

**PERCEPTIONS ON CREMATION AMONGST THE  
ZULU PEOPLE**

**By**

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ZULU PEOPLE**

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degree of Masters in the faculty of Humanities, Development  
and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu Natal**

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## **DECLARATION**

**I, Maria Ntombikayise Zwane**

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Hereby declare that the thesis entitled **PERCEPTIONS ON CREMATION AMONGST THE ZULU PEOPLE** is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other Degree or to any other University.

**Signature:** -----

**Date:** -----

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late mom, dad, my sisters and brothers whose love, strength and determination are forever my inspiration.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**“O Lord, My Rock and Redeemer,** I am indeed indebted to the Lord for blessing me with the capacity to persevere and for giving me wisdom and good health to successfully complete my studies.

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## **ABSTRACT**

South Africa is going through a difficult time due to HIV/AIDS pandemic (amongst other things) which has caused countless deaths leading to major concern about municipal burial sites since such land is limited. There is currently a shortage of burial sites enough in to accommodate the vast numbers to deaths. It has been announced that some graveyards in KwaZulu Natal, Alexandra and Soweto are full. Consequently, municipalities have been seriously considering campaigns to encourage people to opt for cremation as a way of disposing of their deceased loved ones (Daily News, 2010:1). Cremation is an act of disposing of a deceased person by burning their body remains. It has recently featured in the national newspapers in keeping with efforts on the part of the Government to familiarise people within eThekweni and elsewhere in the country with the practice of cremation. Cremation is, however a widely unpopular practice throughout African culture, especially among the Zulu people. Some of them think of cremation as a curse and something that contradicts their culture. In the Zulu culture there is a belief that death is not the end: a person who dies enters into the afterlife and becomes a provider for the family. Such a person is referred to as *idlozi* (an ancestor).

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of the Zulu people on cremation as an alternative to the traditional practice of burial. In this study the population from which a sample was drawn were the Zulu people living in uMlazi and Zwelibomvu, a semi-urban area and a rural area respectively. As a researcher I believed that this study was necessary and important because it was hoping to help educate people so that they will be able to make an informed judgement around the issue of cremation.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This research study focuses on the views of the Zulu society with reference to their cultural perceptions of cremation as an alternative to burial, with special reference to Zulus living in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This study was conducted in one semi-urban area (uMlazi) and in one rural site (Zwelibomvu). The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of the Zulu people on cremation as an alternative to the traditional practice of burial. Most of the participants in this study had experienced a death of a loved one, and they were therefore familiar with the challenge of finding a place to bury a dead person.

### **1.1 BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Steinberg (2004:15) states that problem identification is about the search for general area of interest that has a professional meaning. Vithal and Jansen (2006:13) argue that the importance of any study is its contribution towards improving practice, informing policy and/or enriching the knowledge base of the topic under investigation. Cremation is an act of disposing of a deceased person by burning their body remains. Recently the topic of cremation has featured in the national newspapers in keeping with efforts on the part of the Government to familiarise people within eThekweni and elsewhere in the country with this practice. The eThekweni Municipality became aware of the problem of grave shortages within its zone and so took it upon itself to initiate discussions with the local populace that would serve to introduce cremation as an alternative burial method.

Masango (2005: 1285) perceives cremation as a person's last baptism by incandescent heat. He argues that the pure flame ascending to heaven is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Cremation is, however a widely unpopular practice throughout African culture, especially among the Zulu people. The main question as far as this study is concerned has to do with Zulu people's perceptions of the practice. Some people think of cremation as a curse and as something that contradicts their culture. In the Zulu culture there is a belief that death is not the end: a person who dies enters into the afterlife and becomes a provider for the family. Such a person is referred to as *idlozi* (an ancestor). This research paper explores Zulu people's views on cremation using respondents from eThekweni as its sample. It asks the question of whether or not people's

perceptions on cremation have changed at all in light of burial space shortage (amongst other concerns) as pointed out by the eThekweni Municipality.

Even though the voice of reason behind the cremation concern was the Municipality pointing out the reality of diminishing burial spaces, the involvement in this research of people from rural areas allows for other possible reasons to be explored. Since inhabitants in rural dwellings are not subject to municipal by-laws, I, as a researcher found it necessary to question them on cremation and see why they are not practicing it as an alternative to burial.

Prior research on cremation has, so far, concentrated on how it is perceived by people of different cultures. Cremation has mainly been researched as part of efforts to explain the different types of burial methods. Prior research indicates that many Africans are opposed to the practice of cremation simply because it is felt to be disrespectful to their deceased, who need their bodies to be intact when entering into the 'afterlife' (Roos, 2003:4). Those who hold this notion therefore have concerns about what will happen when the dead person who has been cremated has to be resurrected. Some people, Africans included, are however of the opinion that, given the circumstances highlighted above, the idea of cremation needs to be reviewed.

Among the reasons given by those with such a view, is cost effectiveness in so far as:

- Instead of a coffin a simple container is required.
- There are no cost associated with the purchase and perpetual care of a gravesite and tombstone.
- Due to the high death rate as a consequence of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, space is saved.

Furthermore, many Christians favour burial rather than cremation because they believe that the dead will be resurrected when Christ returns; for such people the question of how God will raise the decomposed body of a believer is mind boggling. However, some Christians have nothing against cremation because they believe that the soul is more important than one's bodily remains (Globe and Mail, 1998: 9).

## **1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

South Africa is going through a difficult time due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (amongst other things) which has caused countless deaths and has thus led to major concern about municipal burial sites since such land is limited. Consequently, municipalities have been seriously considering campaigns to encourage people to opt for cremation as a way of disposing of their deceased loved ones (Daily News, 2010:1).

With the above mentioned concern (and others) in mind, this research aims to explore African belief system with particular reference to Zulu philosophy (which is against cremation), in light of the current burial site problem. It hopes to contribute and add value to information generation and dissemination. It also hopes to help educate people so that they will be able to make an informed judgment around the issue of cremation.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

According to Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw (1995), a research question is formulated in order to explicitly state the coherent goal of one's research. Furthermore, in formulating a research question, the relevant context needs to be stipulated. This study examines the following questions:

- What views do various cultures maintain about cremation?
- Where, when and how was cremation introduced to African people?
- What was the situation in Africa prior to the introduction of cremation?
- What impact does or can Zulu belief system have on one's ideas of cremation?
- Why would people choose cremation instead of the traditional burial methods?
- Are there any contradictions between religion/culture and cremation?

## **1.4 RATIONALE BEHIND THE STUDY**

Vithal and Jansen (2006:11) define a rationale as a clear and brief statement of how the researcher became interested in the proposed topic, showing why s/he believed that the proposed

study would benefit the discipline concerned. The rationale for this study involves contextualising the environment within which the researcher lives; which is briefly described below.

As a researcher living in uMlazi, I noted that the people of my neighbourhood experience the problem of the scarcity of land. They are forced to bury their loved ones in cemeteries because they have no land of their own where they can bury them. They also have to pay for the gravesite, florists, burial ceremony, coffin and the tombstones. The cost of burial today has increased in such a way that the poor cannot actually afford it. The financial burden of a grave site has meant that many people are unable to pay their respects to the deceased person in the manner that they would like, because they are forced by financial concerns to pay their respect at the funeral parlour rather than at the grave site itself (Ngubane, 2004:171).

Many families within the city of eThekweni struggle to secure a gravesite because most of the graveyards are full. Sometimes gravesites are unavailable for purchase because well-to-do families have already bought up any remaining spaces so that when they die they will be laid to rest with the rest of their family. The problem of graveyard overcrowding has led to some people having to bury their relatives on the outskirts of the city, while others have chosen to bury a newly deceased family member on top of another already deceased and buried family member. For example, one relative died ten years ago, you are allowed to bury a newly deceased person in the very same gravesite, by way of digging up the grave and bury the relative on top of other relative. The researcher was interested in exploring the perceptions of Zulu people on cremation as an alternative to burial.

Most of the available literature has concentrated on the conventional practice of burial, as it is the only practice of dealing with the dead that is recognized by the Zulu culture. There is limited information available about cremation in Africa. Owing to this fact a better understanding of cremation is needed within this context. I hope this study will bring about understanding which will result in Zulu society making an informed choice about alternative burial methods.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped that this study will:

- Provide societies everywhere with general knowledge on the ever changing nature of culture in response to changing contexts.
- Enrich African literature on cremation.
- Serve as a baseline for further research into the area of cremation as an alternative to burial, especially within the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- Enlighten Zulu people about cremation and the myths associated with it. In that way communities can make informed decisions about whether or not to opt for it when a loved one dies.

## **1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study assumes that people are unaware of the shortage in gravesites and the fact that there is overcrowding within graveyards. Unless people are informed about the graveyard crisis, the problem will never be solved. The second assumption of this study is that Zulu people lack knowledge about cremation as an alternative burial system. Municipalities and those with vested interest need to educate people on these matters so that in future the latter may well choose cremation instead of burial. My final assumption is that the Zulu people will find cremation difficult to accept, if they do not have any information about it, since they think it goes against their culture.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS / KEY CONCEPTS**

According to Frankfort-Nachmias (1992:28) one of the most significant symbols of language, especially as it relates to research, is concepts. According to Creswell (1994:112), researchers need to define concepts that may not be understood outside of the field of study. These terms should be defined in the first instance as they appear in the research plan. It is on this basis that I, the researcher of this study, will now define the concepts that will be used in this research study. Wherever the source is not provided, definitions are my own or were provided by Mr. Dass (the

Head of the Department of Parks, Leisure, Recreation and Cemeteries). The following concepts are defined in accordance with how they are understood in the study:

**Perception** is defined as a concern with describing the world as experienced by a human being and with relating this world to the physical environment, the structure and physiology of the organism and impact of prior environmental conditions on the currently perceived world (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006).

**Cemetery** is any place where human remains are buried in an orderly, systematic and pre-planned manner, in identifiable burial plots. Such a place, is furthermore permanently set aside (at least that is the intention) for the sole purposes of storing human remains.

**Cemetery authority** means the Regional Council, local council, tribal authority, body or person responsible for the proper operation of a cemetery, irrespective of whether such an authority employs, appoints or contracts with another authority, body or person to undertake the day-to-day operation of the cemetery.

**Cremate** means to dispose of a dead person's body by burning it to ashes (and **cremation** is the noun)

**Crematorium** is any building or structure that has been given permission to cremate human remains therein or thereon.

**Culture** provides a guide to people regarding their values, beliefs and practices as well as their way of perceiving and behaving. Culture influences people's perceptions of health and illness. It is also defined as arts and sciences, religion and philosophies, system of technology, political practices and habits of daily life (Andrew & Boyle, 1999). In this context culture might influence people's perceptions of and attitudes towards, alternatives to the traditional way of disposing of a deceased person, namely burial.

**Death** refers to the action or fact of dying or being killed. It is the end of something that used to exist.

**Grave** means an excavation in which human remains have been intentionally placed for the purposes of burial, but excludes any such excavation where all human remains have been removed.

**Human remains** means any human corpse or any tissue or bone which is identifiable as having formed part of a human corpse, but does not include the ashes remaining after a human corpse has been cremated.

**Municipality** is a form of authority that is subordinate to the central and regional authority. It serves in implementing enactments relating to the ownership and operational of motor vehicles, slum clearance, land, fire protection, water supply etc.

**Recycling** of graves is when people utilise one family grave to bury more than one family member.

**Religion** is defined as an organised system of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe, especially belief in or worship of a God or gods. As an integral component of culture, religious beliefs may influence the society's course of action. (Andrew & Boyle, 1999)

**Tariffs** is the cost that is covered by municipality, for example, fencing cemeteries and hardening of the roads, upgrading drainage systems, rehabilitation of building initial clearance of bushes and landscaping.

**Tribal authority** means a tribal authority or community authority established in terms of the Amakhosi and IsiPhakanyiswe Act, 1990 (Act No. 90 of 1990)

**Urban area** means the area of jurisdiction of a local council excluding any area within the boundaries of such local council that falls under the jurisdiction of a tribal authority.

## **1.8 ETHICAL ISSUES / CONSIDERATIONS**

Collins et al (2000:107) state that the ethical concerns of any research reflect the professional codes of conduct of the particular country in which the research is being conducted. With this understanding in mind, this study was undertaken in accordance with research ethical principles.

Before I began on this research I obtained written permission from the following people:

- The ethical clearance letter from the University of KwaZulu Natal, which granted me permission to continue with my research study (see appendix 1).
- A letter from my supervisor, requesting permission to be given to the researcher to conduct her research study, from the leaders of uMlazi and Zwelibomvu communities as well as the head of the Department of Parks, Leisure and Cemeteries.(see appendix 2)
- An application letter from the researcher requesting for permission to conduct her research study as well as the informed consent explaining the purpose of the research study and ethical considerations.(see appendix 3)
- Written permission from the Council of (uMlazi), from the Headman of Zwelibomvu and from the Head Department of Parks Recreation, Leisure and Cemeteries. (see appendix 4)
- The study's respondents participated voluntarily.
- The participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point, without suffering any sort of penalty or reprisal.
- The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were assured and maintained.
- Participants were made aware that if any sensitive issues arose that were disturbing to them, the researcher would refer them for counseling.

