

Perceived Masculinity among Basotho Women: An Analysis of *Litlobonya* Folksongs

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Abstract

While most scholars who study masculinity focus on men and leave out women, masculinity also exists among women and bears the same consequences. This study aims to show that masculinity exists among Basotho women as their *litlobonya* songs testify. Scholars of masculinity have shown that it is acquired. Generally, it is the quality of masculinity that makes someone masculine, not their gender. Among the Basotho, expressions such as *Ke monna kaofela* (He is a full man) do not solely refer to men but are also used to refer to females who have character traits of men. Masculinity is associated with character traits that one reflects in this society. Therefore, the definition of masculinity relies heavily on each society. The social, religious, political and economic factors, to a great extent, influence masculinity. Through cathexis masculinity, this study analyses data to find out if Basotho women's songs prove that like men, they have masculine qualities. Data was collected through formal and informal interviews. This study concludes that Basotho women's songs portray the existence of masculinity among them and as such need support to construct a form of masculinity conducive for their society.

Keywords: folksongs; *litlobonya*; cathexis masculinity; sexuality; Basotho

Introduction

Litolobonya are Basotho women's songs accompanied by dance. These songs are used for entertainment and for informal sexuality education among women. Motalingoane-Khau (2010) defines *litolobonya* as Basotho women's songs accompanied by exceedingly sexual dances expressive of how a woman should perform sexual intercourse to excite her husband. Motalingoane-Khau continues that *litolobonya* dances equip women with skills to excel in order to please their husbands. For Motalinyane-Khau and most Basotho women, the *litolobonya* platform is one of the few places where women are free to communicate on issues relating to sexuality among them. They engage in discourse about sex, orgasms, and productivity. Through the songs that they create, sing and dramatise, they reach the climax of their intention: to show that it is not only men who have to enjoy sex—women also have to find pleasure in it. It should be noted that *litolobonya* songs share two traits with the Basotho initiations songs. First, the artists deepen their voices as they sing. Second, they dance to the song. However, their dance style is different. In *litolobonya*, some women take male roles as they act. They dance with toy-penises between their legs. By acting in male roles they continue to construct their masculinity. According to Motalingoane-Khau (2010), the essence of *litolobonya* songs is to instill skills in women to be able to sexually satisfy their husbands as failure to do so will lead to their husbands being taken away by other women who know how to perform better. In this study, Basotho women's *litolobonya* songs and dances are threshed to justify this observation. Much as this study focuses attention on *litolobonya* songs, it is important to provide a background on the formation of female masculinity in Basotho culture.

Among the traditional Basotho, every member of a society, boys and girls, approaching adulthood underwent the practice of initiation. The initiation practice was basically meant to acquaint participants with the concept of marriage and how to handle their families in the future. The training of boys and girls was to form and shape their masculinity. This is the reason why, among the Basotho, female initiates had to deepen their voices like men when they sing their initiation songs as well as when they speak. They were also expected to acquire male names as a symbol of their transition into manhood. Sekese (2002) asserts that female initiates were given masculine names of their ancestors to symbolise their achievement. By acquiring masculine names, they were considered to be as brave as men (Motalingoane-Khau 2010, 40). According to Makhisa (1979, 1), a Bafokeng clan elderly by the name of Motanyane had observed that women need to acquire the skills that men acquire in the initiation lodge to be able to keep their families in order. Such skills include the ability to endure extreme pain. Makhisa (1979) puts it thus:

Motanyane ... a lemoha hore monna o lokisetsoa lenyalo ka botlalo lebollong. A fumana ho le bohlokoa hore e ka khona mosali le eena a ke a fete pel'a lithupelo tseo tse matla e le boitokisetso bo ka etsoang setsing sena sa thupelo.

(Motanyane ... realised that a [Mosotho] man is being prepared for marriage in full at the initiation lodge. He therefore found it worthy to propose the same initiative for a [Mosotho] woman to get the same strong training through a similar institution.)

Goduka (1999) concurs with Makhisa (1979) when he shows that girls joined initiation school where they learned about sex and how to sexually excite their husbands. For Sekese (1999), boys started learning about sex from games that were sexual in nature. He provides *tšipho* as an example. According to Matšela (1987), *tšipho* is a male game that is played with a stone attached to the waist so that as the participant jumps like a frog the stone keeps hitting him on the back. When the stone hits the boy, he is expected not to cry as this game helps in the formation of his manhood. Motalingoane-Khau (2010) agrees with Matšela (1987) that *tšipho* helps in the construction of masculinity. Motalingoane-Khau (2010, 36) describes *tšipho* thus:

[It is] ... holding onto the ground with both hands and raising the buttocks and feet off the ground, while following this with the up and down movement of the buttocks.

