary South Africa: Perspectives and Experiences of Young People"*

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by conducting interviews with males and females students on the Howard College campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

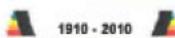
  
MR SS MOKOENA  
REGISTRAR

#### Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: [registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

 1910 - 2010  
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses  Edgewood  Howard College  Mediocal School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

## Appendix 3: Ethical clearance approval letter



09 July 2018

Ms Snenhlanhla Nompumelelo Msweli (214510356)  
School of Built Environment & Development Studies  
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Msweli,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0491/018M

Project title: Ilobola in contemporary South Africa: Perspectives and experiences of young people

### Approval Notification – Expedited Approval

In response to your application received on 16 May 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Pranitha Maharaj  
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Oliver Mtapuri  
Cc School Administrator: Ms Angeline Msomi

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

 1910 - 2010   
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

## Appendix 4: Informed consent form

### UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL  
For research with human participants

#### INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

#### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: October 2018

Greeting: Sir/Madam

My name is Snehlanhla Nompumelelo Msweli from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard collage school of built environment and development, humanities. My contact details are email address: [214510356@stu.ukzn.zc.za](mailto:214510356@stu.ukzn.zc.za).

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the **Ilobola in contemporary South Africa: Perspectives and experiences of young people**. The aim and purpose of this research is to find the attitudes of the KwaZulu-Natal university student at Howard College on ilobola. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants; it will be situated at Howard collage, and University of KwaZulu-Natal. It will involve the following procedures in-depth interviews. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be a month. The study is not funded by anyone.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts the tacking of issues close to participant's hearts, involving their traditions. We hope that the study will help increase literature by tackling issues that affects people's lives in the country. We hope that it will come with solutions to be implemented and consider for the better improvements of people's lives.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee approval number\_(HSS/0491/018m\_\_\_).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [214510356@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:214510356@ukzn.ac.za) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

State clearly that participation in this research is voluntary (and that participants may withdraw participation at any point), and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. Describe the potential consequences to the participant for withdrawal from the study and the procedure/s required from the participants for orderly withdrawal. Under what circumstances will the researcher terminate the participant from the study?

There will be none cost to participants. To protect confidentiality of participants I will insert non-disclosure provisions in employment agreements. If there is a need to disclose their confidentiality, they will be contacted for their approval.

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Snenhlanhla Msweli has informed me about the study entitled Ilobola in contemporary South Africa: Perspectives and experiences of young people. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 214510356@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	yes
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	NO

---

**Signature of Participant**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Translator  
(Where applicable)**

---

**Date**