

*Boys, sport and the construction of masculinities:
An ethnographic study of sporty year-eight boys in a
single-sex private school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.*

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Declaration

I, Barbara Anne Bowley, declare that this thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Durban, _____ day of _____

Supervisor's declaration

As the candidate's supervisor I agree/ do not agree to the submission of this thesis.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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I am hugely grateful to both the school and the lively participants of my research. I hope that I have reflected and recorded their ideas and thoughts in the way in which they intended. Without their generosity of time and openness of ideas, this research could not have been concluded.

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My family have been my base of support throughout the journey that is a PhD thesis. To my dear husband, Pete, for always reminding me to “finish what I start”, I thank you.

Preface

Understanding where I come from

In order to understand this thesis and to make sense of my approach, I thought it important to understand from the beginning, a little about myself as a writer and researcher. I found this preface strange to write initially as I was after all just a ‘girl’ doing research on masculinity, why would my life story be of interest to the readers? It was only after reading my research and the analysis of this thesis, that I realised I could not exclude myself from the study. I was part of the study, fully immersed and inclusive; as is the nature of ethnographic studies. While this thesis is about the eight, 13-year-old grade eight boys, it is also certainly about me.

I was born in 1968 at Mariannhill Hospital, a second daughter in the family. Growing up white in the apartheid era in South Africa was both privileged and exclusive. My father was the sole income provider for our family of five, with my younger brother arriving seven years after me. My mum was the home caretaker and disciplinarian. Being just over five foot, she was (and still is at 77-years-old) a tough, feisty little lady who took no nonsense from her relatively naughty three children. We learnt respect and old-fashioned discipline often from the end of a wooden spoon on our bottoms. My early experiences of growing up before school days were ones of outside – we ran, we swam, we jumped, we played. Inside was what you did when you went to sleep or on rainy days. Games and sports, albeit not organised, consumed our days. My family, and certainly us children, entertained ourselves for hours with made-up games and antics.

My experiences of my own schooling career were that of privilege at a private school, being brought up for the majority of my school life in a Catholic, mostly single-sex girls’ school (there were only two boys in the entire school). My first experiences and pleasurable memories of school were those of sport; both achieving in sport and wanting to achieve in sport. It seemed to be the most important part of my life and it consumed my being. While some may have viewed me as a ‘tomboy’, I saw myself as being sporty. The academic side of my life seemed to simply go by, uneventfully. I could therefore, relate closely to the boys being interviewed and could understand the role that sport played in their lives. If I had to describe myself when I was young, it would be one of a sporty girl, who happened to do school in my spare time when not at a sporting event or training. Success in sport was of paramount importance to being me. Having inherited my mother’s size, of just over five foot, made being a small

sportsman that more challenging. I had to train hard to compete against my opposition. But success and acknowledgement, especially from my father, was important. People may say I suffered from middle child syndrome, with me growing up thinking my elder sister was my mother's favourite and my brother was my father's. But recognition from my father was one of the most important aspects of my life. My father had been a highly successful sportsman in his youth having played provincial rugby most of his life, so he both understood sport and encouraged us children to participate. Seeing him disappointed, made me feel like I had lost, seriously lost.

Wanting to be a teacher was one of the last careers in my mind when I was at school, however, once in the system of teaching, it seemed the only role in life for me. It seems that I have been a teacher for most of my life, having taught for the past 25 years. My first teaching role was that of mathematics teacher and head of sport in a girl's only private school in Pietermaritzburg, inland from Durban. Teaching sport and coaching at an all-girls' school was a wonderful time in my career as the pupils and girls of this school were largely from farming stock and were brought up tough and most were sporty. They played sport competitively and dynamically. I thrived being in an environment of girls similar to myself.

I was then afforded an opportunity to teach in an all-boys' school in Australia and I realised how much I enjoyed the schooling environment with boys. I am currently a teacher who has taught at Connaught school, an all boys' private school in South Africa for the past fifteen years. My academic role at school encompasses that of head of academics in the junior years of the high school, teaching mathematics and physical sciences and of course, in my personal life, currently doing my PhD. Teaching boys has been a fantastic experience and learning to understand the world of boys, masculinities and their link to sport has allowed me to understand the boys in my academic classes far better. The fact that I am also a female coach in a highly male-dominated coaching environment at my school has allowed me a very different perspective of viewing both sport and boys' creation of masculine identities.

I have been an avid sportswoman my entire life and I coach sport at the school. Being part of the sporting world in South Africa has been both interesting and frustrating. Apartheid confined sportsmen to South Africa and barred us from international competition. However, I have an insatiable interest in all sports and thus, with the link to sports in this thesis, it is of particular interest to me. Because sport

is often linked to men, being a sportswoman has helped me enormously in understanding the interviews and the boys. Often, during conversations, the boys would say things like:

“... you know what I mean, ma’am... you play sport... you know what it’s like”.

They felt as if they did not have to explain or articulate any further certain sporting scenarios as they felt that I could relate and I would understand. I understood how they felt and understood the situation. The boys also felt very comfortable explaining sporting activities and their involvement in and passion for, sport.

I consider myself certainly an ‘insider’ in this study by being a teacher at Connaught High and also with my huge interest in sport; hence the importance of this introduction. Doing this research has opened my eyes in the way I view Connaught School. Being a teacher at the school for so many years, I simply accepted the way things were done at the school – such was the ways of the school and the life of an all boys’ school. The old scenario of ‘boys will be boys’ dominated my understanding of the boys and the way they were treated. It was only after carefully viewing from a gender lens, that I become uncomfortable with some of the mannerisms and workings of the everyday life of the school.

The boys at the school are a beautiful group of boys to teach and to undergo research with: kind, thoughtful and sincere, despite the tough exterior of the school. While Connaught certainly did not replicate the stark boarding school environment as depicted in Morrell’s research (2001b), certain teachers were determined to produce sporty, heterosexual males at Connaught High. Once I began to really listen to the boys, I began to realise that they did not simply accept that which was handed out to them. They carefully selected areas of masculinity that suited them and very carefully threw aside that which was not deemed acceptable in their lives. While the boys wanted Connaught High to succeed and be renowned for their sporting prowess, there were certainly limitations and aspects of this that would not be accepted (as discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis). It certainly was an interesting school to study in South Africa and one that possibly proves that masculinity of the 21st century need not necessarily be the stark, regimented, indoctrinated influence of yesteryear.

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you’ve imagined. As you simplify your life, the laws of the universe will be simpler” (Henry David Thoreau).

Abstract

Sport in South African schools plays a vital role in the development of some boys' masculine development and construction. The focus of this qualitative research is on year-eight boys who play sport in a single-sex private independent school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This study investigates the influential role that sport plays in the social construction of their young masculinities. It is an ethnographic study conducted in 2012 and early 2013 in which I gained information and insight into the lives of the boys and the social factors that influenced the construction of their gendered masculine identities. Information and data for this study is generated from a year and a half long participant observation as well as interviews with the boys.

With sport being an integral part of how they construct themselves, the purpose of this study is to examine in detail how they use sport to create masculine identities. During the complex construction of these masculine identities, the boys in this research battle with issues of race, class and sexuality; all of which are intertwined in their construction. I argue that there is a hierarchy of masculinities and a pecking order of power relations and those who do not meet the hegemonic (dominant) ideal are relegated to the position of subordinate 'other'.

The key question for this research that I have addressed is how boys come to invest in sport in schools and in what ways these decisions impact on their masculine identities. The boys' peer group has a powerful influence in the formation of their masculinity so how the boys are seen by their peers and seniors is of enormous importance. They carefully choose and participate in certain sports that will bestow social status, gain acknowledgement and as a result, attain power among their peers. The study found that while sport afforded the boys a certain hierarchy within the broader context of the school community, these boys also competed amongst themselves to create a hierarchy within the dominant group of sporty boys to gain power over one another. I draw on critical masculinity studies and race theories and use social constructionist perspectives to provide an understanding of their investment in sport and how the socially constructed nature of masculinity is affected by their investment in sport. While the official practices of the school are to encourage participation in sport and much of the focus in South Africa is about encouraging sports, this research argues that the meanings that these boys ascribe to sport is gendered, racialised and sexualised.

The findings show that the body plays an important role in the aspirations of a dominant masculine identity. The boys were consciously aware of the limitations of the body but also understood that the body is an integral part of the construction of masculinity. Homophobic taunts and put downs were used by the boys as symbolic markers to assert their heterosexual positions, gain power and reinforce their positions of dominance.

The interviews reveal a number of footholds for understanding the importance that sport plays in the lives of these boys and more importantly, the ways in which sport and masculine power intertwine and become integral to the success of boyhood. Ethnographic research also shows that while sport is an area of unity and cohesiveness, amongst these boys sport is also an area of exclusion and marginalisation. Despite the importance that sport plays in many boys' lives and the fact that sport may act as structures to create positive masculinities, this study reveals that sport is also an area where many boys become isolated and rejected.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“The interplay between sports and the construction of masculinities has long been recognised and schools often provide institutional scaffolding for this process” (Connell, 2008a: 137).

Schools and sport in schools, provide abundant opportunities for the development of masculinities and gender identities (Connell, 2005). For many boys, success in sport at school affords them power (Connell, 2005); power amongst their peers and power over other boys who are seen as being unsuccessful at sport or less skilled at sport and are hence marginalised. Connaught High (pseudonym used), a boys’ only school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and the setting for this study, is no exception in the masculinising processes through which sporty boys gain power. This research investigates the correlation between boys, sport and the construction of masculinity. It discusses how boys engage with sport and the significance sport plays in the construction of their masculine identities.

In February 2012, I began a year and a half-long ethnographic study of observing and interviewing eight sporty year-eight boys at Connaught High School, a private independent all boys’ school. These eight boys were aged between 12- and 13-years-old and were from varying class and race groups; however, all either afforded the fees of the private school or were on a form of scholarship for sport at the school. I classify them as ‘sporty boys’ and use the term throughout the thesis as sport plays a big part in all of the boys’ lives. These grade eight boys were in their first year at high school and creating a positive, powerful identity in their new school was imperative. Being a boy has a series of collective meanings and boys are under constant pressure in order to perform and behave to the expected norm (Swain, 2003). For many boys playing sport and being successful at sport is part of this expected norm. Because sport in schools in South Africa play a vital role in the development of some boys’ masculine development and construction, the boys compete vehemently in sport at all ages. The boys’ investments in sport define both their identities and their positions they hold within the school and amongst their friends. I illustrate how the question of gender identities is inextricably linked to their sporting investments – and with this, the possession of power. The study asks questions of boys, sport and masculinities within South Africa and demonstrates how they are intricately intertwined.

The objectives of this study are:

- To understand how young men give meaning to sport; and
- To understand what this means for the social construction of masculinities and gender relations.

The research focuses on how sporty year-eight boys give meaning to their masculinities. In other words, the study seeks to examine how boys negotiate their masculinities and how sport is pivotal in these negotiations of masculinity. Sport is held in high esteem at Connaught High by both masters and coaches and boys are expected to choose at least one sport per term, depending on the season. A boys' choice of sport is neither random nor haphazard but involves a serious process of negotiations, both with other boys and within themselves.

For this research, I ask five key research questions:

- How do sporty year eight boys give meaning to their masculinities?
- How do the boys use their sport, specifically, to assert their masculinity?
- What discourses do they deploy in doing so?
- What place does race play in the construction of masculine identity?
- What are the effects of these masculinity-making practices for boys, other boys, and gender equitable relations?

Masculine identities are socially constructed and boys perform masculinities continually as they interact on a daily basis. Schools have been identified by a number of researchers as one area and social arena where boys construct their masculinities and where masculinities are continually played out (Frosh et al., 2002; Connolly, 2003; Paechter, 2007; Bhana, 2009).

1.1 Why focus on masculinities and sport?

In November 2014, Senzo Meyiwa, the South African (Bafana Bafana) soccer goalkeeper and captain was shot and killed during an alleged robbery in Vosloorus, Ekurhuleni. The nation of South Africa was in mourning and there was a public outcry regarding the violence. The national government organised free transport for all who wanted to attend his memorial service at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban. Thousands of supporters turned out to honour this young man's life and career by either attending the memorial service or watching the funeral that was televised live on national television. This public display of support for a South African sportsman shows how important sport and sportsmen are to the South African public. South Africa is a sports-mad country with sports such as soccer, cricket and rugby playing an important role in many people's lives, both as players and as supporters. Why do I make mention of the above incident? I do so to indicate the relevance that sport

has for many in South Africa and in some way to make a connection between the general South African community and this micro-context of Connaught High.

But the above incident is not simply a sporting tragedy but includes and highlights the racial aspect attached to it, as with all sport in South Africa (Alegi, 2004). Researchers including Morrell (1994a, 2001b), Nauright and Chandler (1996), Pattman and Bhana (2010) and Bhana (2014a) detail the influence that race plays in the sporting world in South Africa. There is a well-documented history in South Africa that soccer is a game considered by most South Africans as a black sport while sports such as cricket and rugby are associated with white sportsmen and spectators (Pattman and Bhana, 2010). The majority of those at Meyiwa's memorial service were overwhelmingly from the black population of South Africa. This emphasises the role that race still plays in sport in South Africa, despite apartheid laws being abolished 20 years ago. The death of Meyiwa, was the death of a black South African sportsman. This incident and many more have a severe impact on this study, indicating the influence that race still has in sport in South Africa and as a result on the lives of boys and sport in schools. Despite the positive changes occurring within South Africa with race inequalities being slowly eradicated, sport seems to have remained almost stagnant, with boys in schools still being influenced by race when it comes to sporting choices. This emphasises how important it is that this research is conducted in South Africa and in post-apartheid schools, highlighting the value of the study and its contribution to the field.

During the last few decades, there has been substantial research conducted in the area of boys and masculinity around the world (Connell, 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Bhana, 2002, 2008; Swain, 2000, 2004, 2006a). Connell (2005) in particular, has provided background and theories towards understanding men's and boys' masculinities. Her studies show that there "are multiple ways of being a boy and constructing masculine identities" (Connell, 2005:86). There is also extant international scholarship conducted in boys' private schools (Swain, 2004; Bartholomaeus, 2012) but a dearth of studies in boys' private schools in South Africa. Previous school-based studies on boys in South Africa (Bhana, 2008; Pattman and Bhana, 2010) have focused and placed prominence on violence, abuse and sexuality amongst boys in co-educational and single-sex government schools. Schools and their pupils in South Africa have been seriously affected by apartheid and 20 years later, boys at Connaught school are still keenly aware of the significance of race in their lives. This research, based in a private boys' only school, places emphasis on sport as a resource and the connection to race as a source of self-

esteem for boys to create and negotiate their gender identities and masculinities amongst a hierarchy of males.

This qualitative ethnographic study details the social interactions, behaviours and ideas that are both perceived and experienced by the group of boys (Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008). I analysed and examined the details of these eight boys' narratives, in order to obtain insight and understanding into their lives. The research is a written account of how the group of participants, who subscribe to a particular sporting culture, produce and decipher social behaviour and utilise language to make and share meaning of their experiences and ideas. This data reflects the focus on gender identities and gender discourses and how they are contextually enacted at Connaught High School.

Thus using Connaught High as the site for this research, the key question I have addressed is how boys come to invest in sport in schools and in what ways these decisions impact on both their gender and their masculine identities, utilising the context of a boys' school in South Africa. Critical men's studies has become the focus of investigation in recent years (Connell, 1995; 2002) and thus the notion of masculinity has been troubled with various studies accommodating and refuting the essentialist perspectives (Connell, 2002; Renold, 2003; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012). Numerous articles and studies have been conducted in order to give some meaning and insight into the complexities of masculine performance with conflicting notions of what sport means to them (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Drummond, 2003; Swain, 2006a, 2006c; Connell, 2008a). This study looks at how boys construct their masculine identities in relation to others and allows them a voice to discuss and describe this potentially disruptive time of their lives. The study pays particular attention to the ways in which boys negotiate and use sport, to bolster their images and identities amongst their peers. Thus this research is young-person centred (Frosh et al., 2003) and focuses on the ways in which boys express and think critically about the position they take up in the construction of their masculine identities. Boys 'do boy' in a number of ways and through personal interviews and focus group discussions, the boys began to understand that playing sport is not just a game, but an essential resource for establishing their gendered identities.

In order to understand masculinities and sport and to view sport in the context of South Africa, it is important to firstly be aware of both the masculinities and the demographics of KwaZulu-Natal and Connaught High. Race and class play a particularly sensitive role in understanding and analysing the situation of sport in South Africa. Race has a specific history and therefore an "ongoing correlation

with class that reflects the colonial past and the period of apartheid” (Morrell, 2002:12) in South Africa. Thus race plays an important role in the terrain of gender politics and sport:

“... perhaps most importantly of all, the purpose of racial segregation was not simply to separate ‘racial’ groups but also to ensure a clear racial hierarchy in which ‘poor whites’ would be lifted, economically and socially, above almost all non-white people (Seekings, 2010: 3).

Connaught High School is based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Durban is the third largest city in South Africa and consists of approximately three and a half million residents. KwaZulu-Natal is ethnically and culturally diverse with the majority of the population of the province being African (84.9%) and *isiZulu* speaking. The Indian population (8.5%) make up the next majority race group with the white population (5.1%) being mostly English speaking. The coloured population constitutes the smallest population (1.5%) of the entire KwaZulu-Natal population. KwaZulu-Natal (formerly known as Natal) was a British colony since 1843. Because of this influence, British identity has been embedded in much that occurred in the province: culture, language base and in particular, the schooling structures. Schools built in Natal in the early days were based on models of British public and grammar schools (Morrell, 2001b). Examples from British public schools that are still a part of the schooling structures in KwaZulu-Natal today are uniforms worn by all pupils, single-sex schools, boarding school structures, compulsory sport, strict rules and dress codes of both pupils and staff and even corporal punishment. The book *Tom Brown’s School days*, written by Thomas Hughes (1857), depicts the life of a schoolboy at Rugby School in England. The book highlights the traditions, rules and punishments that were instituted in the schools in England and that are often reflected in schools within the current South African schooling structure.

Today sport is still encouraged in many schools and even compulsory in others (Bhana, 2009). Historically, boys’ schools in particular have encouraged their pupils to play a sport (Morrell, 2001a) and interschool competitions between many schools are widespread and competitive. Sport thus starts within the school structure for many boys and often extends from school into adult life (Morrell, 1994a) and thus this sporting ideology is perpetuated through the generations of men’s lives.

1.2 Connaught High: A single-sex private school in South Africa

Connaught High is a single-sex private, independent, boys’ only school situated in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is the only non-boarding boys’ private school in KwaZulu-Natal. While the primary

school that is attached to it celebrated its ninetieth year in 2014, the high school section, which is only 12-years-old, is still considered a new school. Being open for such a short period of time, the high school is not considered an old, established school within the South African schooling structures. As a result of being relatively young, the school does not harbour years of traditions or customs. However, it draws informally on the 90-year-old primary school and the elitist colonial impact that is witnessed daily in the primary school. This inculcates apartheid manifestations as well as gendered hierarchies and sporty white male prowess, displayed in the sports of cricket, rugby and water polo. Connaught is unquestionably privileged with many of the boys coming from elite families in the Durban and surrounding areas. School fees are high, ranging from R80,000 per year for the primary school to nearly R100,000 per annum for high school pupils. Within the South African schooling context this is exorbitant, with some schools in South Africa being free and pupils attending without incurring costs for education. Governmental schools within the country have varied fees but are nowhere near the cost of this type of private school. This indicates the elitism and privilege that Connaught High pupils are afforded.

The system of apartheid (racial segregation enforced by the government of the time) that defined South Africa and all South Africans from 1948 to 1994 has left lasting traces throughout the country. All aspects of South Africa and South African society were divided along racial lines. 1948 saw the implementation of racist policies within the country (Teeger, 2015). People within South Africa were divided into four race groups: whites, Indians, coloureds and black Africans.

“Rights and benefits were allocated according to hierarchy, with whites being most advantaged and black African being most disadvantaged” (Teeger, 2015: 229).

Every area of life (social, political, economic) in South Africa under apartheid rule was racially stratified (Teeger, 2015). Race still plays an integral role in the lives of many South Africans and plays a fundamental part of this research. With the implementation of apartheid within South Africa, race affected all forms of life in South Africa; including education and schooling structures. Schooling in South Africa was and still is, to an extent, severely affected by apartheid where schools were segregated on the basis of race.

The schooling structure in South Africa today still retains evidence of the apartheid era. Sibusiso Bengu, the minister of education in 1994, inherited a complex and collapsed education system in South Africa. Christian National Education had been the curriculum taught and enforced by the presiding

government with both the languages of English and Afrikaans being taught in schools and with pupils being forced to be proficient in both languages. During the apartheid era, schools in South Africa were divided by race. Under the apartheid government, “there were eight education departments and each department followed different curricula and offered different standards of learning quality” (Teeger, 2015:229). Separate departments were in place for coloured, Indian and black people. There were also provincial departments for white people in each of the former four provinces (Natal, Cape, Free State and Transvaal). An independent schools department ran separately from all government schools. In 1993, the existing white schools were tasked with adopting a new model for schooling. These schools were offered model A, B, C or D structures, with model C indicating a semi-private school, with limited funding from the government but greater autonomy for the school. Most former white schools opted for this model. While the description "Model C" “was abolished by the post-apartheid government, the term is still commonly used to describe former whites-only government schools” (Teeger, 2015:229). This abolition of Model C schools saw schools being opened to all race groups.

The fact that this study is specifically conducted in South Africa is vitally important and makes it unique. A study such as this one conducted in other parts of the world would probably adopt a radically different approach to that of this study. The background of apartheid is reflected in the stories of these young men in the study. While racism certainly does occur around the world, in South Africa it is pervasive. Schools in particular in South Africa, as a result of apartheid, still exhibit and harbour the effects of apartheid, segregation and separation. The teachers and the boys in the private school under research are predominantly white. The selection of boys for this study is, however, needed to be from a variety of families of different racial backgrounds in order to take into consideration their ideas and emotions when dealing with the concept of race.

Connaught High is a multi-racial school with pupils from all races within South Africa forming part of the school population (*See Table 1 on next page – For year 2015*)

Table 1 Current numbers at Connaught School broken down by race (March 2015)

| | Grade | | | | | | | | | | | | | % of population | |
|----------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------------|-------|
| | R | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | | |
| Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total | |
| Asian | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | | 7 | 0,75 |
| Black | 1 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 78 | 8,3 |
| Coloured | | 1 | | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 18 | 1,93 |
| Indian | 25 | 20 | 16 | 12 | 22 | 15 | 22 | 19 | 27 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 10 | 249 | 26,75 |
| White | 25 | 30 | 21 | 23 | 42 | 33 | 40 | 44 | 54 | 67 | 67 | 72 | 58 | 576 | 61,8 |
| Other | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | 0,2 |
| Total | 51 | 59 | 47 | 43 | 71 | 56 | 73 | 71 | 91 | 96 | 96 | 99 | 78 | 931 | |

Total school population: 931

Because most private schools within South Africa allowed pupils from all races to attend the school even during the apartheid era, Connaught and other private schools are considered melting pots of all cultures and races of mostly affluent families. Pupils in these private places of education are all highly privileged, have the ability to make choices and have windows of opportunities constantly available to them. However, post-apartheid has seen more pupils of different races attending more affluent institutions and formerly white only schools (Model C Schools) have enrolled middle class black and Indian pupils who can afford the higher fees (Pattman and Bhana, 2009). Connaught High too has seen an increased intake of black and Indian pupils into the school, yet Connaught High remains predominately white, with over 60 per cent of the pupils being white. The Indian pupils at Connaught make up the second highest numbers of pupils at the school. This is due to the high concentration of Indians in the province of KwaZulu-Natal because of historical circumstances. A large part of the Indian population in South Africa are descendants of workers from India (South Asia) during the late

19th-century through to the early 20th-century, thus resulting in Durban having one of the highest population of Indians outside of India today. Also according to Stats SA, Indians are the most economically upwardly mobile race group due to educational investments. This means that many South African Indians place enormous emphasis on the quality of education their children receive. Private schools in South Africa are seen as exemplars of post-apartheid integration (Pattman and Bhana, 2009) and while many private schools were multiracial during the apartheid era, private schools, as a result of the exorbitant high fees, were and still are considered elitist institutions. Thus private schooling in the South African context is strongly linked to being privileged and afforded by the elitist and select population. The boys in this study are highly privileged and have abundant opportunities available to them at Connaught School. Past studies on boys and masculinities in the South African context have mostly been conducted in poor, rural or hugely disadvantaged schools (see Anderson, 2010; Burnett, 2010; Bhana, 2009; Pattman and Bhana, 2009) with the exception of Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014. While the boys that are a part of this study come from varying backgrounds, their family circumstances and early schooling experiences are those of privilege. Studies in private schools around the world have been noted and the literature review draws on the studies of boys in private schools. What allows this study to be distinctive to past studies of boys, masculinities and sport, is that it takes place in a post-apartheid South African private boys' school and thus takes a very different approach to boys, sport and masculinity than studies conducted around the world.

This research does not claim to make generalisations to all boys within private schools of South Africa. It does, however, attempt to begin to understand the contradictions, conflicts and experiences the boys undergo in their pursuit of dominant heterosexual behaviour that is upheld by their sport investments.

1.3 Why the concept of masculinity and sport?

“Gender-segregated contact sports are recognised as leading markers of a valorized, orthodox form of masculinity” (Anderson and McGuire, 2010:250).

Sport and in particular sport in schools, is highly gendered and within the South African context, decidedly racialised and emphatically segregates boys from girls – and in the case of this study, it separates boys. While the “gender regimes of schools and education systems are not homogenous” (Connell, 2008a:132), there are areas of school life that are strongly gendered and sport is a prime example of this. Masculinity and the process of defining and refining masculine identity are highly

visible and the performance of masculinity is intensive. By doing sport, boys are doing masculinity. Early researchers such as Whitson (1990); Mac an Ghaill (1994); Connell (1996); Skelton (1997); Gilbert and Gilbert (1998); Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) and more recently, Swain (2006b); Kama (2014); Bantjes and Nieuwoudt (2014) all agree that sport plays a powerful role in the development of masculinity.

“Having the ability to demonstrate and perform athletic prowess has become an important requirement for establishing and maintaining status in the majority of male peer groups in both primary and secondary schools” (Swain, 2006b: 1).

Masculinity is central to this study and because boys negotiate masculinity on an on-going basis, the process is an active ‘work in progress’ and boys are said to continually ‘do’ masculinity. This research captures moments in the boys lives when this process of ‘doing masculinity’ is explained or observed. Thus through observation and focus group discussions and interviews, the intention is to make the reader more aware of and to broaden concepts and current perceptions of masculinity in particular in the context of this boys’ only private school in South Africa, notwithstanding the legacies of apartheid that underpin their decisions.

I draw heavily on the concept of hegemonic masculinity described by Connell (1995) as a concept that has been understood as the dominant, overriding masculinity that serves to subordinate and outrank other masculinities. Boys are desperate in their pursuit of this masculinity in order to claim power and superiority over other boys. Sporty boys realise, very early in their lives, that sport is an area where a dominant position in this hierarchy can be achieved. Descriptions of the boys’ early experiences in sport in high school feature moments of attainment of hegemonic power and times when they are unable to attain a position of hegemony. With hegemonic masculinity comes power and dominance; dominance and power that sport affords boys who are successful. Sport for boys is almost never simply an area of just play, but from an early age sport plays an instrumental role in the formulation of masculinity. Studies by researchers (Bhana, 2008; Pattman and Bhana, 2010) agree that sport is not even a fun past time but is compulsory in some schools. So from an early age, it plays a pivotal key to early formations of masculinity. Sport plays a vital function where identities can be developed and a favourable position in the masculine hierarchy can be attained or denied.