The exercise as described by Motalingoane-Khau (2010) would excite him and activate his sexuality. Motalingoane-Khau indicates that at a later stage at the initiation, the young men were taught about sex and what they were to expect from their wives. Up to the present, this institution for both males and females still exists among the Basotho, though the male one is still popular while the female one is facing extinction. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that masculinity exists in both Basotho men and women, although it is suppressed among women. Its suppression, however, does not mean it does not exist. The question is: what is masculinity?

Masculinity is stereotypically defined as a term inclined to men and the characteristics that their society expects them to exude. These characteristics, as listed by masculinity scholars, include courage, independence, assertiveness, aggression, perseverance, violence, brutality, anger, strength, leadership, virility, as well as being secretive, focused, respectful, wealthy, brave, ambitious, fearful, warlike, vengeful, vulgar, promiscuous, lustful, and many more. Among the Basotho, almost all the characteristics listed above are expected to be acquired by men while women are expected to exhibit the following characteristics: submissiveness, caring, nurturance, empathy and more. According to Khotso (2010), although masculinity is most desirable when it is observed in men, there are women whose character traits can be masculine. Regarding this point, Satyo and Jadezweni (2001, 306) say:

A thoughtful examination of women disapproves the assumption that women are necessarily powerless. In real life, despite male dominance of some sort or another, women are, in most cases, in control of themselves and their worlds.

One example which testifies that women like men can have character traits traditionally associated with masculinity can be drawn from the Basotho female initiates song below:

He ke chele oe!
He u chele joang monna?
He ke chele bo!
He u chele joang monna?
He ke chele hle ...

(Hey I am burned!
Hey how did you get burned man?
Hey I am burned!
How did you get burned man?
Hey I am burned ...)
(Adapted from Khotso 2017, 266)

According to Khotso (2017), the message of this song is that these female initiates consider themselves men, hence their reference to each other as man (*monna*). As initiates, having successfully acquired masculine characteristics, they publicly sing about their lust for sex. Generally, among the Basotho /*ho cha*/ is an idiom that has both literal and figurative meaning. Literally, it means to have one's skin burned and damaged. In a figurative sense, it means to "bitterly" lust for sex. Therefore, this study observes that it is not only the women initiates who communicate this message through songs but this theme cuts across other female songs that have acquired masculine characteristics. The *litolobonya* songs exemplify this fact. Songs are created from language. Holland et al. (1999) and Weeks (2003) assert that social beings construct and sustain sexuality through language. They continue that sexuality is a product of discourse and is socially constructed. Therefore, this study explores *litolobonya* songs to show how masculinity exists among Basotho women.

Theoretical Framework

Cathexis or the aspect of masculinity theory related to sexuality is employed to analyse Basotho women's songs: *litolobonya*. In order to understand sex and sexuality, it is proper to employ a theory that responds to the research questions. Cathexis or masculine sexuality is another branch of masculinity. Whitehead (2002) states that it is appropriate to review the history of masculinity in order to understand it at present. Masculinity is a broad theory that attempts to help critics to understand manhood in societies in different contexts and activities: for example, at work, in sports and music. However, this definition, according to Whitehead (2002), is a historical one. Whitehead indicates that masculinity is historically variable and subject to change within and across social groupings. In this era, Whitehead points out, it is appropriate to talk of postmodern masculinities. He asserts that this term will give scholars room to scrutinise the influence of globalisation upon ways of being a man while also highlighting the possibility of different masculinities based on race, ethnicity and sexuality. Whitehead concludes that scholars are no longer interested in only studying historical masculinity. Scholars are currently interested in understanding diversity in masculinity. According to Whitehead (2002), during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, as a result of the influence of Charles