## **1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter has introduced the study and provided background information relevant to the study. It has also addressed issues pertaining to the research problem, the research questions, the study's aims and objectives. Also discussed in this chapter were the rationale of the study, the

significance of the study, my assumptions, definition of terms used in this study, ethical issues or considerations and finally the structure of the dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter is essentially a literature review and also deals with the theoretical underpinnings of the research. It provides and engages with the views of the current literature on cremation. Furthermore, it substantiates and explores the three approaches adopted in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains the methodological consideration relevant to the study. It examines in detail the chosen data collection and analytical tools. Reasons for the research methodology that was adopted are justified and elaborated upon.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the collected data and provides my analysis of it. The results are presented according to the different themes that were explored in the study.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided the summary of the study. It further details the limitations of the study, provides my conclusions and gives recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

- A literature review refers to the activities involved in identifying and searching for information on a topic, developing an understanding of information on a topic and developing an understanding of the state of knowledge on a topic (Polit & Hungler, 1999). A literature review is important as it compares what has been previously learned and said about the same or similar topic and also illustratively shows gaps, limitations and recommendations in the body of knowledge. It helps to lay the foundation and provide the context for a new study (Polit & Beck, 2008). According to Brink (1996:76) the literature review enables the research to:

- determine what is already known about the topic,
  - assist in refining certain parts of the study,

- form the basis for comparison, and
- inform or support the study

This section investigates a variety of literary works that have been reviewed so as to re-inform and reinforce this study on the perceptions of people towards cremation. It also provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical underpinnings that have been employed in this study.

### **2.2 BACKGROUND**

South Africa is going through a difficult time in terms of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has resulted in countless deaths which has thus had a major impact on municipal burial sites as plots are limited. In some places there are currently not enough places to accommodate the number of bodies needing to be buried. It has been announced that some graveyards in KwaZulu-Natal, Alexandra and Soweto are full. Attwood (2005) found that at the time his research, almost 600 people were dying in the city of Durban each week and it was predicted that the number would increase each year. Twenty of the twenty-two public cemeteries were filled to capacity and the remaining two were rapidly approaching their limits (ibid).

According to an interview with Mr. Dass of eThekweni Department of Parks, Leisure, Culture and Cemeteries life expectancy in our province KZN is 49 years for males and 50 years for females. Projections are that 6 million South Africans are expected to die in the next 10 years. As HIV and AIDS ravages the country's population, South Africa is running out of space to bury its dead (interview with Mr. Dass head of the eThekweni Department of Parks, Leisure and Culture, Cemeteries, 11/08/2011). Consequently, municipalities have been seriously considering campaigns to encourage people to opt for cremation as a way of disposing of their loved one's remains (Daily News, 2010:1).

## **2.3 CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURE AND CEMETERIES.**

### **2.3.1 Population Factors**

EThekweni's municipal population is about 3.5 million, which comprises approximately 32% of KZN's 10.6 million. The projected population of the municipality by 2020 is 4.07 million, which is an increase 500, 000 people. The current growth rate is 1.4%. It is projected that the population will reach 7 million by 2060 (Census, 2001). Migration to eThekweni from rural areas and countries outside of South Africa are increasing. The poverty and degradation that exists in most areas of KwaZulu-Natal are the main reason that causes people living in such areas to move to urban areas (urbanisation) in search of job opportunities in order to better their lives. This migration of the people has led to serious overcrowding of urban areas. In August 2011 a workshop organised by the Department of Parks, Recreation, Culture and Cemeteries, Mr Dass stated that there is a growing demand for more land to be made for housing and infrastructure required to support the living. This means there is greater competition for land, since the land that is wanted for the developing of cemeteries is also wanted for housing, business, recreation, agriculture and other institutions that service the population.

### **2.3.2 Land Factors**

The Department of Parks, Recreation, Culture and Cemetery is faced with the problem of a shortage of land. The land required for traditional burial sites is scarce. According to the Department of Cemetery and Crematoria, the current layout model requires 10, 000 square meters (or one hectare which is the size of a soccer field) in order for there to be 10, 000 burial

sites. Approximately 20 hectares (20 soccer fields) are required per year to meet the current demand for gravesites. It is assumed that over the next 50 years the requirement will be in excess of 1,000 hectares (1,000 soccer fields). In an interview with Mr. Dass, it was pointed out that there are currently 62 cemeteries in KZN that are available for re-use. In other words there are approximately 500, 000 graves that can be re-used to bury people on top of them. This number includes land acquired for the establishment of a cemetery in the western part of the municipality as well as cemetery that were recently acquired in Umkomaas. Dass said that the department is currently exploring the possibility of acquiring additional land. It also wants to buy two crematoria with three cremators. It is clear from the above information and from the other presentations made by the Department of Parks, Recreation, Culture and Cemeteries to the people that land is a scarce resource. Out of the 22 cemeteries within the eThekweni Municipality, 19 are full, which means that only 3 still have gravesites available (eThekweni municipality 2010). The Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria therefore have to achieve new levels of efficiency if it is to cope with its current resources. It will have to adapt to the challenges and explore all feasible options in order to lay the Municipality's deceased to rest.

### **2.3.3 Cemetery Infrastructure**

The department of Cemeteries and Crematoria has pointed out that there is a backlog in terms of the waiting list for our cemeteries. The total number of cemeteries is 62, the total number of crematoria is 2, and the number of cemeteries without any infrastructure but only land is 10. Furthermore a significant percentage of the cemeteries have inadequate infrastructure. (National Conference, August 2011). Mr. Sandile Khawula of the Department of Parks Recreation and Culture pointed out that the total value of the Municipality's cemeteries and crematoria infrastructure is R154 million, and that proper maintenance for existing infrastructure can cost at least R2.3 million annually. The total estimate for a new cemetery is R56 million (R56m). In terms acquiring new land,–the current rate per hectare is R1m; the price tags for the other related costs are as follows:

- Offices, ablutions and storage facilities: R2m,
- Fences, and concrete palisades: R900/m,
- Consultant fees for surveying, layout plan and geological investigation: R0.5m;

- Environmental impact assessment: R0.7m;
- Internal roads and pathways: R0.8m.

Mr. Khawula further pointed out the estimated number of cemeteries required to eradicate the backlog 10, which means at R4.6m per cemetery, a total of R46m is needed.

### **2.3.4 Tariffs**

The cemetery tariff is a once off fee. According to an interview conducted with Mr. Khawula (11-09-2011), the only other means of revenue for the department is service rates (cleaning the ablutions etc. There is limited provision of maintenance at the cemeteries owing to an insufficient operational budget. The operational budget is currently R47.5m annually (e.g. 20 000 burials a year:  $R47.5m/20\ 000=R2375$ ). The most expensive tariff which is on grade A cemetery is R2, 020. The least expensive tariff on a grade C cemetery, is R150 to bury a child during the week. The council has injected about R10 m for the upgrading of 293 cemeteries within the eThekweni Municipality (eThekweni Municipality, 2010).

## **2.4 ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF INTERMENT PRACTICE**

In order to solve the above-mentioned challenges facing the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria, people need to be encouraged to use the following methods as alternatives to the traditional practice of burying their loved ones:

- re-use of graves
- cremation
- Mausoleums
- promession
- resomation

Since my study deals with how the Zulu people perceive cremation, I restricted myself to cremation without discussing other alternatives to burial methods. As pointed out by Mr. Dass at

the national conference on the alternatives to burial (August 2011), cremation is a faster process than burial, it reduces the demand on land, it is much cheaper than the burial, instead of a coffin a simple container is required, and one does not have to purchase and perpetually care for a gravesite and tombstone. Due to the high death rates as a consequence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, cremations means less land is required. Furthermore, Crematorium infrastructure requires a fraction of land needed for cemeteries and could make use of already existing buildings and infrastructure. The building of an additional Crematorium would mean the Municipality would have the capacity to deal with all the funerals as illustrated-below: 15 crematoria 60 per day /420 per week /21840 per annum (an average of 4 cremations per cremator). Mr. Dass further said that the authority to cremate is more involved with more role players granting authority for the cremation as compared to burials. The process of cremation involves the use of liquid petroleum gas, which combusts with flame and the body thereby reduces the body to ashes (carbon). The ashes are removed from the cremator and any metals are separated from the remains. The remains are then processed through a grinder to make them fine. Finally the remains are packaged and labeled for collection. The remains can be managed at the discretion of the family in a manner they find suitable (eThekweni municipality, 2011). The current statistics show that from July 2009-June 2010, cremations at the Mobeni Crematorium were 1,363: (Africans 74, Indians 793, Coloureds 135 and Whites 361). The numbers of cremations between July 2010 and-June 2011 were 2,494: (Africans 100, Indians 1157, Coloureds 171, and Whites 1066 (eThekweni Municipality, 2011).

## **2.5 HISTORY OF CREMATION**

Cremation is generally defined as that “mode of disposition in which the body of one who has died is quickly reduced by intense heat to its component elements” (Davis, 1998:12). According to Houlbrooke (1989:63) cremation as the destruction of human corpse through burning was popular amongst the Romans during the early Christian era. The Zoolas of the Mosianate exposed the dead bodies of their chiefs upon the branches of the trees, then burned them and threw the ashes into the rivers. Parry (1994:158) suggests that cremation is symbolically constructed as a sacrificial offering of the self to the gods. Death must therefore be a voluntary relinquishment of life and a controlled evacuation of the body (ibid). Before the nineteenth

century, cremation was practiced only in exceptional cases, for instance in times of pestilence or as a form of execution. Masango (2005:1285) perceives cremation –as the last baptism by incandescent heat” and that the pure flames ascending to heaven are a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Whilst Zulu scholars have written on the issues surrounding death, their literature focuses on the conventional practice of burial, as it is the only one recognised by the Zulu culture. They do not in any way address the issues surrounding cremation. Obvious examples of books that deal with death from a Zulu perspective are *Kusadliwa Ngoludala* (Ndlovu & Mshengu), 1994: 47-53) and *Inqolobane Yesizwe* (Nyembezi and Nxumalo, 2005:134-139)

Most archaeologists believe that cremation was invented during the Stone Age, about 3000 BC. It was mostly likely used in Europe or the Near East (Davis, 1998:21). Davis suggests that the earliest cremations may well have been accidental. Fire has long been associated with burial practices; for example, there is lighting of fires near the graves of the dead and the offering of burnt animal sacrifices. Possibly, the transition from inhumation to cremation was influenced by these traditions, or, alternatively, a body could have been accidentally burned by such funerary fires. Evidence exists for cremation in Neolithic times in Palestine, Syria, the Peloponnese, Germany and Hungary (Davis, 1998: 21). The Greeks believed that death and the resultant dissolution of the body provided the means for the emancipation of the soul. Fire was regarded as a purifying agent and aided in the release of the soul after death. Evidence indicates that the practice of cremation entered ancient Greece about 1000 B.C. from the north.

According to most scholars, cremation was practiced in Rome as early as the eighth century B.C. From about 400 B.C. until 200 A.D. cremation was a very common form of burial in Rome. The rise of Christianity caused the practice of cremation to decline. The practice of cremation in both Eastern and Western Europe dates back to the Middle Bronze Age (c- 1800). The first recorded cremation in the United States of America took place in 1792 when Colonel Henry Laurens, a member of Washington’s military staff and President of the Continental Congress of 1777 and 1778- was cremated on his own estate in Charleston, South Carolina. Today there are 960 crematoriums in the USA and 107 in Canada. The practice was legalised in Europe during the nineteenth century and is still accepted in Western societies today due to the spread of HIV/AIDS, urbanisation and the risks associated with crowded cemeteries (Davis, 1998: 27-48).

## 2.6 CULTURE AND CREMATION

Brettell and Sargent (2001:157) define culture as “the notion of human consciousness, or the products of human consciousness (i.e. systems of thought and technology), by means of which humanity attempts to assert control over nature”. Culture does, however, also encompass the beliefs, traditions and/or rituals that come to define individuals‘ or a community‘s values and ways of life‘. The culture of a people may be defined as the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs and adapt themselves to their environment (Ayisi, 1972:1)

South Africa is a multi- faceted country and contains various cultures; there is in fact a myriad of traditional African cultures, Indian cultures and Western cultures within its borders. The Zulus, like any other population group, have their beliefs and rituals pertaining to death. The Zulu people predominantly live in the province of KwaZulu Natal and they believe that they are direct descendants of the patriarch Zulu, who was born to an Nguni chief in the Congo Basin. According to Kridge (1965), the Zulus became the mightiest military force in Southern Africa during the reign of King Shaka (1816-1828). A reasonably large number of Zulus now live and work in industrialised and /or urban areas. Those Zulus living in urban areas are more easily exposed to other diverse cultures and religion. In the Zulu traditional belief, dying is like going home to the place you truly belong, thus we use words like *ukugoduka*, *ukudlula*, *ukuya kobabamkhulu*, which means that when you die, you re-join your old relatives and friends who went before you. The Zulu culture also includes a belief system that appreciates the existence of a Creator *uMvelinqangi* and of the ancestor *amadlozi*. According to the Zulu people, the ancestors are the mediators between people and God. In other words, the gap between the Creator and man is the ancestral spirit. Msimang (1991) states that the Zulu people believe that it is only through invoking the ancestors that they can appeal to the spirit world. Failure to obey the ancestors may result in them turning their backs on you, which is the beginning of you experiencing bad luck and even death. Ancestors are sometimes called “the living dead” because it is believed that they are not dead but continue to live in a different state and in another world. In Zulu culture, the dead continue to be members of their families, communities and societies and continue to interact with their living relatives (Ngubane, 2004:174). To ensure continuity,

various ceremonies such as *ukubuyiswa* are performed with the view to integrating the newly dead into the hierarchy of the family spirit world.