Because sport plays such an important role in the development of masculine identities, research in correlation with masculinity and sport has been varied (Morrell, 1996; Swain, 2006b; Connell, 2008a).

Yet much of the research in sport and masculinity has highlighted and connected hegemonic behaviour with violence, abuse and homophobic situations (Chavous et al., 2003). The theory of masculinity – and in particular that of hegemonic masculinity – is used in this study to help understand the positions of dominance and subordination/marginalisation as it occurs amongst boys. The term also attempts to understand the power aspect of masculine identity and the conditions and experiences that boys undergo in order to achieve this hegemonic masculinity. It also shows that boys are preoccupied with gaining social status and being popular amongst their peers. Boys expose themselves to varying situations in their construction of masculinity in order to possess this power that comes with hegemony.

Racial identity within the South African context is still highly prominent in schools and amongst boys where the legacy of apartheid still continues in a more covert way. Apartheid and its link to sport in South Africa is raised throughout this research. Racial and gender identities are consequently constructed through experiences. My choice of a mixed racial group proved to be highly beneficial in understanding the boys' lives especially within the racial melting pot encountered at Connaught. Racial standpoints in correlation with sport are vastly different and without a doubt not homogenised.

“Addressing the young people as active agents means theorising ‘race’ and gender not as essences which they have that make them behave in certain ways, but as categories constructed by the young people themselves” (Pattman and Bhana, 2009:22).

Homophobic talk and banter utilised during discussions in relation to the sporting world have also been included in the research in an attempt to describe the power boys have over other boys by classifying them as ‘other’. Boys who do not match up to being tough and strong are relegated to terms like ‘other’, ‘gay’ or ‘soft’. It also links quite succinctly the sexualised world of sport in boys' lives and the theme on sport and bodies. This theme of bodies appears prominently in the discussions that revolve around sport. Boys continually emphasise the importance and power that a good body affords them in the sporting world and this ties in with the homophobic taunts and discussions.

1.4 Content of the chapters

In chapter one I provide a background and motivation for the study. I state the argument of this thesis by providing a brief description of the research context and outline the structure of this thesis. I also outline a summary for each of the chapters that follow.

Chapter two theorises young masculinities and identifies research both around the world and specifically here in South Africa. It particularly looks at aspects of understanding masculinity and realising that multiple masculinities exist. Raewyn Connell's (2005) research plays an important function in this section, describing the types of masculinities, playing particular attention to the dominant masculinity: hegemony. Chapter two also discusses the history of sport in both South Africa and schools in South Africa. The chapter similarly introduces the reader to the history and background of schools and schooling structures in South Africa.

Chapter three identifies the existing theories that are in place in the area of masculinities both internationally and locally within South Africa. Particular emphasis is placed on the studies made by researchers on boys in schools and the importance that sport plays in the role of gender identity creation. This chapter also outlines and explains the conceptual framework that I rely on to explain my findings.

Chapter four outlines the methodology utilised in this ethnographic research conducted over the year-and-a-half of observations, interviews and focus group discussions. The boys were viewed as active participants in the research and this chapter begins to explain how I became fully involved in the boys lives and this research, as talks and discussions occurred over the period. This research provided boys with a voice to talk about their experiences, perceptions, views, anxieties and concerns. Furthermore, chapter three introduces the reader to the eight boys involved in the study, giving their background and a little history of their sporting achievements.

Chapter five describes the school in review by identifying the history and backdrop of the school under study. I provide snap shots of daily events and incidents in order to understand the schooling scenario. The gender regime of the school is discussed and explained in order for the reader to have an understanding of the conditions and environment of the school. The school is a key site for the development of masculinities and thus having an understanding of the school structure and an insight into the gender regime that is at the school, is of vital importance.

The intention of chapter six is to describe the boys' summer sport choices in their first term at high school. The chapters highlight that this is not merely a choice, but an investment in sport. Boys do not simply choose a sport, but take into consideration many factors before this decision is made. 'Doing boy' and creating a masculine identity require continual practice and boys' identities are not simply given, but slowly constructed and manipulated throughout their lives and sport is one area for the boys'

to develop this identity. The discussion in chapter four, that is, the gender regime, is continually referred to in this chapter. There is unquestionably a link between and correlation with the experiences of the boys and the gender regime that is established at the school. The concept of race is also introduced by boys making mention that race is one of the many social factors that affects their choice and investment in sport during the summer season.

Field hockey and rugby union are played in winter at Connaught High. In chapter seven, boys debate and argue over the sports that are chosen. It further identifies, that this is again not a simple choice, but a massive investment that separates the tough boys (rugby boys) from the soft boys (hockey). Boys draw on notions of subordinated masculinities by putting other boys down mostly by engaging in homophobic talk. Masculinity defines itself by being heterosexual and anyone who does not match up is positioned as ‘lesser male’, ‘other’ or ‘gay’. Homophobia is used easily by the boys, yet their understanding of homophobic terms is far more complex.

Chapter eight introduces the topic of the body. The boys’ bodies are a vital cog in their development of acceptable masculinity. The body is central to the boys’ lives and in their development of masculine identities. While the boys battle to communicate and discuss this topic, when given a voice, I found it to be an important aspect that required further in-depth discussion. By using sport and through the discussion of sporting activities, it gave the boys opportunity to discuss their concerns around body image.

The final chapter summarises the entire thesis and discusses the contribution that this research makes to the growing body of information on boys’ masculinities. I also touch on the limitations of this research and consider how the findings and suggestions can be implemented and considered in school structures. This chapter concludes by reiterating how school bound, and thus context specific, many of the accounts of doing gender are and emphasises how, by reporting staff’ and boys’ experiences, gender regimes play an enormous role in the masculinising process of the boys (Renold, 2005). The key question for this research that I have addressed is how boys come to invest in sport in schools and in what ways these decisions impact on both their gender and their masculine identities.

1.5 Conclusion

Although masculinity has been a topic of wide spread research (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Connell, 1995, Kimmel, 1990; Messner, 1992 and more recently Bhana, 2008; Swain, 2006b; Bartholomaeus,

2012; Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014) masculinity is not a stagnant, simple construction and requires constant research. A boy in the 21st century in a single-sex school faces enormous obstacles, choices and decisions every day to make a name for himself and to construct an identity. Because “gender is central to identity, the sense of masculinity is central to being a teenage boy” (Pascoe, 2003: 1424).

In South Africa, sport has been considered a vehicle to social cohesion. An understanding of boys’ sport in an elite environment (of which we know very little) can help us develop locally relevant knowledge particularly in the context where some research has illustrated that sporty masculinities are embedded within gender relations of power and inequalities. Researchers such as Connell (1987) and Mac an Ghail (1994) present the concept of masculinity as being continually acted out, by describing masculinity as actually being ‘masculinities’; meaning there are multiple masculinities that are developed over a period of time and not one singular masculinity that is simply produced. Since sport is central to the boys under study, identity and investments in sport are vital. Boys in the private school under research are given ample opportunity to participate in a variety of sports. Yet, the choices of sport the boys make are historically and culturally bound. In the thesis I develop an argument that while the boys are faced with a selection of choices when it comes to sport, these choices are not necessarily simple. Identity and power are intrinsically linked. Who we are is a matter of personal experience, the way we have grown up, our life experiences, school, home and friends. The way we construct ourselves later in life, is an amalgamation of our life’s personal experiences and indeed choices we make and the boys in this study remind us of this.

Being successful at sport is a key component to a successful masculinity (Bartholomaeus, 2011) and thus for boys to be successful at sport early in their high school life is imperative. Connell (2005) describes masculinities as being hierarchical, with successful sporty boys being afforded the position of hegemonic male; one that holds highest status. Hegemonic masculinity is not afforded to all boys and is undoubtedly not ‘normative’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), meaning that hegemony is not attainable by all boys, yet boys still strive to attain this hierarchical, powerful position. As a result, boys who do not achieve this hierarchical status are subordinated, classified as ‘other’ and are marginalised. The boys, in their journey to strive to achieve hegemonic status, continually practice and perform at ‘doing masculinity’ and this process can place the boys in a susceptible, precarious position and is undeniably an on-going process. This research investigates the varying approaches and symbolic resources that the boys utilise to gain hierarchical status and to classify and position themselves within their own peer group (Swain, 2004).

Chapter 2: Theorising young masculinities and schooling

Introduction

“...the concept of masculinity has been used to explain male behaviours across diverse areas of the educational sector that includes primary schools, secondary schools, further education and training institutions and higher education” (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012:577).

This thesis aims to examine how a select group of school-boys make meaning of masculinity through their investment in sport. How masculinity is understood and theorised is an important aspect of this study and it must be recognised that masculinity is indeed socially constructed through actions and experiences and certainly not simply a biological given (Swain, 2000).

“Different masculinities are constructed in relation to other masculinities and to femininities through the structure of gender relations” (Connell, 1992:732).

This chapter begins by firstly interrogating the concept of gender. How some researchers through history have interpreted and tried to analyse gender is taken into consideration. The correlation between gender and power is then explained. This thesis is particularly interested in observing how the modes of power, concerning gender, race and sexuality, its impact on the boy’s lives and in their construction of masculine identity (McCormack and Anderson, 2010). Theories of masculinities are then discussed as they pertain heavily to the analysis chapters that follow. Early concepts of theories are examined and then critiqued and finally the latest theories are evaluated.

2.1 Gender and power

“Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalised, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized” (Butler, 2004:42).

The theorising of ‘gender’ and the term gender has been written about by theorists since the early 1970’s (Connell, 1987). How gender is both interpreted and understood is key to understanding this research, and a major lens to examine and understand masculinities in schools. Unfortunately, early understanding of the term gender was often only examined in terms of biology; classifying in categories of female and male (Connell, 2012). But gender is a far more complicated and complex

term; it does not simply mean being a 'man' or being a 'woman'; but it is a matter of personal experience, what we do, how we conduct our lives and how we see ourselves. Thus gender cannot be classified as simple 'biological sex' and seen as inevitable and unchanging. Despite academic research in this topic, sex and gender still seem to become considered with the same meaning. From birth a child is 'allotted' a gender category by nature of its body. Society thus classifies gender not as a process, but a preconceived idea of biological and behavioural traits that come with being either male or female. Ann Oakley in as early as 1972 utilised the term gender in an attempt to "distinguish biology (sex) and culture (gender)" (Hearn, 2004). Connell, as early as 1983, added to existing theories of gender by theorising about patriarchy and gender. Her book *Which way is up?* emphasised that gender was not a closed structured system. In fact, Connell "tried to link class analysis, gender analysis, psychoanalysis, cultural critique and mainstream sociology (Connell, 2004:16) when defining and describing gender.

Connell, highlighted, that gender has to be differentiated and disconnected from the term sex. Recent research has thus emphasised that being male or being female cannot be classified simply by sex. Gender is far more involved and as Connell expresses above, has a large number of factors that influence gender including that of race, class and sexuality. Connell writes about the difficulty and trouble with "categorical thinking about gender" (Connell, 2012:1). What is meant by 'categorical thinking' is that it classifies bodies as the complete definition of gender and with male and female meaning the complete opposite. But this understanding of gender does not assist in the dynamics of gender (Connell, 2011; Paechter, 2007; Mac an Ghail and Haywood, 2012)) and the understanding that gender is neither set nor stagnant, but a process. One can describe that a person 'becomes gendered' in reaction to the experiences encountered. This thesis investigates the manner in which boys 'become gendered' and the intricate way they use sport in this process.

"Bodies are not objects with inherent boundaries and properties; they are material-discursive phenomena" (Barad, 2007: 153).

The topic of gender is thus vital in the study of boys in school, but this topic of gender cannot be seen in isolation but must also be incorporated with power.

"Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate through its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only the inert or consenting target; they are always also the

elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not is points of application” (Foucault, 1980:98).

People are thus the vehicles of power, fully involved in the process and continually acting on positions of power. Foucault’s understandings on the theory of power, as mentioned above, indicates that power is everywhere in society and people are continually engaging in acts of power. Foucault classified two forms of power: domination (powers which regulate or influence people) or resistance (powers which contest or try to prevent the power). But what Foucault emphasised is that power is not only perceived as negative, in fact, power can be highly productive; by producing “ways of being and knowing in the world” (Foucault, 1978:174). Thus we all possess the ability to exert power and be exposed to power. Foucault has had a massive impact on the understanding of the term power for researchers even until today. His theories moved away from the earlier understanding that power was always seen in a negative light in order to create dominance and violence. For Foucault, power is everywhere, diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault 1991).

“Power is everywhere’ and ‘comes from everywhere’ so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure “(Foucault 1998: 63).

Power is thus seen by Foucault as an everyday, socialised and embodied phenomenon. Power is a part of our day and is viewed as internalised within the practices of life (Swain, 2000) and thus seemingly the same as gender.

Thus this creates the basis upon which the link between gender, masculinity and power can be understood. Because all people are continually exerting power or being exposed to power, any form of masculinity must have the concept of power as its centre (Swain, 2000). By using Gramsci’s concept of hegemony that was used in the context of class relations, Connell incorporated this concept of hegemony into the area of gender power (Swain, 2006a). She thus highlighted the importance of power when researchers analyse masculinity. There are multiple areas and settings for power to be utilised by boys in creating their masculinities and therefore there are multiple masculinities being played out at all times- all with a hierarchical order and dominance or power over others. Hegemonic masculinity has become a central focus point for many academic papers and emphasises the male dominance and power when understanding masculinity. Studies by Connell (1900), Connolly (1998), Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger, and Hamlall, (2013), Swain (2006a) and Bartholomaeus (2015) to name but a few, have all

relied heavily on the concept of hegemony in understanding the power and dominance that comes with the studies of masculinity.

2.2 Sex role, socialisation and social constructionist theories

This research distinguishes between sex and gender in order to allow a more “fluid embodiment of masculinities and femininities” (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012: 578). The sex-role theory provided a framework to begin to understand gender. When children were born, right from the start they were classified as either female or male and were expected to behave accordingly. There were set ‘roles’ for females and set ‘roles’ for males. Society also created ‘norms’ or expectations and people would comply with the norm to avoid being different. Not conforming or non-appropriate gender behaviour could lead to negative reactions of others. However, it was soon realised that there was no one set pattern or one ‘sex-role’ for boys and one for girls, but multiple patterns. The sex-role theory could not begin to explain any variance in gender brought about by class differences or varying ethnic groups from modern society. Sex-role theory was simply not adequate and hugely flawed.

The idea that multiple patterns existed for both men and women in society resulted in multiple patterns of masculinity and femininity. Patterns are not simply learnt but experienced and both men and women are constantly active agents in creating these patterns (Connell, 2002). While constructing identities for themselves, men and women encounter difficulty. They find difficulty in “working out patterns of conduct in a gender order marked by power, violence and alienated sexualities” (Connell, 2002:78), again proving the complexity of ‘becoming gendered’. All people are not passive in the process of developing masculinity, but hugely active. How we ‘acquire’ gender is not a simple process, but a series of experiences and we are actively involved in these experiences. These experiences are also often referred to as ‘projects’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). These projects are not simple or smooth, but massively contradictory and complex and the boys in this research certainly proved this. In this process, the body plays an important role and the term ‘embodied’ is often used. Our bodies are an active part in the understanding and development of gender identity. Our biological bodies are a starting point, but our bodily experiences both shape and model our gender identity. The influence of the body is explained further in this chapter, highlighting the important role it has to play in the masculinising process.

The social constructionist perspective looks at the manner in which society shapes and changes a person’s life and that it is not simply a biological or anatomical given. To explain this, not all boys are

moulded the same (Connell, 2001; Bartholomaeus and Senkevics, 2015). But social product is as a result of different ways in which identities and meaning are constructed and reconstructed through our life histories. People interact with each other and experience the world and make sense of the world in their own ways. Because of this social constructionists approach, it allows researchers to not take things as 'natural' or 'for granted' but rather to view each boy as an object of social construction and also recognising the diversity of children. Bartholomaeus and Senkevics (2015:1) "conceptualise children as 'being' rather than 'becoming'". Using the constructivist approach allows a researcher, such as myself, to understand the meaning that the boys gave to their identities. And,

"the commonest way of understanding the presence of gender in personal life is through the concept of 'gender identity'" (Connell, 2002:85)

Identity was originally defined as 'sameness' but today it has more to do with who you are and how you behave. One's identity is formed by social interaction.

"Gender is socially constructed because it is produced, created and maintained in interactions" (Bartholomaeus, 2015:3).

No identities are simply fixed or natural, but formed and created through experiences. When one talks about either a man or a woman, there is a whole host of understandings and implications incorporated into the meaning of being woman or being man. Connell's (2005) thought of multiple conceptions of masculinity and femininity are thus perfectly poised. Both masculinities and femininities are "situationally constructed and hierarchically positioned" (Bartholomaeus, 2015:4).

"Gender is relational, where masculinities and femininities are created and structured in relation to one another, as are multiple forms of masculinities and femininities" (Bartholomaeus, 2015:4).

Thus gender is considered to be socially constructed and produced. There is no true or single gender identity. Schools are a perfect place for experiences and interactions to be made and gender identities to be created. The development of masculine identity can certainly be described as part of the 'hidden curriculum' of the school as it includes a multitude of aspects within the schooling structure. One aspect is that of acceptance and approval of peers. Approval of peers, gaining popularity and in a sense, status (Swain, 2003) is of vital importance to the boys and in their development of their masculine

identity. Compliance with norms or to “achieve an acceptable form of masculinity” (Swain, 2003:302) underpins the acceptance of boys by other boys. “Conflicting models of masculinity and messages of determining what masculine is” (Connell, 2002: 80) places boys under further risk of not belonging. In addition, boys are continually at risk by not conforming to the dominant, accepted form of masculinities. And it is probably for this reason that both Connell and Morrell refer to masculinity as a practice – a seriously dynamic and fluid practice (Morrell, 2001a; Connell, 2005) and that boys need to develop a flexible masculine identity (Frosh et al., 2003). This construction of masculine identity:

“... is in fact something multiple and potentially fluid, constructed through experience and linguistically coded. In developing their identities, people draw on culturally available resources in their immediate social networks and in society as a whole” (Frosh et al., 2002:4).

Schools thus provide a multitude of experiences for boys to develop and construct their masculinity and masculine identity. However, not all aspects are positive and constructive, as many images and experiences are both confusing and contradictory for the boys and often leave them in a ‘crisis’ situation.

2.3 Understanding masculinities

The theoretical framework of masculinities is used as a theoretical tool to analyse the boys’ behaviours and utterances in this research. Early sex-role theories of masculinity influenced and advised gender studies but also attracted some serious criticism (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). An early article written by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) criticised the “male sex role” theory and literature and proposed and advised towards multiple masculinities and power relations involved in the masculinising process.

“The concept of masculinity is criticised for being framed within a heteronormative conception of gender that essentialises male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within gender categories” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:836).

Unfortunately, the early sex role theories were stagnant and far too prescribed. The social nature of masculine development was not inculcated into the theory and the theory proposed simply a ‘male role’. Norms and values were established, and all men fitted into the one norm and thus the weakness

of the sex role theory became more and more apparent. One cannot simply 'blur' all men's' behaviour as a norm (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). These sex-role theories are described as lacking:

“... as they ignore the complex, dynamic and frequently contradictory nature of gender. These theories of socialisation imply that there is a general social consensus about gender roles which can be used as a guide and 'learnt' in a one-way mechanical process; while sex-role theories suggest that there are a set of universal, unitary male and female characteristics which have somehow been defined as normal, and on which children can model themselves” (Swain, 2001:41).

Masculinity is not fixed nor simply embedded in the body. Masculinity has to account for personality traits of individuals. The sex-role theory also battled to account for the concept of power. As I stated earlier, power is consistent and incorporated within the construction of masculinity. Power and variance amongst men, were core concepts in the gay liberation movement and called for a varying view of single role theories of men. New literature and studies added the

“... realism that the sex-role literature lacked, confirmed the plurality of masculinities and the complexities of gender construction for men, and gave evidence of the active struggle for dominance that is implicit in the Gramscian concept of hegemony” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:932).

Gender hierarchies were subject to change and this could not be accounted for in the single sex-role theories.

It was during the early 1990s, that Connell troubled the concept of masculinities and developed complex theories around boys and their masculinities. Connell's theories also explained five key concepts to masculinity:

- “masculinity is a relational construct occupying a place in gender relations;
- there are multiple masculinities;
- there are hierarchies of masculinities;
- masculinity is a precarious and on-going performance; and
- it is generally a collective social enterprise” (Swain, 2001:41).

Connell's (1995) more progressive views of masculinities, neither essentialist nor reified, offered a far more dynamic understanding of masculinities and combined a number of interrelated features (Morrell,

et al., 2013). Many authors (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Skelton, 2001) have agreed with Connell and have argued against the sex-role theory by announcing the inadequacies of these theories of socialisation. From the mid- 1980's until now, the new concept of masculinity has gone from merely a conceptual model with a fairly narrow base, to be far more comprehensive and all-encompassing and allowing researchers to utilise the concept in diverse contexts (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Because the concept of masculinity has been so extensively researched, it has also come under further criticism.

“Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:836).

Masculinities have to mutate and change and hence the constant critique that has to accompany the studies of masculinities in order to reinforce or conflict the current concepts and ways of thinking. This makes the study and term progressive and formulates ways to further understand and analyse significant issues about gender.

2.4 Multiple masculinities

Connell recognises that there are multiple masculinities that boys can occupy at varying stages in their life and also in varying situations. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) refer to these multiple masculinities and varying ways in which boys manoeuvre from one masculinity to another as ‘flexible masculine identities’. We as researcher’s need to develop a way of understanding the manner in which boys manage this practice. Masculinities are thus not only multiple in nature, but constructed each day through discourses. In understanding that masculinities are in fact multiple, Connell (2005) classifies four basic ‘types’ of masculinity, namely: hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and subordinate. The term ‘type’ is used for the sake of convenience in this thesis even though Connell cautions against either reifying the term or treating it as static (Connell, 1995). Swain (2001) refers to them as typologies – types of masculinities. But Mac an Ghail (1994) remind all of us researchers that typologies can have serious limitations and we as researchers only use them to show the range and differences in masculinities and with the understanding that these typologies or types of masculinities are undoubtedly “not fixed unitary categories (Mac an Ghail, 1994:54). Masculinities are indeed practices and while I am aware that masculinity is fluid and that boys do not necessarily fit into one ‘type’ or other, these ‘types of masculinity’ are a way of providing an explanatory framework for the different configurations of male identity. The theory of multiple masculinities correlates with historians

and anthropologists who have, for some time, shown that there is no single pattern of masculinity to be found everywhere (Connell, 2011). Connell's four basic types of masculinities theory is widely accepted by scholars writing on or about masculinity (Swain, 2004; Pattman and Bhana, 2010; Bowley, 2013) and this thesis relies heavily on her theories to acquire an understanding and insight into the boys' language and movements researched in this study.

“Multiple masculinities not only implies the existence of a variety of competing and frequently, contradictory, masculinities, but also their hierarchical ordering” (Swain, 2001:44).

Because there are multiple masculinities, this means that there is also a hierarchy within the masculinities that compete against one another. These hierarchies of masculinity are different in each setting and schools, for example, will “generally have their own dominant or hegemonic form” (Swain, 2004:169). But each school will differ in their specific forms of hegemonic masculinity. Yet despite these varying forms of hegemony, the dominant form “gains ascendancy over and above others” (Swain, 2004:169) and “becomes culturally exalted” (Connell, 1995:77) and thus “exemplifies what it means to be a ‘real boy’ ” (Swain, 2004:169). Because hegemonic masculinity achieves ascendancy, other boys are subordinated but not completely eliminated. Connell has been accumulating extensive research over the past nearly three decades to bring together theories, experiences and understanding and refining of the term hegemony (Wedgwood, 2003). This group may not necessarily be the most powerful boys but it is a group whose power is sustained by large numbers motivating to support this group. This concept of hegemonic masculinities and its association with power was developed “to analyse men's power” (Morrell, et al., 2013:3). As Ratele (2006) writes, “hegemonic masculinity is not an identity, not just a set of role expectations and not only about practices, but are fundamentally about discursive material power” (p53).

“It (hegemonic masculinity) proposes a multiplicity of masculinities and hierarchies of power and shows how men exercise power over women and other men” (Morrell, et al., 2013:3)

Hegemonic masculinity, the dominant form of masculinity, is used in detail in chapter six where boys aspire to be a part of the dominant form or face rejection and are compelled to submit and be marginalised. The boys are seeking power in their creation of their identity, an aspect that is seriously connected to hegemony. Connell used Gramsci's work as a background to her theorising of masculinity in order to understand the manner in which boys negotiate different forms of masculinity and in order

to understand the hierarchy and power that is involved in the development of masculinity. Drawing on Gramsci's influence allowed Connell to express hegemonic masculinity as being able to:

“... be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (2005:77).

With the domination of this hegemonic group comes both power and subordination; power over other boys and relegation of certain groups of boys that do not possess this power. Thus, “hegemonic masculinity is Connell's key concept in a hierarchical framework of masculinities” (Bartholomaeus, 2012:228). Hegemony, the highest on the hierarchal framework, is a significant factor when considering boys, the process of gender and, specifically, patterns of power (Bartholomaeus, 2012). In the South African context, hegemonic masculinity is often associated with boys-only schooling and sporty boys (Morrell, 2001b) and thus the importance of understanding hegemonic masculinity within the contexts of this study.

Connell (1995) points out that this dominant form of masculinity is normally the culturally dominant masculinity of either the school or the neighbourhood in western society. But Connell reminds us that “the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are (not) always the most powerful people” (1995:77). Because of the dominant masculinity power becomes incorporated into the construction of masculinity. While it may be the most dominant masculinity, it is certainly not the most common. However, with hegemonic masculinity certainly does come power, a position that the boys in this research strive for and that is observed in detail in chapter six of this thesis. But not all boys have access to hegemonic power and many boys find themselves subordinated by and to it (Morrell et al., 2013). Boys who do not form a part of the hegemonic group are relegated to subordinate or marginalised masculinities. Paechter (2012) confirms this theory by stating that “hegemonic masculinity is entirely bound up with power: it is what maintains the power of patriarchy” (p231).

Boys who are excluded from the hegemonic group are often labelled as ‘other’, ‘girl’, ‘gay’ or ‘wimp’ (Swain, 2006a). Boys in this study who do not form part of the hegemonic circle are referred to as ‘other’ ‘gay’ or ‘soft’. Boys that are ‘othered’ are a group of boys who may be unsuccessful in sport; find themselves not achieving at the game or having limited skill with regards to what their bodies can do (Paechter, 2012). There are powerful pressures to conform and if boys deviate slightly from the norm, they are accorded inferior status (Swain, 2003). While boys may be considered ‘other’ or linked

to femininity, for a variety of reasons, the most common reason is as a result of the body and what it can and cannot do (Swain, 2003) and thus the important link that power has to sport and bodies.