Kingsley, manhood was described as not having characteristics associated with women. Furthermore, manhood was described by stereotypical characteristics as defined by the society. However, it was not clear what being a man really meant. To address diversity, the theory of masculinity was developed to incorporate a number of branches, including cathexis or masculine sexuality. Connell (1995, 337) describes sexual desire as emotional energy attached to an object. He argues that social relations are located in the body “as sexual arousals and turn-offs, as bodily actions in sexuality.” Connell continues that cathexis is one branch of masculinity theory that is underutilised because the fact that sexual desires are socially constructed is ignored. In order for scholars to understand sexuality, cathexis as an aspect of masculinity theory is appropriate. Khotso (2019b) indicates that sex is prominent in the language that is used in social institutions, including masculine ones. Therefore, in order to comprehend the reproduction of gender power relations as portrayed in the language of the *litolobonya* songs, this article will examine the following: sexual relations as portrayed in these song, sex as the ultimate form of physical pleasure, and sex as the most important avenue for attaining psychological and emotional fulfilment. To examine the notion that sex is used to determine masculine characteristics in these *litolobonya* songs, aspects of cathexis masculinity will be employed.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method. Myers and Avison (2002) indicate that a qualitative method is good for studying social and cultural notions, since it is concerned with comprehending people and their social life, their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. This study focuses on *litolobonya* songs, which are a social phenomenon. Myers and Avison (2002) assert that a qualitative method is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. Data was collected through formal and informal interviews. Groups of women who sing this kind of song were visited. The researchers sought permission to conduct a study and were granted permission. The researchers were allowed to conduct interviews and make recordings. They only recorded songs that featured the notion of interest. The recordings were transcribed later. To support the collected data, the researchers listened to different radio stations such as MoAfrica FM and Motjoli FM in Lesotho. These radio stations have programmes playing these songs. The recordings were later transcribed. Purposeful sampling, which is used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest, was used to collect the songs sung by participants and those from the radio stations. First the songs that featured the notion in question were selected and then they were transcribed. Content analysis was employed as it gave the researchers the opportunity to categorise the data according to themes. Content analysis refers to a research methodology that takes into consideration social media including music, letters, diaries, newspapers, folk songs, short stories, symbols, literature, and messages from media, by examining the details and implications of the content and repeated themes. According to Las Das and Bhaskaran (2008), content analysis gives

the researcher an opportunity to select units for analysis, develop categories in the process of analysing data and sample relevant content only.

The researchers found content analysis appropriate because it takes social media into consideration when collecting data. For this reason, the researchers listened to songs that were played on the radio, aired on television, and found on CDs. The songs were then transcribed into data for analysis. The researchers only chose songs that were relevant to the study.

Analysis

The analysis for this study is based on cathexis masculinity, as already indicated. The songs selected for analysis reflect the existence of masculinity among Basotho women. The study analysed seven Basotho women's songs or *litolobonya*. The analysis was conducted according to the following pattern: first a summary of the song is provided; the song, its lyrics and the analysis come thereafter.

Song 1

Summary: This song is expressed through euphemism. The image of a matchstick is used to euphemise a penis. The song communicates that a penis spreads problems throughout the country. It goes on to communicate the problem: a mistress has taken another woman's husband and there are two possible reasons for this—either the husband or the mistress is skillful in sexual intercourse. The song contains the following lyrics:

*Thutsoana ea chesa naha
jonnana oe!
thutsoana ea chesa
jonnana oe!
Thutsoa ea chesa naha jonnana oe
ha le bona Mosali enoa
o nkile monna oa ka
hobane a tseba ho fecha
Thutsoa ea chesa naha jonnana oe.*

(The matchstick has burned a country
Oh my goodness!
The matchstick has burned a country
Oh my goodness!
The matchstick has burned a country oh my goodness
When you see this woman
Oh my goodness!
He has taken my man
Because s/he is excellent in sexual intercourse
Oh my goodness
The matchstick has burned a country oh my goodness.)

This song calls for an analysis of cathexis masculinity as it provides the researcher with the opportunity to look into people's sexual relationships. Through this song, a wife complains about another woman who is a mistress to her husband. The wife complains because the mistress, among other things, will destroy her sexual relations with her husband. Usually when a man has extramarital affairs, the sexual relationship in the family deteriorates. The wife in this song complains that this other woman has taken her husband due to her excellence in sexual intercourse. According to Motalingoane-Khau (2010), the worries communicated by this song form the crux of *litolobonya* songs. Through these songs the message of the pleasure of sexual intercourse is given priority. Both a woman and a man are expected to perform to the expectation to sexually satisfy each other. This is the reason the artist is worried about the satisfaction she assumes her husband and the mistress derive from each other. The word */enoa/*, which is equivalent to "this one," is a pointing word. It sounds as though the lamenting woman is facing the woman who has taken her husband. The action of pointing at someone whom one has sour relations with triggers a fight among the Basotho. It is only a person who is ready to fight who is brave enough to point a finger at someone she considers to be the source of her trouble. This is a clear sign of masculinity. Those who are masculine do not hesitate to face danger. A woman who has graduated from fear has acquired masculine characteristics. The artist in this song is one such a woman who has acquired masculine characteristics.