Cemeteries or graves are places of long-term memorials as well as being the resting place of one's body. Graves are useful in the Zulu culture as they are the place where the families of the deceased can go and visit in order to communicate with the dead (something that people especially wish to do when crisis arises in their lives). Visiting the dead gives the Zulu individuals an opportunity to contemplate the life they shared with the deceased, to come to terms with the new life they must now lead without that person, and to plead for success and luck. Cremation is perceived by many Zulu people as a curse, and it is thought that any person who is cremated will bring down misfortune on those who cremated him or her, to the extent that they may even cause extinction of all members of that family (Ngubane, 2004:174). Among the Zulu people, if someone is cremated there needs to be cleansing ritual on their behalf before they can be accepted and welcomed into the world of the ancestors. In the Zulu culture people's bodies must be respected; which means they must be put in a descent resting place so that the family that is left behind may have reference and access to the graves. To the Zulu people, cremation is a shameful thing and something that contradicts their culture. Baur (2006: 67) also stated the following African values towards cremation:

- Families would be unable to attend the funeral and pay their last respect.
- The tradition of living in a community with their dead will be broken.
- The spirit will bring unhappiness to the community and family.
- The spirit will also die.
- God will condemn the spirit to hell.

## **2.7 RELIGION AND CREMATION**

Martinelli (1993) describes religion as a person's attempt to understand his or her relationship with the world. Andrew and Boyle (1999) also define religion as an organised system of beliefs concerning the course, nature and purpose of the universe, especially the belief in or worship of a

God or gods. South Africa is a multi-religious society and all these different religious groups have their different views on the issue of cremation.

### **2.7.1 Hinduism and Buddhism**

Both these communities have nothing against cremation. They actually mandate the use of cremation. The reason for the Hindu for destroying the corpse by fire over burying in the ground is that it is believed that cremation helps detach the spirit from the body and in so doing, encourages it to pass on to the other world (<http://www.giftofireland.com/articles.htm>). To the Hindus, the dead body is sacred since the soul has left the body. In South Africa the statistics show that about 99% of the Hindu community practice cremation (interview with Mr Dass, Department of Cemetery and Crematoria, 2011)

### **2.7.2 Judaism**

Judaism has traditionally disapproved of cremation which was the traditional means of disposing the dead in the neighboring nations of Israel and Judah. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Jewish cemeteries in many European towns became overcrowded or were fast running out of space, cremation became an approved means of corpse disposal amongst liberal Jews (<http://www.giftofireland.com/articles.htm>).

### **2.7.3 Islam**

The Muslim community does not believe in cremation. They believe that cremating a person means you are punishing that person. They believe that Allah has forbidden them to use fire on his creation. They believe that the body continues to feel even in death; in other words, that it continues to ‘exist’ even after the soul has left it. “In Islam we believe in two lives and so if we use a coffin or cremate, the deceased will not resurrect. The Holy Koran does not allow cremation because only Allah (God) can punish by burning,” says Isa Chakarane, a Muslim (<http://www.giftofireland.com/articles.htm>).

### **2.7.4 Christianity**

Christianity in general is not against cremation although some denominations are however totally against it. The Roman Catholic Church used to condemn the practice. Up until 19 May 1886, the

Catholics were not allowed to join societies that believed in cremation or to have their bodies cremated. During World War II German Catholics favouring cremation were excommunicated. (Davis, 1998: 54). Special legislation in many European and American countries, as well as in South Africa, has legalised cremation, and precautions are taken to prevent its use to destroy any criminal evidence. In July 1963, the Vatican Holy Office lifted the prohibition forbidding the Catholics to practice cremation. This permission was included into the revised code of the Canon law of 1983 (canon#1172) as well as in the order of Christian funeral; (<http://cemeteries.la-arcdiocese.org.8cfc.html>). The reasons individuals cited for cremation were space, economics, war, and hygiene.

Among the Protestant denominations, the situation regarding the practice of cremation varies. Mainline and generally liberal groups tend to accept the practice, but conservative denominations either reject it or discourage it. Matt Slick in Davis (1998:55) stated that there is nothing in the Bible that speaks against cremation. Normally, people from the Old Testament and New Testaments were buried since cremation was not the custom. In addition to this, cremation can be difficult since it requires a great deal of heat and fire. Logistically, it's much easier to bury a person. There is however no real difference between cremation and burial in terms of the end result; when a body is buried it will, if given enough time, completely disintegrate, and so, cremation and burial ultimately lead to the same physical condition of complete disintegration.

In the resurrection, the infinitely powerful God of the Bible, who knows all things, will be able to produce our resurrected bodies. There is nothing to prevent God from accomplishing His promises to raise us (<http://www.gospelcom.net>) The Bible has a few references to the disposal of bodies by burning them in the fire, for example, Judges 15:6 says: The Philistines burned Samson's wife and father-in-law to death. Amos 2:1 says: "God proclaimed a death curse on Moab because he had reduced the bones of the king of Edom to lime through burning". Revelation 20:15 says: "The fate of those whose names were not written in the Book of Life is to be thrown into the lake of fire". The above-mentioned verses emphasised the fact that it is not wrong for the Christians to choose cremation. Christians have always concluded that whether dead or alive, the body belongs to God because of redemption and sanctification (cf. Rom. 8:23; Heb. 10:10. On this matter Origen in Davis (1998:86) wrote, "It is the reasonable soul alone that we honour, and we commit its bodily organs with due honours to the grave".

## **2.8 STUDIES INVESTIGATING CREMATION OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA**

According to the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, –The estimated 3.4 million new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa in 2001 mean that 28,1 million Africans now live with the virus,” says a UNAIDS 2006 report. It is estimated that 2.3 million Africans died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2001, a statistics that demands a rethink in terms of our burial practices. In a traditional African society, cremation is seen as a Western phenomenon that is completely alien to conventional African beliefs (<http://www.ips.org>).

### **2.8.1 Zambia**

Zambia has, from time immemorial, buried its dead. Today however, the shortage of land for burial sites has become an issue of public concern. The capital city of Lusaka has recently seen the opening up two new private cemeteries, (Mutumbi Cemetery and Remembrance Park and Leopards Hill Memorial Park), where people can bury their dead at a fee. The majority of Zambians cannot however afford to bury their departed loved ones at such sites because of the huge costs involved. The local authorities (particularly in Lusaka and Chipata) say they have run out of land for burial sites and that this situation is prompting people from certain circles within society to start considering cremation. The concept of cremation has been received with mixed feelings by Zambians, who argue that the practice is not part of the new Christian religion to which most Zambians subscribe (The Times of Zambia, 2010).

### **2.8.2 Kenya**

According to Kenyan Minister of Health, Manyas 3,000 Kenyans die of AIDS related diseases every week. Julia Odhiambo, a clerk in Nairobi, Kenya says: –We bury our dead six feet deep in the grave, and that’s how it’s going to be” (<http://www.mthopgr.com/cremation.html>). Many Kenyans still have strong objections to cremation, which they do not believe is in accordance with African tradition.

### **2.8.3 Botswana**

Botswana is a multi -religious country. Christians are not against cremation and most churches have no problem with people holding evening prayers in honour of the person about to be cremated. They believe cremation is not an issue of theological interest. A Hindu run crematorium has just recently opened up in Gaborone. The Hindu community says that it will assist all those opting for cremation instead of burying their dead, as a way of averting land shortages particularly in the urban centers. <http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?=20000911>).

### **2.8.4 Zimbabwe**

As already mentioned, Africa as a whole is faced with the problem of overcrowded graveyard, especially in consequence of the countless deaths caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Between 1999 and 2001 the city Authorities called on Zimbabwean residents to consider cremating their dead. To date, the number of Zimbabweans opting for cremation is still low. Michael Galiao of Mashfords Funeral House in Harare said that their business conducts up to eight cremations per day, most of which are of White people, who believe it is a more hygienic way of disposing of a body. Traditional black culture says it is a taboo for a black person to be cremated. Black people say that their culture does not allow for cremation. Despite these indigenous cultural and religious beliefs, Zimbabwean authorities are encouraging people to consider cremation as an alternative option to the graveyard (<http://www.mthopbgr.com/cremation.html>).

## **2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework provides a well-developed and coherent explanation of a phenomenon or event (Vithal & Jansen, 2006:17). The three principal theories upon which this study was constructed, and that were used to provide valuable background information and also interpret results are as follows:

- **Cognitive theory**
- **Cultural theory**
- **Identity theory**

The above mentioned theories were selected partly because they are supportive of each other. These theories were used as a basis for the study of perceptions on cremation because of the fact that they are all about how people perceive the world around them and how they define themselves in terms of the context of their broader surroundings.

The researcher discusses each of these theories or approaches below. However, it must be pointed out that in the context of this study, the theories need to be understood holistically in order to achieve an optimal appreciation of the study.

### **2.9.1 Research Paradigm**

Paradigms act as lenses through which the world can be viewed. Interpretivism is an approach committed to studying meaning and human phenomena within context. According to Neuman (2006:68) interpretive research should explore “socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at an understanding and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds”. Paradigms provide a set of assumptions about nature and reality and guide the nature of a study through the dimensions of ontology and epistemology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ontology specifies the nature of reality of a study while epistemology relates the researcher to the researched community. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm as it includes focus groups and interviews which are interactive, qualitative and dependant on the subjective reality of the participants.

### **2.9.2 The Cognitive and Cultural Theories**

Individuals vary in how they perceive and think about the world around them. This common place observation implies that you need to be aware of the major ways in which people differ from one another. What may work well for one person may not work well for another person. The aim of this study is to explore and analyse what Zulu people think of the idea of cremation as an alternative to the other local or traditional practice of burial, particularly in light of our ever-changing times and context.

The cognitive and cultural theories are both branches of anthropology. The reason I chose both these theories is that they deal with the origins of people, and they are thus appropriate to a study that aims to examine society’s views on cremation as well as the impact that culture has on it.

Cognitive Theory arises from the idea that humans perceive the world through cultural perceptions. McGee et al (2004:395) argue that the theoretical school of cognitive anthropology examines how people perceive the world around them. Cognitive anthropologists argue that each culture has its own system of classification. People perceive and organise phenomena such as materials, events, behaviours and emotions. For example, although Americans distinguish between dew, fog, ice and snow, the Koyas of India do not call all of these forms *mancu* as they do not think the differences among them are significant enough to warrant more than one word. On the other hand, the Koyas distinguish seven different kinds of bamboo, giving them each different names while Americans simply call all of them bamboo (McGee et al, 2004). This example shows that people in different cultures may perceive the same phenomenon differently because of their own cultural systems. The above mentioned example has a bearing on this study, which explores Zulu people's perceptions on cremation as well as the impact culture has on it. The literature review showed that people of different cultures view cremation differently. For example, it has been mentioned that the Hindu community does not have any problem with cremation, yet Zulu people do have a problem with it, seeing it as a taboo and as something that contradicts their culture.

Cultural Theory explores the totality of a society's distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge; in other words- the way humans interpret their environment (Sedgewick, 2005). There are various interpretations of culture and what it means. According to Williams cited in Smith (2001:2) culture refers to the intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development of an individual, group or society. Culture designates the entire way of life, activities, beliefs and customs of a people, group or society. Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It also includes value systems, traditional beliefs and practices which are linked with traditions or religion (Schalkwyk, 2002:1). Leininger(1991:37), Diller (1999), Goodman and Marx (1978), Spector (1985) and Stanhope and Lancaster (2000) conceptualise culture almost the same way, because they all mention that culture is learned through socialisation that is brought about when one learns. Culture is also shared among the members of a community so that there can be order in that society. If problems arise then culture (because it is shared) is used as an intervention strategy to solve those problems, this means that the members of that culture agree on a certain beliefs, norms and values.

The above authors also view culture as a dynamic process that develops overtime and changes with difficulty. For these authors, a culture, in response to the needs of its members and their environment, provides guidance to help its adherents solve life's recurrent problems and live in a meaningful way. Culture guides us in terms of how to think, behave and relate to other people. Our cultural background influences the way we give, receive or perceive information. Culture represents the legacy from the past, meaning it is bequeathed to us by our ancestors and that is also influenced by their beliefs. People are not however prisoners of culture because it is something that is constantly changing (Diller, 1999). Cultural theories examine the people within a culture and try to understand or predict how and why they act or react in certain ways. As mentioned in the literature review, the Zulu culture includes a belief system that appreciates the existence of a Creator *uMvelinqangi* as well as ancestors *amadlozi*. According to the Zulu people, ancestors are the mediators between people and God. In other words, the gap between the Creator and man is the ancestral spirit. Msimang (1991) states that; the Zulu people believe that it is only through the invoking of the ancestors that they can appeal to the spirit world. Failure to obey the ancestors may result in the ancestors turning their backs on the living, which would mean the beginning of bad luck for the latter. According to the Zulu culture, it is a curse for any individual to be cremated. Culture is part of us, it is learned, shared, transmitted formally and informally and integrated into people's lives.

### **2.9.3 Identity Theory**

According to Hogg et al. (1995:255) Identity theory is principally a micro-sociological theory that sets out to explain individuals' role-related behaviours. It also explains social behaviour in terms of the reciprocal relations between the self and society. Identity theory is strongly associated with the symbolic inter-actionist view that society affects social behaviour through its influence on the self (Hogg et al, 1995). In identity theory, the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorise, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. This process is called identification (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Through the process of self-categorisation or identification, an identity is formed. This theory explains how people define themselves within the context of their broader surroundings (Hanslam, 2001: 26-57). In the present context my assumption is that the people in question find it difficult to accept cremation as a burial method because they think it goes against

their culture and because they do not want to have to deal with. Most changes in life are accompanied by frustration, resistance, insecurity and/or fear. Like any change, the accepting of cremation as an alternative to the burial would inevitably involve a change of beliefs and attitudes.