Research has been detailed when referring to the dominant, hegemonic group. Mac an Ghail, for example, undertook a three year ethnographic study of a state secondary school, Parnal, in the United Kingdom (1994). The research was to examine the construction and regulation of masculinities within the school. With his study allowing the voices of the students to be heard, his research confirmed that within the context of the school there were a variety of masculinities being developed. His study showed that there is a range of ways of conceptualizing masculinity and found that there were groups of boys each constructing their masculinities in different ways, thus multiple masculinities were being developed within a school. The research explored within the context of the school, the variety of teacher masculinities and the production of various masculinities within the boy group. Much emphasis of the study was placed on the dominant heterosexual orientation of a group that was referred to as the ‘macho lads’. Mac an Ghail regards these ‘macho lads’ as the most popular group to study as they represent the stereotype of hegemonic masculinity (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Much of the findings of this study are centred on the importance of male heterosexuality. While the formation of male identities is socially constructed, Mac an Ghail reminds us that the construction is fragile and marked by contradiction. Despite this, it is powerful and enduring.

The diversity of masculinities exists not only across an entire culture, but also within small-scale situations within a culture (Connell, 2008a). One single institution, for example a school, shows multiple masculinities and produces and reproduces particular forms of masculinity. One cannot simply label a particular form of masculinity as hegemonic, but has to see how it operates in context (Paechter, 2012: 232).

The three year ethnographic study by Mac an Ghail (1994) on the ‘macho lads’ shows not only hegemonic masculinity but is also a “good general example of educational sociology studies in the mid-1990s” (Kenway et al., 1996:509). Mac an Ghail’s study offers

“a compelling picture of the complexities of male identities and the social, political, cultural and psychic forces which shape and reshape them” (Kenway et al., 1996:509).

Over the past 20 years there has been a build-up of research about patterns of masculinity (Morrell et al., 2013; Bartholomaeus, 2012; Swain, 2006a). These new ideas and information have “profoundly

changed social-scientific understandings of the gender of men and boys” (Connell, 2008a:132). Yet, most research has still found that within a “culture or institution there is a typical pattern of masculinity which controls the dominant position” (Connell, 2008:132); that of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Researchers have also found that throughout history, masculinities do change and differ between generations (Connell, 2008a) and this reminds us that masculinities are historically developed. Men and boys, as is shown in greater detail in chapter five of this study, are continually practicing and changing both their masculinity and negotiating their identities at school. Construction of a boys’ identity is not a known entity or path that is simply applied or followed, but a journey that has varied experiences and defining moments in this identity creation. Because it is made of moments and experiences throughout a boys’ life it is thus continually fluid. Boys learn and begin to understand and define their masculine identities, through the choices they make in life.

“Masculinity is contextually bound and assumes different meanings in different places, and so being a boy is a matter of constructing oneself in, and being constructed by, the available ways and meanings of being a boy in a particular time and place, or, as Gilbert and Gilbert (1998:51) maintain, it is about negotiating a ‘set of storylines and ‘repertoires of action’” (Swain, 2006b:318).

Swain’s (2001) research was an in-depth empirical comparative investigation into the social world of boys aged between 10- and 11-years old at three junior schools in the United Kingdom. His ethnographic study was of boys and echoes Mac an Ghaill’s study by describing how boys construct their masculine identities within the schooling structure and how important a role sport plays in this construction. Swain argued that “the construction and performance of masculinity is inextricably linked to the acquisition of status within the school peer group” (Swain, 2004:167). Swain looked particularly into the role that the school plays in producing ways of being a (school) boy (Swain, 2001) and more specifically that of being a powerful boy. Particular emphasis was placed on

“the various strategies and symbolic resources that the boys are able to draw on to gain status and to classify and position themselves both within their own peer groups and in relation to the official culture in each school (Swain,2001:ii).

Swain confirmed that masculinities were created and constructed through interaction and experience and were both culturally and contextually specific resulting in a variety of ways of expressing masculinity (Swain, 2001). An ethnographic study such as Swain's and also this study, is vital as many situations in life affect boys' masculinities. Being able to observe and interview boys over a year-and-a-half affords one the opportunity to witness moments in boys' lives that contribute to their development of masculine identity. The major 'context' where masculinities are constructed is in sport, which forms the basis of this thesis and is one of the areas highlighted as of foremost importance in the lives of boys in school (Swain, 2006b).

Bartholomaeus (2011) concurs with the above statement in her research that was conducted in two Australian primary schools which looked at boys aged between 6 and 7 years. Particular attention was paid to the role of hegemonic behaviour within the boys' group. She supported the findings that sport is indeed central in the manner in which boys construct masculinity.

"Boys spend considerable time practicing masculinity through their participation in sport"
(Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:56).

Bartholomaeus emphasises that while sport contributes to the formation of hegemonic masculinity, she also makes researchers aware that with primary school boys hegemonic masculinity "hides the fact that the concept does not account for the interaction between age and masculinity" (Bartholomaeus, 2012:242). She reminds us yet again that the varying patterns of masculinity and in particular hegemonic masculinity are found within varying schools and within varying ages of boys.

However, there have been recent researchers that have felt the need to include more than just four typologies of masculinity. Hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalised cannot 'classify' all boys or be used to describe the complexities that comes with the construction of masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have looked particularly at the concept of hegemony and have critiqued its development and influence on studies. As Wedgwood (2009) explains, the term and concept is correct, however, (i) there can be more complex models of gender hierarchy, including the agency of women; (ii) masculinities can be discussed more at length regarding location and influence of geography; (iii) the importance of embodiment and link to power; and (iv) further understanding in the dynamics associated with hegemonic masculinity.

The first concept that has been addressed is that of more than the four groups suggested by Connell. New groups have been started taking shape by studies completed on boys. Swain (2006a) used the term ‘personalised’ masculinities. In describing boys that do not compete against the dominant hegemonic type, nor do these boys aspire to be a part of the hegemonic group. Indeed these boys are perfectly content in actively constructing their masculinity without competition to the hegemonic group nor challenging or subordinating others (Swain, 2006a). Thus proving that there are other alternate ways of ‘doing boy’. Asking the question if all hegemonic masculinities need to be constructed by subordinating others in order to maintain itself (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012).

Anderson (2005) contributed to the groups of masculinity by forming an ‘inclusive masculinity’ theory. He utilises the study of male cheerleaders to explore the concept of gay identities and the impact this has on the forms of masculinity. His study on sixty-eight self-identified straight male football cheerleaders “revealed that heterosexual masculinity is not necessarily dependent upon the objectification of homosexuality” (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012:581). This group of boys is indeed unique. Because these boys “had a positive association with homosexuality, homophobia ceased to be a tool to masculine marginalisation (Anderson, 2005:351). Mc Cormack and Anderson (2010) continued with this theory by studying a group of boys in three sixth form schools across the south of England. Here boys were able to form masculinities without fear of being ‘homosexualised’. Boys in one school had almost “near-total absence of homophobic discourse” (Mc Cormack, 2010:351). Indicating strongly that the construction of masculinities is indeed changing and being challenged by social and cultural changes. The study by both Anderson and Mc Cormack also once again highlights the importance of power within the construction of masculinity and the manner in which power impacts and pervades into these boys lives.

However, Connell did initially intend for the categories that she created – hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised, to be mere starting points whereby more masculinities could be developed and the terms could be modified. Swain (2006a) adds to this framework by including the concept of personalised masculinities. Anderson and McCormack offer varying ideas and differences in the way forward in defining masculinities by including inclusive masculinities. All these studies still require a concept of ‘masculinity’ in order to explain the “social and cultural formation of men’s identities” (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2012:581). Despite, perhaps some short falls of Connell’s theory of masculinity, it is still undeniable that Connell’s work on the theory of masculinity has had a substantial impact on the studies on men in the past (Wedgwood, 2009).

2.5 Importance of bodies, race and class

Connell has shown that aspects of class, race and bodies play an integral role in the construction of masculine identities. Because gender is socially constructed, when one focuses on gender, you cannot do so without including aspects such as race, age, class, sexuality, ethnicity or any other factors (Wedgwood, 2009). As explained in the sections above, the formation of one's identity is continually practiced and experienced.

“The social practices through which, and by which boys' masculine identities are defined are generally described in terms of what they do with their bodies” (Swain, 2001:50).

Swain's studies (2003) of boys and their bodies show that bodies play a vital role in the construction of their masculinity and refers to this connection between the body and masculinity as 'embodied masculinity' (Swain, 2003). How their bodies perform on the sporting field limits or encourages the boys' development of masculine identity. Researchers (Swain, 2001, 2003; McCabe et al., 2006; Allen, 2013) have all noted and confirmed that the body plays an active, not passive, role in the construction of their self-identity. Swain (2003) writes how the boys use their bodies to become *somebodies*; thus consciously using their bodies as key roles in their construction of identity. Connell (1995:61) reminds us that the bodies are both the “objects and agents of practice, with the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined”. In other words, the boys are agents and consciously aware of what their bodies can and cannot do and they continuously practice at maintaining and sculpting their bodies in ways that will make their bodies both more acceptable to their image and to be accepted by their peers. Sporting prowess and success at sport is a key signifier of dominant masculinity (Swain, 2001) and boys use their bodies to achieve this dominance in sport. The body thus has a symbolic value of power by conveying toughness, strength and skill.

Bodies or embodied masculinity (Swain, 2001) are important aspects to take into consideration when considering the development of boys' masculine identities. Boys are continually aware of their bodies and people are judged by their bodies (Swain, 2001). The boys therefore continually shape and mould their bodies and bodies are certainly not passive.

“The body is inescapable in the construction of masculinity; but what is inescapable is not fixed” (Connell, 1995:56).

Connell above reminds us that both masculinity and the construction of the body are fluid, but at the same time both highly visible aspects. Boys are concerned when their bodies do not aspire to the dominant form – that of being ‘fast’, ‘hard’, ‘tough’ and so on (Swain, 2001), that is inscribed in the media. Connell (1995) proposes “that the physicality of the body remains central to the experience of gender” (p185). At school, boys continually utilise their bodies in the sporting activities that they participate in. Strong, hard, physical and tough sporting bodies afford the boys sporting prowess (Swain, 2001) and is a key signifier in hierarchical bodies and thus hierarchical masculinity. Because sport is “used as a forum for competing against other males” (McCabe et al, 2006:577) what boys’ bodies can and cannot do links especially with success or failure in sport (McCabe et al., 2006).

“It is important to ‘factor in’ the politics of gender when considering how discussions about gender, sexuality and sport may be framed” (Gard and Meyenn, 2000: 31).

Bodies and in particular, boys’ bodies, possess power (Swain, 2003). Understanding how boys use their bodies in their construction of masculinity and in particular their gendered sexuality is of vital importance in understanding the motivation they have for performing certain acts in their construction of gender and of ‘doing boy’.

Bhana (2015), when describing the bodies of boys uses the words ‘steeling the junior body’, reminding us of the vital significance that the body has when learning and dealing with constructions of masculinity. Swain’s earlier work supports Bhana by saying that boys *are* bodies (2003) and thus inextricable from one another. Boys’ bodies make the self and create the identity of the boy. Drummond and Drummond (2014) emphasise that the junior body is not researched sufficiently and therefore schools are not aware of the importance that the body plays in the construction of masculine identity. Researchers seemed to have avoided the study of junior bodies as this time was classified as a time of childhood innocence (Bhana, 2015). But current research shows that this is anything but a time of innocence (Bhana, 2015; Swain, 2006b; Paechter, 2007). Boys are particularly aware of their bodies and what the body can and cannot do. At times the word ‘machine’ is used when describing the masculine body (Drummond, 2003). The term machine is aptly used as it “identifies as the instrumental male in which the body has become the focus of the self” (Drummond, 2003:1). Boys find this term a highly desirable trait.

“boys are actively constructing their bodies. In part, their bodies enable them to construct masculinities through their own awareness of the power but also in relation to others” (Bhana, 2015:4).

The relationship between boys and their body image is an important one. Schools and school sport are places where boys can learn to deal with their problems and concerns. However, instead of schools assisting boys in coming to terms with their body image, schools are often sites where body image becomes problematic (Drummond, 2003).

But with the concept of bodies, studies within the South African context and especially the South African schools context, cannot exclude the concepts of race and class when discussing the construction of masculinities. Race and indeed racialized sport has played a pivotal role in the development of gender identities in boys in schools in South Africa.

“Soon after democratisation in 1994, the last vestiges of statutory racial discrimination were removed in South Africa. But the new government inherited a society where inequality could not be reduced to race alone and inequality persisted in the face of formal political equality” (Seekings and Natrass, 2002:1).

Post-apartheid studies in South Africa deal mostly with poverty, health care, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, sexual violence, non-parent households and wider contexts of adversity with the central focus on historical inequalities within the South African education system (Bhana, 2008). These studies have relied heavily on race and racial inequalities that occur within the schooling structures in South Africa. Sport has been researched (Pattman and Bhana, 2010) as a “factor of inequality within schools where children are seen as grappling with the apartheid history within the schooling structures” (Teeger, 2015: 230). However, there have been few comparative studies constructed and concentrated on private (often seen as colonial) boys’ schools in South Africa (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014, the exception).

Despite being over 20 years since the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, participation in sport by all racial groups has not matched up to the image of the united racial nation as was envisaged. While South Africa may be united in diversity in many other aspects (Teeger, 2015), post-apartheid sport participation is anything but united. Poor facilities in rural and non-white schools have often still been blamed for white dominance in sports and in sporting teams representative of the country. In turn, racial quotas (teams have to consist of a certain percentage of black athletes when chosen) have been

implemented in school sports teams to allow opportunities for all racial groups to be represented in the sporting world and to try and eliminate the inequalities of the past. Private schools in South Africa are racially diverse and should be places where boys learn to challenge race and racist discourses (Teeger, 2015). Bloch (2009) argued that schools in South Africa are “an important testing ground for new ideas in the battle for transformation and are site of excellent practice where many of the goals of the South African nation can be realised” (Bloch, 2009:148). Unfortunately, schools simply often just perpetuate and reinforce existing discourses of racism and racial issues despite schools imagining that they are spaces for diversity (Teeger, 2015).

In the years of South Africa’s transition in democracy, South Africa was often called the ‘The Rainbow Nation’ (attributed to Bishop Desmond Tutu), describing the intercultural diversity that was occurring within the country. But research has shown that schools are not quite the exemplar of a ‘Rainbow Nation’ as presumed. Boys, race and sport in South African schools are terms closely connected. Boys relate certain sports with particular racial groups. While this is not advocated by the school, the subtle and sometimes not so subtle gender regimes and hidden curriculums of the school transmit these norms and ideas. South Africa is seen as model of racial reconciliation owing to the abolition of apartheid only two decades ago (Teeger, 2015), but schools seem to paint a slightly different picture.

The relationship between boys and sport and the impact that these choices have on their gendered identities depends critically on race, as studies in South Africa (Bhana, 2002; Salo, 2007; Anderson, 2010) and in the United Kingdom and United States (Sewell, 2000; Connolly, 1998), have demonstrated. While racism and racial segregation occurs throughout the world, race is an important aspect when discussing sport and boys within the schooling structure in South Africa. Bhana (2008) and Morrell (1994b) all highlighted how when discussing sport and boys in South African context, the aspect of race cannot be excluded. Yet many schools in South Africa are reluctant to discuss race issues at all (Pollock, 2004) for fear of being seen as prejudiced or biased. But Teeger (2015) argues that:

“... in failing to talk about race and racism in schools, teachers do not make racial inequalities disappear. Instead, they often perpetuate these very inequalities” (Teeger, 2015:228).

But race is not the only area that must be taken into consideration when discussing the construction of masculine identity. Schools too must be observed. Bhana (2002), Anderson (2010) and Swain’s (2001) research have all been completed within the schooling structure, which again emphasises the

importance of the school in the development of both masculinities and masculine identities. Connell argues that:

“Schools are important agents in the formation of masculinities and sports have a great significance in the cultural life of many schools, engaging the school population as a whole in the ‘celebration and reproduction of the dominant codes of gender’” (Connell, 1996:217).

Connell (1983: 18) continues by stating that “sport is the central experience of the school years for many boys”. South Africans are described as a ‘sports mad nation’ and thus sport plays a dominant role in the lives of many boys at school. Hence, it is of vital importance in understanding the literature that has been conducted with boys, school and sport. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998:115) point out that “boys’ lives are lived out primarily in institutions – family, school, sports clubs, teams and the discourses of masculinity play through all of them”. Because boys spend almost their entire lives being part of some form of institution or other, understanding the importance that sport plays in the development of boys’ masculine identities within institutions, is of great interest to researchers.

Just as masculinities are hierarchical, dividing and separating boys into accepted or subordinated masculinities, so too does sport. While sport is an area in terms of which people may unite and support each other, it is also an area of major division and individuals may differentiate themselves from others as a result of their abilities and skill in a sport. This is particularly evident amongst boys and especially in boys’ only schools (Swain, 2000). The sporting arena is one area where people may make an identity, be it positive or negative, for themselves. Sport may classify the individual either latitudinally or hierarchically (MacClancy, 1996), while these identities may also either exist simultaneously or seasonally. In other words, just as masculinities are fluid so too are boys’ identities. They create their identities according to the seasonal sport that is being played. This research will look specifically into the way in which the young male participants construct masculine identities within the institution of organised seasonal sports and attempt to identify ways in which class, cultural and racial differences may mediate this relationship between the construction of masculine identities and sport and perhaps lead to the construction of different meaning and different masculinities. Here the connection comes in with hegemonic masculinity, as hegemonic masculinity marginalises individuals and groups of boys. The study was interested in exploring whether the participants self-identified as being successful at sport and therefore as being a part of the hegemonic group or not. Because “sport appears to be on the rise globally and has become the leading marker and definer of masculinity in mass culture,” (Connell,

1995:200) sport can therefore “provide boys and men with the “quintessential manifestation of the masculine ethos” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:60).

Studies by researchers (Swain, 2001, 2006; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008a; Bartholomeaus, 2011; Bowley 2013), all describe the importance that sport plays in the creation of boys’ identities and in the development of their masculinities. The fact that South Africa is classified as a sports-mad country (Alegi, 2004) accentuates the importance of sport in the lives of South African schoolboys. There is a common perception among many boys and men in our country that all men love sports, and, if they do not, they are not real men (Alegi, 2004). Therefore sport, boys and masculinity is a common thread in the lives of many South African schoolboys. But one cannot exclude the concept of race in this research in the construction of masculinity when doing so in the South African context.

I am an avid sportswoman who has been actively involved in sport in South Africa for over 40 years. I experienced exclusion from school sport in conjunction with race from a young age by attending a private Catholic school with a mixed race population. Looking back now, it is strange that I did not notice that while children of other races were included in certain schools, they were excluded, through the Separate Amenities Act Number 49 of 1953 (South African History Archives, www.saha.org.za) from enjoying or participating in various activities in our country – and one such area was that of sport. I do remember quite vividly an incident that involved school sport and provincial trials. Being a hockey player I was asked to attend the local trials in an attempt to be selected for a provincial team, but once I arrived at the trials, I was told I could not participate because my school was multi-racial and during the apartheid regime, this was deemed unacceptable. The apartheid system was firmly in place within the sporting structures at school and while it excluded children from different races, despite being white, I too was partially exposed to this system of exclusion. This history of exclusion to certain sports is still highly visible in schools today. Despite schools trying desperately to provide areas of inclusion and unity, the “schools simply reproduce the very hierarchies they are meant to dismantle” (Teeger, 2015: 226) and thus the separation within sporting structures is perpetuated.

As a result of the apartheid system, schools were vastly varied and certainly differently resourced. As Morrell states:

“the relationship between race to subordination and marginalisation is central to an understanding of gender in South Africa. Colonialism and imperialism created race as a marker of inferiority” (2002:21).

While Morrell (2002) was referring to gender specifically, this above statement also pertains to other aspects of South Africa, such as both schools and sport within schooling structures today. Schools today are still divided somewhat on race and certainly on class. Certain sports are also still divided on race owing to the availability of sporting fields and equipment. With soccer considered a sport mainly for black players and rugby considered a sport for white players, the demographics of sport in South Africa is battling to change.

Education specifically had huge socio-economic divisions both in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and in the broader country. White schools were fully resourced, with qualified teachers, relatively low class numbers, good academic resources and plenty of sporting facilities (Pattman and Bhana, 2009). Private schools were elitist and exceptionally well resourced. Class sizes within private schools were small and teachers were considered exceptionally privileged to gain access to teach in this environment. Parents paid high fees to afford their children the opportunity to attend these schools. In contrast, Indian, coloured, black and especially rural black schools were, on the whole, overcrowded and under resourced both academically and in sporting structures (Morrell, 1998a).

With the abolishment of apartheid, and the with the

“formal de-racialisation of schools in South Africa (it) has resulted in the formation of racially diverse learner (pupil) populations in the formerly white, (coloured) and Indian schools but not in the township schools which remain exclusively black” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:548).

While there has been steady progress throughout the country, especially within the schooling structures, unfortunately the poor, under-resourced rural township schools have slipped further into poverty and remain exclusively black in population and under-resourced (Bhana, 2009). Education has not been afforded the opportunity to be upgraded and sport is also still far behind. While apartheid was dissolved over 20 years ago, and the new non-racial constitution is firmly in place, change has been slow in many areas and aspects of the schooling structures including sport.

“The impact of colonization and apartheid has meant fractured, uneven patterns of living which provided fertile ground for the creation and maintenance of ethnic and racial identities. Familiar apartheid delineations of identity as black, white (English and Afrikaners), Indian and coloured continue to be markers in post-apartheid South Africa (Bhana, 1999:94).

This racial identity is clearly exemplified in the sport of rugby. Rugby, in particular, was significant in creating white male schoolboy identity (Bhana, 2009) and this separated the white boys in white schools, who predominantly play cricket and rugby and black boys, in black schools who mostly play soccer. Bhana (2008) identified that boys, as young as eight years old, had “marked and polarized gendered and racial identities and relations” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:548).

“There is a long, well documented history in the formally white public schools of associating sport (and notably rugby) with (white) male character building” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:547).

Boys in Bhana’s study (2008) recognized that white boys spoke with pride about the game of rugby and black boys spoke similarly about football. She also found that in the school of study, an ex-model C (white) school that the white boys talking about rugby was also seen

“... by white management in formerly white schools in a symbolic attempt to preserve what are constructed as ‘white standards’ in the face of the influx of black and Indian learners” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:248).

This set ideology stems from the history of soccer and rugby in this country, as soccer was associated with black and plebeian, whilst rugby was perceived as white and patrician (Morrell, 1998b; Alegi, 2004). This concept was especially noticeable amongst English-speaking private boarding schools (Morrell, 1998b). Rugby was seen as epitomizing fair play, manliness and ‘Britishness’ amongst the English speaking students and schools. In South Africa, “rugby has been seen as a symbol of white male success, exuberance, athleticism and solidity” (Morrell, 1994b:95). While South Africa is many decades past this, the tradition has continued and the ideology is still perpetuated in current school structures (Morrell, 1998a), as particularly noted in Bhana’s (2008) study. Schools have made massive changes since the end of the apartheid area (post 1994) and demographics of both pupils and teachers has changed dramatically, especially in the urban ex-all white schools (Bhana, 2008), yet the perpetuation of racial ideas in connection to sport seems to prevail.

So, while spectators of sport may unite behind sportsmen and their countries, sport for boys in schools still remain an area of great divide. Boys learn acceptance or rejection from sport from an early age (Swain, 2001) and because sport plays such an important role in the masculinising process, they learn from an early age to be rejected from the popular sporting group that plays such a vital role in the

masculinising process. This highlights, therefore, the importance that schools play in the implementation of sport. It also indicates the importance that is placed on sport within schools both by the boys themselves and the schooling structures in South Africa.

2.6 Heterosexual domination

“Sexuality, gender and heterosexuality intersect in variable ways within and between different dimensions of the social” (Jackson, 2006:106).

Literature tracks the connection between masculinities and sexualities at school (Allen, 2013) and the important link that the body plays in this role. However, children are often considered to be unaware of gender (and sexuality) (Skelton 1997; Epstein et al., 2001; Bhana, 2002; Renold, 2002). Bhana’s (2008) work in particular demonstrates that children are not too young or innocent to understand gender and are certainly not blank sheets of canvas where patterns of gender are simply placed. Gender and sexuality are thus “key sites by which masculinities are constituted, negotiated and resisted” (Allen, 2013:351). Despite Bhana (2002) reminding us that children are not without agency in the construction of their gendered sexualities, there is limited research on the connection between gendered sexuality and children and in their accounts of being and becoming boys. This limited research is because most research has tried to protect children’s (sexual) innocence (Renold, 2005). Gendered sexuality and with particular reference to this study, “heterosexuality, is not only visible and present in schools but crucial to the organisation of schools” (Renold, 2007:280). Boys are judged by their bodies and therefore use their bodies as social symbols in the development of their gendered masculinities (Swain, 2001).

“Focusing on the sexualisation of children’s gender identities, is identifying heterosexuality as a pervasive and normalising force mediating and regulating children’s school-based relations and relationships in ways that constrain and empower how they live out their gendered identities as ‘girls’ and ‘boys’ ” (Renold, 2005: 168).

Studying children’s gendered identity is important in understanding children. Understanding how they empower their lives by engaging in heterosexual activities within the school structure to become powerful boys or girls, is vital. Kehily (2002) reiterates that sexuality of children has been of concern for some time, yet an area of limited research. Childhood is anything but a time of sexual innocence,

instead it is a contested and gendered concept (Renold, 2005). Thus in order to understand how boys construct their gendered identities, the link between masculinities and gendered sexuality must be understood. Researchers have since begun to identify and understand the ways in which gendered sexualities are constructed (Gard and Meyenn, 2000; Renold, 2005; McCabe, Ricciardelli & Ridge, 2006; Bhana and Anderson, 2013). Hearn (2004) argues that gendered sexualities “persist in relations with other social experiences and inequalities around gender, class and race” (Bhana and Anderson, 2013: 549). In South Africa and in particular in schools in South Africa, there are many social inequalities and this has serious associations with the manner in which pupils articulate their gendered sexuality (Bhana and Anderson, 2013).

“... the idea that young men might be sexy bodies at school is a particular invisibility because of the associations this has with femininity and the way young people are often denied as sexual subjects” (Allen, 2013:361).

Allen’s (2013) study on 22 students aged between 16 and 18 in New Zealand is crucial in understanding the meaning boys give to sexuality and the body. Studies into two secondary schools highlighted the ‘sexy bodies’ that were prevalent within the school structure. She gives us an insight of how young men understand sexual embodiment at school. The link between bodies and sexualities is thus researched and explored. By using photographs of ‘sexual bodies’ around the school, the students are asked to discuss and explain the meanings they give to sexuality and the link to the body. Other research, such as this, relies on narratives from students, but the photographic research gives the students a platform to explain their meanings and ideas. Allen’s research thus proves that boys and students in general, certainly do view their bodies as sexual. Allen also makes use of the phrase sexual bodies are “both everywhere and nowhere at school” (Allen, 2012:348). This reminds us that despite the boys’ bodies being of particular importance to the boys, it is a topic that remains silenced and indeed even taboo. Power is afforded to boys with good, sexy bodies and the study reminds us that one cannot research masculinities in isolation, avoiding the concepts of power and sexualities.

Pattman and Bhana’s (2009) study of mostly black South African schoolgirls identified how girls may use sexuality in their construction of their identity and emphasised that “sexuality was (indeed) a medium through which they (girls) asserted themselves and through which they were subordinated” (Pattman and Bhana, 2009:37). This research thus affirms that sexuality is a key factor in the

construction of identity. But this is not only significant research for girls, but shows that sexuality is a major role player in the construction of all gender identity.