The use of the auxiliary */o/* in Sesotho is not specific to a woman or a man. It becomes specific in context. In this case it is ambiguous as it refers to an expert in sexual activity. It could be that the mistress is excellent in sexual intercourse or the husband. It should be noted that the woman who complains is silent about her expertise in relation to sex. The question is: is sexual intercourse a reciprocal activity? According to Makhisa (1979), both a wife and a husband should get similar satisfaction from a sexual relationship. Failure of one of them to reach climax results in problems leading to the marriage's breakdown. Makhisa (1979) puts it thus:

[*Ke ka*] ... *boitokisetso* ... *ho ka phengoang ho se khotsofatsane thobalanong ea monna le mosali lenyalong. Khotsofatsano ena e matla bophelong ba lenyalo. Ntla ea bohlokoa-hlokoa phelisanong [ea lenyalo] e itšetlehile ka likamano pakeng tsa monna le mosali e le ho phema ho se khotsofatsane ho isang likhohlanong le likarohanong.*

([The] ... initial training ... will lead to avoiding to fail to reach sexual fulfillment of a husband and wife in their marriage. The most important issue in marriage life heavily depends on the relationships between husband and wife in order to avoid dissatisfaction [in sexual relationships], which will lead to serious misunderstanding heading towards divorce.)

For Makhisa (1979), the initial training received by both boys and girls during the initiation process helps them to acquire masculine characteristics. Therefore, a woman who laments her husband's intimacy is not wrong, as communicated by this song under the discussion. However, she should make an effort to contribute to her husband's

sexual satisfaction so that other women cannot take him away. According to Omartian (2006), sexuality is a top priority in a man's life. In line with Omartian, this study finds through an examination of *litolobonya* songs that sex, and sexuality, is a top priority for a woman as well. Omartian (2006) and Makhisa (1979) share the same view that marriages where the sexual relationship is a low priority often fail. This woman who laments her husband's fidelity through this song is also aware that men in extramarital affairs do not only enjoy sexual intercourse but also enjoy supporting their mistresses financially. Rapeane-Mathonsi (2011) asserts that even if the wife fights her husband's mistress, the mistress will not stop her affair because it benefits the mistress enormously. However, this woman does not say anything in relation to financial or any other kind of support that her husband might be giving to this mistress; what she is mostly worried about is the sexual relationship that the two are engaging in. This is the reason why she wails and blames her man's private parts. For her, the penis causes the trouble that spoils her relationships with the rest of the women in the country. According to Ericsson (2005) and Kimmel (2004), sex is something that should be policed and failure to bring it under control will disrupt the moral and social order. Through the message of this song, it becomes clear that the social order is disrupted due to extramarital affairs where pleasure is mainly derived from sexual intercourse. The courage of this woman to hit the nail on the head about her true concern reflects her masculinity. Not a single Mosotho woman under normal circumstances can publicise her sexual dissatisfaction with her husband unless she has graduated from womanhood into the world of masculinity, where among other qualities talking about sex is encouraged. Her readiness to speak openly about what worries her makes her fit into the masculine world. It is considered masculine to be courageous, to face what worries one and be ready to fight it. For Khotso (2017), masculinity has both positive and negative consequences. In the song discussed above, the artist forms a desired masculine trait that is positive for a content society; therefore, this kind of masculinity needs to be nurtured.

Song 2

Summary: In this song, the screaming that is heard from a man having sexual intercourse with his mistress raises a question. The women are interested to find out what the other woman did that was so exciting. They are inquisitive to find out how this woman was able to sexually attract other men:

O no mo nehile joang?
O no mo file joang?
O no file joang?
O no mo file joang haeka joale oa lla
O no phephetso matota!
O no phephetso matota!
O no phephetso matota!

(How did you give him?
 How did you give him?)

How did you give him?
How did you give him when it is like now, he is crying?
You were exciting men!
You were exciting men!
You were exciting men!)

In this song, the other women's fear is explicit as they pose one question a number of times: "How did you 'give' him?" From this question that is posed many times, it is evident that the other women are asking that they want to learn the best sex styles to attain psychological and emotional fulfilment. This study surmises that the other women are afraid that the woman referred to in the song is an expert in sexual intercourse such that she makes a man "cry" in excitement. One can also assume that these other women are afraid that this woman might take their husbands if she could happen to have sexual intercourse with them. It has already been indicated in this study that the gist of these songs is that if a woman who fails to excite her man sexually, other capable women will take her husband. For Makhisa (1979), a woman who is excellent at sexual intercourse has high chances of keeping her husband from extramarital affairs. The opposite happens with a wife who fails to do so. Makhisa (1979) states:

Ho ile hoa elelloeha hore kopanong ea monna le mosali, likhohlano le ho se utloisisane li hlalisoa ke ho se khotsofatsane ho bileng ho qhobelang monna ho ea botheta, le mosali ho ba le nyatsi.