Fullan (1982) argues that when change is imposed is imposed upon a person or community, it is bitterly resented. When change is voluntary, it can be threatening and confusing. In any event, the transformation of one's subjective realities is at the heart of change. There is a strong tendency for people to adjust to any approaching change, by changing as much as is necessary. Others assimilate change. Still others abandon changes that they were initially willing to try. Many fight change, while some simply try to ignore. Marris in Fullan (1982:25), however, says that, people cannot avoid change: "all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle". Fullan (1982) further says that, people react differently when exposed to change and these reactions and their attendant feelings are natural. Some people were totally against the practice of cremation were first introduced to the idea; some even thought that were they to cremate their loved ones it would look like they were abandoning them or did not respect the bodies of the dead. Some still see cremation as a curse or shameful act, and as something that goes against their culture and what they believe. Others are not against cremation; they say that the spirit of a person is the most important thing, not the body, so it does not really matter if the dead body is buried or cremated. There are those who have even asked the question as to what happens to those individuals that have died because of tragedies such as being burnt to death in their homes or cars? Does that mean that they are a curse to their families? The conclusion that many who think like this reach is that is important is that we all have choices, and if one person chooses to be cremated, he or she must not be criticised. Similarly, if a person decides to be buried, it is that person's choice and they should not be criticised on account of it. The most important thing is that everyone understands the necessity for change, and this will eventually leads to many more accepting the need to change their attitude towards cremation.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I revealed some of the problems facing the people within eThekweni and the Department of Parks, Leisure, Culture and Cemeteries. The researcher revealed some alternatives that people can follow in order to deal with the remains of their loved ones. It was shown that

one of the alternatives to burial is cremation. I then described how different communities view cremation and what impact does culture and religion has on it. Thus, the cognitive, cultural and identity theories served as a suitable framework to underpin this research since all the three theories deal with a society's views on cremation as well as the impact culture has on it. It is hoped that this research will help educate people so that they will be able to make informed decision or judgment concerning the issue of cremation versus burial.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter on research methodology presents a description of the research process I followed in conducting this particular study. It includes a detailed description of the research approach, the research design, the population, the sampling approach and sampling process, the data collection instruments and data collection process, my data analysis, the validity and reliability of the data and the ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design is a plan or blueprint of how a researcher intends to conduct research (Mouton) 2009:55). According to Polit and Hungler (2001), a research design is the researcher's overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions. This study examines cremation as a social issue and looks at how it is perceived by Zulu people, qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative method helped unravel the understanding of cremation and address the importance of the population group in question choosing cremation as an alternative to burial. Qualitative methods also allow one access to meaning and context; and also facilitate in-depth exploration, whilst the quantitative method quantified people according to their knowledge of what cremation is and what myths they believe about it so as to come up with recommendations as to how to develop or change such knowledge.

Quantitative methods are more applicable to comparison across sites and lend themselves to standardisation. Certain quantitative effects, such as biased interpretations and the heading of the respondents affect the data collection process in an adverse manner. However, by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the strength of both methods are harnessed so as to ensure high quality concerning the perceptions of people on cremation and effects that Zulu culture has on these perceptions (Babbie & Mouton, 2004).

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, rigorous and systematic process for generating information about the world. Quantitative research is conducted in order to describe new situations, events, or concepts relating to the world (Burns & Grove, 1995: 23). This makes it an appropriate method for this study, where research regarding the Zulu people's perceptions on

cremation is conducted for the first time in eThekweni and its surrounding areas. Quantitative data is attained through the measurement of variables, and measurement involves the assignment of numbers to represent the amount of an attribute present in an object or person, using a specified set of rules, (Polit & Beck, 2008). The advantages of quantitative studies are that resulting information tends to be objective, precise, and more accurate than that obtained through other methods (Polit & Beck, 2008).

Qualitative research methods allow for detailed kinds of data collection as the researcher is not simply restricted to the obtaining of quantifiable information. The researcher can adjust the focus of his/her research as and when new information becomes available. Qualitative researchers are thus in a position to study the “changing or dynamic nature of reality” (Stainback & Stainback, 1984: 402), as they are able to study data within the context of the meaning that it has for study participants. Thus the qualitative approach, with its underlying assumption that reality is subjective, allows for the exploration of how people make sense or gives meaning to their lives and experiences. Qualitative research allows for the exploration of how individuals construct their own meaning, understanding and identity. Furthermore, another advantage of using this approach is that it provides the researcher with another social reality and s/he can therefore gain an in-depth understating of localities, activities, and constraints as experienced in individuals’ unique daily lives (Nueman, 2006:73). The lived experience gives meaning to each individual’s perception of a particular phenomenon and is influenced by everything internal or external to that individual (Polit & Hungler, 2001:212). In this research, perceptions on cremation as an alternative to burial examined with the help of both the qualitative and quantitative methods.

### **3.3 RESEARCH SETTINGS**

The study was carried out in two separate areas within the magisterial district of the eThekweni Municipality, which falls under the jurisdiction of KwaZulu-Natal, one of South Africa’s nine provinces and the traditional home of the Zulu speaking people. KwaZulu-Natal is the third smallest province (94,361km) and has a total of 9.4 million inhabitants (Statistics SA, 2004). The 2001 census shows that the province has the country’s highest population to land ratio (Statistics SA, 2005). This study took place in one-semi urban site (uMlazi), and one rural site (Zwelibomvu). The one reason I selected these two research sites was that I felt I would obtain better information as to the attitudes of the Zulu people towards cremation as an alternative to

burial by interviewing semi-urban as well as rural dwellers. The other reason was to increase the possibility of my transferring the findings of the study to the wider geographic region of KwaZulu-Natal. Leininger (1994:14), refers to transferability as a criterion for evaluating a qualitative study in order to determine whether or not its findings can be transferred to other similar contexts or situations. Being different in terms of their locations, the two areas offer greater insights into the issue at hand.

### **3.3.1 Zwelibomvu**

Zwelibomvu consists of seven districts namely, ePanekeni, ePhangweni, eMkhangoma, eMadwaleni, Ezimbokodweni, Magcaba and eMasomini. These districts are governed by Chief Mkhize, however, each district has its own headman (*induna*). The area is semi-developed; as it has services such as electricity and running water. And some of the homes are built from bricks and mortar, but other houses are built out of mud, and some of the roads have yet to be tarred. The area has schools, a clinic, shops, a community hall, and rivers. It is characterised by high unemployment and poverty. The residents in this area bury their deceased in their own backyards because there is no bona fide cemetery for them. The researcher selected respondents from the following three districts: ePanekeni, ePhangweni, and eMkhangoma. These particular districts were chosen because they are in close proximity to each other.

### **3.3.2 Umlazi**

The township of uMlazi, is situated approximately 25 km south-west of Durban and is subdivided into 26 sections (also called units) which are named alphabetically from A to Z, with additional peripheral areas being named AA, BB, CC and Philani Valley (Tshabalala 1998:34). It is the second largest township in South Africa and clearly the largest in KN. It has a population of at least, about, 400, 000 people although the exact number is uncertain: It has been claimed that more than 1, 5 million people live in uMlazi, (Tshabalala, 1998:37). The area consists, mostly of residential sites, train stations, educational facilities, community halls, markets, small scale *spaza* (a corner store) businesses, pubs and *shebeens* (places where people drink alcohol). There is a big shopping centre called Mega City, as well as banks, grocery shops, restaurants and saloons.

### **3.4 POPULATION**

Neal and Liebert (1980: 62) define population as the total collection of people, things, or events under consideration. According to Mudler (1989: 53), population means a group that is similar with respect to one or more characteristics. In this research the characteristics with respect to which group under study is similar are that all group members are Zulu people and all living either in uMlazi (a semi-urban area) or in Zwelibomvu (a rural area). The study population included 55 people. All the respondents were between the ages of 24 and 55 because it was felt that such individuals are responsible and of an age to know what they are talking about.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

Sampling is a way of determining who your participants are going to be. A sample is a smaller segment of the population with which one conducts one's research (Mudler, 1989:57). Sampling is done so as to give the researcher a group that is of a manageable size for the purpose of his/her research. It is more practical and less costly to collect data from a sample than from an entire population. The sample for my focus groups (and it was out of these focus groups that my individual interviewees were drawn) came from the population; specifically, there were 20 from uMlazi, 20 from Zwelibomvu, 10 others who represented different religious sectors (e.g. Pastors) and 5 who represented Municipal Authorities. Furthermore, 10 of the focus groups participants were randomly selected to provide face-to-face interviews so as to allow for follow up-on the focus group discussions that took place in each area. These groups were randomly chosen based on respondents' availability and willingness to participate.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

The triangulation method was used in this study. Mayring (1996: 121) describes triangulation as an approach where one attempts to find different ways and channels of gaining information in order to find answers to the central question defining one's research. It needs to be emphasised that the aim is not to gain total corresponding conformity, but rather to compare the differences discovered in the obtained data in order to reveal strengths and weaknesses of the respective methods. The results may be more meaningful than relying on only one single method of data collection because the method provides different steps of analysis and allows the researcher to validate his or her findings. In a study that seeks to understand the debates surrounding

cremation, focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews were the chosen research tools. Kreuger (1988:18) defines a focus group as a carefully planned discussion that is designed to obtain people's perceptions with regard a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:292) focus groups interviews provide the researcher with the opportunity to observe a vast amount of interaction on a topic within a limited period. A focus group interview can taps into human tendencies where attitudes and perceptions are developed through one's interaction with other people. During a group discussion, individuals' ideas and attitudes (the way they express themselves) may shift due to the influence of other comments. Alternatively, opinions may be held with certainty, no matter what else is said. The purpose of the group discussion is to obtain information of a qualitative nature- from a predetermined and limited number of people.

The focus group session each lasted for two hours. The function of the researcher is to facilitate discussion, and so I facilitated the group discussion. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted; contact between the researcher and participants in focus groups and interviews makes it possible to clear up any misunderstandings in terms of participants' interpretation of the questions. This helps ensure validity of the collected data.

The aim of these discussions and interviews was to obtain each individual's perspective on the practice of cremation. The opinions of each individual were specifically elicited. I asked each to share their personal feelings and experiences of death, burial and cremation, and asked them to talk about the meanings and social context in which cremation is being practiced. As stated by Greef (2002:302) interviews are useful if you are interested in complexity, process and/or personal and controversial issues, all of which are relevant to the cremation process. The questions were posed in the local language of IsiZulu.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

Data collection was done immediately after ethical clearance was received and the consent forms were signed by the Headman of Zwelibomvu, by the uMlazi Council, by the Head of Parks and Recreation, Leisure and Cemeteries, and by the relevant Religious leaders. After the participants had had been identified they were invited to participate in a focus group. When the participants had acquired a general idea of the topic that was going to be discussed, the process of the focus

group discussion and the interviews was briefly explained. The respondents were also told what they could expect to happen during the sessions. The discussions were conducted conveniently located community halls. The purpose of the study and its significance was discussed with the participants, and they were told that their participation in the study is voluntary. Convenient times for the interviews were discussed and agreed upon. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. The respondents were notified that the interviews would be recorded for the purpose of transferring and analysing the information generated during the session, and that notes would also be taken in case of any technical problems with the tape recorder. Confidentiality was ensured.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

All the people selected through the systematic sampling attended the group interview. The taped focus group discussion was transcribed and analysed (see Appendix 7). The transcription is a permanent written record of the interview. In order to maintain the true character and flow of the group discussion, I kept my editing of the transcriptions to a minimum. A thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is a process whereby themes and patterns emerging from the study are identified and used in the building of a valid argument (Aronson, 2009). The validity and the reliability of the findings gained through the process of thematic analysis are improved when combining with relevant literature (Aronson, 2009). A qualitative cut-and-paste technique was used in this process. This is a common analytic technique. Steward and Shamdasani (1990) say that the cut-and-paste technique is often used by focus group researchers because it is seen as a quick and cost-effective method (in the absence of any computer programmes) for analysing the transcripts of a focus group discussion. This process was considered beneficial in analysing the transcripts for this study. According to Steward and Shamdasani (1990), this process consists of five major steps, and these five steps were followed in this study. Firstly, I identified sections of the transcripts that I felt were important and relevant to the objectives of the study. Secondly, major topics and issues were categorised in a system that was developed shortly after my initial reading of the transcripts. Thirdly, the coded copy of the transcript was cut apart and sorted according to particular topics. Fourthly, the various pieces of transcribed material were used as supporting material and incorporated within the interpretative analysis. Finally, themes and sample statements within the

major themes were identified (i.e. concepts were grouped into broader categories in which properties and dimensions were identified so as to inform my understanding of cremation).

### **3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Collins et al. (2009:191) defined reliability as the degree to which a scale or an interview question yields consistent results or scores. De Vos et al. (2005:163) state that reliability occurs when a measuring instrument does not fluctuate (unless there are variations within the actual variable being measured). Collins continues by saying that validity is the degree to which the measurement actually measures what the researcher intends to or claims to measure. In order for the measurement to be reliable, it has to produce the same results over a period of time. Vithal and Jansen (2006) state that validity is an attempt to ‘check out’ whether the meaning and interpretation of an event is in fact sound, and it includes determining whether or not a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what is intended.

The study’s chosen focus areas contain many ‘typical’ or so-called ‘average’ Zulu working class individuals so the respondents’ views are assumed to be true for many other people within those same areas. The sample of people was also randomly chosen so that there would be no bias in the observations. The same results can therefore, be observed if the research is collected in a different area with another randomly chosen sample of people.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

De Vos et al. (1998:75) defines research-related ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and expectations pertaining to the most correct conduct towards respondents and participants. Ethical principles are important to consider, since they concern interpersonal interactions.

Relevant ethical issues were considered when conducting this research study. The first relevant issue that had to be considered was the principle of autonomy (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). This principle is concerned with voluntary participation, informed consent, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the participants’ right to autonomy in any publication that may arise out of the research. The research process was therefore explained to every person

willing to partake in the discussion before they were surveyed. This was done through an informative letter that accompanied the consent form. The participant were (during the introductory meeting already mentioned) informed about their right to anonymity. They were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix 4).