Considerable research has been completed linking the operations of homophobia, heteronormativity and sexuality in the production and maintenance of gendered identities (McCormack and Anderson, 2010; Bhana, 2014). At school level and especially at boys' schools, the aspect of heterosexuality and gender are often topics that are discussed when gender identities and masculinities are being fashioned. Research in Australia by Ferfolja (2007) demonstrates that heterosexuality is privileged by omitting or silencing gay identities. In both the United States and in United Kingdom, Pascoe (2007) and Epstein et al. (2003) have studied that gay students and gay identities are certainly still marginalised and that there is a stigma attached to being gay. This reinforces the heterosexual domination in schools and especially amongst boys in boys' only schools. Because there is such a stigma attached to homosexuality amongst boys, boys have been "shown to use an array of heterosexual boundary maintenance techniques to publicly defend their heterosexual identities" (McCormack and Anderson, 2010:5).

Anderson (2009) discusses an inclusive masculinity theory that incorporates the work of Connell and acknowledges that there is some form of hierarchy or "stratification" (McCormack and Anderson, 2010: 5) Both Connell and Anderson agree that boys construct their masculinity in opposition to femininity and homosexuality. Where Anderson varies from Connell is in situations when homophobia in the culture of the school or institution has become far less aggressive. Boys tend to become either homophobic or accepting of gay identities. He uses the term 'gay friendly' or inclusive masculinity to describe the group of boys that are more accepting of the gay boys and also physical affection and emotional intimacy between boys is far more accepted (McCormack and Anderson, 2010). However, McCormack and Anderson's study of six form boys in school in the UK is limited in experiencing boys that are exceptionally accepting of gay identities. Most researchers talk of active homophobia and heteronormative behaviour in boys' schools.

Studies by Renold (2007) have been hugely influential in understanding the heterosexual performances in the life of a boy. Both sexuality and heterosexuality have been integral and are embedded in the manner in which boys define and construct their gendered selves (Renold, 2007). She reminds us that especially hegemonic masculine performances are tied to "dominant notions of heterosexuality" (Renold, 2007:276). Unfortunately there has been limited research in children and sexualities in the past as sexualities and especially heterosexuality are key components in boys' construction of

masculinities. Renold also includes the aspect of power within this heterosexuality as one of the key concepts in the power relations involved in masculine construction.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the theorising of young masculinities and included these theories within the schooling context. Because gender and the construction of masculinities are fluid, not just in the boys' lifetime but over generations, one can conceptualise gender and masculinities as something people do or perform and "gender identities are produced and given substance through these performances" (Pattman and Bhana, 2010: 548). Most importantly, Connell (2008a) points out that masculinity is not simple – there are no set patterns and if there are patterns, these are susceptible to change. In addition, masculinities are actively constructed and boys continually test and contest the set masculinities in the situation in which they are placed (Pattman and Bhana, 2010). Boys' masculinity is neither simply formed nor caused by social context or at birth, but is rather shaped and constructed through interaction. Research shows that boys 'do' masculinity and gender (Messner, 1995).

"Gender identity is not a thing that people have, but rather a process of construction that develops, comes into crisis, and changes as a person interacts with the social world" (Messner, 1992: 102).

It would appear that masculinity is a 'project' in a man's life. Gender is therefore a key lens in exploring the lives of the boys in this study. What was certainly found later on in this research was that boys are situated within a school environment that has "normative expectations relating to their gender" (Bartholomaeus, 2015:7). Schools perpetuate dominant understandings of gender and heterosexuality is certainly one of these expectations.

Understanding Connell's theories of multiple masculinities and the concept of hierarchical masculinities is important for this research. Boys are continually practicing at their masculinity and it is indeed fragile and inconsistent. Swain (2001) refers to boys "maintaining and defending" (p45) their masculinity in order to gain power and advantage over other boys. I focus chapters five and six on the dominant masculinity, hegemony, as it is often linked both to sport (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Morrell, 1994a; Bhana, 2008; Drummond, 1998; Skelton, 2000; Swain 2000, 2006b) and to the perpetuation of the masculine hegemonic ideology. In fact Connell writes that "men, such as sporting heroes, are taken

as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity” (2000:11). Bartholomaeus concurs with Connell by stating that “sport was the most frequent descriptor of boys and masculinity” (2011:3).

“Developing an understanding of the ways in which (boys) manage this task (of masculinity) is made especially complex by the fact that masculinities are racialised and expressed through social class positions” (Edley and Wetherell, 1995, cited in Frosh et al., 2003:85).

“The form which masculinity takes is shaped by the context in which it is created. Certain contexts offer little possibility for alternative masculinities to emerge. As compact formal organisations with a very clear gender regime schools provided little space for different gender interpretations” (Morrell, 1994a:62).

However, hegemonic masculinity and the understanding thereof, is still limited and certainly has weaknesses. Despite its weaknesses, it is still the best way in order to explain the dominant masculinity in this study. I am continually reminded as a researcher that it has its limitations but still regard it as a “major analytical device to conceptualise masculine hierarchies (Swain, 2001:46) in this study. The study of young boys’ masculinities is thus central in any gender study and has allowed the researcher to study men through the lens of masculinity.

“Several researchers have argued that the ways in which boys act as masculine, and their masculine identities, need to be seen as gendered practices which are relational, contradictory and multiple. In this respect, a gap in our current understanding of boys and masculinities is of complex notions of what it means to ‘do boy’ in specific contexts (Connell, 1996; Davies, 1997), that is, of the multifarious ways in which young masculinities are made” (Frosh et al., 2003:3).

Masculinity and the construction thereof, is neither simple nor fixed. This chapter discussed the understandings of gender and masculinity and the importance that masculinity plays in the theoretical framework that is utilised in this study. It also shows the link and importance of sport in the lives of South Africans and in particular, boys in schools. Because “sport has long been regarded as the site for the development of masculine behaviours” (Sabo, 1985:2), institutions have been sites for gendered research (Connell, 1983; Morrell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Bhana 2008 and Pattman and Bhana 2010) and the association between the boys, sport, schools and gender. However, the choices that the

boys make are neither simple, nor instinctive. In fact, the choices are highly motivated by gender, race and power and are certainly not inherent.

This chapter reviewed both the international and local (South African) literature on the topics of masculinity, sport and the link with schools. There have been numerous and varied contributions throughout the world to understanding the concepts and theories of gender, masculinity, ethnicity and sport in schools (Morrell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008b) and this thesis looks to adding to these considerable contributions, but within the South African private schooling context. In order to gain insight and understanding and to position this thesis, I have reviewed and located the work of others, in order to motivate for the need for this study. While this chapter looks at the scholarship in this field, chapters five, six and seven feature the implications of the boys' choices of sport on both their gender and masculinity.

This research study makes use of Connell's ideas and theories, not only because they are extensive and thorough, but because the structure of the South African schools situation expresses that hegemonic masculinity and thus "successful masculinity[,] is embedded within sporting prowess" (Bhana, 2008:6). The boys in this research all come from different cultures and different backgrounds although most of the boys are from wealthy middle to upper class families. Connell maintains that it is not possible to ignore the "cultural character of gender" (Connell, 1995: 52) and this is noted during the interviews with the young men and highlighted in chapter three of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Review of related literature

Introduction

This thesis explores the construction of masculinity of 12- and-13-year old boys at school in South Africa. Sport in schools in South Africa play a vital role in the development of many boys' masculine development and in the construction of their gender identity and thus this study investigates the influential role that sport plays in the social construction of their young masculinities.

In this chapter, emphasis is placed on boys within the schooling structure and their relation to sport in the construction of their gender identity. The study of boys and masculinities is certainly not a new topic, researchers in the past have found that the connection between boys, sport and masculinities is a common practice and that the relationship is also a deeply troubled and complex connection (Connell, 2008a; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Morrell, 2001a; Swain, 2006b).

This chapter continues from chapter two where the theoretical components of masculinity and gender were explained. It begins with defining concepts and terms that are utilised throughout the study. The theoretical definitions of these relevant themes are presented to provide insight and a language in order to make sense and understanding of what was being observed and discussed by the boys in this research. This background allows me to describe these terms in a theoretically informed and coherent manner when analysing the data received from boys.

In chapter two, the first main concept, that of masculinity, was discussed and explained. Because boys construct, negotiate and perform a range of different masculinities (Swain, 2004), understanding the history of the term masculinity is important and the definitions of masculinities which are "contingent on the meanings and practices" found within the school, were explored and explained (Swain, 2004:11).

The topic of gender and the history involving both the sex-role theories and social constructions concept were grappled with and explained. The concept of gender, and with particular reference to gender identity, is a common theme that emerges from this research, forming a common thread that is seated at the heart of this research. Masculine identity, along with the concept of masculinity, forms the basis of this research analysis. Boys' identity formation is of paramount importance throughout the study and forms a key concept that needs to be understood and theorised.

By understanding the concept of gender identity and the importance of bodies in boys' lives, the analysis of how boys' construct their gendered identities through sport by utilising their bodies, can be successfully completed.

This chapter follows from chapter two by further exploring both the international and existing local literature on concepts that are utilised within this thesis. Studies by leading researchers both internationally and locally within South Africa on topics of masculine development within schools are explained in order to reinforce and provide background for this research.

While many researches findings have already been explained earlier, I focus on a few more researchers and the ideas and explanations undertaken by their research. The concepts of sex-role theory and social constructionist are not mentioned in this chapter.

3.1 Gender identity

“Gender identity is not a thing that people have, but rather a process of construction that develops, comes into crisis and changes as a person interacts with the social world” (Messner, 1992:102)

The concept of gender and the varying approaches from sex-role theory to social constructionist theories were explained in chapter two. Here the focus is on the concept of gender identity and the manner in which boys, in particular, create their identities.

Gender identity is a key task that begins in early childhood and seems to continue with us throughout our lives. Identity and the creation thereof is defined by our personal characteristics and personal traits that we both observe and act out. However, the construction of one's self identity is neither simple nor unchallenging. Adolescents in particular find it a most troublesome time of their lives, in creating a sense of who they are and most importantly to where and if they belong. It is bound by a journey of finding out who one is. Boys at school, are no exception and boys in their first year of grade eight at high school are particularly cognisant of finding out who they are and where they belong. Gender is often described as the quintessential element of human identity. Boys are continually struggling with concepts like:

- Do I fit into my gender category?
- Is there room to digress from stereotypes of my particular gender category?

- Is my gender perhaps superior to others?

Boys need to find compatibility within their gender group by feeling a sense of belonging. They grapple and find difficulty with conformity within gender identity formation. Boys in high school and at an early adolescent age both see and witness common identity traits and either need to conform to these traits or possibly risk becoming excluded from the stereotype behaviour. Understanding the nature in which they personally internalise the shaping of their male identity is grappled with within the analysis chapters.

Sport, can certainly be one key aspect and manner in which boys construct and manipulate their identity.

“There are a profusion of ways in which sports influence, define and assist in the creation and contest of identities, and do so at a series of levels and along a range of cultural domains”
(MacClancy, 1996:17).

Sport influences and assists in the formation of many boys’ identities (Swain, 2001). While significant literature in the past has inclined to focus on the achievements of powerful men, rather than on men’s everyday activities and relationships, current research has focused on the importance of sport in the everyday lives of young boys (Swain, 2001; Bhana, 2008; Bartholomaeus, 2012).

Drummond (1998) and Messner (1992) assert that the same argument can be applied to men in sport as every day events and choices impact on the lives and identities of both boys and men. As gender is central to identity (Pascoe, 2003), researchers have now tried to link identity, gender and sport in everyday lives of boys. Because sport plays such an important role in many boys lives, the creation of identity is also linked and connected to power that is either achieved or denied through their choice of sport and sporting skill. McKay et al., (2000) have since attended to this area of previously excluded research, by placing gender at the centre of the analysis of men’s sporting experiences.

Sabo and Runfola (1980) were amongst the early researchers to investigate the relationship between masculinity and sport. Their research emphasised that sport was almost seen as the ‘hidden curriculum’ yet played a vital role in the development of boys’ masculinities and hence played a role in the development of their masculine identities. Researchers have also now looked at the role that sport plays in creating forms of masculinity and, in particular, dominant masculinity (Bhana, 2008; Hall, 1985;

Kimmel and Messner, 2006; Sabo, 1985). Sport constitutes one of the key multifaceted components in the complex construction of most societies (Kimmel and Messner, 2006). However, most early studies of sport were concerned simply with the physical aspect – the human body – with this physical aspect being seen as natural and unchangeable and, therefore, pointless as a subject of study (MacClancy, 1996). However, while sport may be played by millions of people all around the world for the purposes of fun and fitness, there are, nevertheless, several other facets attached to it. With one being, for example, the sites for development of dominant masculinities and the formation of personal identities (Swain, 2004). Because sport is seen as a “major vehicle of identity, gender identity is a process of construction that develops, comes into crisis, and changes as the person interacts with the social world” (Kimmel and Messner, 2006: 102).

Recent studies by researchers (Swain 2006b; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008a; Bartholomeaus, 2011; Bowley, 2013) all discuss the importance that sport plays in the creation of boys’ identities and in the development of their masculinities at school.

“Sport appears to be on the rise globally and has become a leading marker and definer of masculinity in mass culture”, (Swain, 2006b:317)

“... providing boys and men with the quintessential manifestation of the masculine ethos” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:60).

Sport and in particular school sport is not simply played for fun and enjoyment and certainly cannot be classified as an “innocent pastime” (Swain, 2006b:317). School sport has become a symbolic signifier in understanding our gendered selves.

3.2 International school based research on masculinities

School based research on masculinities around the world has taken momentum in the past decade. Most researchers work off the ground work completed by Connell as a base to work from; by either adding to or conflicting to Connell’s theories. Having already included Mac an Ghail’s (1994) study and some of Swain’s (2001) study in the earlier findings, I look at further researchers that have added to the school based research of masculinities around the world. Authors that were of particular interest to me were ones that recognise the importance that schools play in the construction of masculinity and that within

this construction this is also an area of tremendous power for some boys. I also observed studies that highlighted the body in the construction of masculine identities.

Early theories following a biological framework, for example, believed that it was not possible for schools to do anything to influence masculinity (Connell, 1996). But, this view “revealed little understanding of either the process of gender construction or of what happens in schools” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:114) or other forms of institutions, such as clubs and family groups. Later research, such as that conducted by Connell (1996) and Swain (2001; 2006c) has demonstrated that schools have routines, expectations, curricula, sports, rules and an ethos; all of which powerfully and pervasively impact on gender and, in this case, masculinity (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Their research thus points to the importance of the school in the development of boys’ masculinities and is a vital cog in the gender construction.

In as early as 1996 Salisbury and Jackson wrote a book entitled *‘Challenging macho Values: Practical ways of working with adolescent boys’*. Their book highlighted the dominant ground that boys took within schools and tried to understand ways in which teachers and schools could assist both girls and marginalised boys within the schooling structures. Topics of violence, sexuality, bodies and indeed sport were discussed and articles written about these issues. Similarly these are still topics and issues that currently occur within this study. Boys are still being marginalised by sport, bodies and sexuality. Authors contributing to this book all highlighted the need to discuss and work with boys as a matter of importance, yet despite this, nearly two decades later, these topics are still being highlighted as problematic within schools. The power that some boys wield within the schooling structure needs to be addressed and the old version of ‘boys will be boys’ is unfortunately a term that is still disturbingly used.

Paechter (2012) adds to the research contributed by Salisbury and Jackson and Allen (who was mentioned and detailed in chapter two), by studying the importance of bodies and performances in the construction of gender within boys in school. She highlights the importance of language usage when constructing the hegemonic male figure and the ‘othering’ of girls in the process. Language is vitally important when referring to what it means to be girl or be boy. More importantly it is vital to understanding the meaning of ‘doing boys and doing girl’ rather than simply expecting certain behaviours and using certain language for boys. I troubled the boys in my research on their usage of the

word gay in their language to describe boys who were lacking in skill in sport. Understanding the boys' language when they talk is vital in understanding their construction of masculine identities.

The topics of typologies or types of masculinities is further investigated by Swain in his findings of his three schools in the United Kingdom. Swain adds to Connells four basic typologies of masculinity by trying to place boys in his study into collective groups. The first aspect or possibly new category that he observes is that of 'personalised' masculinity. Swain's personalised masculinity boys were a group of boys that did not compete with the dominant group nor did they find any aspirations to do so. They were content in their own masculinity and to pursue their own form of masculinity. These boys simply existed alongside the dominant form. Swain describes this as an 'alternate' way of doing boy. These new 'type' or group of boys varies from the four basic groups that Connell describes as the boys are not the hegemonic dominant boys nor are they side-lined or marginalised by the dominant group. The second 'type' of masculinity that Swain investigated was what he described as "liminal" (Swain, 2001: 311) masculinity. These boys were found outside of the hegemonic or dominant group. These boys did not possess the requirements of resources to be part of the dominant group. While the personalised boys did not aspire to be a part of the dominant group, this group of liminal boys did indeed want to be a part but were found lacking possibly in skill in sport and yet tried desperately to hang around the dominant group. In fact Adler and Adler (1998) called these group of boys the 'wannabes' as they were desperate to become a part of the dominant group. The group of boys under this research could certainly find wannabes within the group. These boys who found themselves lacking at skill in certain sports in varying seasons but who desperately wanted to be a part of the sporting dominant group.

Wedgwood (2005) conducted an interesting study in a coeducational school in Australia where she observed the behaviour of two Australian Rules football teams within that school. Wedgwood's study highlighted the importance that the school's gender regime played in the construction of both the boys and girls gender identities within the sporting world at the school. The role of the physical education teacher was carefully observed in the manner in that he either reproduced or challenged the gender norms. Wedgwood's study was similar to mine in that she too was a woman studying a predominately world of male sport. Wedgwood encountered difficulties in becoming involved in the boys' world of sport, an aspect that I thankfully never encountered. The boys in my study allowed me a place in their world of sport. But what did concur with my study was that certainly sport played a dominant role in the construction of the boys' gender identity and the school continually reproduced the gender regime of the school. Wedgwood also highlighted the complexity and inconsistencies in the construction of

hegemonic masculinities that the boys encounter which was similar in many ways to the difficulties that the boys in my research also encountered.

The theme of multiple masculinities being played out in schools is one that pervades this research. Skelton's (2001) research explores the world of 6-7 year old boys in a school and looks at the manner in which these boys negotiate their masculine identities. Skelton looks particularly at the emphasis that both race and class take in this negotiation of masculinity. Despite the boys being rather young, the portrayed typical behaviour in the negotiating of their masculinities, was similar to that of the boys in this study. Physical appearance (bodies) was already important in these boys' lives in the construction of their masculine identity and boys were already side-lined owing to their physical appearance and personal habits. The boys were also desperately trying to avoid showing any signs of weakness or emotion. Skelton uses the term 'hard man image' when describing these boys – a masculinity that held high status at the school being studied. Part of this hard image also involved being white. Boys in the study that were not white were marginalised. This marginalisation was not seen directly in this study and race only became an 'issue' when the topic of swimming came into discussion. Boys at Connaught High were certainly not side-lined or marginalised because of race, but race did, however, prove to be a contributing factor in the choice of sport each term. Skelton also reminds us researchers that there are indeed problems when boys construct their masculine identities within the school structure. We as researchers make aware that there are problems, but strategies should be put in place in schools and made available for teachers to assist them in helping boys in creating their gender identities.

Weaver-Hightower (2003) reinforces the need that Skelton observes of looking at the creation of masculine identities within boys at school level. Much of the past research has focussed on the gender inequality of girls instead of focussing on the patterns that problematic masculinities actually create. Girls were always seen as being in trouble and lacking, but Weaver-Hightower points out that it is more the dominance of boys that needs serious research. He states that by ignoring boys as simply 'boys are boys' we reinforces the 'backlash' as he puts it, whereas addressing the issues surrounding masculinities and gender identities can potentially create more allies with girls. He urges us as teachers to not simply write the rhetoric about problematic boys, but more to systematically change the way we teach boys. He states that often we as researchers conclude our studies by stating that the gender regimes of the school are simply recreated and reinforced by the boys. But what we should be doing is looking at how we make the changes within the gender regimes of the schools that is potentially

harming girls and marginalised boys. Teachers need to change and schools need to adapt.

Unfortunately what often happens is that:

“teachers are, as boys used to be, a kind of ‘shadowy other’, peeking through only to react to or witness the acts of disruptive boys and then fading away again” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003 : 488).

Gender injustice and the contributions to homophobia was highlighted by studies of Travers and Fraser (2008). Their studies assisted this researcher in understanding the foundations of homophobia that is created within schools and amongst boys. Homophobia was rife within the lives of boys at Connaught, especially when talking about sport and the use of the body during sporting activities. Travers and Fraser remind us of the link between creating dominant masculinities through sport and gender injustice and homophobia. This is highly visible and certainly almost taken for granted within schools and virtually goes unnoticed. It is almost as if the construction of sporting hegemonic masculinities and homophobia go hand in hand and are accepted. While findings by Fraser and Travers also highlighted the role of women within this construction of dominant masculinity, my study was confined to understanding how boys worked in a boys’ only environment. However, their findings did show that while girls and boys are separated and hierarchy placed within the context of sport, boys within the group of boys are also separated and divided by sport. They found that society played an important role in “normalising compulsory heterosexuality and gender conformity” (Travers and Fraser, 2008:82). Sport is a male realm and a male heterosexual realm.

Kehler and Atkinson’s (2010) book comprising articles about boys bodies is important in understanding that it is still an ‘unspoken’ rule to not talk about bodies. Some emphasis is placed on the locker room and the antics that occur within. The experience within the locker rooms can be traumatic and harrowing for many boys as it is here that their bodies are on display. The term “social bads” is used as some of the negative aspects that are associated with boys’ locker rooms and towards sports and Physical Education lessons. Unfortunately Kehler and Atkinson found that coaches and PE staff seemed to reinforce these ‘bads’ within the schooling context. The athletic body is strongly connected to the socially accepted body. This is highlighted and emphasised in chapter seven of this research where the body is looked at as an aspect of gender creation. Again another topic that is often written about, but very little concrete change has been implemented to make it correct and safe for boys to learn about their bodies during Physical Education lessons.

Davison (2000) adds to Kehler and Atkinson's studies by reinforcing the importance of bodies in the construction of masculine identity looking particularly at the Physical Education lessons. In school we take physical education lessons for granted and little is discussed about the behaviours and antics that go on both inside the lockers and during the lessons. Often simply violence; that of boys being harmful to other boys bodies is discussed, but the process of physical education lessons is ignored and rarely discussed.

“Multiple complexities and contradictions of masculine identities and sexualities are learned by the body in school and, in turn, shape the physical body” (Davison, 2000: 256).

Davison again points out how many boys hate physical education because their bodies are on stage. Name calling and humiliation are all part and parcel of physical education lessons. Instead of the lesson being a healthy exercise for boys, it becomes a negative aspect of their lives. Teachers do not reinforce the importance of positive body image and there is little space for boys who do not 'fit in' owing to their body shape. Weak and smaller bodies are areas for easy targets and verbal or physical attacks. Davison reminds us that there are many lessons in masculinity that could be positively learnt in physical education lessons, but sadly they are not. In chapter seven I reinforce this by conferring with Davison how boys need to talk about their bodies and learn to understand and respect boys' bodies that do not conform.

Authors such as Ricciardelli and Mc Cabe (2006) add to the body of knowledge on boys' bodies and sport and highlight that sport is an important area where boys can compete with other males. Despite the media focussing excessively on body image and drawing our attention to the perfect male form and body image, Ricciardelli and Mc Cabe still found that boys were reticent when talking about their bodies. The boys in my study could happily talk about strong bodies in tackles, but the moment one mentioned bodies outside of the sporting context, it became a taboo subject. Ricciardelli and Mc Cabe interviewed 15 and 17 year old adolescents in their study and found the same to be true to these boys. While some of the boys did in fact talk about their bodies, they made sure that the language usage was confined to “the boundaries of being acceptably male” (Ricciardelli and Mc Cabe, 2006:583). This just shows that although the boys are slightly more mature than my 13 and 14 year olds, talk of the body is still confined to sporting talk. Strandbu and Kvaalem (2012) agree with the Ricciardelli and Mc Cabe in their research on both boys and girls study on body talk. Again the adolescent age group was used as research subjects. They found that while girls were slightly happier discussing bodies and the boys may

joke about bodies, the boys produced little detail when discussing their bodies in greater discussions. These boys too felt happy talking about bodies in the sporting context, but remained silenced when actual discussion occurred around bodies outside of sport. Definitely reluctance was found when talking about other boys bodies. Despite the body being of concern to many boys, it is still not a subject up for discussion. Hauge and Haavind's (2011) study was interesting in that they observed the progression of boys over several years and the manner in which they addressed the masculine body. My study highlighted only 13 – 14 year old boys and Riccardelli and Mc Cabe looked at 15 – 17 year old boys but Hauge and Haavind interviewed boys repeatedly over a number of years and showed that boys *do age and do adolescence* through the discussion of the body. The process was fascinating, from noting simple play of junior boys to understanding the complexities of the masculine form and the importance of possessing a strong body. Play and sports were seen as incidental to start but later became vitally important when developing a sense of self. Boys' bodies became a basis for differentiation and marginalisation.

Mills (2001), in his book about violence amongst boys, observed the manner in which boys in schools achieve dominance and popularity through violence. By looking at the way in which boys 'do boy' by taking into consideration their identity formation and behaviour, Mills endeavoured to find an understanding of boys in problematic areas. Primarily the aim of the book was to reduce gender based violence between boys and girls and also between boys and other boys. One feature that was specifically attended to was that of the connection between violence, sport and domination. Boys used their positions and achievements in sport to create positions of power and dominance over girls and over other boys. This gave me a good grounding on the relationship between sport and the dominant hierarchy of males within schools.

I finish the international section by looking at the contribution by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002). In their book entitled *Young masculinities: Understanding boys in contemporary society*, they contributed enormously to the section on gender and masculinity by highlighting the need to understand that boys need to have flexible masculinities in order to cope within society. Their book covered a variety of topics including the central role that gender identity plays in identity construction. These authors also remind us that this process is complex. Their research project on 11-14-year-old boys again looked at the troubling adolescent period in producing these vulnerable masculine identities.

This comprehensive book gives me as a researcher background on themes that emerged throughout the research such as race, sexuality, sport and the need for boys to talk.

Research around the world is gaining momentum especially within the context of school. But what many researchers feel and their research has found is that while research and understanding of the process is of vital importance, more importantly is developing structures to be put in place to assist and aid teachers in making the construction of masculinities a far easier journey within the school structure.

3.3 South African school based research on masculinities

Here in South Africa, Bhana, Pattman and Morrell have been instrumental in doing work on masculinity especially in the South African schools context. Morrell (1994a, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2012), has conducted extensive research into the issue of masculinity. His early studies, *Masculinity and the white boarding schools of Natal: 1880-1930*, include an examination of the impact of colonialism, in particular, on white South African private boarding schools. Later, Morrell's book *From boys to gentlemen, Settler masculinity in colonial Natal, 1880-1920*, not only looks at farmers and settlers in Natal but also highlights the origin of mostly private schools in the now KwaZulu-Natal. The private schools in South Africa were modelled on the British public school system (Morrell, 1996) and thus had many traits and characteristics of the British structure. The school in this study is similar to the British schools that have been studied. While Connaught may not be a boarding establishment school, many of the aspects of this early study by Morrell, resonates to this study.

Early studies of masculinities (see for example Biddulph, 2000):

“... assume that all boys and men possess a common trait which propels them to think and act in similar and predicable ways” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:548).