(It was realised that it is during unsatisfactory sexual intercourse of a husband and wife that conflict and misunderstandings are resultant from not being able to orgasm that ends up pushing both a husband and a wife into extramarital affairs.)

The many questions that are asked by other women in this song express their worry that may be the result of their failure to excite their husbands to reach climax and make noises in excitement such as those described in the song. So, through their many questions they also cry out to her to help them acquire the skills that she has in bed so that they can use them in their homes to excite their husbands. It is in the *litolobonya* space that women are free to talk about sexual intercourse: women guide each other regarding how to please a man sexually. This is one of the few spaces where Basotho women are free to talk about sexuality (Motalingoane-Khau 2010). Besides, these women might also be mistresses in extramarital affairs and hence need such skills to attract their partners. The language used in this song as they brag qualifies them to enter the masculine world. According to Khotso (2017), songs can be used to discover the attitudes and values of the artist. Through an examination of this song, the study finds that these women possess an attitude that is traditionally considered masculine and hence qualify to enter the world of masculinity. Among masculine attributes, one given top priority is the ability to placate a woman. This song reveals that women intend to conciliate men. By longing to offer sexual pleasure to their husbands, they emphasise their masculinity. This song reveals that there are both positive and negative elements of masculinity. When a woman laments not pleasing her husband sexually among the

Basotho and wants to rectify this, it benefits the family as that man will not have extramarital affairs. However, if a woman wants to enjoy extramarital affairs, it becomes dangerous both for her and the society as extramarital affairs disrupt the social order in different ways, one of which is the spreading sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Therefore, the formation of this kind of masculinity whereby women engage in extramarital affairs has to be discouraged in society.

Song 3

Summary: this song questions the availability of women's guns as the others indicate that their rifles are available and ready to shoot.

Basali, thunya tsa lona li kae?

Basali, thunya tsa lona li kae?

Sa ka ke sena ke sek'hok'hile!

(Women, where are your guns?

Women, where are your guns?

Mine is here ready to shoot!)

This song calls for the masculinity theory of cathexis as it gives the researcher the opportunity to examine the reproduction of gender power relations as portrayed in masculine language among the Basotho. For Khotso (2017, 254), masculinists refer to weapons to bolster their masculinity. Weapons are associated with men as they are stereotypically expected to protect their families: women and children. Among the Basotho it is socially acceptable to hear a man boast of his gun, but it is the opposite to hear a woman talk of her gun. In this song context, when women talk of their female parts and their powerful feeling of physical pleasure (orgasm), they refer to it as a gun. In sexual language in Sesotho, *ho thunya* (to shoot) means to reach sexual climax. Women who talk of their guns show the formation of masculinity in them. A Mosotho woman who strongly subscribes to Sesotho culture with regard to sexual activity cannot publicise her feelings during sexual intercourse. In Sesotho, the phrase *Ba bua joalo ka banna* is equivalent to "they speak like men." Through this song, however, a gun is used metaphorically. Khotso (2017, 255) states "metaphors create a clear picture of artists' strength, power and courage." In this song, the language that is used is masculine. Women are asked by the singers about the whereabouts of their "guns." This question is repeated, which emphasises the seriousness of it. The woman who poses this question is asking for their weapons as if she knows that they will soon have to engage in a serious "war." Her questions about weapons qualify her entry into the masculine world. Masculinists are fascinated to hear about weapons and war. The rifle in this case is metaphorically used. It should be borne in mind that as these songs are sung, women dance and dramatise to them. When this song is sung women only wear their underwear under their mealie meal woven skirts with bottle tops. Sometimes they only wear their bras. When they sing about a rifle, they also point at their private parts, which in this case is considered to be their gun. One reason to refer to it as a gun could be that it

releases heat. By saying that they are on the trigger /*k'hok'hile*/, they mean that they are ready for sex. Making reference to a gun during sexual intercourse is also common among Basotho men. When they express orgasm, they say *o thuntse*, which is equivalent to “he has shot.” Therefore, displaying masculine qualities, these women publicly communicate that they are ready for sexual intercourse and gain its highest pleasure. This publicity reveals their masculine qualities. Through this song, their masculinity can be understood. According to Wolfreys (2004, 145), expressions within social structures are responsible for social forms as they are products of that formation. Basotho women are not exceptional. In their songs they express the formation of their masculinity. According to Khotso (2017), masculinity is one of the pillars of a society, hence there is a need for the formation of positive masculinity. With this song women intend to develop their own masculinity and complement their husbands’ masculinity for the benefit of their families. Therefore they need the support of the society in this endeavour.