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has sought to present and justify the researcher's choice of methodological approaches. It explained that interviews and focus groups were employed as the methods of data collection. Qualitative data analysis was used to give meaning to the data to help unravel the understanding of cremation as held by the population group under investigation, and to address the importance of cremation as an alternative to burial. It was argued that the quantitative method is appropriate to this study as it can help to classify people according to their knowledge of what cremation is and what myths surround it. Such information is important if I am to come up with recommendations as to how to change such thoughts and attitudes.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents my analysis of the data that was acquired from the study. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of the Zulu people living within the eThekweni Municipality towards cremation. This chapter begins by exploring Zulu society's perceptions on cremation as revealed through the focus group that was conducted and the chapter then concentrates on the data that was collected by way of the face-to-face interviews. Through the process of analysis explicated in Chapter Three (Methodology), data is presented according to the themes that were predetermined as well as those that arose from the study objectives and research questions. Similar themes arose from the data generated by both the focus group and the individual interviews.

The data was collected, utilising an interview schedule guide that was spread out over a period of six weeks. This study surveyed Zulu people who reside either in the semi-urban area of uMlazi or in the rural area of Zwelibomvu.

Whilst all correspondents were in isiZulu, I have reproduced them in English for convenience purposes. Examples of Zulu version are also attached as appendix 7.

### **4.2 SECTION A: Demographic Information**

This section focuses on the demographic characteristics of the participants. The demographic data that was collected relates to age, sex, religion, level of education and employment. Of the 30 individuals that were interviewed 17 were females and 13 were males. The interviewees' at the time of the interview ranged from 24 to 55 years old. The reason why these specific individuals were chosen was that I considered them to be responsible people, they were and neither too old nor too young to know what they were talking about. In terms of education, 20 of the interviewees were literate, 5 had gone as far as grade 5 and the other 5 refused to reveal their level of education. In terms of religion, about 80% were Christians and the remaining 20% said they attend African-based,

traditionalist churches (e.g. Shembe and Zionist churches). In terms of occupation, about 60% were employed and 40% unemployed.

### 4.3 SECTION B: CATEGORIES OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.3.1 Focus group interview

It emerged from focus group and interviews that how people view death influences the way they dispose of dead. For example, various religions believed that there is life after death, and for some of these what is done to the body of a deceased person is important in relation to that person's afterlife. See the supporting quotes below:

The study's participants were asked the following introductory questions:

#### **Interviewer----- What do you know about death?**

- Respondent 1:-----*“Death means to live the earth and go to heaven and wait for resurrection.”*
- Respondent 2: -----*“Death is passing on to your ancestors.”*
- Respondent 3: -----*“Death is the end of life.”*
- Respondent 4: -----*“Death is because of AIDS.”*
- Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_ *–Death is something that comes unexpectedly, it needs lot of money to bury your loved one. It happens to young and old.”*

#### **Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a family member/ relative/ a friend who has passed away lately?**

- Respondent 6: \_\_\_\_\_ *–Yes, my mom.”*
- Respondent 7: \_\_\_\_\_ *–Yes, my brother, aunt, sister and dad.”*
- Respondent 8: \_\_\_\_\_ *–Yes, my friend.”*

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Did you encounter any problems in finding a burial space for them?**

- **Respondent 9:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“Yes, we were told that the graves are full.”*
- **Respondent 10:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“No, because we bury our relatives in rural areas (i.e. on a farm).”*
- **Respondent 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“Yes, we were told that in order for us to be able to use the grave, we must have a relative who has passed on ten years ago so as to burry our loved one on top of him or her.”*
- **Respondent 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“Yes, we were forced to bury my sister at KwaNdengezi as a result of the grave shortage.”*

#### **4.4 VIEWS ABOUT CREMATION**

It emerged from the study’s data sources that one’s views about cremation are influenced by a number of factors. I grouped these factors into the following categories:

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FACTORS</b>
1	Cultural
2	Religious
3	Literacy
4	Financial
5	Residential

#### 4.4.1 Cultural Factors

Leininger (1991:31) refers to culture as the learned, shared and transmitted values, beliefs, norms and life ways of a particular group that guides their thinking, decisions and actions in patterned way. Culture represents the way in which people behave, experience and evaluate their life world.

It emerged from the data sources that how the participants perceive death influences their views about cremation. For example, those who strongly believed that there is life after death where the deceased meet with their ancestors opposed cremation, believing that the individual should be in one piece when meeting with the ancestors and the body should therefore be respected (i.e. not cremated) See the supporting extracts below:

**Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Have you heard that the municipal authorities are encouraging people to opt for cremation in order to solve the grave crisis? What do you say about that?**

- **Respondent 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“I do not agree with that, what will the ancestors say if they see me as ashes?”*
- **Respondent 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“Cremation is a taboo: the body of the deceased should be respected so that he or she will arrive in one piece to the ancestors.”*
- **Respondent 3:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“As a Zulu, I totally disagree with that, We grew up knowing that a dead person becomes idlozi-we speak and ask for luck to them.”*

#### 4.4.2 Religious Factors

The data also reflected another reason for supporting or not supporting cremation: that the body has to be kept intact for the sake of resurrection. See the excerpts below:

- **Respondent 4:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“I support the idea of cremation. I believe that the spirit is more important than the body.”*
- **Respondent 5:** \_\_\_\_\_ *“No! No! No! I do not agree with cremating the dead:- we believe that he will be resurrected in the next life.”*

#### 4.4.3 Literacy Factors

Most of the views in support of cremation were from people who were literate, meaning that they were either educated or had some form of education with regard to cremation. The quote below was spoken by an educator in one of the schools at uMlazi:

- Respondent 12: \_\_\_\_\_ *“I attended an awareness campaign last year at the national conference [2010]. We were educated about alternative burial methods in such a way that I do not have a problem with cremation, the only thing that is needed is that people should be made aware of the problems that the Department of Cemetery and Crematoria is faced with. By so doing people will surely accept cremation as an alternative burial method”*.

#### 4.4.4 Financial Factors

Based on what was discussed in the focus group, burying your loved ones in keeping with the traditional method is expensive when compared with cremation:-

- Respondent 9: \_\_\_\_\_ *“In my opinion I say it is better to be cremated:- it saves space and money, there is no cost associated with the purchase of the grave, and a simple container is used rather than the expensive casket.”*
- Respondent 11: \_\_\_\_\_ *“When my brother was cremated the cost was very low:- to be precise, we spent plus-minus R5,000 for the whole ceremony compared to the money that we paid when my granddad was buried where we spent almost R20, 000 for the whole ceremony. I would encourage people to choose cremation instead of the traditional burial method.”*

#### **4.4.5 Residential Factor**

The data suggests that people living in rural areas are against cremation because they own land and they bury their loved ones on that land, in the vicinity of their own home. Those living in semi-urban areas have to bury their loved ones in the overcrowded cemeteries owned by the Municipality and are therefore more supportive of the idea of cremation.

- Respondent 3: \_\_\_ *“I am totally against cremation. People must return back to their rural areas in order for them to be able to bury their loved ones.”*
- Respondent 7: \_\_\_ *“It is better for someone to be buried at the rural areas, as it is not good for a person to be cremated: there [i.e. the rural area] the person will be buried next to the fields peacefully.”*
- Respondent 8: \_\_\_ *“I am not saying anything except that the municipal authority had said that the graves are full and we need to be educated about cremation so that we will be able to make informed judgement around this issue.*

#### **4.5 VIEWS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND RELIGION ON CREMATION.**

It emerged from the data sources that people’s perceptions towards cremation are influenced by their culture and religion. Generally speaking, those who are totally against cremation see cremation as something that contradicts their culture and religion. See the supporting quotes in the subsections below:-

##### **4.5.1 Culture**

Culture is a legacy that is passed down through generations: we inherit it from our ancestors. Culture is furthermore influenced by beliefs, and so the culture we inherit developed according to the beliefs of those who came before us. People are not however prisoners of culture, because all cultures are constantly evolving (Diller, 1999). The following quotes speak to the issue of how culture influences one’s views about cremation:

- Respondent 2: \_\_\_ *–When the person is cremated, you only get so little of ashes, what are you going do with it? Ay! Ay! This is against our cultural belief.”*

- Respondent 3: \_\_\_\_\_ *—We know that when the person dies, he or she goes to meet with his ancestors and now if he is cremated, how are the ancestors going to meet him.”*
- Respondent 4: \_\_\_\_\_ *“We as the Zulu people believe that when a person is dead he becomes idlozi [ancestor]:- he is the one that mediate between the living and the dead. He is the one that ask for forgiveness to God (Umvelinqangi) on our behalf, but when he was cremated he becomes a bad spirit who bring bad omen in his family until a sacrifice of a cow is made to cleanse him, then he becomes the good spirit in his family who brings luck. So I say we must not practice cremation.”*

#### **4.5.2 Religion**

- Respondent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ *“We as Christians believe in resurrection. We believe that when a person dies he goes to heaven to be with the Lord, so whether a person is cremated or not it does not matter.”*
- Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_ *—A person who is cremated will float, and becomes a ghost. We believe that when a person did not live righteous life, he or she will burn in hell, so now this means that this person will be burnt on earth and in heaven.”*
- Respondent 8: \_\_\_\_\_ *“What will happen to those who died through fire, who were burnt in their houses and cars? Does that mean that they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven? Think again, my friends. That is why I support those who say it does not matter whether your body was exposed to fire, cremated or buried the only thing that matters is your spirit, which goes back to God who created it.”*

#### **4.6 VIEWS ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO SOLVE THE BURIAL CRISIS**

It emerged from the data sources that individuals views about the solution to the burial crisis were influenced by the way they view cremation. See the supporting quotations below:

- Respondent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ *“People must go back to the rural areas to be buried there.”*

- Respondent 2: \_\_\_\_\_ *–The Government must release new places for burials.”*
- Respondent 3: \_\_\_\_\_ *“The better way is to bury people on top of another.”*
- Respondent 4: \_\_\_\_\_ *–The people must be educated about cremation so that they will in future be able to choose cremation as an alternative burial method.”*

#### 4.7 FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

This subsection addresses the face-to-face interviews that were conducted with the participants chosen from the focus group, with religious leaders and with municipal authorities. As explained in the research methodology (chapter Three), the triangulation method was used in this study. Mayring (1996:121) describes triangulation as an approach where the researcher attempts to find different ways and channels to gain information that will provide answers to the central question defining the research. In a study that seeks to understand the debates around cremation, focus groups and face-to-face interviews were adopted, as they were deemed the most appropriate research tools. It is observed that the answers given in the focus groups are similar to those derived from the interviews. The following themes were identified from the data gathered from the interviews, and these were then reinforced by data that emerged from the also focus group session:

- **Cultural influences**
- **Religious influences**
- **Financial influences**
- **Literacy influences**
- **Residential influences**

The researcher started each interview by explaining to the participants both the reason for this research as well as their rights during the course of the interview. In all the interviews that took

place, the researcher began with the same introductory questions, which asked the participants to explain what they know about death. The findings from the interviews revealed that the way people view death influences the way/s they dispose of a deceased person's body. For example, some people believe that when a person dies s/he goes to meet with the ancestors, so it is obvious that, such people will be against cremation since it goes against their culture which emphasizes that a dead body must always be respected (i.e. kept intact).

All the respondents gave different answers to the following (introductory) questions, but their replies show that they do have an understanding of what death is.

**Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ What do you know about death?**

Respondent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Death means passing on from earth”*

Respondent 2: \_\_\_\_\_ *“It means to go to heaven to be with the Lord who created us”*

Respondent3: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Death means to pass on from the earth and meet the ancestors”*

The interviewees were asked if they had lost a loved ones; most of them answered yes and they also all told the researcher how those people were related to them. The interviewees were then asked if they had encountered any problems in finding a place to bury their loved ones. Those who were from uMlazi answered yes they had a difficulty finding a place, but those from Zwelibomvu answered no, they had not had any difficulties in that regard. See the responses below:

Respondent 2: \_\_\_\_\_ *“The Municipality told us that there was no burial space”.*

Respondent 8: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Yes we did face some challenges because we could not find the space to bury my grandfather.”*

Respondent 6: \_\_\_\_\_ *“No we do not have a burying space at Zwelibomvu we have plenty of land where we bury our relatives at home.”*

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **What was your solution to that problem?**

Respondent 18: \_\_\_\_\_ *–Eiy! It was very tough indeed. We ended up burying my cousin on top of his mother, who died ten years ago.”*

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Have you heard about the grave or cemetery crisis?**

Twenty five of the respondents responded positively to this question, some saying they had heard about the issue on the radios and others saying they had read about in newspapers.

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Have you heard that the municipal authorities are encouraging people to opt for cremation in order to solve the issue of grave overcrowding?**

About 20 of the respondents said they had been unaware of the Municipality’s plans. Ten of the respondents said they knew about this, and they said they had heard about it on the radios or read about it in newspapers.

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do you agree with cremation?**

The responses were as follows: 18 replied \_no’, 9 replied \_yes’ and 3 said they did not know.