Morrell's early (1998a) studies oppose these ideas and also oppose taking boys and men for granted and he challenges the discourse “boys will be boys” (title of a book written by Myriam Miedzian in 1991). Morrell may be said to have given momentum and insight into the construction of masculinities within local contexts. Because masculinities are fluid and are reliant and developed by many aspects of a boys' life, Morrell showed how school plays an important role in the development of both masculinity and masculine identity building within the South African context. Researchers since Morrell (1998a), have added to the vast information on masculinities and masculine development

within the schooling context in South Africa. I look particularly at, not only the research on masculinities, but also the vital link that sport plays in the construction of this gender identity. Many “aspects of men’s involvement in sport can also impact on their health and personal well-being” (Drummond, 2002) and hence the importance of the link to sport in schools as a part of their masculine and gender development. It was thought that sport built character (Drummond, 2002) and without it, one did not develop into a real man. Sport developed a man’s value of courage and strength (Messner, 1992). So, sport was seen and is still seen in many schools as a valued site for the young men in their development of masculinity and masculine identity.

More recent studies by Bantjes and Nieuwoudt (2014) in South African schools resonate with Mac an Ghail’s and Swain’s earlier studies and have further added that masculinity and male heterosexuality are complex phenomena that boys negotiate when performing gender. In order to understand this complexity that is the masculinising process, it is necessary to understand the complex gendered regimes that are prevalent in schools. Institutions, such as schools, create certain norms, rules and standards. This informal life or hidden curriculum of school life has a fundamental influence on the construction of masculine identities (see for example Mac an Ghail, 1994; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Connell, 2000). Thus emphasising the importance of chapter four in this study, as this chapter attempts to give insight and understanding of the gender regime of Connaught High by highlighting the day-to-day experiences of the school. The hidden curriculum and the informal life are explained in detail. This informal life:

“... provides boys with a series of collective meanings of what it is to be a boy, and there are constant pressure on individuals to perform and behave to the expected group norms” (Swain, 2003:302)

Bhana’s (2008) early contributions to the research in schools in South Africa have been particularly impressive and have focussed on primary school-aged South African pupils. Young black boys in particular have been researched when understanding the importance of sport in their development of masculinities. The patterns and manner in which they create their masculine identities is discussed and the discourses they encounter when constructing this identity. Bhana reminds us that race, gender and class are important aspects in the construction of masculinities within the South African context. Sport was a key aspect in the construction of dominant masculinities and the marginalisation of weaker boys and girls. Bhana (2009) later reminds us that boys are never too young within schooling contexts to

discuss aspects of masculinity. The importance of teachers within the schooling context and the construction of young masculinities is highlighted within her study. Her boys aptly named “rugger buggers and smoothies” (pg 333) show the meaning that very young boys give to sport in their construction of identity. Teachers unfortunately take for granted typical assumptions about gender and young children and perpetuate this ideal within the pupils they teach. As a result, they create situations for male power within the school. Again, Bhana highlights that gender issues need to be addressed in primary school years at school in order for the stereotypical patterns of behaviour to be stopped.

Pattman and Bhana (2010) have further added to the research by looking at black and Indian pupils in formerly white schools and their creation of gender identity post-apartheid years. Their research emphasises the changing constructions of children’s identities in post-apartheid schools and remind us that masculinities are continually fluid and open to change. Anderson’s (2009) study on boys in trouble in the Wentworth area of Durban, added to the masculinity studies within South Africa by highlighting the violence and power developed by boys in this area. Despite the area being renowned for gangs and violence, there are still a variety of patterns of masculinity being developed and not all are violent.

Work on uses of homophobia by African masculinities has been highlighted by Ratele (2014b) and further adds to the volume of research within South Africa and Southern Africa. His research is instrumental in understanding the use of homophobia in African ruling men and more importantly in the building of hegemonic masculinity within the African male culture. Purposeful harming of and violence against gay and lesbians within Southern Africa is directly resultant of the “untenability of the hegemonic discourses of Africanness and African masculinity” (Ratele, 2014b:126). Homophobia and the link between hegemonic African masculinities is highlighted by Ratele and his research in both Malawi and South Africa shows the continued incidents of homophobia occurring within South Africa when the construction of masculinity is involved. Homophobia and homophobic acts need to be curbed within southern Africa. Persecution and violence towards gay and lesbians in both Malawi and South Africa adds to the failure of positive non-violent construction of hegemonic masculinities within South Africa.

Govender (2011) adds to the work of Ratele, by emphasising the boys who use excessive heteronormative behaviour in order to ‘prove’ their masculinity and avoid being classified or linked to homosexuality. He uses the term ‘hypersexual’ that is seen as the complete opposite as homosexual. Shefer’s (2015) work on gender practices within South Africa raises concerns on how much research

has reproduced “gendered, classed and raced othering practices and discourses” (Shefer, 2015:1) and if indeed the research has simply “bolstered regulatory and disciplinary responses to young women’s sexualities” (Shefer, 2015:1). Thus focussing on the perpetuating violence against both men and women within South Africa. Shefer, Kruger and Schepers’s (2015) article view the current understanding of adolescent masculinities within South Africa. They highlight the importance of documenting the relationship between power and violence in the construction of masculinities.

Karlsson (2004) provides interesting insight into the world of school space and how children learn to position themselves within the schools both during the era of apartheid in schools and post-apartheid times. The hierarchy is investigated and the manner in which children attain power through space in schools is investigated. Already as early as 1995, Prinsloo conducted research in South African schools highlighting how space was used to reproduce gender within schools. Karlsson found that the hidden curriculum within school structures provided a valid place for hierarchy and special spacial power to be developed. She found that:

“The social practice of apartheid in school space powerfully produced experiences that led informants to position themselves racially, economically and culturally in relation to others within their society” (Karlsson, 2009:342).

Bantjes and Nieuwoudt’s (2014) research of mayhem within a private boys’ school within South Africa, highlights the position of power that is created when boys create gender identities. Their research proved the consequences of masculine culture of the school caused the mayhem to occur and was resultant of the “gendered practices which are frequently (albeit unconsciously) performed within the school” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014: 3). This research was particularly interesting to me as it was provided from a private schools perspective and added insight to this research in the area of power.

Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall (2013) write about the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its part in the theoretical framework of men’s’ power. These authors specifically look at understanding this concept within the South African context with the concept of race being at the centre. The term hegemonic masculinity is utilised throughout South Africa not only in the schooling context. However, these researchers remind us that the term cannot be a fixed one and cannot only be associated with violence. Hegemonic masculinity is not always constructed with violence but by consent.

The affect that race still has within schools within South Africa is highlighted by Teeger (2015). Despite the schools being run twenty odd years after apartheid was in place within South Africa, the racial diversity within schools is highly prominent. With the school being highly racially diverse, it should be the perfect opportunity for pupils to understand and certainly challenge “racial discourse and practice” (Teeger, 2015:226). However, Teeger found as did I in this study, that schools still “reproduce the very hierarchies that they are meant to dismantle” (pg 226). Overt racist practices still exist within schools of South Africa and these raciest practices are reinforced through subtle and as Teeger states “race-neutral practices” (pg226). Teeger performed eighteen months of intensive research in two racially diverse South African schools. Schools are places where pupils interact with people of different races for the first time. It is a place where the pupils learn to “identify, confront and respond to interpersonal racism” (Teeger, 2015:227). Yet despite this, schools are apprehensive about talking about race and resist talking about race altogether. Teachers are desperately scared of being prejudiced or being thought of racist themselves when approaching the topic. I too encountered some difficulty when talking about race. When I tried to probe the conversation on race with Lamont and Carlos, the boys shut me out and the conversations were short. Teeger reminds me that by teachers not talking about race within the classroom, pupils learn to “mute their perceptions of racism at school” (pg 228). This is not positive for racial reconstruction within the country. The ‘Rainbow nation’ shall never be achieved if we do not approach the subject of race with pupils at our schools. By teachers and certainly pupils silencing and remaining silence on the topics of racism within schools us teachers are

“validating some students perceptions of reality and invalidating the perceptions of others, thus structuring unequal experiences for young people within school grounds” (Teeger, 2015:239).

This is incredibly harmful within our schools and certainly not allowing advancement in terms of the racial divide within the country.

The current research within the South African context is indeed impressive and expanding and certainly adds to the research that is found within the world. But particularly pertaining to the South African context and masculine development within South Africa.

3.4 Conclusion

“Several researchers have argued that the ways in which boys act as masculine, and their masculine identities, need to be seen as gendered practices which are relational, contradictory

and multiple. In this respect, a gap in our current understanding of boys and masculinities is of complex notions of what it means to ‘do boy’ in specific contexts (Connell, 1996; Davies, 1997), that is, of the multifarious ways in which young masculinities are made” (Frosh et al., 2003:3).

Masculinity and the construction thereof, is neither simple nor fixed. This chapter discussed the understandings of masculinity identity, bodies and the importance that masculinity plays in the theoretical framework that is utilised in this study. It also shows the link and importance of sport in the lives of South Africans and in particular, boys in schools. Because “sport has long been regarded as the site for the development of masculine behaviours” (Sabo, 1985:2), institutions have been sites for gendered research (Connell, 1983; Morrell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Bhana 2008 and Pattman and Bhana 2010) and the association between the boys, sport, schools and gender. However, the choices that the boys make are in neither simple, nor instinctive. In fact, the choices are highly motivated by gender, race and power and are certainly not inherent.

This chapter reviewed both the international and local (South African) literature on the topics of masculine identity, bodies, sport and the link with schools. There have been numerous and varied contributions throughout the world to understanding the concepts and theories of gender, masculinity, ethnicity and sport in schools (Morrell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008b) and this thesis looks to adding to these considerable contributions, but within the South African private schooling context. In order to gain insight and understanding and to position this thesis, I have reviewed and located the work of others, in order to motivate for the need for this study. While this chapter looks at the scholarship in this field, chapters five, six and seven feature the implications of the boys’ choices of sport on both their gender and masculinity.

This research study makes use of Connell’s ideas and theories, not only because they are extensive and thorough, but because the structure of the South African schools situation expresses that hegemonic masculinity and thus “successful masculinity[,] is embedded within sporting prowess” (Bhana, 2008:6). The boys in this research all come from different cultures and different backgrounds although most of the boys are from wealthy middle to upper class families. Connell maintains that it is not possible to ignore the “cultural character of gender” (Connell, 1995: 52) and this is noted during the interviews with the young men and highlighted in chapter three of this thesis.

This chapters refers to some of the current research that has been conducted throughout the world and within South Africa on the aspect of masculine identity construction. The analysis chapters that will follow will rely on these authors' research and conclusions when fully analysing the incidents that occurred at Connaught High.

This thesis asks the question that in South Africa, with sport demographics trying to change, does race still play a part of their gender identity decision making. Certain race groups did not have access to sporting facilities and were not encouraged or accepted to play certain sports in the past. Race quotas in South African teams have tried to rectify this by forcing and coercing different races in to various sports. As the title of this thesis suggests, the major concern is the gendered analysis of masculinity and its link to sport. I try to make sense of the boys in the school. What is missing from current existing work of which I have mentioned in the above chapter, is the life of a sporty boy in a private all boys' school in South Africa post-apartheid. I feel that there is a need to link gender and masculinity specifically into South African schools and their histories and ask the question if indeed sport can be seen and used "... as one of the key areas of reconciliation in the New South Africa" (Nauright, 1997:1)

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

Introduction

“A researcher’s methodology – the system of principles that guides his/her research – is based on his/ her understanding of the world, including its social or physical attributes” (Gough, 2000:6).

Because we do not all view, understand or experience the world in the same way, how we have learnt to behave and the rules we have for our life, guide and dictate our actions and the manner in which we behave. However, because we are socially constructed, we do not subscribe to a fixed set of principles as our lives are continually changing and our view of the world is thus hugely dynamic.

This chapter focuses on the following: background to the study, purpose, paradigm, context, sampling strategy, data collection methods, ethical considerations and limitations and techniques. It provides and explains the framework used for bridging the research questions that are asked and links this to the execution and implementation of the research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that is used to generate data for this study. The chapter concludes with a snapshot of the boys who participated in the research in order to gain an understanding into their backgrounds and lives.

4.1 Research design

This research involves 18 months of fieldwork with eight boys in a private single-sex school in KwaZulu-Natal. The study endeavours to understand the construction of boys’ masculine identities using sport as the main variable. The manner in which these boys use discourses of gender in order to construct their gender identities, is explored.

Qualitative research focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings and for the purpose of this research the natural setting is the school structure and the life and days of boys at Connaught High. It also involves taking into consideration the thoughts, ideas and feelings of the participants of the study; that is, in all their complexity (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This type of ethnographic research was exactly what was required in order for an analysis of the research questions to be addressed. Drawing on qualitative research, within the interpretivist paradigm, this ethnographic study afforded me the

opportunity to become fully immersed in the boys' lives and to understand their schooling experiences better.

4.2 Ethnographic research

Ethnography is a 'social science' research method (Genzuk, 2003). This type of research requires in-depth (over a lengthy period of time) fieldwork and immersion conducted by a researcher who is often in the field and lives and works alongside the people who are being studied and thus suited me perfectly. Because this type of study is conducted on site, it has a naturalistic setting and is highly personalised (Sangasubana, 2009). Ethnographies study the natural setting of the participants and try to explain the messy complexities of life of the participants in a language that can clarify what is happening (Swain, 2006c). Ethnography is a hugely rich and informative method of acquiring information and researchers have relied on this type of study to draw rich information from the participants (Renold, 2005; Swain, 2006c; Mendick, 2000).

An ethnographic study is a written description of the particular culture, custom, belief or, specifically for the purpose of this research, the behaviour of boys. The study involves working with the boys rather than viewing them as objects. As Sangasubana reminds us,

“ethnographers search for predicable patterns in the lived human experience by carefully observing and participating in the lives of those under study” (p567).

The personal experiences of the boys are the focus of the study and this is not simply achieved through observation, but was maintained and included an intensive study and discussions with the participants. This study encompassed interviews, observation and a careful study of English written essays by the participants. This type of research is highly personalised as the researcher is both an observer and a participant in the lives of the boys being studied (Sangasubana, 2011). One important aspect of this research is to provide the boys with a voice and the interviews were deliberately created to give the boys an opportunity to talk (Swain, 2006c) and to voice their ideas and emotions. The aim was then to take these 'voices' and make them comprehensible. The primary aim of this research is to explain the link between sport and masculinities as they are expressed by a group of eight boys at Connaught, by being as true to their words and expression as possible. In order for the 'story' of the participants to be told, all forms of narrative input (group interviews, focus discussion groups, individual interviews, written accounts) were collected and utilised (Hammersley, 1990) as well as including observations and

incidents that occurred throughout the study. Ethnographers collect data over extended periods of time and in multiple ways in order for triangulation to occur (Sangasubana, 2011). There were many experiences that occurred during the research and I guarded against making false assumptions or misinterpreting experiences (Swain, 2006c) by re-reading the data back to the participants and remaining faithful to the data being analysed. The boys thoroughly enjoyed being reread the conversations and interviews and the boys often laughed about what they had said in the heat of the conversation. Slight adjustments needed to be made to what they had said but no boy asked me to remove anything that had been said. Some boys wanted to further clarify what they had meant in the conversation and this was added to the transcripts. This part of the process of ethnography is considered dialogic since “conclusions and interpretations (are) formed through given comments and feedback from those who are under study” (Sangasubana, 2011:567). This is an important aspect of ethnographic study as being a part of the school by being a teacher at the actual school, can sometimes mean I misinterpret information, and I seriously guarded against doing this to the boys’ stories and ideas.

An ethnographic study conducted in a boys’ only school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa is interesting and relevant in order to understand the views, actions, problems and perspectives of year-eight boys. The boys’ experiences are viewed up close and personally over a year-and-a-half of study and while the study is not about me, I am inextricably a part of it. And this is not uncommon, but an integral aspect of ethnography. Ethnography involves a full commitment to the environment and here I felt lucky to be a part of the school as I could witness day to day occurrences and follow ups to our discussions. Some researchers only have time to view schools for a month or so, but being actively part of the school was a fantastic opportunity for this research. While studying gender identity and behaviour around sport, I also found myself being more aware of the boys in my care (my classroom and sports field). As Swain (2006c) reminds us as researchers, the task of an ethnographer is to “make behaviour of a different way of life comprehensible” (p206). I became more understanding of the boys’ ‘simple everyday gestures’. Below is an example from my field notes taken after a parent interview:

Interview with Mrs James regarding Simon (year 9) and his academics and sport - May 2012

Mrs James is worried about her son Simon’s academic achievement and confidence. Simon has just completed a very successful water polo season as captain and now is battling with his academics and the start of the rugby season. He is slightly injured in rugby and cannot play in the matches. Mrs

James cannot understand how her son's positive self-image has all of a sudden become 'lost'. [*boys self-image – change from one season in sport to another – need to be successful in both water polo and rugby in order to maintain positive self-image*]

Figure 1 Extract from field notes

While possibly just a simple interview with a parent, it allowed me further detail and insight into the lives of boys at Connaught High. Studying the boys' image around sport also provided the boys opportunity to communicate better with me. I would watch most hockey and rugby games over the winter season and the boys in the study would chat to me about games over the weekend on the Monday at school. Asking if I had seen them score a try or tackle someone of the opposition team. This afforded me to develop a good relationship with the boys in the group. Because I had attended matches and shown an interest in their sport, the boys reciprocated and showed a big interest in my study. While I was still very much their teacher, we managed to secure a bond as they knew I was interested in their sport and how they played. Throughout the research period, I was still called by Mrs Bowley or Mam by the boys, as being a part still of the academic team, I was still their teacher during 'school time'. The boys began to feel that the interviews that were conducted at break or after school became 'our time' and most managed to understand the relaxed interview time and the structured academic time. The boys were all quite capable of developing and performing different roles, one in academic time and one in the relaxed interviews. Swain (2006c) calls this 'multiple positions' (p209). I think both the boys in the study and myself needed to develop this.

4.3 Sampling strategy

It is common practice at Connaught for the English department to spend the first week of the boys' grade eight year in class discussions about how they have found their first few days of high school. The boys discuss and write about their anxieties, their joys and excitements of high school life. I attended the first few English classes that the grade eight boys experienced. I observed the lessons where the English staff firstly ask the boys about who they are, what their strengths are and what their goals are for the coming year. The boys then discuss their initial fears, joys and anxieties of high school. Through observation of the lessons, it was a perfect opportunity for me to understand and identify the boys in the grade who were fanatical about their sport. These boys spoke often about their sporting

experiences and communicated with ease with their teachers. Having taught some of the boys in the primary school, it was also easy for me to identify some of the participants that I wanted to join the group. Thus the participants were purposively chosen due to their ‘sporty nature’ (interest in sport) and experiences, as these boys all shared a genuine love of sport.

This qualitative ethnographic study used observation, semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews as well as focus group discussions and also written accounts completed in English lessons (as described above) of the participants’ daily lives. With the boys being new to the high school, I not only observed the first few academic lessons where the boys were being taught but also sat during break times and listened to their conversations in order to understand which boys would be suitable for the study.

Extract from field notes - conversation in Mrs Jones’s English Class – February 2012

Mrs Jones Please stand up (points to Owen), please introduce yourself to the class

Owen My name is Owen and my word [*to describe myself*] is sporty and I was in the prep school last year. [*Owen was in Connaught primary school last year.*]

Mrs Jones Okay, so tell us a bit about yourself, Owen.

Owen I love sport, it’s all I do, not too good in the classroom, but I also sing a bit. [*class giggle*]. *Ja*, it may seem weird that I sing too, ‘cos I do mostly sport.

Mrs Jones So what sports do you do?

Owen Water Polo, Mam. In summer that is... rugby during the winter.

Figure 2 Extract from Field Notes

The sampling strategy used took the form of purposive sampling. In other words, the boys were specifically chosen owing to their sporty nature and enjoyment of sport. Because the boys were specifically chosen and not randomly selected, this makes the selection of participants, therefore, also not unbiased. Non-probability sampling means that it is a sampling technique where the samples (participants) are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the school equal chances of being selected. This needed to be done owing to the nature of the study.

Eight boys were approached after the first week of observation of English classes and break time discussions. I called the boys individually into my classroom and explained to them the process of the research. I also handed them ethical clearance forms for both their parents and themselves to complete. The boys were all very excited about the experience especially since it involved discussions around sport and the very next day, I was handed back forms from all boys and recipients. Many of the boys asked eagerly when the first interviews were to start.

A limitation of this study may well be the size of the sampling group, that is, eight. But ethnographic research requires and seeks in-depth understandings of the lives of boys and I believe this was achieved using this small sample of boys. I think that the eight boys that were included in the research provided sufficient data to analyse and the racial composition was adequate to understand the racial identity that is still very much inculcated in the gender regime of the school. Discussion of sport in the South African context, cannot be done without race, considering the important aspect that race has played and still plays in all sport in South Africa. Thus choosing boys from varying racial groups was important for the study to achieve a balanced and thorough approach and understanding to sport in the schooling context. I felt by choosing boys from a variety of race groups, I could get a better perspective of the impact that sport played in their development of their gendered identities. The choice of boys also proved hugely beneficial, as they were comfortable during the focus groups and highly articulate, which allowed for easy discussions and good banter amongst the boys. Further research may look into the private school boys' world of sport and see the progression of boys' sporting ideals and identities over a longer period of time. Having the boys as part of a research group over the five years of their high school career may prove interesting.

The selected boys were individually interviewed nine times during an 18-month period with the objectives of the research being defined in the opening interviews. The first individual interviews occurred when the boys began grade eight at their new school and participated in a summer sport. They were also individually interviewed at the end of the summer season in order to review their season. A table of sports that is offered during the summer and winter seasons at Connaught High can be found on Appendices 2 and 3 (page 191 and 192). Interviews also occurred both before and after the winter seasons in both their grade eight and grade nine years.

The system of principles that guided this specific research took the form of semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions; collecting views and ideas from young men in a bid to

understand their construction of masculinity through sport. Reading the diaries and stories they wrote in English lessons afforded me additional opportunities to read and listen to what boys have to say about their lives and connections to sport, and to explain their ideas and thoughts in greater detail. I also purposefully observed boys during break times and on their way to classes during their daily routine at Connaught High. Their ideas and thoughts were viewed and recorded, not simply just as windows, but as answers to why and how boys in a private school construct their masculinities around their sport (Bhana and Pattman, 2010). These informal conversations that often occurred during break times, were recorded in my field notes.

First Break – June 2012

Sitting outside the tuckshop while I do break duty. I sit with a group of Grade 9 students discussing the soccer over the weekend.

John Mam, do you watch soccer? British soccer I mean?

Me Yes, why?

John So what team do you support?

Me Liverpool [*some in the group giggle*]

John Oh, sorry mam, see you lost to Man U, sorry.

Me And you? Which team?

John But Man U of course, mam, who else.... Here in the group we all support Man U.

Me So is this why you sit together?

John No, not really, we are just friends and we all just support the same team.

Chris Maybe we wouldn't be friends if we supported other teams? [*group all laugh*]

Na.... we would still be friends. We are the Man U group.

Figure 3 Extract from Field Notes

It provided a time for the boys to discuss any topic and also involved boys that were not a part of the study group. The data gleaned from these conversations often provided confirmation of ideas or concepts from discussions that had been held in focus groups or individual interviews. I also spent many breaks in my classroom catching up on work and boys come into my classroom early from break. These conversations and notes were also added to my field notes as they were often sporty in nature. This added to the research being classified as valid, as other boys outside of the study group were confirming ideas and incidents. Guided by concrete research questions and a set research design, rational and plausible conclusions were then drawn (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

The conversations between the boys and I were highly entertaining as the boys often expected me to understand what they meant with me being sporty. The boys would say, “you know what it is like, ma’am” in conversations as if to say I understood what it was like to play sport. This was a wonderful part of this ethnographic research as I felt that the boys included me in their conversations. The group spoke freely and with passion about their ordeals and troubles in their construction of masculinity and thought that I would understand what they were discussing with me being a sportsman.

Connell (1995) states that collecting anecdotes of one’s life is one of the oldest and most reliable research methods in social sciences. This research was not simply a method of eliciting knowledge from the boys but also allowing the boys an avenue to be open and to talk about their masculinities – it provides the boys with a voice. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) refers to this type of research as an interpretive approach as the researcher tries to understand the ordinary language of the boys and make sense of their social worlds. Because interpretive research relies on first-hand accounts, data was, therefore produced during the interview process and not simply gathered or collected (Gough, 2000). The involved detail of their accounts and specific language used by the boys is therefore interpreted and a position of empathetic understanding is used (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

“Boys’ development, like girls’, involves a tremendous amount of learning through and about human relationships” (Connell, 2008a: 135).

The boys’ relationships with each other were purposefully discussed during individual interviews and focus discussions as human relationships form a vital part of human identity. You classify yourself often by how others view you. An example of this was the group that supporter Manchester United (from above). They classified themselves as the Man U group. Sport gave them a sense of identity and it was what made them friends and have a bond.

During the course of the year, the boys were also asked to write an account of their first few days of high school and also their best sporting moments of their summer and winter season. I took in all these 'essay style' works and highlighted sections on what they had written that could be used in the analysis chapters. This allowed me a start to see where themes and ideas could be created for the analysis chapters. I distinctly noted common themes and threads that were running through a few of the boys discursive essays. They were then all interviewed at the end of the fourth term to discuss their entire year of sport. After analysing the data, I realised that there was a need to repeat the process of interviews and to talk to the boys under research more for the following half year. So interviews were again conducted at the start and end of both the summer and winter sport season in 2013. Each boy was thus individually interviewed nine times over the 18-month period – before the summer season began, after the summer season was completed, before the winter season started, after the winter sports season had been completed and at the end of the boys first year in grade eight. The group were then interviewed again before summer and after summer seasons and before winter and after winter season in their second year of high school (2013).

Interviews were conducted on the school premises in a quiet office away from distractions and noise. I predicted that each interview would last a maximum of half an hour. While some interviews lasted 20 minutes, others lasted 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the openness of the student and some had more to say than others. While I had an interview schedule with the questions I wanted to ask, the interviews allowed for flexibility and for the participants to influence the direction of the discussions. Questions were also open ended, which allowed the participants to answer in their own words and express ideas that may not have been anticipated. This type of interviewing allowed for the boys to express their thoughts, feelings, concerns, anxieties, perceptions and opinions. This flow of communication allowed for a creative, rich and in-depth method of research.

The first 'formal' interview was an individual interview with each boy. I say 'formal' in the sense that the boys were formally sat down and introduced to the outline of the study and my intentions for them during the study was explained (Swain, 2006c). Each first individual interview lasted about 20 minutes and the boys expressed any concerns or questions that had about the study. All were very eager to participate and looked forward to the first group interview. Interviews were conducted outside of academic time and I made sure no schooling time was lost due to the interviews. The first group interview was with all eight boys and started with the boys being asked what sport they had chosen for the summer season and what had made them make this choice. This interview lasted an hour and the

boys eagerly presented their choices and options for summer sports. The group and individual interviews were both formal and narrative in style and incorporated both semi-structured and open-ended type questions. This means that some of the questions were predetermined and provided a guide to initiate the interview and topics were presented to them about which they could talk at length. This allowed the boys to simply chat about ideas of sport that fascinated or troubled them. These face-to-face interviews yielded a high response rate that was positive for the study. However, throughout the interviews I had a few questions jotted down that I wanted answered and made sure that these questions were answered during the session. So while the group could talk freely on certain topics, I needed to bring them back every now and then to the questions that I needed answering (Swain, 2006c).