Song 4

Summary: A woman expresses yearning for sexual unity in her home as it bonds a husband and wife. This woman is worried that her man neglects her during the night as he only comes home in the morning. It is implicit that during the night this woman sleeps alone. The emphasis is on the prefix /*ko*/ of the word /*kopano*/ (unity). The prefix /*ko*/ is emphasised to draw the audience’s attention to the word /*koma*/, which is equivalent to “penis.” In other words, the woman lusts for sexual intercourse with her husband. The second stanza is the same as the first one. However, the first stanza is a request from a woman while the second stanza is a request from a husband for sexual unity. The prefix /*ku*/ is emphasised in the word /*kuku*/, which is a nickname for female sexual parts in Sesotho. It should be noted that the second part of this song is sung by another woman who imitates a male to represent a man whose wife’s behaviour mimics that of the man who arrives in the morning, as she has made her husband sleep alone. During the singing and dancing no man is allowed to join, hence if there is a part to be played by a man, some women in the same group will play the parts that would be played by male characters. This song follows:

Ke kopa kopano ka lapeng laka
Ke kopa kopano ka lapeng laka
Monna enoa o oa nsotla
O fihla hoseng
Ke kopa ko--pano ka lapeng laka

Ke kopa kutloano ka lapeng laka
Ke kopa kutloano ka lapeng laka
Mosali enoa o oa nsotla
O fihla hoseng
Ke kopa ku--tloano ka lapeng laka.

(I request unity in my house

I request unity in my house
My husband neglects me
He comes home in the morning
I therefore request unity in my house

I request unity in my house
I request unity in my house
My wife neglects me
She comes home in the morning
I therefore request unity in my house.)

This song calls for the use of masculinity cathexis theory to help understand how references to sex determine masculine characteristics. In this song, both the woman and the husband lust for sex and find fault in one another for not being available at night. Omartian (2006, 62) states:

In the juggling of priorities, sex can end up on the bottom list. ... Some ... allow week after week, month after month, six months, a year, or even more to go by without having sexual relations with their [partners] for one reason or another. When disaster hits, they are surprised.

In the above song, a wife finds a husband neglecting her by arriving at home in the morning when she expected him to be at home the whole night. By arriving home in the morning, this man has failed to perform his “night duty” in his master bedroom. For this woman to talk about sex and show a need for it evidences her masculine character. For her, if this part of her marriage life is neglected, she sees danger in her family. The disaster will soon hit her family. Omartian (2006, 62) says that for a man, when this part of life is neglected, his eyes, ears, brain and emotions become clouded. He does not see anything except that he is becoming useless. The same thing happens to a woman experiencing loneliness in this arena of her marriage. In terms of masculinity, sexual intercourse is a sign of fidelity and virility. Therefore, this woman’s masculinity cannot be questioned. The same applies to the other women who provide responses acting as if they were the husband. That these women act like men and show lust for sexual intercourse testify to their masculinity. As in the previous songs, the kind of masculinity formed here is constructive, and for the benefit of the society it has to be nurtured.

Song 5

Summary: this song is about a woman who is tired of being abandoned by a husband at night. This husband only comes home in the morning. Therefore, this woman informs other women that her husband is useless. As a result, she willingly gives him away to any woman who may wish to try him.

Monna e noa ke le file eena ha thuso
Monna e noa ke le file eena ha thuso
O fihla hoseng ke le file eena ha a na thuso

*O fihla hoseng ke le file eena ha na thuso
Ha na letho ke le file eena ha a na thuso
Ha na sesepa ke le file eena ha a na thuso*

(This husband I have given him to you!
This husband I have given him to you!
He comes home in the morning I have given him to you he is useless
He comes home in the morning I have given him to you he is useless
He has nothing I have given him to you he is useless
He has not even a bathing soap I have given him to you he is useless)

This song calls for the use of cathexis masculinity theory to help researchers understand sexual relationships. The woman in this song laments her husband's unavailability during the night just like in the previous song. In this song, the message is clear that the partners have a poor sexual relationship. According to Omartian (2006, 64), in most cases it is the wife who has excuses for not wanting sexual relations with her husband; however, there is an opposite situation sometimes where the wife is sexually neglected by her husband. Omartian asserts that there can be physical, mental and emotional reasons for such behaviour, but if the situation goes on month after month without sex, something is wrong. If the husband only comes home in the morning for a long time, something is wrong: either he has health problems or he is engaging in extramarital affairs. It is because of the continuous practice of this man to arrive in the morning that his wife finds him unworthy to keep and decides to give him to other women. This woman also hints at the idea that besides his failure to make himself available for sexual intimacy, he also fails to support her financially. She mentions his failure to purchase a cheap item, "bathing soap," to communicate that he is extremely useless. For her, she finds that there is no reason why she has to keep such a useless man.