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **What is cremation?**

Respondent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ *It is to burn the dead body which is a disgrace to us as the Zulu people.”*

Respondent 25: \_\_\_\_\_ *“They say that when a person is dead, they do not bury that person but burn him or her with fire.”*

Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_ *“It is the Western culture of burning their loved ones after he or she has died. They want us to follow it and leave our culture which is not right to us as Zulu people”*

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Would you advise people to practice cremation?**

Respondent 25: \_\_\_\_\_ *“As a Pastor I will advise the members of my church to practice cremation, but it would be up to the individual if he or she prefers it. As we have said what we believe is important is the spirit not the body, whether you are cremated or not, the spirit goes to God.”*

Respondent 21: \_\_\_\_\_ *“I will not advise people to opt for cremation since it goes against our culture of respecting our ancestors.”*

Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_ *“What can we say? The word has come out that the graves are full, so I can advise the people to opt for cremation as an alternative method to the traditional method.”*

Respondent 9: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Much as I am against cremation, but one can see that as time goes on one will be left with no choice but to cremate. Yes I will advise the people to do cremation and to be educated about it.*

It emerged from the data sources that individuals’ views about cremation are influenced by a number of factors as was also discussed in the focus group sessions

#### **4.7.1 Cultural factors**

It was also noted that people's perceptions about death influences their views on cremation. For example, those who strongly believe that there is life after death (where one meets with the ancestors) were completely against cremation. See the supporting view below:

Respondent 19: \_\_\_\_\_ *“You see, my girl, as a Zulu person I strongly believe that when a person dies he become idlozi (ancestor), and he looks after those who still living. We respect the dead body. If I die and my children decides to cremate me, I will become a bad ancestor, Ay! Ay! It is a shame to cremate, how can one brings luck to his family if he is an ashes. A person should meet with obabamkhulu (the elders who have gone before) in one piece. This is our culture and we won't change it.”*

#### **4.7.2 Religious factors**

A religious factor that was cited by some of the respondents as to why they either support or condemn cremation is that they believe in the resurrection of the dead. See the quote below:

Respondent 10: \_\_\_\_\_ *“We as Christians believe that there is life after death where the spirit of a dead person goes to heaven to be with our Creator, so whether a person is cremated or buried in a traditional method, it does not matter. What the Bible says is that one day we shall be resurrected and be with the Lord in our new bodies.”*

#### **4.7.3 Literacy factors**

It emerged from the data sources that those who are educated welcome the idea of cremation while those who are illiterate do not welcome the idea of cremation:

Respondent 3: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Even though it is difficult to accept cremation, what can we say because we see that as time goes on, one will be left with no choice but to cremate, since the burial space issue has become a problem.”*

#### 4.7.4 Financial factors

The data revealed that cremation is cheaper than burial. See the extract below:

Dass \_\_\_ [An official of the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria]

*“The price of an average grave is over R4, 000 and cremation was R350. This figure shows that cremation is cheaper than the traditional burial method, there is no cost associated with the purchase and perpetual care of gravesite or tomb. It can be economical, because a simple container can be used in place of an expensive casket.”*

**Pastor Dlamini:** \_\_\_ *“I see cremation as the solution for those who could not afford a proper burial”.*

#### 4.7.5 Residential factors

It emerged from the study findings that the people’s views about cremation differ in accordance with where they live. The respondents’ residential status influences the way they perceive cremation. For instance, it was noted that because from the rural areas have plenty of land in which to bury their loved ones, they are utterly against cremation, whereas people from the semi-urban areas (where there is overcrowding of graveyards, women are being raped in the cemeteries, and there is a great deal of vandalism of grave, are open to the idea of cremation as a solution to the problems surrounding burial. See the extract below:

Respondent 10: \_\_\_\_\_ *–We in rural areas have land; as you can see, we bury our loved ones in our homes so we will never accept cremation.”*

Respondent 19: \_\_\_\_\_ *–I think cremation is the best solution. You see, my girl, one day I visited my sister’s grave and find out that it has been tampered with, the tombstone was destroyed. And then we as the family decided that we will never bury our family because we did not understand as to whether it was criminal act or witchcraft because you may never know.”*

## 4.8 THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND RELIGION ON PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON CREMATION.

### 4.8.1 Culture

Finnegan (1992:70) defines tradition as:

established way of doing things whether or not of any antiquity, the process of handing down practices, ideas or values, the products so handed down, sometimes with the connotation of being old or having arisen in some natural and non-problematic way.

Then speaking more specifically about tradition, she argues that:

Something called a tradition is often taken to somehow belong to the whole community rather than the specific individuals or interest groups, to be unwritten, to be valuable or (less often) out dated, or to mark out a group's identity

Many students of culture and society have concluded that the tradition is no longer an 'authentic' body of knowledge as handed down from one generation to the next, with only minor alterations being incurred. Such students argue that this is the result of the supposed malfunctioning of individuals' memories or skills. Although the past is a powerful authority in culture, human society selectively adds to the past, subtracts from it, and/or moulds it in its own images (Hassan, 1996:45)

It can be seen from the data that it is difficult for the Zulu people who have lived all their lives steeped in history, culture and tradition to accept cremation, which is something that is new to them and is perceived as being against their traditions and customs. In traditional belief, to die is to home to where you belong, thus there are the words like *ukugoduka*, *ukuya kokhokho*, which means that when one dies one re-joins the relatives who had gone before. It is the traditions, culture and historical roots of the Zulu people that were given by the respondents as the main reasons for them being against cremation.

Respondent 19: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Our culture, my daughter, does not allow us to cremate but to bury and respect our relatives who have passed on from this earth. The most important thing that we know is that our ancestors are the mediators between God and the living; they continue to live in a different state and in another world. When we know where their bones are, we can go visit and perform our rituals. If I die, I want my children and grandchildren to communicate with me. I want those who were not present when I died to be shown my grave, but how can that happen if I am cremated and my ashes are scattered in the garden? My great grandchildren will never know that I even existed.”*

#### **4.8.2 Religion**

Andrew and Boyle (1999) defined religion as an organised system of beliefs concerning the course, nature and purpose of the universe, especially the belief in or worship of a God or gods. As an integral component of culture, religious beliefs may influence the society’s course of action. It emerged during my discussions with the participants that peoples’ perceptions of cremation are influenced by their religion. For instance, those who believe in the resurrection of the dead in the Christian sense, does not have a problem with cremation. This is reflected in the following two participants’ responses:

Respondent 25: \_\_\_\_\_ *“As we have said earlier, the Bible does not say anything about cremation whether it is wrong or not. What we as Christians believe is that the spirit is more important than the body, we preach Christ who can change the spirit so that when the person dies, he will be resurrected again and be given a new body.”*

Respondent 20: \_\_\_\_\_ *“There is no difference between cremation and burying. When the body is buried, given enough time, it will completely disintegrate, so cremation and burying ultimately lead to the same physical condition of complete disintegration. It is the choice of the individual as to whether when he/she dies would like to be cremated or not. According to what I heard from the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria is that to cremate is cheaper than to bury, it also saves space and can be more economical, hygienic and it allows scattering of the remains in a place of significance to the deceased. I would have my body disposed of quickly by heat rather than allowing it to decay in a grave.”*

#### **4.9 VIEWS ABOUT A LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE GRAVE CRISIS.**

Respondent 5: \_\_\_\_\_ *“I think the Council should meet with the community members and discuss the ways to solve the grave crisis.”*

Respondent 24: \_\_\_\_\_ *“In order to solve this crisis the Government must give the land of the black people back, in that way the grave problem will be solved.”*

Respondent 21: \_\_\_\_\_ *“Eish! Truth be told, there is no beating about the bush now! Cremation is the only solution. We just have to deal with it now and get used to it”*

Pastor Nhau: \_\_\_\_\_ *“The Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria must continue with sensitising people about the grave crisis, since they have started in schools they must also call the members of different communities and teach them about other burial methods so that people will be able to make informed decisions around the burial issue.”*

Elder Mgenu: \_\_\_\_\_ *“People including the church should be educated about alternative burial method.”*

The above responses confirm my assertion that the views of people as to the solution to the grave issue are influenced by the ways they perceive cremation. Most of the responses advocated Government involvement in solving the grave issues, and the suggestions included provision of land and education.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

The focus in this chapter was on a presentation and analysis of the study’s findings. The findings presented in two sections, namely, demographic data and categories of data (as they emerged from responses of the participants). Five categories emerged from the interviews and focus groups; these categories were: cultural influences, religious influences, financial influences, literacy influences and residential influences. The findings revealed that the way people perceive cremation is influenced by the above mentioned categories or themes.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Leininger, (1991) states that one's findings require synthesis of thinking, configuration analysis, interpreting and creating and creative formulation from data in order for conclusion to be credible. This chapter presents the limitations of the present study. Conclusions are also drawn based on the findings of the study. Finally, I make recommendations for further research. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of the Zulu people living in the areas of Zwelibomvu and uMlazi, which are parts of eThekweni Municipality, towards cremation as an alternative practice to burial.

As already highlighted in the literature review, very few studies have been conducted on cremation within African society/ cultures. Whilst Zulu scholars have indeed written on issues connected with death, their writings focus on the conventional burial method, as it is the only funeral practice recognised by the Zulu culture. In addition to the above, most of the findings of this study do not relate to the existing literature.

### **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

When embarking upon my study, I was confronted with so many challenges concerning the agreed entry / exit schedule, which resulted in disrupted engagements at the Zwelibomvu area, which is one of the rural areas where my study was conducted. It took about three months for the headman to sign the consent form that was to grant me the permission necessary to conduct my research in his area. Several meetings were conducted with different political leaders of that area as well as with the community leaders, whereby I had to explain the reason for my conducting a research study in their area. When the permission was eventually granted, it was very difficult for me to conduct a focus group in that area owing to the fact that the people in that area wanted to be paid for their participation. Although the process was explained to the headman and to the people who were present when the information letter and the consent form were given many still insisted that they needed to be paid for their participation. I felt that it was unethical to give the participants any money for their participation because it would then have looked as if I had bought the information and someone could then argue that the results of the study are biased. For that reason, one focus group was conducted at uMlazi where the participants were willing to

participate in focus groups as well as the interviews. Only five individual interviews were conducted at Zwelibomvu.

Another problem I faced was that of scheduling the interviews, on several occasions when dates or times had been set, the researcher was unable to proceed due to the unexpected unavailability of participants because of family commitments.

In light of the above constraints the study's findings cannot be generalised to all the Zulu people living in Zwelibomvu and uMlazi. However, the findings do give insights as to the perceptions of the Zulu people towards cremation as an alternative to burial and the themes that emerged from the data could well be used to guide future research.

Interpretive studies emphasize the importance of the researcher being the primary tool for both collecting and interpreting data (Durrheim, 1999). It is imperative to remember this when dealing with one's data, as bias may occur as a result of the impossibility of the researcher remaining objective at all times. The researcher is the sole instigator and cannot employ other researcher in an attempt to negate the possibility of bias seeping into the research. To counter this possible limitation, the researcher refrained during the interviews from giving clues as to how the participant should or should not respond. However, some degree of bias is always inevitable, as this is the nature of qualitative research.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Having completed the data collection phase of the research, I analysed the data in order to arrive at the findings, which are important because they assisted in my determining of the perceptions of the Zulu people towards cremation as an alternative to burial and the challenges that are faced by the Department of Cemetery and Crematoria with regard to educating people as to the options other than burial that are available to them. This chapter highlights the themes that I identified by way of an extensive analysis of the transcripts as well as the observations I made during the course of the focus group discussions and interviews. The following themes were identified:

- Cultural influences
- Religious influences

- Literacy influences
- Financial influences
- Residential influences

### **5.3.1 Cultural and Religious Factors**

It is apparent from the findings that cultural and religious beliefs are important determinants which help shape the respondents' understanding and attitudes towards cremation. People's perceptions on cremation were prescribed according to their cultural and religious practices. With respect to attitude, many Zulu people exhibit a 'conservative' or negative attitude towards cremation. They still see it as something that in conflict with their culture and their belief in ancestral worship.

The majority of the respondents; (about 70% of the sample) were against cremation owing to the fact that most of them believe in ancestral worship and also believe that the dead body should be respected and should meet the ancestors in one piece. When a person dies s/he becomes *idlozi* (an ancestor) and *amadlozi* are said to bring luck to the family. On the other hand, if one does not respect *amadlozi* bad things will happen to that particular person and his/her family.

About 30% of the sample was in support of cremation. What I observed is that the respondents' perceptions are influenced to some extent by religious concepts. The Christians believe that when a person dies s/he goes to heaven. The emphasis with such people is on the spirit rather than on the body, so it does not matter to them if a person is buried or cremated as long as a person is in right standing with God, his/her spirit will return to their Creator.

### **5.3.2 Residential and Literacy Factors**

The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the Zulu people do not have an in-depth or adequate knowledge of cremation as an alternative burial method. It was observed that knowledge of cremation varies according to where one lives; in other words, people living in semi-urban areas and those living in rural areas tend to have differing views on the matter. The results showed that the respondents living in uMlazi (a semi-urban area) have at least some

knowledge about cremation; the reason for this is that many are literate/ educated. As a result of this, some of them are in favour of the idea of cremation, seeing it as a solution to the issue of overcrowded graveyards and a shortage of space for cemeteries. Zulu people from Zwelibomvu (a rural area) however, are not knowledgeable about cremation and they are totally against it. They further showed no significant association of cremation since they bury their loved ones within the vicinity of their own homes.

### **5.3.3 Financial Factors**

The findings of the study indicate that the cost of cremation is cheaper than is the cost of traditional burial. As pointed out by some of the respondents during the interview sessions, the cost associated with burying someone is very high when compared with cremating that person, as one has to pay for the gravesite, the ceremony, the flowers, an expensive casket and the tombstone whereas in cremation only a simple container is needed to contain the ashes of dead person's body.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It became evident during the data collection process, that most Zulu people are not knowledgeable about other types of burial methods, especially cremation. The recommendations that follow are discussed under the following headings: Cultural and Religious Factors, Financial and Literacy Factors, Residential Factors and On- going Research into Alternative Burial Methods.

### **5.4.1 Cultural and Religious Factors**

What is needed is for the eThekweni Municipal authority to help people's perceptions on cremation, so as to make cremation a viable solution towards the issue of overcrowded graveyards. This can be achieved by way of intensive educational programmes that are aimed specially at the Zulu people, since it is they who still see cremation as a taboo or as something that contradicts their culture. Furthermore, many Zulu people still believe that cremation is a White or Indian practice. Such programmes should reach all of South Africa's different racial groups, without any social status bias. This will ensure that races other than Whites and Indians are able to access the relevant information and thereby make informed decisions with regard to

the bodies of deceased loved ones. One solution would be to train and employ community-based workers who can educate the populace. Such workers could reach people with information about other alternative burial methods.