The focus discussion groups that then followed varied in size and length. Some were just two boys together who shared the same passion for a certain sport, while others were a group of boys who had varying or similar opinions on topics. Some focus groups were quietly spoken and not much was said between the participants. These were difficult to conduct as a researcher and of limited duration, as the boys' answers were short and to the point. These focus group discussions were recorded, but the information gleaned from many of them was not utilised in the analysis chapters. Others, like the conversations of homophobia and the difference between rugby and hockey were highly animated with boys moving from their chairs to sitting on the desk as they really became fully involved in getting their points across. Some boys even asked me to stop the recorder, to make sure that what they had said, had been recorded, in case someone had been talking at the same time. These focus groups were often loud and boys were highly talkative. I had to often remind the group of boys to let others talk and to allow their peers time to voice their opinions.

Extract from Focus Group – June 2012 – Carlos, Lamont, Owen, Craig and David

Lamont Mam, mam... stop the video thing.

Me What do you mean, Lamont?

Lamont [*moves to sitting on the table*] Mam... I don't think you got my last thing... the thing I said about softies and hockey. Can you re-run it [*the recorder*] so we can check?

Figure 4 Extract from Focus Group Discussion

All the data from the interviews was digitally recorded. The boys’ thoughts and ideas were analysed using content and discourse analysis, which positioned the boys as agents who are active in negotiating their own social worlds. In addition, they were seen as experts in all matters concerning them. While research “cannot guarantee its results in advance” (Connell, 1995: 92), the interview method is a valuable and strong method of acquiring information. In addition, the constructions of masculinities are projects: a dynamic, fluid exploration (Connell, 2005) of a man’s life and the changes in his life. In other words, stories and discussions were perfect ways of understanding the situations that had shaped and moulded these men’s lives. In total, each of the eight boys was individually interviewed nine times in the 18 months, eight group interviews were conducted and 20 focus group discussions were recorded. I also conducted countless informal conversations with boys and staff in the school during the course of the study at varying times and at different places (Swain, 2006c). When situations were relevant to my study, then these were described in my field notes and formed part of my analysis chapters.

Table 2 Summary of Data Collection

| | Type of Data Collection | Who was interviewed? | Date | Average duration of interview |
|----|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Group interviews | All boys together | February, March, May, June, October 2012 February, March, May 2013, | 30 minutes |
| 2. | Individual interviews | Each boy individually nine times | February, March, May, June, August, September, October 2012 February, May 2013 | 20 minutes |
| 3. | Focus Group Discussions | Selected boys: March 2012 (Carlos, Lamont, Owen, Craig, Zaid, David) June (Carlos, Lamont, Owen, Craig, David) | March (x3), June (x7), October (x 5) 2012 May 2013 (x5) | 40 minutes |

| | | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>June (Campbell, Richard)</p> <p>October (Zaid and Richard)</p> <p>May 2013(Lamont, Owen, Carlos,David)</p> | | |
| 4. | Essays analysed | <p>All boys- taken from English class</p> <p>All boys</p> | <p>February 2012</p> <p>October 2012</p> | |

The fact that I am both an adult and a senior teacher at the school that the boys attend, could have posed a challenge. The boys in the research group while excited about the whole process of being part of the research group were also slightly apprehensive to start as they were new to the school and some had not met me before the interviews started. Power relations that of pupil and staff, that are evident within schooling structures can pose a problem with interview techniques, as boys are nervous to voice their opinions in front of a staff member. However, most of the boys were highly articulate and eventually comfortable during the interviews and as far as I could discern this did not pose a problem. Swain (2006c) does remind researchers of the importance of continually maintaining relationships with the boys throughout the data collection period and to be forever mindful of the power relations that the researcher can have. This is especially true for me as a new, novice researcher and in the fact that I am a senior teacher at the school. I was lucky in that I spent each moment of the year in the school, being a member of staff at the school. This allowed me continual exposure to events and observations. Daily observations were vital to understand the boys even further and often the topics of the interviews were reinforced by observations. The observations helped reinforce what the boys were discussing in the interviews. Swain (2006c) considers this type of observation as “*semi-participant observation*” (p201). This means that while I was not a pupil in the school, I became involved in the research by being a part of the everyday school life. I experienced the same situations as the boys and while I was a staff member and possibly interpreted them differently, I was still a part of the school.

Keeping field notes of incidents that occurred during the 18 months of observation was difficult. Once I began to write the analysis chapters, often events that had occurred during the time, came back to me as a memory and I wrote as accurately as possible, the events that occurred. Researchers such as Walford (2000) states that few researchers actually take field notes in that it is far too time consuming when collecting data. However, I found the field notes to be an additive support to the interviews when writing up the data analysis. I found examples of boys who were not part of the study who through their actions and observations could reinforce the topics of discussion by the boys under study. One example that was not used from my field notes is an observation at the school championship swimming gala.

Swimming Gala – 4 February 2012, Wednesday afternoon

The entire high school is to attend the championship gala during the school day. Only a few of the best swimmers get to swim. The rest of the school are in the stands watching the events. It is a bit like a bull ring around the pool area. Boys chat and cheer for friends – especially the older boys in the school. The senior swimming boys seem to love this event and chants from the crowd like: “We call on old Travis to give us a wave, give us a wave”. To which the swimmer called stands on the block and waves to the crowd. The boys all cheer in response. *[confidence of older boys]*

Many of the boys are incredibly well build and have defined bodies. These boys walk around the pool almost parading their bodies. *[body image of senior boys]* Some of the juniors seem a little more shy and cover up with a towel around their waists until their event. *[body image of junior boys]*

Figure 5 Example from field notes

Traditionally this form of study is associated with a small sample, like this one, that is not representative of the wider population. This study does not seek to generalise the findings to a wider population. It is an in-depth study that seeks to explore the specific experiences of this group of boys. There are 96 grade eights in the year group, but time and feasibility constraints rendered it impossible for me to increase the size of the study. I needed to ensure that the sample size was manageable especially when it came to time management with the information gleaned for analysis (Swain, 2006c). I predicted that I would be able to generate sufficient data from these eight participants in order to address the research questions presented. Being an ethnographic study also allowed me time to become involved in the boys lives, by walking around the school and taking part in casual conversations during

break times and to study the boys in sufficient depth. Once the data was collected at the end of October 2012 in the form of audio-taped interviews and written accounts, I then transcribed all the audio-taped interviews as well as detailing any distinct body language and non-verbal gestures, which was noted during the interviews. The data was now in the form of words that the respondent's used to express the events, anecdotes and moments in their lives. Recording all the details from the interview was difficult to replicate, but I endeavoured to take utmost care during this process by reading back the transcribed version to the boys of their ideas and thoughts. The boys found little to no discrepancies in the transcripts from their interviews and written accounts.

No experiences of any traumatic memories or any seriously painful incidents were evoked during the course of the interviews. I did notice, however, that when issues of race and bodies were brought into the conversation, particularly in group interviews and focus discussions that the boys were hesitant to answer. They carefully chose their words and even said:

“I don't mean to be racist, or to put anyone down but....” (David)

and

“I don't know how to say this without being seen as racist, but the black guys do not swim”
(Craig)

and

“Boys don't talk about bodies...it's gay” (Lamont).

During these times, I tried to encourage the boys to talk, but was often cut short and the interview conversation was stopped as if the boys seemed to think that this subject of conversation needed no further explanation. The boys stopped the discussion with very short answers such as:

“That is what boys do” (Lamont).

This again reminded me that I was still a teacher of these boys and certain subjects were still not up for discussion. While I tried to have open interviews, I still had a set of questions that I wanted answered and thus the interviews were regarded as Burgess (1988) refers to as “conversations with a purpose” (p153). Individual interviews allowed boys to chat about any topic under sport that they had found

interesting in the season. The focus group discussions, revolved more around a specific topic that had evolved from individual interviews. It gave both me and the boys time to address certain statements and thus allowed the topic to become more dynamic. Boys shared ideas and also argued points across when they had a difference of opinions in the groups focus discussions. They also reminded each other of events that had occurred during the season that could reinforce a topic or point. I tried once to have an entire group of eight discuss a certain focus topic, but this allowed certain boys (like Lamont and Owen) to dominate the conversations and quieter lads like Richard, remained quiet during the entire interview, even when provoked by me to comment. I thus structured most of the focus groups around smaller numbers of boys and this proved to be far more successful.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

While ethnography can be a hugely beneficial style of research gathering, it can also have some serious pitfalls. Despite utmost care being taken throughout the process of gathering information, I was indeed wary of some areas of reliability and validity of the data. Neuman (2003) refers to the first pitfall as that of reactivity – the degree to which my presence as a researchers influences the behaviours of the participants of the research. Perhaps because the boys knew they were under study, they may behave and react differently. Many of the ideas and thoughts of the boys during the interview process were confirmed by my observations. I also think that I was as unobtrusive as possible and caused little disruption in the boys' lives so as to limit the reactivity.

Reliability was again another hurdle that needed to be overcome as a novice researcher. Cross checking and verifying information from boys in individual interviews, was reaffirmed by focus groups. I thus acquired the information sometimes from a different angle or perspective from the boys by either hearing the same story in a focus group or actually watching the situation. Group focus discussions proved a hugely reliable way of verifying information as I would begin with a question or situation that had been brought up in an individual interview and then the rest of the boys would reinforce the story or add another perspective to the same story.

I certainly had doubts in my validity as a researcher at the start of this research project as I had trouble posing correct questions during interviews and often found I had a huge amount of data after the interview was completed, but once I started to analyse it, it lacked richness. I had to restructure questions and questioning techniques in order to get sufficient data that could be useful when analysed. The data needed to accurately reflect and describe the boys who were under my study (Neuman, 2003).

I also improved the validity of the study, by returning the transcripts to the boys and re-reading to them what they had said, so that I could confirm that I had accurately recorded their ideas and thoughts. Angrosino (2007) also adds that a study must have pragmatic validity and transferability so that this study once completed can also have relevance outside of the study.

Ethnography is hugely labour intensive and time intensive spending many hours in the field and often one has to ask how much is enough (Singleton and Straits, 2005)? Field work lacks the structure that can be acquired through quantitative research, but is nonetheless, hugely rewarding. Taking into consideration the huge volume of data that is collected I did experience difficulty in the data analysis section and interpretation (Roper and Shapira, 2000).

4.5 Data analysis techniques

The aim of the data analysis was to give the participants of the study a voice. The participants' own words were transcribed verbatim to get some insight into their lives. While I was conducting the interviews I made notes of anything I thought significant relating to particular situations in their lives.

These interview transcripts were then carefully analysed after having been recorded. According to Connell (1995) the language used in the interviews is not the only important aspect of the interview but it is also vital to see the language in context. It was thus, essential that a process be followed as it is not sufficient merely to record the interviews as proof and evidence – they had also to be analysed.

Analysis of data is often a troublesome period in an ethnographer's life as much is written down, observed and saved, but only a small fraction is actually used in the final account. I read and re-read through all the data in order to identify themes that could be used for this research project. Many failed attempts at identifying topics were tried and left alone. The transcripts revealed many topics that could have been used but three main issues continued to emerge: bodies, homophobia and identity. I took all conversations, observations and essays and highlighted conversations that fitted into these three categories. Some researchers refer to this as coding, by highlighting in a certain colour all the conversations and comments that occurred around homophobia, for example, I could finally see the analysis chapters developing. I thus took all the information that was connected to one topic and grouped meaningful conversations and information together. I could then compare and contrast and identify patterns that were emerging (Sangasubana, 2011). After I had decided on these topics for analysis, I returned to the group of eight boys and discussed the final themes for the research project

asking if they had anything further to add to the transcripts that I would be using. The boys were all happy with the themes and did not want to add any further topics.

Once main topics had been identified, I broke them down further into patterns by grouping the ideas into smaller sets that could be used as headings in a chapter. Themes developed throughout the chapter and were linked together by the subheadings. Outliers or events and information that did not fit with the rest were also identified and noted (Roper and Shapira, 2000). I needed to confirm whether these ideas should be included or simply left out depending on their contribution to the research.

The essays that were written by the boys both during their English class and for the study were narrative in style. I read their 'stories' and used sections of the essays that were pertinent to the themes that had emerged. I also used a few parts of their stories to explain how the boys felt at the beginning of the year towards their sport. Some of the accounts that had been written by the boys had already been discussed in interviews but some were new, especially when the boys discussed how they felt in the first few days of school. Here is where I describe my analysis as discourse analysis, as I read and observed the specific language that was used by the boys. Some boys in the study did not always fully explain what they meant by a situation even after being further probed. Allowing the boys to write down their thoughts, helped a few of the lads explain in greater depth their thoughts and ideas. Also by writing down feelings, they were not analysed by the group as only I got to read their essays.

Existing literature was then added to the work and data that I had collected by either comparing or contrasting my research.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained through the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the process of interviewing began (See appendix six, page 197). Both the observations and the interviews were conducted in accordance with the principles and guidelines of informed consent. Accordingly, written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school's executive headmaster, the respondents and their respective parents or guardians. This informed consent was obtained by means of a letter that outlined the rationale of the research and topics and questions that would be asked during the interview process. In addition, all respondents were informed how the data would be collected and that all information was treated with the utmost confidentiality. Safekeeping of transcripts and interview tapes

were also explained to the interviewees. Pseudonyms were used as best as possible to protect the identity of the school and the boys during reporting of the research.

Because the boys are all minors, permission to interview them was sought from their parents. The participants themselves were also asked to sign a consent form guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality and the option to withdraw from the research at any time as well as the option not to answer any questions that they were not comfortable with. I also reminded the boys each time I started an interview, that it was going to be taped and that the information they were giving was confidential. Not once during the interviews did the boys ask for a section to not be recorded, so while the notion of informed consent can be flawed (Swain, 2006c), I felt that the boys were comfortable with the information they were giving me.

The ethical consideration also affected me as a novice researcher. I was the academic teacher to some boys and sports coach to others in the group and thus I worried that I may find myself in a troubling position. While I was a researcher primarily, I was also a teacher in the school. The boys in the group were incredibly well behaved in all discussions and nowhere did I need to remind them of their language or behaviour. In fact, once Lamont became so engrossed by the topic of rugby and hockey that he ended up sitting on the desk, however, I did not see this as an event that needed a ‘teacher voice’ to reprimand him as he was simply so involved in the discussion and was providing valuable information. The other boys did look at me when he sat on the desk, but realised that I was not bothered by the action and simply continued with the discussion.

4.7 Biographies of the participants

My interview sample was delineated by five specific factors: boys, aged 12 to 13 years, grade eight pupils, boys with an interest in sports and a single sex boys’ school in KwaZulu-Natal. Eight grade eight pupils were chosen.

Below is an exact breakdown of the number of pupils in each grade at Connaught School:

Table 1 **Current numbers at Connaught School broken down by race (March 2015)**

| Race | Grade | R | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | % of population |
|----------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------------|
| Asian | | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | | 0,75 |
| Black | | 1 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 8,3 |
| Coloured | | | 1 | | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1,93 |
| Indian | | 25 | 20 | 16 | 12 | 22 | 15 | 22 | 19 | 27 | 21 | 21 | 20 | 10 | 26,75 |
| White | | 25 | 30 | 21 | 23 | 42 | 33 | 40 | 44 | 54 | 67 | 67 | 72 | 58 | 61,8 |
| Other | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | 0,2 |
| Total | | 51 | 59 | 47 | 43 | 71 | 56 | 73 | 71 | 91 | 96 | 96 | 99 | 78 | |

Total in school: 931 (2015)

Connaught High has 460 pupils and 69 per cent of the pupil population is white, 22 per cent are Indian and the remaining population is made up of black, coloured and Asian. These demographics are drawn from how the school collates and documents their pupil population. The term Asian is used for pupils who are from Chinese or Japanese ancestry. For the sake of this research, three white, one coloured, two Indian and two black pupils were chosen. During the course of the first term, one black boy left the school and hence another boy replaced him. These boys were not chosen randomly, but were selected specifically due to their interest in sport and the fact that they could communicate easily. I took careful notice of boys when observing their English classes and could then note which boys answered freely in class and also spoke with confidence, as this was vital in order to collect a group together who could talk with ease and assurance. Below, I give a brief introduction to each of the boys in the group. The boys' lives are discussed in depth in the analysis chapters when their lives are discussed using the responses from interviews.

The school is one of privilege with the boys in the study being exposed to a variety of privileges during their schooling career. The history and exact composition of Connaught High is explained in further detail in chapter four. While it is important to realise that the composition of eight boys in the research does not constitute a representative sample of boys in all private schools in South Africa, it does give some insight into the lives of private school boys and their constructions of masculinities in the early years of high school. After the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, private schools were seen as melting pots of gender, race and culture and should, therefore, be prime areas for transformation and

integration to occur. Connaught High is, therefore, the ideal site for this research. At Connaught there are boys from all races and with different cultural backgrounds, but because it is a boys' school boy-girl relationships within the school environment have not been explored.

4.7.1 David

I have known David for about five years. He is a 13-year-old white boy who had been a pupil of the primary school before moving to Connaught High. Due to his achievements in the primary school, and having been awarded a sports scholarship to the High School, I classified David as a very talented sportsman. David played rugby, hockey and was a swimmer and water polo player. He had been the captain of the water polo team in the primary school and had represented KwaZulu-Natal at the sport the year before. During the course of the summer season in high school, he was made captain of the water polo team for his age group. David has a very large, supportive family who are always in attendance when David plays matches. His older brother was also in the high school and was a very good sportsman in the senior age group. Highly articulate and in the "A" stream academic class, David set himself high goals throughout the year, both on the sporting front and in the classroom. While relatively quiet during interviews, David had a large group of friends and the interviews showed that he was viewed as being highly popular amongst his peers. When interviewed individually, he was exceptionally polite and trivialised his successes on the sporting field. In his written explanation, David had stated that he thought he was quite good at sport, however, he did not think of himself as being exceptional. He played for the first team in his age group in all the sports he attempted: water polo, hockey and rugby. During the course of the year, he was given the opportunity to play for the water polo first team, which was a huge accomplishment. While being a proud moment for him, he wrote that his major concern before the game was that he might disappoint the coach by doing "something stupid".

"But one of my best experiences at Connaught was being asked to play for the first water polo team against a local team. Before the game I was extremely nervous and I knew I was going to get shouted at by sir if I did something stupid. But at the end of the day, I felt really fortunate to have this privilege." (David, essay, 2012)

His self-esteem should have been high, but he doubted his own ability and really feared disappointing the coach by "doing something stupid". David's family is a large one constituting David's older brother

and twin younger sisters. All four children attend private schools. David's father is a businessman and his mother is a 'stay at home mum'. The family live on a gated estate in Durban.

David writes of his first impressions of Connaught High that the reason he chose Connaught was not only that his older brother was there, but because of his water polo career.

“Coming to Connaught has had a huge influence in my social life, by making a lot more friends and meeting new people. This has helped my confidence, especially being popular in the sporting team – like the water polo team”. (David, essay, 2012)

“...like every grade eight boy walking into their first year as a high school boy, we all wanted to make friends, but more importantly we wanted to fit in. While I was quite shy and scared (that I wasn't going to fit in), my sport, especially my water polo helped me. Being part of a team is a wonderful confidence booster”. (David, essay, 2012)

4.7.2 Craig

Craig is a 13-year-old white boy who had also been a pupil of the primary school. He is known by the other boys for being a strong water polo player and had represented the sport at provincial level the year before thus earning him a sporting scholarship to the High School. Craig also played for the under-14A team in rugby.

“I was selected to play for the Under-14A rugby team, which was quite a shock as I am not the best at land sports and battle at running.” (Craig, individual interview, March, 2012)

While being a very talented sportsman, Craig was also a member of the school orchestra; he played the guitar and was a member of the drum group. This multi-talented pupil had opportunities throughout the year to entertain the school during assemblies, showing his immense musical talents. While Craig was certainly renowned for his sporting abilities, the boys of the school viewed Craig as both a musician and a sportsman, especially during the summer water polo season.

Craig is the youngest of his family, having a number of older siblings. His family were hugely supportive of him and his parents were always in attendance at sporting and cultural activities at the school. Craig's father is the marketing director to a major firm in Durban and his mother is a photographic stylist. The family live in close proximity to the school and Craig often walked to school.

Of his inclusion into the College, Craig writes:

“On one uncharacteristically gloomy cold and wet January day, a new boy walked up the steps that would from that moment onwards, signal a day of school? Feeling decidedly lonely, this boy walked up the steps behind his mother who was chattering about how great a school this was. The boy felt uncomfortable in his white top and khaki trousers. A scary step into a new high school and essentially the beginning of a new life. Eventually it became time for the jittery mother to leave. It’s hard to believe that that scared and lonely boy was me.” (Craig, essay, 2012)

Craig is a confident, happy young man with a big group of friends. However, as noted in the piece of writing above, Craig was still highly nervous of high school and of making a name for himself. Craig was highly articulate during individual interviews, but tended to need prodding when answering in focus group discussions as he preferred to simply listen to other boys’ stories in groups.

4.7.3 Campbell

Campbell is a 13-year-old coloured boy who was new to Connaught High. Highly articulate and with a love for all sports, Campbell played basketball, soccer and hockey. Neither basketball nor hockey had been offered at his previous primary school, so he was new to both sports in his grade eight year.

“I am going to play basketball for the first time, I can use my height to my advantage. But I have only just started and am still learning all the tactics and strategies. It’s a new sport for me, someone has to do it. We (my friends and I) originally wanted to play cricket, but it was too hot and long so we played basketball.” (Campbell, individual interview, February, 2012).

Campbell was a popular boy in the grade, often seen with a group of boys who used the library during break time, to chat or play games on the computers. Kind and a good friend to many boys, the boys enjoyed his company and friendship. Campbell was seldom seen alone on the campus at Connaught High. After his first term of summer sport, Campbell writes:

“Sport has helped me fit in at Connaught as I have made new friends and have had fun with them – the friends I have made that is.” (Campbell, essay, 2012)

Although the basketball team were not highly successful, Campbell writes about his highlights of the season:

“The moment when I thought basketball was the best sport in the world was when we were playing against St. Johns (pseudonym used) and it was our first match. We lost possession to them as soon as we started playing. But then John stole the ball and threw it up to me and I scored the first points of the season.” (Campbell, essay, 2012)

Campbell spoke highly of sport and was incredibly excited at the start of the winter season when he would be playing hockey for the first time. After the winter season he writes about his one match:

“The best moment of the season was a game... although we lost eight nil! We had no goalkeeper for the game, so we played with a back who could kick the ball. During the match he tripped over his own feet and the whole team laughed so loudly we could not concentrate for the rest of the match. Even though we lost the match, it was very funny.” (Campbell, essay, 2012)

Campbell enjoyed the camaraderie that came with sport and for him, winning at sport was not as important as having fun with his friends in his team.

Campbell’s father is a doctor of medicine and worked as a medical consultant. Campbell’s mother is a social worker and the family lived near to the school. Campbell’s mum was often in attendance at sporting fixtures and supported him at both his basketball and hockey matches. His dad’s busy schedule at work prevented him from attending many weekly fixtures, but he made an effort over the weekend fixtures to attend games. Campbell’s mum had been a good sportswoman at school and had encouraged Campbell to take part in sport, in particular in hockey at Connaught. He writes when making his choice of winter sports:

“I didn’t want to play rugby. My mum had played hockey, so she thought it would be fun for me to play. My dad had played squash and tennis. I tried squash but did not make the team so hockey was the choice for me for the season.” (Campbell, individual interview, May, 2012)

4.7.4 Lamont

Lamont is a 12-year-old black boy who was new to Connaught High. Lamont, once having gained confidence amongst his peers, was very vocal about his choice of sports and had strong views and opinions. He played basketball in the first term for the A team, was an ardent rugby player in the second term and played soccer in the third term. While he was not a particularly strong academic, Lamont wrote about how he lived for his sports and thought that he was quite successful at it.

“I love sports and can talk about sport all day. It’s better than maths.” (Lamont, individual interview, February, 2012)

Lamont was a shy young man around staff and elders, but was full of laughter and amusing antics when entertaining his peers during break times and during academic class time. He was never seen alone at break and clearly enjoyed the company of his peers and friends. When asking why he chose basketball as his summer sport, he replied:

“I play basketball ’cos I’ve never played cricket before. I don’t know how to play, but I have watched basketball before and I wanted to start it... also all my friends play... so it’s cool to join them (Lamont, individual interview, February, 2012).

Although the basketball season was unsuccessful, it did not matter too much for Lamont. When asked if they won many of their games:

“No, but even when we lose... it was like we won... it was fun with the guys in the team. Everyone tried hard... we had a good team spirit and were all good friends (Lamont, individual interview, March, 2012).

Lamont came from a broken home, with him having little contact with his father who was an attorney. His mother worked for the local municipality and their family stayed in a black township near to Durban. Neither Lamont’s mother nor father was ever seen at sporting fixtures. Lamont’s mother’s attendance at academic parent evenings was sporadic, and she often sent emails excusing herself from these meetings.

Lamont, while not the best sports-man of the group was certainly the most verbal and dominated many discussions on sport. He seemed to classify himself as the leader of the research group and was always reminding me of meeting times and next sessions for interviews.

4.7.5 Carlos

Carlos is a 13-year-old black boy who had also attended the primary school of Connaught. Carlos played basketball in the summer season for the A team. Despite being a very good swimmer in his primary school years, Carlos did not try out for the swimming or water polo teams at the beginning of the year. Although all grade eights were asked to try out for the swimming team, Carlos said he did not want to swim and would rather play basketball. Carlos was a strapping, well-built and popular boy whom many other boys had spoken about in their individual interviews. He was an icon in the eyes of many of the grade eight boys. In answer to the question, who is the most popular sportsman in grade eight?

“Definitely Carlos as he has the best body and he gyms a lot.” (Campbell, group interview, June, 2012).

“Carlos is certainly the most macho ’cos he is the biggest and is the strongest in grade eight.” (David, group interview, June, 2012).

Carlos was a quiet, shy and reserved young man who spoke very little during the initial interviews. His older brother had been both a prefect and member of the schools’ first rugby team the year before Carlos arrived at the high school. As a result of his brothers’ influence at the school, Carlos was friendly with many of the senior boys in the school and later on in the first term was often seen at break times interacting with the senior boys. Carlos played rugby during the winter season and soccer in the third term. Carlos was extremely popular and while incredibly shy when talking to staff, was always surrounded by a lot of friends at break times. Yet despite what I observed of Carlos during break times, he wrote in his accounts of himself:

“I was so nervous of fitting in at the College. Playing sport has helped me fit in in grade eight. I got to know my friends better and they know me better. I was so nervous of my first game of basketball, but I knew I was not the only person. We all knew we were going through similar experiences, which brought us, closer together during our games. I now can socialise better and it has encouraged me to talk more. I am quiet and shy, but now I am far more confident. Being

self-confident was something I have struggled with all my life, but being in the A (sporting) teams has helped my confidence.” (Carlos, essay, 2012)

Carlos came from a household that was headed up by a single mum who worked as a consultant to a firm. He lived close by to the school and often walked to school. I met Carlos’s mother once at a basketball match and also at a rugby match. Both his mum and his older brother were ardent supporters of Carlos’s sporting achievements at Connaught. Carlos was also often seen at the local gym with his older brother working out.