Sex is private among the Basotho. It is a taboo to hear women openly talk about it. However, for masculinists, sexual relationships have to be understood and deserve to be performed diligently. Omartian (2006, 62) asserts that if neglected, "[a] man can easily be made to feel insignificant, beaten down, discouraged, destroyed or tempted in this area of his being." The analysis of this song reveals that the same feelings and attitude take hold in a sexually neglected woman. For this woman to lament their lack of sex and desire separation because of it signal her entry into a masculine world. The kind of masculinity formed here needs serious attention. If a man is not sexually performing to his wife's expectations, it might be due to some physical, emotional or other problems. Therefore, women should be helped to form the kind of masculinity that gives support to their husbands where necessary.

Song 6

Summary: A woman is engaging in two extramarital affairs and the partners are brothers: the elder and the younger. This woman finds herself in a life-threatening situation when she is visited by the younger brother. While they are engaging in sexual

activities, the elder brother also comes and knocks to ask the mistress to open for him. So, the mistress seeks a piece of advice from other women.

Nkeletseng hle lona basali
Nkeletseng hle lona basali
Ke qabantse bana ba motho
E moholo o ntsa kokota
E monyane o ntsa robetse
Nkeletseng hle lona basali

Sapoto tsa bona
Lia lekana
He nkeletseng nkeletseng hle lona basali!

(Please advise me fellow women
Please advise me fellow women
I have brewed trouble among brothers
The elder one is knocking on my door
While the younger brother is in bed with me
Please advise me fellow women

Their support towards me is equal
Their support towards me is equal
Please advise me fellow women!)

This song calls for the employment of the theory of cathexis masculinity to determine the masculine character in the language that is used. Masculinists are fascinated with multiple extramarital affairs. In this song, a woman communicates her profligacy openly. She has multiple partners. According to Khotso (2017), profligacy is a crucial theme among masculinities. Khotso (2010) defines profligacy as immorality, promiscuity or looseness in behaviour. Profligacy has been common among Basotho men as the Sesotho culture permits in its language. Proverbs such as *monna ke mokopu o a nama* (a man is a pumpkin, he spreads) are used to support this behaviour. Possa (2013, 167) maintains that “these proverbs are popular among men as they claim to have a right to sleep around.” Similarly, Phafoli (2009, 186) avers that among Basotho, there seem to have been some signs of promiscuity in olden days, although it was not legalised.

The message of this song proves that this promiscuous behaviour was not found among men only. With this song, the woman communicates that she has extramarital affairs with two blood-related brothers and enjoys it. As a Mosotho woman, her behaviour is unacceptable. However, as a masculinist, it reflects her conformity. Khotso (2017) states that the ability to have sex with multiple partners is mostly appreciated in the world of masculinities. According to Luxolo’s narrative (cited in Sikweyiya, Jewkes, and Dunkle 2014), African men are raised to exhibit masculine traits. Luxolo puts it thus:

And we are raised in a manner that we are men, you find that we behave in a manner that we like and we socialize [party] ... do you understand? And as men we have to smoke and drink [alcohol] do you understand? To sleep [have sex] whenever and wherever and with whoever you meet, do you understand? You are a man.

Luxolo (cited in Sikweyiya, Jewkes, and Dunkle 2014) communicates that it is not wrong to have multiple partners to illustrate one's manhood. In line with Luxolo's view, Motalingoane-Khau (2010) states that *litolobonya* songs have functions such as communicating messages of extramarital relationships, among others. The same situation is conveyed by the song above. In this case, the woman has acquired masculine characteristics by having multiple partners who are related. She brags about their equal support, though she is asking other women to advise her. As a masculinist, she does not see it as immoral to engage in extramarital affairs. She even complicates her request for advice by warning the women who might advise her to drop one of the partners not to do so as she claims that these men are equally satisfactory to her. Masculinists find it more pleasurable when a situation is difficult to deal with. This woman is aware that men do kill one another for a woman. The worst part of it is that she is aware that the brothers might kill one another for her, but like a masculinist, she enjoys it. The formation of this kind of masculinity is unhealthy for a society. It needs to be curbed otherwise it will contribute to the prevalence of HIV in Lesotho (Khotso 2019a).