#### **5.4.2 Financial and Literacy Factors**

The Government needs to put programmes in place that will provide the public with adequate information so that they can make informed decisions, especially with regard to cremation. In addition, programmes are needed to educate people as the advantages of cremation over burial, namely that it is cheaper and saves space.

#### **5.4.3 On-going Research on Alternative Burial Methods**

Cremation has a real presence in South Africa and thus cannot be ignored. It needs to be better understood so that everyone is able to make informed decision about it. The information for this exploratory study was collected in six weeks from interviews conducted with 30 respondents. The findings of the study are exploratory in nature and many of the conclusions are tentative, it is therefore recommended that further research into other alternatives to burial should be done in order to help the Zulu people make informed decisions on the matter. Such research would also help solve the challenges being faced by the Municipality with regard to the graveyard crisis.

### **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The study has shown that the Zulu people, in consequence of their culture, have a negative attitude towards the adopting or choosing of cremation as an alternative to burial. Many Zulu people have little or no knowledge about other burial methods, particularly cremation. The researcher thus recommends that further researches be conducted into alternatives methods of interment in order to better educate the Zulu people so that in the future they will be able to make more informed decisions about what to do with the bodies of deceased loved ones. The Government and municipal authorities need to put programmes in place that will ensure adequate information is circulated. It is only in this way that the Zulu people's negative attitude towards cremation will change.

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Globe and Mail—Jackman, P. 9 September 1998. Cremation now a hot option.

The Times of Zambia- Nawa, D. 3 April, (2010). —Shortage of Burial Sites-How About Cremation?”

### **Internet Sites**

<http://www.giftofireland.com/articles.htm> (11-09-2011)

<http://cemeteries.arcdioc111ese.org.8cfc.html> (11-09-2011)

<http://www.gospel.com.net> (11-09-2011)

<http://www.ips.org> (11-09-2011)

<http://www.mthopgr.com/cremation.htm> (11-09-2011)

<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi=20000911>

# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Letter



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Research Office, Gdwan Mbeki Centre  
Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN, 4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
[mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

17 June 2011

Mrs MN Zwane (209535849)  
School of IsiZulu  
Faculty of Humanities, Development &  
Social Sciences  
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs Zwane

**PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0340/011M**  
**PROJECT TITLE: Perceptions on Cremation among Zulu people**

In response to your application dated 13 June 2011, 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.

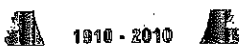
**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)  
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Dr N Zondi  
cc Mrs S van der Westhuizen



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## Appendix 2: Letter from the Supervisor



Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences,

School of IsiZulu Studies

Howard College Campus.

11 November 2010

### To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Mrs Maria Zwane is a Masters student in the School of isiZulu Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus, Durban. As part of her Masters Degree, she has to conduct a short research study on the area that is of interest to her. She has selected Umlazi, Ward 80 as one of the areas that will offer her insight into the issues of the changing perceptions on cremation. To this end she will need to talk with some people in this ward whose help in this regard will be of great significance. As her supervisor, I request that you grant her access into your area where she will still sought permission from the people themselves. The student also acknowledges that she will explain the participants' rights in the research and those who take part will do so with a full knowledge that they are not compelled to be part of the study and that they may pull out of it anytime they might so wish. (Please see such an informed consent letter attached).

Should you have any queries about her study, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N.B. Zondi".

Dr. N.B. Zondi

031 260 1301 zondin@ukzn.ac.za

### Appendix 3: Application letter to conduct a research from the researcher.

Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences  
School of IsiZulu Studies  
Howard Campus  
4041

The Head

Parks Leisure and Cemeteries

eThekweni Municipality

Durban

4000

Dear Sir / Madam

#### APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT

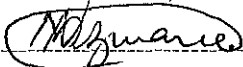
My name is Maria Zwane and I am a student at the above mentioned institution. I am currently carrying out a research study for my Masters degree dealing with the perceptions on cremation among the Zulu people.

In order to pursue my study, I need to conduct recorded interviews with individuals from your department. Permission is hereby sought to conduct an oral interview with representatives from your department. In support of my application I undertake the following:

- That information will be obtained through recorded ( audio and visual) means.
- That all information gathered will be strictly for the purpose of this study and will remain confidential.
- The recordings will not interfere with the programmes of your department.
- No individuals will be forced to participate in my study.
- Access to the individuals to be used in the recordings will be negotiated.
- A copy of the findings will be lodged with your department on completion of the study.
- All recordings will be stored for reference purposes and will not be made available to anyone.

Your assistance will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully



Maria Zwane

Faculty of Human, Development and Social Sciences  
School of IsiZulu Studies  
Howard Campus  
4041

Nhloko Yomnyango  
Parks Leisure and Cemeteries  
eThekweni Municipalities  
Durban  
4000

Mnumzane /Nkosikazi

**INCWADI YESICELO SOKUTHOLA IMVUME YOKUQHUBA UCWANINGO**

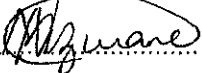
Igama lami nginguMaria Zwane futhi ngingumfundi kulesi sikhungo esibhalwe ngenhla. Njengamanje ngenza ucwaningo lweziqo zeMasters oluphathelele nemibono mayelana nokulothiswa kwabantu phakathi kwabangamaZulu.

Ukuze ngikwazi ukuqhuba ucwaningo ngidinga ukuqophisa izinkulumbo mpikiswano nabantu abasemnyangweni wakho. Ngicela imvume yokuqhuba lolu ucwaningo.

- Lonke ulwazi luyotholakala ngendlela yokuqophisa.
- Ukuthi lonke ulwazi oluyotholakala kulolu cwaningo luyoba imfihlo.
- Ukuqophisa angeke luphazamise izinhlelo zoMnyango wakho.
- Akekho umuntu oyophoqeleka ukuba abe yingxenye yalolu cwaningo.
- Ikhophi yokutholakale ocwaningeni iyonikwa umnyango wakho uma luqedwa ucwaningo.
- Konke okuyiqoshwa kuyogcinwa kufihlekile akuyukunikwa muntu.

Ngiyothokoza uma isicelo sami samukelekile.

Yimina ozithobayo

  
.....

uMaria Zwane

### **Appendix 3: Informed consent :**

**(Informed Consent) Uhlelo lwemininingwane yocwaningo kanye nefomu yemvume yokuzibandakanya ocwaningweni ube uqwashisiwe**

Mina, **Maria Zwane** ngingumfundi waseNyuvesi yaKwaZulu Natali, ngenza Iziqu zeMasters ngaphansi KweSikole sesiZulu. Ukuze ngiphothule lezi ziqu kumele ngenze ucwaningo ngento engicabanga ukuthi ingasiza ukuqonda kangcono ngezindlela ezingasetshenziswa ukungcwaba abantu njengoba kuthiwa izindawo zokungcwaba seziphelile kumbe sezigwele. Ucwaningo lwami lumayelana nokulothiswa kwabantu.

#### **Yini ngempela inhloso yalolu cwano?**

Lolu cwano luphokophelele ukufundisa abantu ukuthi baqonde kabanzi mayelana nezinye izindlela ezingasetshenziswa ukungcwaba njengoba sekuphume emaphephandabeni nasemisakazweni ukuthi izindawo zokuthuna sezigwele. Nginyaqonda ukuthi kwezinye izindawo abantu sebengcwatshwa kude nasezindaweni abahlala kuzo ngenxa yokungabibikho kwezindawo zokuthuna.

#### **Luzokwenziwa kanjani lolu cwano?**

Lolu cwano luzokwenziwa ngokuthi kube khona imibuzo ezobuzwa abantu ngokulothiswa kwabantu. Ngizobuza imibuzo bese ngibhala phansi futhi ngizobe nginesiqophamazwi ukuze ngizwe yonke imibono yabantu.

#### **Kungani ngicelwe ukungenela ucwano?**

Utholakale ungumuntu ongaba wusizo kulolu cwano ngalezi zizathu ezilandelayo:

- Ungumuntu omdala oneminyaka engaphezu kwama-25.
- Ungumuntu onomqondo ohluzekile nongakwazi ukuveza imibono ephusile mayelana nalesi sihloko.

#### **Kuyothatha isikhathi esingakanani ukuxoxisana kwethu kulolu cwano?**

Kuyothatha imizuzu ethi mayibe ngu-30 kuya ehoreni ukuphendula imibuzo nokuyoncika ekutheni lungakanani ulwazi onalo ngalesi sihloko

#### **Yiziphi izingqinamba noma ubungozi okungahambisana nokungenela lolu cwano?**

Akukho izingqinamba noma ubungozi okungahambisana naloli cwano.

**Kuyongisiza ngani mina ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo?**

Lolu cwaningo lukhuluma ngezingqinamba esihlangabezana nazo njalo ngenxa yokuthi sishiywa yizihlobo zethu mihla namalanga bese sihamba siyofuna izindawo esingazithuna kuzo. Ngakho-ke ngicabanga ukuthi imibono kanye nolwazi engizoluthola kuwena luyosiza abantu abaningi ngokuluthiswa kwabantu. Kophinde kusizakale nezizukulwane ezizayo.

**Kuzokwenzakalani ngalolu cwaningo?**

Uma uvuma ukungenela lolu cwaningo ngengxoxo engizoba nayo nawe ekugcineni ngiyokhipha umbiko noyobekwa ezindaweni zomtapo wolwazi ukuze ube nosizo njengoba kuchazwe ngenhla.

**Ngabe kukhona yini inkokhelo engizoyithola ngokungenela lolu cwaningo?**

Cha akukho nkokhelo ngoba yimina engiyokuza lapho ukhona. Nokho siyoba nalo itiye lokucima ukoma.

**Kungabe ingxoxo phakathi kwami nomcwaningi iyogcinwa iyimfihlo?**

Yebo ingxoxo iyohlala iyimfihlo futhi amagama abantu angeke adalulwe noma asetshenziswe. Igama lomuntu liyochazwa ngo A noma B njalonjalo.

**Nginamalungelo mani kulolu cwaningo?**

Lolu cwaningo ungalungenela ngokuzithandela kwakho. Akekho onelungelo lokukuphoqa ukuba ulungenele futhi ungashiya noma yinini uma uthanda.

Uma kukhona ofisa ukukwazi mayelana namalungelo akho ekuqhutshweni kwalolu cwaningo njengomunye wabalungenele kumbe unezikhalazo ungaxhumana nomeluleki wami uDkt. N.B. Zondi ngale mininingwane: 031 260 1301, i-email: [zondin@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:zondin@ukzn.ac.za)

**NOMA uxhumane**

Nabezocwaningo baseNyuvesi YakwaZulu-Natal ngale mininingwane:

Ms Phumelele Ximba: 031 260 3587; i-email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

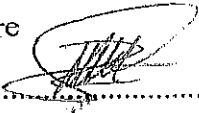
**Appendix 4: Written Permission from uMlazi Councillor, Headman from Zwelibomvu and the Head, Department of Parks, Leisure and Cemeteries.**

Letter of consent from Umlazi Ward 80 Councillor for research purposes.

I MSHIBE ZITHULELE W......councillor of the Umlazi, Ward 80 have been consulted by Mrs Maria Zwane with a request to conduct a research study which deals with cremation. I hereby authorise her to access the people she may need to get any information that will be of help to her.

Full name.....ZITHULELE WISEMAN MSHIBE

Signature



Date

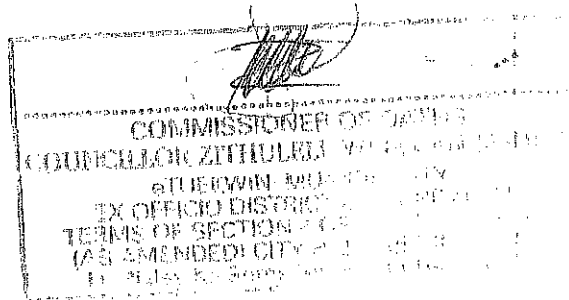
14/02/2011

Witness



Date:


14-02-2011



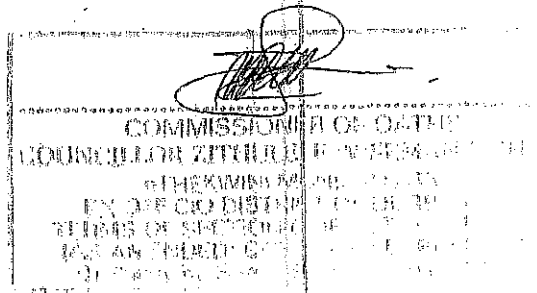
Incwadi yesicelo semvume evela ekhanseleni lase Mlazi esigcemeni sakwa E.

Mina CUK Z.W. MSHIBE.....ngiyavuma ukuthi uNkk Maria Zwane uchazile izinhloso zakhe ngokwenza ucwaningo endaweni yami, emva kokufunda ngaqonda konke okusenwadini ayibhalile, ngakho ngiyamunika imvume yokusebenzisa lewadi ngenhloso yokumelekelela ocwaningeni alwenzayo.

Amagama Aphelele : ZITHULELE WISEMAN MSHIBE

Ukusayina : 

Usuku : 14/02/2011



## CONSENT LETTER FOR UMLAZI COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY.

Mrs Maria N. Zwane a Masters Degree student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, rest your permission to participate in a research project which deals with the changing perceptions on cremation. Participant will be required to respond in focus groups discussions and interviews.

Participation to this exercise is voluntary and no physical or psychological harm is anticipated.

The result of the study will assist in enlightening people about cremation and the myths associated with it. In that way communities can make informed decision when opting for or against it.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this study, please fill in the information as indicated below.