While Carlos was definitely the most sporty boy of the group, his quiet reserved approach to all the interviews did not make him the leader or ‘in charge’ of the group.

4.7.6 Richard

Richard is a 12-year-old Indian boy who had recently moved from England to South Africa with his family. His father is the MD (managing director) of a big firm while his mother is a housewife. Their family lived on a gated community close to the school. Richard has two siblings. A sister who attends a girls’ private school and Richard’s younger brother, who is in the primary school at Connaught and also showing a keen interest in sport. When asked about his siblings, Richard replies:

“My brother... he’s in grade seven here (Connaught)... also plays soccer... he’s really good. We only played soccer in England... my dad played in England as well, so all us boys played.” (Richard, individual interview, February, 2012).

Both of Richard’s parents were ardent supporters of Richard’s sport and were seen on the side of both the soccer fields and basketball courts. His choice of sports had been influenced by his exposure to sport in English schools. He was a staunch soccer supporter and spoke often of the British premier division clubs and match scores during class. He loved both the basketball and soccer seasons. Despite his interest and keenness for basketball, his team were not very successful during the summer season. He wrote in his accounts that:

“The staff said you must choose a sport for term one... I opted for basketball, one of my favourite sports... but it turned out... I wasn’t very good at it!” (Richard, essay, 2012)

Very knowledgeable about most sports, Richard enjoyed discussing anything related to sports and was often part of a heated discussion during break times about teams and players whom he thought were talented. Richard had a distinct group of friends who were loyal and close to each other and were always seen together at break times. Despite being new to the school, Richard wrote:

“When I moved to South Africa, I was the odd one out... I was the one with no friends. But, since the start of the year, I have become more known and popular, but certainly not any thanks to my sporting ability.” (Richard, essay, 2012)

Richard is a confident young man who spoke with ease during both the individual interviews and focus group discussions. Unfortunately his choice of doing only gym during the winter season, caused him to become uninvolved during the winter season discussions when the sports of rugby and hockey were discussed.

“Gym is boring... it’s not a team sport... I go mostly on my own... some Mondays with a friend... but it’s mostly on my own.” (Richard, Focus group, June 2012)

4.7.7 Owen

“At the beginning of school, just before school started, I had that feeling, that feeling that almost every boy gets when they start their first year of high school, will I fit in?” (Owen, essay, 2012)

Owen is a white 13-year-old boy who was also a pupil in the primary school. His opening words describe how important it was for him to be accepted and to fit in. Owen is both a swimmer and water polo player and had represented a provincial team for water polo in the primary school. Owen is a rugby player in the winter season, but owing to injury, he could not play the entire rugby season. He still considered himself a rugby player as he ran the line during games being the touch judge.

“I loved the games of rugby... they are lots of fun... for everyone... spectators and parents cheer when you make a big tackle... there’s a *gees*” (Afrikaans word for spirit) (Owen, group interview, June 2012).

Owen is a happy-go-lucky and full of fun young man. His coaches often teased him about being lazy or fat, but he always had a quick retort and most times ended the conversation with roars of laughter.

Watching Owen during break times and during class, I observed that he had a most positive outlook on life and really enjoyed his school days. He often mingled amongst different friendship groups and age groups during breaks. Owen is also a member of the school choir and had a beautiful singing voice, which was recognised and appreciated by his peers.

Owens' father was an attorney and his mother an interior designer and the family stayed near to Connaught High. Owen's family were staunch supporters of Owen's sport and were always in attendance at both fixtures and on tours around the country. Owen had an older brother who was at Connaught High. Being so highly supportive of him, when asked if his parents put pressure on him for sport, Owen answered:

“No pressure... but my mum likes preparing and taking me to training. It pays off 'cos now I make my own decisions about going to training. It feels so good to be fit.” (Owen, individual interview, May 2012).

4.7.8 Zaid

Zaid is a 13-year old Indian boy who was an excellent cricket player. During the season, he had been afforded the opportunity to be scorer (This involved not playing for the first school team, but attending all first team games and taking care of the scores between the two opposition teams). For many boys at Connaught, this was their first step to being a fully-fledged member of the first team in seasons to come. Zaid spoke about this opportunity been made available to him and saw this as a huge privilege.

“This was the most important moment of my sporting life. I was so honoured.” (Zaid, individual interview, May, 2012)

Zaid was also a rugby player during the winter season and soccer was his choice during the third team. Zaid is a serious young man who had a small band of friends who were always seen together at break.

“All the pupils in Connaught are fun and helpful. In school... they are my brothers and I would protect them like that are my real brothers.” (Zaid, group interview, June 2012)

Exceptionally polite in the classroom, Zaid was very popular amongst the teachers and was viewed as a good leader and strong academic. Owing to his sporting ability, Zaid was on a sports scholarship to the school.

Zaid's father was a financial manager who lived in Johannesburg and Zaid lived with his mother, a physiotherapist, in Durban. His parents were divorced and Zaid often spoke with excitement on visiting his father during the school holidays. Zaid's extended family of mother, aunts and uncles were often seen on the side of the cricket field, supporting Zaid's sporting achievements.

Table 3 Summary of the boys selected to be part of the research

| | Name | Age | Race | Selected sport summer | Selected sport winter | Important aspects to note |
|---|----------|-----|----------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | David | 13 | White | Water polo | Hockey and Rugby | Good sportsman, but not confident of own ability when talking |
| 2 | Craig | 13 | White | Water polo | Rugby | Sportsman but also involved in music |
| 3 | Campbell | 13 | Coloured | Basketball | Hockey | Very confident to start, but lacks confidence after summer season |
| 4 | Lamont | 12 | Black | Basketball | Rugby | Confident about all sport, talks easily in group |
| 5 | Carlos | 13 | Black | Basketball | Rugby | Hugely talented in rugby, slightly shy and reserved in conversations |
| 6 | Richard | 12 | Indian | Basketball | None | Hugely confident at beginning of year, stops sport during 3 rd term. |
| 7 | Owen | 13 | White | Swimming and water polo | Rugby | Confident and contributes easily during conversations |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|----|--------|---------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8 | Zaid | 13 | Indian | Cricket | Rugby | Quietly confident, better in individual interviews than group |
|---|------|----|--------|---------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter summarises that this study is an ethnographic, qualitative study that occurs over 18 months at Connaught High, a single-sex private, independent boys' school in KwaZulu-Natal. Because ethnographies involve observation and in-depth interviews with participants, this ethnographic approach was utilised owing to the valuable data that could be collected and analysed. The qualitative method was also applied in order to dig deep into the phenomenon that was being researched and in order to interpret the new insights and developments from this phenomenon.

After careful observation during English classes and listening to the boys' interests and ideas, eight boys were chosen and asked to form part of the study. They were purposefully chosen after observation because of their interest that they showed in sport. Over the 18-month period, both individual and group interviews were conducted, but this was not the only form of data that was utilised. Numerous forms of data were collected over the course of the study: transcripts from group and individual interviews, transcripts from focus group discussions, articles written by the boys, field notes and observations and casual conversations that eventually became conversations with a purpose (Swain, 2006c). The research therefore involves in-depth exploration using both individual interviews and focus groups to analyse how boys both conceptualise and articulate their experiences in the school (Frosh et al., 2003).

After careful reading and re-reading of all the information that was gleaned from the boys and observations, certain themes finally emerged and were used to shape the course of this research. A coding method was used by highlighting all the conversations that pertained to a certain theme. These conversations and ideas formulated the basis of the analysis chapters and subheadings.

The data showed how both articulate and rich the boys' accounts were when given the opportunity and encouragement to talk. While it may be difficult to compare the findings of this study to other research, through the process of interviews and other methods of obtaining data, I gleaned sufficient data and information in order to arrive at themes to shape this thesis.

Chapter 5: The school in review

Introduction

A specific focus of this chapter is the gender regime of Connaught School. The particular workings of this school and the ways in which it sanctions gender through sport and compulsory heterosexual identity formation are emphasised. The gender regime of any institution refers to the state of gender play in that given institution (Connell, 1996). In the school context, the manner in which pupils and teachers are treated in both explicit and implicit ways offers some insight into the gender regime of the school. This chapter provides a descriptive analysis of the history of Connaught High School, the structure and the school association, which includes staff and pupil populations. Ethnographic research permits an in-depth look, by way of observation, at the daily occurrences in the school and facilitates an exploration of the gender regime that pervades the daily routine of the school. By offering snapshots of the composition of the school and experiences of everyday life, one can begin to understand more fully the choices and behaviour of boys in the analysis chapters.

5.1 Ma’ams, Sirs, Lads: The gender regime at Connaught High School

“Schools, like all institutions are thoroughly gendered in their own organisation and practice” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:114).

Because gender forms such an important role in schools, in order to understand and make sense of the boys’ life at Connaught High, the organisation and daily practices of the school are explained. And while organisation and daily practice might not form a direct part of gender regime, I have included it into this section to facilitate an understanding of the school. One cannot see the boys of this research as being separate from the school nor can one see the school as some neutral background (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Boys will not simply ‘be boys’ despite the school, but boys and the school are highly influential on each other. Schools thus play a vital part of the masculinising of the boys and their gender identity shaping.

Masculinity is played out constantly by all boys and research has shown that boys are desperate to be classified as a ‘real boy’ (Renold, 2007). Therefore the construction of identities relies heavily on the situation they are in. Aspects of race, class, ethnicity and geographical location play an important role in the development of these masculine identities and the way boys relate and behave in some social

situations (Martino and Meyenn, 2001). While this is touched on in this chapter, it is explained in detail in chapter five of this research.

This constant construction and renegotiation of self is often classified as ‘masculinising practices’ (Connell, 1987; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) and is highly evident at Connaught School through the ordering in terms of power and prestige included in competitive sporting teams, codes of behaviour and patterns of authority (Swain, 2006a). Because boys’ behaviours are “inscribed within masculinised discourses of masculinity as they ‘do boy’, they are required to prove that they are ‘real’ boys in ways that mark them masculine or even macho”. (Epstein et al., 2001:170).

This chapter also considers how many activities performed by the boys at school are actual accounts of doing gender (Renold, 2005). By reporting boys’ own lived experiences, it emphasises how the gender regime plays an enormous role in the masculinising process. The chapter argues that within the school structure, masculinity-making micro-cultures are alive and it is through these devices that sporty masculinities are produced. The boys in this study participate in, contest, accommodate and mediate these micro-cultures as they engage with broader cultures of masculinity and sport in South Africa.

Research has shown that schools and high schools in particular, have a capacity to act as socialising agencies and to have enormous influence on the lives of boys (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Swain, 2006a; Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014). Day-to-day school routines as seen in research in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Swain, 2006a; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002 and Connell, 2008a) are undoubtedly seen and recognised as key sites for the production of gendered identities. Boys are also seen as active agents within the school setting. They are not simply blank slates who adopt and accept all that they are exposed to from the environment, but boys purposefully strategize and negotiate ways of ‘doing boy’ in order to become powerful agents within the school.

Research in private schools in South Africa is sparse. While Morrell (1996) focused on masculinities, “white farmers, social institutions and specifically on settler masculinity in the Natal midlands based from 1880 to 1920” (Morrell et al, 2013:12), and in doing so highlighted the harsh elements in the construction of ‘muscular Christianity’ within private schools in the Natal area (now known as KwaZulu-Natal), little is known of the present day private schools in South Africa. Morrell’s research emphasised the hardship, punishment, bullying, initiations and stark ‘Spartan’ conditions that were synonymous with boarding school environments. More recent research by Bantjes and Nieuwoudt (2014) conducted in a private school in South Africa highlighted the performance of gender and the

construction of masculinities in a boys' only school after an event of violence occurred at the school. Connaught High's study, however, is different to the rigours and violence associated with Morrell's (1996) South African boarding schools of the past and also of the violence associated with Bantjes and Nieuwoudt's (2014) study. As a result, this chapter is vital in order for all readers to have insight and understanding into the world of the boys of Connaught High School.

5.2 Structure of Connaught School

White walls and flowerbeds greet newcomers to the school. It certainly does not look like a school – there are no red face brick walls and no long corridors in sight. Family homes have been converted into classrooms and primary school boys bustle along the corridors clad in khaki safari suits.

Connaught is a private boys' school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is situated in an affluent area of the city with all the boys being day scholars. The primary school was founded in 1924 by a leading British educationalist, who realised the need for a private boys' school based in KwaZulu-Natal. The primary school starts from Grade R (the reception unit) and accepts boys from the age of six. These boys, whose uniforms comprise red golf shirts and khaki shorts, are affectionately known as the red ants. This name has developed mainly because these young boys are often seen scurrying around the school and on the fields during the school day, typifying the behaviour of ants in their daily routines. Grade seven is the last year of the primary school which has an enrolment of 440 boys aged between 9 and 13 years. The high school was recently opened in January 2002, with the board of governors recognising the demand for a private boys' high school in the Durban area. Since its inception in 2002, it has grown from a meagre eight students to 415 pupils ranging from Grade eight to Grade 12 (the final year of school in South African schools).

The whole school is overseen by a board of governors, an executive headmaster (who oversees the entire school – both primary and high school), a high school principal, a primary school principal and a foundation phase head.

5.2.1 The khaki-clad safari-suit men: The primary school

The founding headmaster founded Connaught School, a primary school situated in KwaZulu-Natal. Because of the headmasters' English background and the inheritance in KwaZulu-Natal of British colonial rule, the primary school is steeped in British public school traditions that are still highly

evident today. Morrell (1994b), looking at the history of schools in South Africa, states in his article on masculinity and the white boarding schools in the KwaZulu-Natal area, that schooling was “initially delivered by schools closely resembling the British public schools” (p. 30). Concepts such as school uniforms; sports such as rugby and cricket; prefect systems; sporting house system and a classics curriculum were all features of British public schools’ that were encapsulated in the South African schooling system. One can say that the school regime is that of British public schools of the past (Morrell et al., 2013). This is almost mirrored at Connaught. The uniforms, as an example, are a stark reality of this British colonial rule when one first enters the school and sees all the primary school boys dressed in khaki safari suits, a tradition inherited from the British. Uniforms are worn by every boy, strict rules and discipline are adhered to and academic achievement is important within the primary school. While huge emphasis is placed on sport and all boys are encouraged to play sport, the academic side is central to these boys’ schooling.

“Stop!” roars a master in the primary school, as a group of grade three pupils rush down the corridor.

“Where are you going to?”

“PE! [Physical Education]” shout the lads in unison, their faces beaming with delight.

“Why are we running? Connaught gentlemen do not run in the corridors. Now walk carefully and remember to greet if you pass an adult on your way.”(Field notes, May, 2012)

The above situation is a common occurrence noted in the primary school. On a daily basis, the boys bustle their way through the corridors of the school and boys are continually reminded by all staff of their manners and discipline. In class, during assemblies and in everyday greetings of boys, emphasis is placed on being a good-mannered gentleman of the school. The schoolteachers all emphasise good character building as being an important aspect of the boys’ education. The school believes that without this character building, one would not develop into a gentleman – an attribute hugely emphasised in the making of a good British colonial citizen (Morrell, 1994a). Centuries after the influence of the British colonial rule has waned in KwaZulu-Natal, Connaught still maintains the rules and discipline seen in developing a boy into a gentleman. This task of developing a boy into a gentleman takes practice and discipline and thus one can understand that the development of certain masculinities are encouraged and reinforced within the school regime.

“The ideals of the English public school system did not automatically take root in Natal. These schools were defining institutions but their influence came to Southern Africa not via curriculum pressure and the need for other schools to copy them in order to achieve social and academic success as was the case in Britain. Rather, it was the products of these schools and the universities they fed, who ensured that public school values spread in Natal’s schools. ... from the outset Natal’s schools were staffed by men from Britain” (Morrell, 1994a:35).

The school sets its sights on trying to develop good citizens for the country through academic rigour, sporting involvement and an emphasis on manners and discipline; thus creating what the school describes as the ‘renaissance man’.

“...gender is embedded in the institutional arrangements through which a school functions: divisions of labour, authority patterns and so on. The totality of these arrangements is a school’s gender regime.” (Connell, 1996: 213)

Gender is embedded within the school and in how it functions. Authors often refer to these experiences as the gender regime of the school (Swain, 2006c). The school is not simply a neutral background where pupils instil and construct gender amongst themselves (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998), rather institutions, like schools, have their own gender regime; “gendered practices that are frequently performed within the school” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014:3). They are unique and may have a distinct impression on the gender order that is created in the school (Morrell, 1998b). Gender regimes, gender identity and masculinity are crucial to understanding the boys in this research. Theorists like Connell, argue that gender is not simply incidental but central to an understanding of the past (Morrell, 1994b) and in this case, understanding the history of the school gives one insight into the gender regime of the school.

The female and male staff dress code is sent out via email at the start of each academic year. It includes a list of rules and regulations that female staff members must adhere to at all times. Ladies may not wear any form of jeans, strappy tops, shirts or skirts that are see-through. Ladies are reminded in the mail that they are teaching boys and must, at all times, dress according to the rules. The male dress code stipulates that during the first and fourth terms all male teachers are to wear shirt and tie. Jackets are to be worn to all assemblies in the second and third terms (Field notes, February, 2012).

The dress code that is described in the above paragraph indicates the type of gender regime that is instilled within Connaught High. Men and women teachers are instructed what clothing is deemed acceptable during the school day. Discipline, dress code, academic competition, hierarchy and authority are highly visible at Connaught. Connell refers to these routines as a “set of masculinizing practices governed by the gender regime of the school” (Connell, 1996:215).

By controlling both the teachers and the boys’ dress codes and being strict on discipline, it is the school’s way of producing conformity and disallowing diversity (Morrell, 1994b). All boys and teachers are expected to conform to the rules that are set and governed by the school. Assembly themes, led by the primary school principal, often involve good manners and discipline. Boys are taught and shown, from Grade R that respect for ladies, elders and seniors is paramount to being a gentleman. Authority patterns and power relations, linked to authority and rules, are enormously important in understanding the principle of hierarchy that is central at the school Connell, (1996). At Connaught, school rules have to be strictly adhered to by the boys and this is controlled and monitored by the teachers.

Appropriate behaviour (as stipulated in the school rules and by management and staff alike) is reinforced and ‘lads’ (as they are often referred to) who do not comply are disciplined. The South African Schools Act (1996) banned the use of corporal punishment in schools. Schools have resorted to alternative means of punishment and one such form of discipline at Connaught is detention (staying in on Friday afternoons or during break time). Boys are disciplined and punished for the following misdemeanours: disrespecting teachers; bullying, fighting, or being impolite. Smoking, drug taking and ‘bunking’ (absenteeism from school) are seen as serious offences and are grounds for expulsion. Detention numbers are low as most boys try and conform to the rules.

Research on boys in the past often centred on the ‘problem of boys’ (Skelton, 2001) with regards to academic achievement (Epstein, et al., 1998). The ‘poor boy’ discourse blamed many factors contributing to boys’ poor academic achievement in schools (Head, 1999; Skelton, 2001; Francis, 2006). Boys were often positioned as victims due to fatherless homes, female-dominated primary schools and feminism (Foster, Kimmel and Skelton, 2001). The study of boys’ achievements in schools has been identified as a complex process (Epstein et al, 1998; Arnot et al., 1999; Francis, 2006; Younger et al., 2005). In order for Connaught school to prevent failure, academic rigour is encouraged and lads failing to achieve the required standard are given extra lessons and assistance. Staff meetings

are held weekly and are primarily concerned with boys' achievements and progress in academics. Each term the top academic achievers in each grade are announced and boys are congratulated on their fine accomplishments. The prize-giving ceremony at the end of the year is dedicated to achievements of academic excellence.

5.2.2 Spaces in the primary school

The primary school is housed in old residential properties in the Durban region and does not have the formal appearance of a school. The classrooms have been converted from rooms in houses that are all painted white. Classrooms inside are large, air conditioned and colourfully painted with plenty of stimulation on the walls. Field space is limited, according to the school management, who would like to have greater space available but is constrained by the location of the school amidst residential surroundings. The school has three large sports fields, two basketball courts and three swimming pools. There is a fully stocked library, two halls and two computer rooms. Remedial facilities are also available to the boys when remediation is required. Class sizes are limited to 24 boys in a class.

5.2.3 The authority figures of Connaught: The staff

Organisational management of a school "plays a significant role in the gendered nature of the school" (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998:89). Boys moving from the primary school in grade seven to grade eight in the college take with them a history of the primary school. I take into consideration factors like gender and race in this background as both aspects influence and play a pivotal role in the development of the schools' boys' masculine identities. I shall, later in this chapter, discuss the implications that the composition of the staff has on the boys themselves, taking into consideration the history of the staff in the primary school and the composition of the staff in the high school.

The staff in the primary school includes both the primary and the foundation phase teachers. The 42 staff members comprise both male and female. However, the foundation phase is made up of only female teachers with the head of the foundation phase being a white female. For the first four years of schooling at Connaught (Grade R to Grade Three), the boys are taught by female teachers only, with the one exception being that of sport and physical education, where they are taught by male staff members. Research has shown that physical education and sport have been subjected to gendered histories and gendered nature (Paechter and Head, 1996). Boys experience from their early years at Connaught that academics are taught by females and sport by males.

The headmaster is a 47-year-old male who has been head of the school for two years. Before arriving at Connaught primary, he was the head of sport at a boys' private primary school. The majority of his experience in schools has been that of boys' only schools. The deputy headmaster is a white, 30-year-old male teacher. His main function in the primary school includes that of the day-to-day running of the academics. While it is common to have male teachers at the helm of a boys' only school, these appointments as leaders of the school, reinforce the association of power relations with a pattern of masculinity with authority (Connell, 1996) within a school.

For the first four years of their schooling career (Grade R to grade three) boys only interact with female staff for their academics and male staff members are connected to sports and physical education. During their primary school years (Grades four to seven), the boys are exposed to some male class teachers who teach boys academics. The division of labour amongst the teachers and staff has close links to the gender regime of the school. While the leadership of the school is male, the majority of the teachers on the staff are female and white. The table below gives a brief outline of the management staff in the primary school:

Table 4 Composition of Management staff in the Primary School

| Age, race | Male | Female | Responsibility | Academics |
|-----------|------|--------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 47, white | ✓ | | Principal of primary school | |
| 50, white | | ✓ | Head of foundation school | |
| 30, white | ✓ | | Deputy headmaster Head of academics | Teaches mathematics |
| 35, white | ✓ | | Head of sport | Teaches physical education |
| 42, white | | ✓ | Head of culture | Teaches art |

5.2.4 The lads

In South African schools, school uniforms are a norm rather than an exception. The primary school boys dress in khaki safari suits (comprising of shorts and jackets that hang out over their shorts). The original khaki uniforms were worn by the British military during drill operations. These ‘suits’ are tangible reminders of old school British colonial traditions still harboured by the school. Dress is important and is again seen as a way of controlling the discipline in the school and boys are punished if the uniform is not worn correctly. Haircuts are also strictly adhered to and regularly checked. ‘Short back and sides’ is the rule of thumb for the boys’ haircuts.

The school has been multiracial since its inception in alignment with most private schools that were founded before or during the apartheid era. However, the demographics of the school show that it is a predominantly white pupil population. The number of Indian pupils has increased in the past few years (as explained in detail in chapter one), but the number of black students is still relatively low (a maximum of eight per cent of the pupil population).

5.2.5 Sport in both South Africa and Connaught School

In South Africa, there has been an abundance of documented history of sport in the former white public and private schools that “associate sport and notably rugby with white male character building” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010). Sport is an important aspect of many boys’ school careers and therefore, a central experience in their lives and their schooling (Swain, 2006b).

As noted in other areas of the school, such as discipline and uniforms, the schools’ sporting regime perpetuates the British influence. With the first officially recorded game of rugby in the then Natal schools (now known as KwaZulu-Natal) being played as early as 1870 between Maritzburg College and Hermannsburg School of Greytown (Morrell, 1994b), it is interesting to note, that rugby today is still considered one of the important sports in schools. Cricket is the main sport in summer and rugby dominates the winter season with the majority of boys at Connaught playing these two sports. While other sports are offered and obviously played, the boys are encouraged to play cricket and rugby and the other sports are not generally regarded as important by the senior teachers. Examples of this are highly evident during the season when there is a clash of sports and one of the sports has to take priority. If the boy is playing cricket in the first term, this takes precedence over any other sport. Often boys do not have a choice and are simply told by the senior masters that they will play the cricket game. The school has been known in its history to excel in tennis, swimming and water polo but these

sports are not given the high profile that both cricket and rugby are given by the masters. This is highly evident during the rugby season. Former white schools in South Africa have a history of “associating sport and notably rugby with male character building” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:547). Rugby seems to be almost entrenched in the make-up of the school. Boys play mock games during break times, running at each other to show strength and prowess. Boys who are not players are side-lined to the outskirts of the fields to make way for the rugby season and the rugby-playing boys. When teams are chosen the boys rush to the notice board to see who has been selected and the disappointment is noticeable for those who do not have a place in the teams. To make the ‘A’ team is considered a huge accomplishment for some boys. Others resign themselves to playing for a ‘less competent’ team for the season. Rugby games are thus big occasions, with parents lining the sidelines cheering their boys on during the matches. Rugby is therefore an area where masculinities can be both performed and constructed (Bhana, 2008; Pattman and Bhana, 2010) and the school provides a platform for these masculinities to be constructed.

5.3 The High School

As one moves from the primary school area across to the high school area of Connaught, one is met with an aura of calmness. While the boys may be physically bigger and certainly take up more space, it seems that with age comes a quietness and calmness. No-one rushes about, there is no running in the corridors. The boys simply amble along their way to class. The excitement, a feature of the primary school, like the grade three boys running to PE, is absent from this environment. The boys take their time to get to their lessons.

The classroom is noisy as the class of grade eight boys bustle their way into the classroom at the start of the first lesson on a Monday morning. “Quieten down, lads” says Mrs A, as the boys make their way to their desks. Some stand silently, while others clearly have some chatting to do. “Hey you bunch of chirping girls, quieten down” says Mrs A. The class roars with laughter and stand quietly to be greeted (Field notes, June, 2012).

The above extract is an example of the start of the day for the high school boys. The reference to the ‘chirping girls’ is a common occurrence used by teachers when addressing the boys. I include this extract as an example of the day-to-day gender regime that is highly visible within the school.

The high school was officially opened in January 2002. The school is housed on the same premises as that of the primary school, with local houses in the surrounding area being bought up to house the high school. Most of the boys in the high school come from the primary school, but the numbers are also boosted by boys from surrounding local schools. The high school, like the primary school, has excellent facilities, such as halls, computer rooms, access to Wi Fi, gym, pool and other sporting facilities. The 415 boys in the high school are divided into academic classes with class sizes being limited to between 20 and 24 pupils. Given the facilities the boys are exposed to and the conditions of the academic classrooms, the school is considered an elite and privileged situation with boys attending the school being from mostly privileged and wealthy families of the Durban area.

5.3.1 The role of academics at the school

Academic achievement is of vital importance to the boys of Connaught High. For many of the Connaught boys, being both sporty and a good academic is important. Swain's study on primary school boys found that the boys who were visibly seen achieving high grades did so without being victimized (2004) and the same is evident at Connaught. Academically, the boys are exposed to a variety of subjects and options. While committed to the private schools selection of subjects, the school gives the boys a variety of options. These include the traditional subjects such as: English, *Afrikaans*, *isiZulu*, Mathematics (both core and literacy), Physical Science, Life Sciences, Accountancy, Business Economics, Geography, History, Life Orientation, Engineering Graphics and Design, Dramatic Arts, Visual Arts and Information Technology. While the concept of masculine curriculum is not highly noticeable, the choice of Engineering Graphics and Design (EGD) for example, is certainly a subject that is geared towards boys. The EGD teacher is male.