Song 7

Summary: this song communicates that, like a turkey, this woman sleeps wherever and with whomever she wishes.

Ke kalakunu ooe
'Na ke robala hohle moo ke ratang
'Na ke robala hohle moo ke ratang
Le Maseru koana 'na ke robala hohle moo ke ratang
'Na ke robala hohle moo ke ratang
Le Khauteng koana ke robala hohle moo ke ratang
'Na ke robala hohle moo ke ratang!

(I am a turkey
I sleep around wherever I wish
I am turkey I sleep everywhere I wish
Even in town Maseru I sleep wherever I wish
Even in Gauteng I sleep wherever I wish!)

This song calls for cathexis masculinity to understand why sex is the most important avenue for attaining psychological and emotional fulfilment. According to Motalingoane-Khau (2010), women, like all human beings, have feelings and desire sex. Through this song, the singer explicitly communicates her promiscuous behaviour of sleeping everywhere. It is clear that when she sleeps in different areas, she sleeps with different partners. In Maseru she has a different partner from the one she has in

Gauteng. This study surmises that for human beings, both men and women, to attain psychological and emotional fulfilment, they need to understand their sexuality and engage actively in matters concerning sex and sexuality. However, among Basotho women, issues related to sexuality cannot be freely and openly talked of. It should be noted that these songs are no longer privately sung. Artists record them and they are played on radio stations. Moreover, they are available on cassettes and DVDs. It is only when women are able to move out of the world of femininity and join the world of masculinity that they can start engaging in discussions in which men engage in public.

In the above song, first this woman, like masculinists, employs animal metaphors to create a clear picture of her masculinity. According to Khotso (2017), metaphors are powerful devices in language. References to animal metaphors boost one's masculinity. She intends to help others to understand her by accepting her for possessing qualities similar to those of an animal, and thus names herself after such an animal. Among the Basotho, the behaviour of turkeys can be understood from folktales. In the folktales, a turkey is known for sleeping everywhere outside its habitat. The artist singing the above song communicates her misbehaviour of sleeping everywhere and probably with anyone and everyone. As a masculinist, she does not want anyone to question her behaviour. It is mentioned in the song that she sleeps all over the country as well as in the "neighbouring" country, South Africa. By displaying these character traits, she fits well into the masculine world. Masculinists are fond of being displaced. For instance, many Basotho accordion music artists pride themselves on being displaced in the complexities of Gauteng when they bolster their masculinity (Khotso 2017). However, there is a limitation in this kind of portrayal of masculinity, especially in this HIV and AIDS era. If masculinity is constructed as embodied in someone who sleeps all over and with whomever, what can be the future of such a society? For a calm and content society, women who sing these songs should be helped to understand the danger they are inculcating in the society so that they can create songs that will instil positive masculinity among women.

Conclusion

This study concludes that masculinity is not limited to men. This fact is evidenced by scrutinising the Basotho women's songs: *litolobonya*. Women also qualify to gain entry into the masculine world. In societies such as the Basotho where the concept of masculinity in relation to women is suppressed, most people believe that it does not exist. The analysis of *litolobonya* songs has revealed that women among the Basotho, just like men, have the potential to acquire masculine attributes and exhibit them. Through these songs, Basotho women bravely refer to infidelity and extramarital affairs. Besides, as women, the space provided by *litolobonya* is one of the few spaces where they are able to discuss sex and sexuality issues in order to be psychologically and emotionally fulfilled. Therefore, not only men's masculinity, but women's masculinity is also worth the consideration of scholars as it has the same consequences: positive and negative. As a direct consequence, this study concludes that women, like men, need

attention in matters relating to masculinities so that when this concept is constructed for a healthy society, women are not excluded because they are women and are deemed to have nothing to do with manhood, especially during the HIV and AIDS era in Lesotho.

Based on its findings, this research offers the following recommendations:

- Masculine women should not suppress their feelings as the society can benefit from their skills;
- The Basotho should accept masculine characteristics in women as both men and women can be masculine, because masculinity is not innate but acquired;
- Positive *litolobonya* songs have to be elevated by being documented as they provide education on sexuality for women, while the songs with negative influences have to be discouraged;
- Studies on masculinities should include both men and women as they would gather a more comprehensive idea on masculinity (Khotso 2017, 270); and
- Scholars of masculinity studies should research other spaces where women form their masculinity besides *litolobonya* so that such spaces can be preserved and conserved.

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