### PARTICIPANT CONCENT FORM

I MFANA PATRICK NENE (full name of participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the above research programme with any clarification they may require.

I understand that I and any other person participating in this project are at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should we so desire.

FULL NAMES: Mfana PATRICK NENE  
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT: [Signature]  
DATE: 14/02/2011

**Incwadi yokugunyaza ukubuzwa imibuzo**

Mina..... Mfana PATRICK NENE.....(amagama aphelele alowo obambe iqhaza ocwaningweni) ilungu lomphakathi waseMlazi ngiyavuma ukuba yingxenye yalolu cwaningo lukaNkosikazi M.N. Zwane. Ngियाqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyaqonda ngalo futhi ngiyavuma ukuba ngibuzwe imibuzo.


Ngियाqonda futhi ukuthi mina nabanye abazobe besebenzisana naye kulolu cwaningo sinelungelo lokuyeka noma yinini uma sithanda.

Ngazisiwe nokuthi uma kukhona engifisa ukucaciselwa kumele ngenzenjani.

Igama eliphelele..... Mfana PATRICK NENE.....

Sayina..... .....

Usuku..... 14/02/2011.....

Ufakazi..... .....

Usuku: 14/02/2011

INCWADI YEMVUME EVELA ENDUNENI YASE ZWELIBOMVU

Mina... MBONGWA MAGCABA.....ngiyavuma ukuthi uNkosikazi Zwane usechazile ngezinhloso zakhe zokwenza ucwangingo endaweni yami, futhi emva kokuba sengifundile ngaqonda kahle konke okubhalwe encwadini yesicelo,ngiyamunika imvume yokwenza ucwangingo endaweni yami ngenhloso yokwenza ucwangingo olumayelana nokulothiswa kwabantu aluqhubayo . Emva kokulalela kahle ukuthi ucwangingo lwakhe lumayelana nani, ngiyamunika imvume yokuqhuba ucwangingo nabantu ukuthi athole usizo aludingayo.

AMAGAMA MBONGWA MAGCABA APHELELE

UKSAYINA me

IKHELI D.LWAMBENI C.P. SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 823

NAGINA 3604

INAMBA 073 2829 856 YOCINGO

**ISIMANLA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL**  
**ZWELIBOMVU**  
INDUNA: MBONGWA MAGCABA  
P.O. BOX 823  
NAGINA 3604  
TEL.: 073 654 1099 / 073 2829 856

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS CONSENT FORM

Mrs Maria Zwane a Masters Programme student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, rest your permission for you to participate in a research project which deals with the changing perceptions on cremation. Participants will be required to respond to interviews and discussions. Participation is voluntary and no physical or psychological harm is anticipated.

The result of the study will assist in enlightening the community the people about cremation and the myths associated with it. In that way community members can make informed decisions when opting for or against it.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this study, please fill in the information as indicated below.

FULL NAME AND SURNAME MARIA NIDMBIKAYWE ZWANE

PHYSICAL/POSTAL ADDRESS 4821 THEMDELE ROAD  
KWANDENGEZI  
3607

PHONE NUMBER 082 469 8636

I ~~AM~~ / Mrs MARY NOMPUMELELO HLOPHE who is a community member at Zwelibomvu agree to participate in this research project under the conditions stipulated above and depending on my willingness to participate.

I understand that this consent can be withdrawn at any given time if necessary.

Signature [Signature]

Witness [Signature]

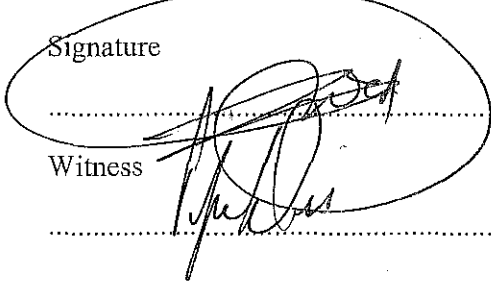
Date 14-02-11

**Letter of consent from the Head Parks Leisure and Cemeteries for research purposes.**

I CHRISTO SWART the head Parks Leisure and Cemeteries have been consulted by Mrs Maria Zwane with a request to conduct a research study which deals with *cremation*. I hereby authorise her to access the people she may need to get any information that will be of help to her.

Full name CC SWART

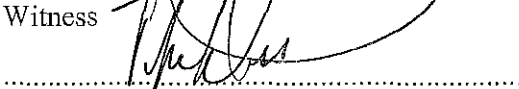
Signature



Date

29/03/11

Witness



Date:

29/03/11

**ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY  
PARKS, LEISURE & CEMETERIES  
TEL: 031-362 4176**

**TERMS OF AGREEMENT**

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this content form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
  - I understand that my personal details may be included in the research / will be used in aggregate form only, so that I will not be personally identifiable.
  - I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
  - I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Name of participant : PEPE DASE

Signature of Participant : [Handwritten Signature]

Date : 29 .03.11

Signature of researcher : [Handwritten Signature]

Date : 29/03/11

**ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY  
PARKS, LEISURE & CEMETERIES  
TEL: 031- 362 4176**

## APPENDIX 5 : FOCUS GROUP /INTERVIEW GUIDE

DATE OF INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONDENTS' NUMBER	
RESPONDENTS' NAME	

GENDER: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATIONAL STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_

OCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME LANGUAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

- What do you know about the word death?
- Do you have a family member /relative/ friend who has passed away lately?
- What kind of a relationship did you have with your loved one?
- Did you encounter any problem in finding a place to bury him/her?
- If yes can you explain the problem that you encountered?
- Have you heard about grave or cemetery crisis?
- Where did you hear about that?
- What do you think the cemetery authorities need to do in order to solve the problem?
- Do you know anything about cremation?
- What is cremation?
- Do you know that the municipal authorities are encouraging people to choose cremation as a solution to solving the burial crisis?
- Do you agree with that?
- Give me the reason for your choice of number of number 12?
- Has cremation ever been done in your family?

- If yes, how long have you been doing it?
- If not, why have you not considered doing it?
- What does culture say about cremation?
- Many people believe in the afterlife, what do you think will happen to those who have been cremated?
- Do you think of cremation as a western culture?
- Why do you think so?
- Do you believe in resurrection as a question of how God will raise the dead?
- Why do you/not believe in it?
- Do you think that the Zulu people will accept cremation as a solution to solving the grave issue?
- Why do you think so?
- What about the cost of cremation as compared to the traditional way of burying people?
- What do you think would be the long term solution to solving the issue of grave overcrowding?

## ISONGA MIBUZO

- Yini oyaziyo mayelana nokufa?
- Sikhona yini isihlobo kumbe umngani wakho osewadlula emhlabeni?
- Wawuhlobene ngani nalowo muntu?
- Ikhona yini inking enahlangabezana nayo ekutholeni indawo yokumngcwaba?
- Uma uvuma ungayichaza inking' owabhekan anayo?
- Uke wezwa yini ngezinkinga zokugcwala kwamathuna?
- Wayizwa kuphi leyonkinga?
- Ucabanga ukuthi uMasipala angayixazulula kanjani lenkinga?
- Ikhona yini into oyaziyo ngokulothisa?
- Kuyini ukulothisa?

- Uyazi yini ukuthi uMasipala kanye noHulumeni bakhuthaza abantu ukuthi bakhethe ukulothisa njengesixazululo sezinkinga zokungcwaba?
- Uyavumelana yini nalokho?
- Nginike isizathu sempendulo oyikhethe ku-12 ngenhla.
- Kwake kwalothiswa emndenini wakini?
- Uma uvuma, senikwenze isikhathi esingakanani?
- Uma kunguqha, yini ndaba ningakwenzi?
- Lithini isiko ngokulothisa?
- Abantu abantu bakholelwa empilweni yangale kwethuna, ucabanga ukuthi kuyokwenzekani kuyokwenzekani kulabo asebalothiswa?
- Ucabanga ukuthi ukulothiswa kuyisiko laseNtshonalanga?
- Yin indaba ucabanga kanjalo?
- Uyakholelwa yini ekuvukeni kwabafuleyo?

- Yini ndaba ukholelwa/ungakholelwa kukho?
- Ucabanga ukuthi amaZulu azokwamukela yini ukulothiswa?
- Yini ndaba ucabanga kanjalo?
- Ungaphawula uthini ngezindleko zokulothiswa uma uqhathanisa nezokungcwaba ngendlela endala?
- Ucabanga ukuthi kungabayini isisombululo ekuxazululeni le nkinga yokugcwala kwamathuna?

## APPENDIX 6

### Interviews with Religious Leaders/ Cemetery Authorities.

- 2.1 Have you heard that the graves are full and that the Government is thinking of closing the cemeteries and banning the headstones?
- 2.2 What can you say about that?
- 2.3 Are there any other alternative burial method that you know of?
- 2.4 If yes, is cremation one of the alternative methods?
- 2.6 Would you consider doing it as a solution to solving the grave crisis?
- 2.7 Why would you/not consider it?
- 2.8 As a person who is always faced with a challenge of burying people on daily basis, would you advise people to consider doing it?
- 2.9 Why?
- 2.10 What does culture/religion say about cremation?
- 2.11 Do you see a need of educating people about cremation or other methods of burying their loved ones?
- 2.12 How can education be done?
- 2.13 Who is supposed to educate people?

## ISONGA MIBUZO

- Usuke wezwa yini ukuthi iamathuna agcwele nokuthi uHulumeni ucabanga ukuwavala amathuna nokuvala indaba yokufakwa kwamatshe emathuneni?
- Ungaphawula uthini ngalokho?
- Zikhona yini ezinye izindlela zokungcwaba ezingasetshenziswa ozaziyo?
- Uma uvuma, kungabe ukulothisa ngenye yalezo zindlela?
- Kuyini ukulothisa?
- Uyakucabanga yini ukukwenza njengenye yezindlela zokuxazulula inkinga yokugcwala kwamathuna?
- Yini ndaba ungakwenza/ungeke ukwenze?
- Njengomuntu ohlale ebhekene nomsebenzi wokungcwaba njalo, ungakwazi yini ukweluleka abantu ukuthi bayilandele le ndlela yokulothisa?
- Yini ndaba?

### 2.10 Ithini inkolo mayelana nokulothisw akwabantu?

- Uyasibona yini isidingo sokufundisa abantu ngokulothisa noma ezinye izindlela zokungcwaba?

- Lolo hlelo lokufundisa lungenziwa kanjani?

2.13 Ubani okufanele afundise abantu?

## **Appendix 7: A sample of the Transcribed Data**

**What is it that you know about death?**

Eyi! I think death is when the person passed on from this world.

**Have ever lost your relative? What was your relationship to him or her if any?**

Yes, I have. It was my brother.

**Did you encounter any problem in finding a place to bury him?**

Yes.

**What can you say about that problem?**

The problem was the space to bury him.

**What was the resolution about that problem you came across?**

It was very tough in actual fact, there were lots of questions asked if there was any family member that passed on before, so we can use the space to bury him.

**In your opinion what can the Municipality do to resolve the issue of grave yard?**

Even though it is difficult to accept this as our belief system differs from cremation but one needs to accept this.

**Is there any method of burying the dead that you know of besides the common burial method?**

As I have said, it is better to cremate, it's the only system I know other than the ordinary one.

**In your own observations, would you say, cremation is the western culture of burying or even the African can employ this tradition?**

Yes, in actual fact it is not our culture.

**Do you personally agree with cremation of the dead people?**

Eyi! I don't agree, but one can see that as time goes on, one will be left with no choice but to cremate.

**What can you say about the expenses of the cremation compared to burial?**

Eish! I wouldn't know exactly, but I think it the same as the other.

**What do you think would be long term solution to solving the issue of the grave crisis?**

It could be that people are cremated or that they must return back to their rural areas where they will be able to bury their loved ones in the vicinity of their own place.

## **Transcribed Data in IsiZulu**

**Ikhona into oyaziyo mayelana nokufa?**

Ukufa ukudlula emhlabeni uye kobabamkhulu asebadlula emhlabeni.

**Sikhona isihlobo noma umngani owakewadlula emhlabeni?**

Yebo umfowethu.

**Ikhona mhlawumbe inkinga esenike nahlabezana nayo ekutholeni indawo yokungcwaba?**

Cha.

**Uke wezwa yini ukuthi uMasipala unezinkinga mayelana nezindawo zokungcwaba abantu?**

Ngike ngezwa emadolobheni kodwa-ke njengabantu basemakhaya asinalo lonke ulwazi.

**Ikhona into engasiza ukuthi kuxazululeke lenkinga?**

Ukuthi umuntu abuyele ayongcwatshwa kubo ekhaya lapho avela khona.

**Uke wezwa ngendaba yokuthi abantu bayalothiswa ngenxa yokuphela kwamathuna?**

Yebo, ihlazo nje lelo. Esho eabaza! Eshaya nezandla. Umuntu kumele angewatshwe ngendlela yesintu.

**Wena uyavumelana nokulothiswa kwabantu?**

Cha, ayi implela angivumelani nokulothiswa?

**Lithini isiko mayelana nokulothiswa?**

Isiko akivumelani ezenje lokho, umuntu kumele agcinwe isidumbu sakhe siphelile, aze angene egodini.

**Wena uyahambisana yini noma uyakholwa ekuvukeni kwabafuleyo?**

Yebo ngiyakholelwa.

Ngoba sakhuliswa abantu abadala nabobekholelwa kukhona nebhayibheli liyasho ukuthi uma ufile ulele okwesikhashana.

**Yini engaba isisombululo kule nkinga yokuphela kwamathuna?**

Isisombululo ukuthi ngoba akuvumelekile ukuthi emadlozini kungcwatshwe phezu komunye umuntu ngakho-ke umuntu kumele angewatshelwe kwimvelaphi yakhe.