Subject choices occur in year 10 and tend to be a difficult time in many boys lives. This is due to the fact that many have no idea what careers they would like to pursue. While the boys do not differentiate certain subjects as being defined as 'feminine', there is a stigma attached to certain subjects, one being Mathematical Literacy. Core Mathematics is the stream of Mathematics that is associated with good academics. Mathematical Literacy has a reputation of being a 'lesser maths' or a 'soft choice' and boys and many of their parents, seem to want them to steer away from the subject, even if their sons are not coping with Core Mathematics. Boys would rather battle with Core Mathematics, than be subjected to the stigma related to mathematical literacy option. It is, however, a relatively new subject, and it is becoming more acceptable to the boys at Connaught High as a subject choice.

Interestingly enough, boys do not have the same approach to either Dramatic Arts or Visual Arts. Studies have shown that these subjects are often considered part of the feminine culture and boys who opt for these subjects are doing it as a way and means of opting out of the heterosexual, masculine culture. While there are huge gender stereotypes attached to these subjects, the Connaught High boys view boys that take these subjects as being exceptionally talented and are envious of their talent that allows them access to these subjects. Their inability to either act or draw precludes them from these subjects and therefore reduces their subject choices.

The boys are streamed in certain classes according to their ability. While the school may perceive this as positive for the boys academically within the school, it may also have serious negative effects on the boys and their construction of their masculinity. Although the school is not emphasising and producing a single masculinity, by dividing the boys academically, they are emphasising and reminding the boys of differences between masculinities. This is a concept that is taken for granted, however, it is a subtle form of power affirmation for some boys. Thus by certain boys being placed in a higher academic class they acquire this sense of power and domination. This type of ‘streaming’ can have adverse effects on boys. By labelling them as academic, or rather non-academic, their masculine development can be seriously hampered, as boys become aware early on their academic careers if they are successful or not. Streaming thus becomes a masculinising practice (Jackson, 2012).

Achieving academically is a high priority in the high school with the Grade 12 student’s final results being publicised in the local newspapers each year. The school has had a history of a 100 per cent pass rate since its inception – a tradition that is strongly upheld and hugely marketed. Each year’s final prize giving, as with the primary school, is dedicated to academic achievement. The boys who are top in each grade and subject are lauded.

5.3.2 The lads of Connaught High

The quad is quiet, even though it is time for break. No one is around. I walk into the hall and find the entire school seated in silence. 415 boys, grade 12’s included, are silent. The head boy is striding up and down and the prefects are standing in careful watch. What was the reason for this? Some boys had misbehaved by chatting during hymn practice the day before. One school, one set of rules, one set of punishment. They sit in silence for the required 10 minutes. (Field notes, April, 2012)

The high school ranges from grade eight (the boys in their first year of high school life), to grade 12 (the leaders of the school). The boys all wear white shirts, long trousers, ties and blazers to school. Strict control of uniforms is monitored by both teachers and the prefect body. The only noticeable distinction (apart from size) between the high school boys is their ties. Grade 12 boys and boys with sporting or academic colours have their own ties.

Discipline and 'old school manners' in the classrooms are traditions from the British public schools that are inherent and visible at Connaught High as described in the example given above. While discipline and school uniforms may be seen and accepted as a simple tradition in schools, it can also be considered a masculinising practice that is implemented by the gender regime of the school as it confines all boys to conformity by all wearing the same school uniform. School uniforms compel all boys to be equal in appearance. Dress codes are strictly monitored and boys are punished if their hair is not cut to the correct length, wrong belts are worn or if boys dress untidily.

Discipline is one area of school that typifies the gender regime of the school. At Connaught High the rigour of discipline is noticeable, yet through observation as I walk through the school; the boys do not consider it to be too harsh. Some boys simply find the rules as just being petty. When boys misbehave their punishment is one to two hours of detention on a Friday afternoon. Upon further inquiry into the transgressors in detention, it was noted that most of the boys had either failed to complete homework on numerous occasions or did not attend a compulsory function, such as a cultural or sporting event. Very strict rules govern this school and one such rule the boys have to abide by is they may not walk on any of the grassed areas (excluding the fields). This rule is not written down in any rule book, but it simply implemented by the prefects each year. One can understand the rule is in place in order for the grass to grow in that area, but the boys still see it as a rule, and abide by it. The boys are only allowed to walk on the cemented areas. The other rules, as mentioned in the primary school rules, are also obeyed by boys in the high school.

5.3.3 Break time and spaces

It's Friday lunchtime and instead of the boys heading for the tuck shop for their traditional burgers and chips Friday, they are instead in a massive ring in the quad. The head prefect stands on one of the tables and calls the school to order. The boys muscle together and link arms. The head prefect calls the first rugby team into the middle of the circle and the school war cry ensues. (Field notes, May, 2012)

Spaces and the occupation thereof plays a massive role in the gender regime of the school. The distinctive difference in space occupied by boys at Connaught High depends on their age. My observation of the school during break time indicated that while the ethos of the school is one of a strong sense of camaraderie, these boys adhere to strict rules and discipline measures. There is a distinct area or space of the school allocated to grade 12 pupils only, where the majority of the grade 12's collect together to eat their lunch. Boys in grade 12 proudly dominate this space and even though not the best place in the school to sit, because it is designated as 'their area', a privilege afforded to the most senior boys. Apart from the grade eights, who move away from the main quad, the other grades seem to effortlessly mingle during break time. Boys of different grades sit together and chat in the area outside the tuck shop. No games or sports are allowed during the break times and boys are encouraged to talk and socialise. There are, however, specific groups that go to the computer room or library during break times. These boys escape to the library to chat and mostly play games on the computers. They are given the opportunity to discuss computer game tactics and game rules that interest them. The majority of these boys do not play sport at Connaught and are classified as the 'non-sporty group' by the boys. Research has shown that these boys "seek safe and private hideaways to escape the gender binary and gender stereotypes of macho masculinities" (Renold, 2005:150). Boys find a space in the school at break time where they can be comfortable and safe. These non-hegemonic boys deliberately excuse themselves from the more visible areas of the school, by moving into a space where they both feel comfortable and non-threatened. I presume it is their way of subordinating themselves from the dominant group. They purposefully exclude themselves from the hustle and bustle of the quad at break times.

Field Notes – March 2012 – In the library

Me Why do you guys sit here in the library at break times?

Sam Its much easier.

Me What do you mean by this?

Sam At break... in the quad... everyone is pushing and moving... they all talk loudly and mostly sport.

Josh *Ja*, here it is quiet... no sport talk... we can just talk about other things.

| | |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sam | We get to play on the computers and can just be. |
| Me | Do you never go to the quad? |
| Josh | Just if I need to go to the tuckshop, or if the library is closed. |

Figure 6 Extract from field notes

By these boys removing themselves from the quad at break times, they are removing themselves from the ‘rough and tumble’ activities of the quad. While no sporting games are being played in the quad, it is certainly a busy area, with boys battling to find seating space and a spot to simply be with boys of similar interests. This safe haven in the library provides the boys not only with a place away from the quad, but also a time for them to be able to simply be themselves. On observation in the library, the conversation is certainly not centred on sport or sporting activities and allows the boys to interact in non-hegemonic ways (Renold, 2005). Renold (2005) found in the study at Tipton School that some children even preferred staying in the classroom at break times, to avoid the playground and this time away enabled them to be safe and to interact with one another totally in a non-threatened way. Researchers have labelled these groups as ‘losers’ (Best, 1983), ‘sissies’ (Thorne, 1993), ‘isolates’ (Eder and Kinney, 1995), ‘outsiders’ (Davies and Hunt, 1994) and ‘others’ (Renold, 2005, Paechter, 1998). At Connaught the boys simply refer to these boys as the ‘library boys’.

Me: Do you know where I can find Tain?

Owen: Oh, *ja*, he hangs out in the library with the rest of the library boys... or maybe the computer room... try there as well (Field notes, March, 2012).

The vast majority of the boys simply sit in the quad and eat and chat. There is a strong prefect presence during break times, with prefects sitting either in the quad or in the tuck-shop assisting with discipline. A teacher is also allocated a daily duty to make sure that there is calm during breaks and that the quad area is kept clean of litter.

At Connaught High, boys have what seems as a ‘natural respect’ for teachers referring to them as ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ when greeting or talking to them. Boys in grade eight learn from their first early days at Connaught how to greet teachers from both the prefects and their seniors. While there exists a relaxed atmosphere between teachers and boys, there is clear evidence of respect. The boys step aside at the

tuck-shop queues for teachers or visitors and will stand back in doorways to allow both male and female teachers to go through first. There are often casual conversations between teachers and boys who often ask teachers about their weekend or about sporting events.

There is a prefect system in place at Connaught. It is a democratic process with all boys in the school voting for boys whom they think would be suitable prefects. This group of boys are highly visible during breaks as they patrol the quad and also during school assemblies. Prefects issue ‘break detention’ for boys who arrive late to school or who are seen to be unruly during assembly. This break detention constitutes standing in the hall with a prefect for the duration of the break. While many boys found the break duty to be petty, they nevertheless complied with the punishment.

Bullying and initiation in single sex boys’ schools is seen almost as a rite of passage. Many junior boys in schools are exposed to severe bullying and initiation by the senior pupils (Morrell, 2001b). It is seen as a toughening process by senior boys in order to assert hierarchical power (Morrell, 2001b) over other boys. Bullying is seen as an extremely negative behaviour at Connaught High and the prefects and most of the staff try to ensure that it is attended to and limited. While incidents of bullying are not so visible, it has been known to occur both in the classroom and during break times in the quad.

5.3.4 The Authority figures of Connaught High: The staff

The academic staff of the high school consists predominantly of white men in the total group of 40 staff members. However, the management, until quite recently, consisted of only white men with the head of the High School, the deputy, and the Head of Academics being white and male. This is yet again further emphasis of the power relations and dominant masculinity associated with authority (Connell, 1996). The following is a table of the management staff, their roles and gender profiles.

Table 5 Table of Management Staff in the High School

| Age | Race | Teaching experience and subjects taught | Gender profile | Responsibilities |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 55 | White male | 34 years of teaching History | historian and sportsman. | Executive Headmaster of school |
| 51 | White male | 30 years of teaching Geography | sportsman especially rugby | Principal of the high school |

| | | | | |
|----|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 40 | White male | 20 years of teaching Mathematics and Physical Education | sportsman, especially rugby, cricket and hockey Strong disciplinarian | Deputy headmaster of the high school and master in charge of sport |
| 45 | White male | 25 years of teaching Business economics | Tennis coach | Head of academics |
| 42 | White female | 22 years of teaching Mathematics | sportswomen especially hockey | Master in charge of senior school academics |
| 45 | White female | 25 years of teaching Mathematics and Physical Science | sportswomen and academic | Director of the middle school |
| 45 | White male | 25 years of teaching English and Life Orientation | Basketball specialist and coach | Director of counselling |
| 38 | White male | History | involved in culture, debating, public speaking, music. | Master in charge of culture |
| 48 | White Male | Physical Education | Sportsman | Director of Aquatics |

It is interesting to note that, with the exception of one of the members of the management team, all are involved in sports. This shows that, while it may be completely coincidental, sport is indeed a vital cog in the running of the school and therefore inherently part of the gender regime and highly visible to the boys at the school.

Table 6 Remainder of the high school staff (excluding management):

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| Male number total | White | Black | Indian | Coloured |
| 15 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Female number total | White | Black | Indian | Coloured |
| 15 | 13 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

An example of the hidden curriculum and gender regime is highlighted in a memo that is sent to female staff members at Connaught. The memo goes out amongst the staff asking for assistance in the library on one afternoon per week for the term. This is to be considered as an extramural duty for a staff member. The memo is addressed to the female members of staff only. Added to their academic duties, most of the male staff is expected to coach both a summer and a winter sport. While some female staff members coach sport, the majority are asked to do supervise the boys using the computers, library duty or take extra academic lessons in the afternoons in lieu of taking a sport. Connell refers to this as the “division of labour” (1996:213), where specific tasks and roles are allocated to certain teachers. In the case of Connaught High, there is certainly a strong emphasis on sport being a male domain and library and computer duties as designated for females. The female staff members do not contest the way in which duties are specifically assigned. Rather than spending time coaching, most are quite content to spend their afternoon in the computer room, which gives them the opportunity to mark work or prepare academic work for the next day. While this may seem the norm at the school and amongst the teachers, it may also play an important role in the interpretations the boys may have of female and male staff members. This is discussed further in chapter five of this thesis.

The staff meeting is tense. Prize giving is imminent and each year a grade 12 pupil is awarded the prize for being the pupil that epitomises a true Connaught ‘gentleman’. Being good in sport, achieving academically and with an interest in culture, are the attributes of a deserving recipient and is a difficult prize to award. Nominations have come forward before the meeting. Chris, one of the boys nominated, is discussed by the staff. Chris is in the top five of his academic class, plays clarinet in the orchestra and is the top cross-country runner in the school. Judging from the comments from the majority of the staff, he is a good candidate for the award.

“It simply can’t be Chris,” says Mr M. “Yes, he may be a nice guy and plays musical instruments for the school, but he doesn’t play any real sports. We can’t award this to a boy who runs cross-country and does canoeing – it’s just not right! It will make the award a joke.” (November, 2012)

Chris was finally not awarded the prize, but another boy. Here I highlight the extent to which success at sports (in this case specifically rugby) translates into success at being ‘masculine’ (Renold, 2005), and show how school staff can reinforce these hierarchies of sport.

“Unwittingly, the school’s own pedagogical strategies to rank sporting competence created heterosexual hierarchies, and the cycle of heterosexuality, sport and hegemonic masculinity was reinforced” (Renold, 2005:121).

This reinforces studies that show how boys, especially young masculinities, define their masculinity through their sport and how in chapter six, the boys’ narratives reinforce that which is enforced by the staff members. Mr M is clearly an example of how some teachers set standards for the importance of sporting competencies. While it may be the opinion of some teachers that Chris may be a perfect recipient applicant for the award, Mr M clearly has reservations and is reluctant to allow the boy to be awarded the prize. The power, status and kudos that are afforded the rugby players, does not apply to the cross-country runners. Mr M’s attitude demonstrates the conflicts that exist in the hierarchies of sport.

5.3.5 Sport in the College at Connaught High

The interplay between sports and the construction of masculinities in boys has long been acknowledged (Swain, 2006a; Connell, 2005), and “schools often provide an institutional scaffolding for this process” (Swain, 2006a:331). Chapter two highlighted and provided insight into how sports and masculinities are linked at the school and here I show how at Connaught High School the authority structures provide the institutional scaffolding for this process of masculinity-making.

Sport in early British schools had a traditional profile as being “important forms for the channelling and shaping of male attributes and desires” (Hickey, 2008:147). Sport was also seen as a place where boys could experience their identity and masculinity and, as a result, sport was encouraged and played an important role in the lives of both the boys and their respective schools. Sport was also considered an ideal place for inclusion and team forming. Connaught High is no exception to the British schooling system of the past, when it comes to highlighting and placing huge emphasis on sport. From its traditions that were inherited from the primary school, and accepted as ‘the norm’ in traditional boys’ schools, sport too plays an important role at Connaught High.

“Whether in the classroom, on the stage or on the sports fields, our boys work in an environment of excellence and rigour. Every boy is encouraged to involve himself to the fullest in order to ensure that he makes the most of all that the High School has to offer” (School brochure, 2013).

The comment in the school brochure implies that the school does not only produce outstanding academic results, but builds and develops well-rounded pupils. Simply achieving in sport and being the top sportsman seems not to be their only aim but rather sport is perceived as being able to provide opportunities to develop good character (Pattman& Bhana, 2010). It is not simply academics and good sportsmen that the school aims to produce, but rather men of good character and good citizens of our country. While this may be claimed in the school brochure, according to the boys interviewed, and as seen in chapter five of this thesis, sport plays a far more vital role in the school.

Sport choices are enormous and each boy is fully catered for (Refer to appendices 2 and 3, summer and winter timetables). In the first term cricket, canoeing, chess, swimming, basketball, water polo, squash, tennis and gym are offered. During the winter season hockey, rugby, squash and cross-country are offered. Because of the variety of sports that are on offer for the boys, at Connaught High each boy is expected to play at least one sport per term. Sports registers are monitored and boys are placed in sports detention if they fail to attend practice. Failure to attend a match is classified as a serious offence and the boy is placed in a two-hour detention on a Friday afternoon. Each Friday morning, the first teams of each sport are called out by name and the boys are asked to stand up and are applauded by the school. At break time on a Friday, the first teams of all sports that are playing over the weekend are placed in the centre of the quad and a school war cry ensues (as described earlier in this chapter). Each Monday, the results of all teams are read out during assembly and a copy of the results is placed in the weekly update. Outstanding or remarkable achievements are also mentioned – for example a batting century achievement in cricket.

Rugby season is an important season in the lives of many of the boys at Connaught High. Pre-season training occurs weeks before the actual start of the matches where the boys put in many extra hours on the field in an attempt to get fit before the season starts. Selection of teams is also an anxious time in the boys' lives. Being selected for the first team is a massive accomplishment and the accolades that follow this selection are prominent. This rugby season hype is described in further detail in chapter six.

The school's brochure states:

“we believe that participation in sport at a competitive and social level is the cornerstone of a young man's development. Boys are encouraged to experience the benefits of team and life sports and are taught the importance of a healthy lifestyle and encouraged to make exercise a lifelong activity. Our boys participate in a modern and innovative sporting and exercise

curriculum that makes full use of our highly experienced coaching staff as well as extensive use of specialist professional coaches” (School brochure, 2013).

In the past 10 years, the school has developed a good sporting programme and is often marketed on its excellence in this area. While all sports are encouraged, the focus is on cricket in summer and rugby in winter. The controlling premise in traditional British schools was that the “sport for real boys and for the formation of gentlemen, were cricket and rugby” (Noakes, 2011:18). While it is not compulsory to participate in any particular sport, boys at Connaught High are encouraged to play both cricket and rugby. Some authors (Swain, 2006b; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008a) have pointed out that the emphasis on sport in schools as being a vital cog in a school, is residual of the English/British public school life, where cricket and rugby were seen as the gentleman’s games.

5.4 Institutional change

All institutions have some form of gender regime and these regimes are highly gendered (Connell, 1996; Swain, 2006b). Masculinities are produced and reproduced in schools. By understanding and studying how institutions operate, one can begin to understand men and their construction of masculinities (Connell, 2008a). Therefore, by understanding the background of Connaught High, one can begin to understand the boys and their masculinities that are formulated and actively constructed within the school context. By looking at their sport involvement in particular and understanding the importance of sport in their lives, it is important to identify the stereotype and assumptions that govern the ways in which they perceive themselves and others. These stereotypes are emphasised by past research in schools where sports have often been concerned and linked with violence (Connell, 2008a; Gard and Meyenn, 2000). However, recent research has concentrated its emphasis on the development of masculinities through sport (Connell, 2008a; Hickey 2008). By placing enormous emphasis on their sport, boys marginalised others and created the dominant masculinity through their sport.

Because “different masculinities exist in different situations, institutions and cultures, one can understand that masculinities are responsive to change” (Connell, 1996:207). One can say that the masculinities being formed at Connaught are dynamic and open to contestation and replacement. Staff and boys in the past years at the school have tried to set standards and norms. Experienced teachers who have taught previously in all-boy schools, have tried to influence the boys into keeping the school as traditional as possible by pushing the traditional sports of rugby and cricket. While still a new

school, one can already see the importance that sport is playing in the lives of these men and in their development of masculinity. These are, however, malleable and open to change, and therefore conflicting and difficult for the boys at Connaught High to negotiate. Because of the fluid and dynamic nature of the construction of masculinities, schools can over time be susceptible to change in gender relations. This is hugely relevant to this study, when looking at Connaught High. The boys interviewed understand that there are set standards already in place, but that there are opportunities for changes to occur. The boys being interviewed are seen as an example of how the boys at Connaught High go about using sport as a means to identify and create their specific masculinities.

Some of the studies on schools and the reshaping of masculinities and shaping of modern masculinities, (Connell, 1996) have been done on boys and pupils who have completed school and have had the opportunity to reflect on their schooling years. Such research is done and demonstrated from outside the institution and not from within. Messner's (1992) life histories work on American athletes' masculinities and Connell's (1994) research conducted on groups of Australian men, all had men reflecting back on their school careers. This research endeavours to view the pupils within the system and how they are reflecting and talking about the changes currently occurring within the school structure they are presently in.

Boys' ex-model C schools in the Durban area are large, featuring more than one thousand pupils and are hugely traditional in terms of sport as they have been open for decades. Connaught High is not classified as a traditionally large boy's high school, considering it only has 415 pupils and has only been open for 12 years. However, Connaught High competes against all schools in most sports. For a school to have success in the sporting arena today is a massive marketing tool. Parents of sporty boys are sending their sons to schools that are producing the results on the sports field (specifically with regard to rugby and cricket). Rugby, in particular has become the number one marketing tool for certain schools (Whitfield, 2012). In an article in the *Sunday Tribune*, Whitfield emphasises how schools have lost players to other schools due to their sport results 'poaching'. Scholarships are being awarded to entice pupils. By some parents choosing a school based on sporting results and not on academic performance, they are sending out a clear message – there is money and careers to be made in sport and sport is important in boys' lives. There is massive emphasis on intensive competition and commercialisation. As a result, sporting excellence is of paramount importance in the marketing of the school. Failure to compete means fewer numbers are attracted to the school. These top sportsmen are therefore, highly sought after, are handpicked and lured through scholarships to the school. One can

understand why schools place such huge emphasis on sport as it is used as an essential and effective marketing tool. By encouraging each boy to play sport, the school believes it will foster competition amongst the boys to improve and be the best possible teams they can be.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter gives the reader a glimpse into the structure, activities and gender regime of Connaught School. Both staff and boys are introduced and a brief summary of the day-to-day life of a boy at Connaught High is provided.

This chapter also provides the background to sport at Connaught and attempts to understand the enormous emphasis that is placed on sport at Connaught High – a relatively new school in the area. The school has had to market itself and attract pupils so that it can be competitive in the market. Sport is an area of the school regime that is remarkably gender-biased and exclusive. Sport is one of the ‘vortices’ (Connell, 2008a) at a school where masculinity and the formation of masculinity is hugely visible. Throughout the history, particularly of South African boys’ schools, these gender regimes impact hugely on the masculinising process (Morrell, 2001b).

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned emphasis placed on competitive sport in the school structure, this research looks to the link between the sport and the development of masculinities at Connaught High, a new private boys’ school in the Durban area. The sporty competition, the training of hierarchy that is created and the extreme rewards, all contribute to the creation of masculinity. Sport and particularly school sport is highly visible in the media for both the boys and their schools and thus the schools and the boys are under enormous pressures to succeed. When boys make their decisions in choosing their respective sports, there is a myriad of complexities that the boys take into consideration, some subliminally, before making their choice. Daily routines carve an indelible mark on the ways the boys perpetuate and continue the regime that is instilled in the school structure.

Chapter 6: Sporting prowess and racial identity: Sport is who I am, it defines me

Introduction

Sport plays an integral role in the construction of many boys' gender identities at school level in South Africa in particular. Chapter five investigates boys in the summer season of their first year at high school trying to create an identity for themselves through sport. The chapter highlights the intersection of race, sport and gender identity in a new school. While boys may simply choose a sport for the summer season, this choice is hugely important in their construction of gender identity. Boys remind us that masculine construction is not a simple task, but involves many varied factors and is a continuum that continuously troubles them. Sport is often seen as an area to unite boys and is indeed a powerful tool in schools to build camaraderie and friendships in binding boys together. But boys also show that sport is an area for marginalisation and exclusion owing to variance in skill level and of choosing different sports.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination” (Nelson Mandela, Laureus World Sports Awards, 2000)

Nelson Mandela recognised the power of sport. He envisaged sport as a powerful entity that has the potential to unite people of a nation and believed that it possesses the power to break racial barriers. Mandela imagined that sport could unite nations “in the face of all types of discrimination” (Nelson Mandela, 2000). While being fully aware that sport is highly racialised and is expressed through social class, he believed that sport would overcome racial barriers and sports would be both accessible and enjoyed by all. This chapter demonstrates that gendered power relations in connection with masculinity and sport are “more complicated and contradictory than any simplistic discourse of ‘boys will be boys’ suggests” (Reay, 2010:120). The boys at Connaught High are faced with a choice of sport in their first term. Many choose a sport simply on their past experience of the sport and almost do not think twice about their selection of sport. But for many boys, sport in school is highly racialised and forms an important cog in their formation of masculine identities based on sporting prowess. While boys may appear to haphazardly choose their sport for the term, they are aware that their choices are heavily invested in power.

Schools are seen as active domains for the manifestation of gender identity and sport plays a significant role in the development and construction of this identity. For boys' sporting identity to be perceived as both positive and powerful, they need to be successful at sport. The ways in which boys construct their masculinities revolves around their investment in sport and these constructions "include a jostle for power" (Bhana et al., 2011:443).

Boys make a conscious decision to invest in sport. This investment can be heavily influenced by many aspects, and the one highlighted in particular in this chapter, is the aspect of race. Race plays a vital role in the making of gender and in particular in the construction of gender identities.

"How boys construct and perform gender identities depends crucially on race as studies have demonstrated" (Pattman and Bhana, 2010: 548).

Race has been an integral part of research when dealing with boys and sport (Alegi, 2004) and here in South Africa, sport became structurally divided along racial lines that were introduced through apartheid laws. However, twenty years after the abolition of apartheid, the social divide is still highly evident (Bhana, 2008). The hierarchies of social class, race and power that exists within sports, makes the investment in sport that much more complex for the boys. Some "authors have argued that the experience of being a boy is based on varying cultural variables including race and class" (Kimmel and Messner, 2006:102).

Research by Bhana (2008) in her ethnographic study on the lives of eight- and nine-year-old South African primary school boys confirms this and found that young children drew on discourses of race in the development of their gendered identities. Bhana (2008) also found that young boys' association with sport was all about constructing their identities. While sports like soccer and rugby were offered in schools to stimulate boys' interest in school, it had enormous effects on exacerbating divisions across races and promoted a hierarchy of race groups through sport (Bhana, 2008).

Performing gender and the construction of gender identities is not a simple process, but a composite, constant process of re-negotiation. Boys' stories, choices of sport and relationships with sport, influence and shape their masculinities, as their masculinities are in turn shaped by sport. This construction of gender through sport investment plays a part in boys' social lives and the sense of power or lack thereof and choosing sport becomes choosing masculinity.

“Sport forms a vital segment of school life for many boys and is riddled with masculinising associations” (Bowley, 2013:1).

I use the theoretical framework of masculinities, and in particular the definitions of masculinity described by Connell (2005), to analyse the boys’ responses. As a result, masculinity, and in particular hegemonic masculinity, provides a starting point for boys to “make sense of their masculinities and their social stratification” (Anderson & McGuire, 2010:250). I view the boys through an ethnographical lens, not in isolation, but as active agents who strategise, construct and manipulate their identities using sport as a powerful medium to demonstrate gender power. This chapter highlights and focuses on the way boys “attach meaning to gender and the manner in which they shape and forge their gender identities” (Bhana et al., 2011:444). Race, gender and sport are closely intertwined.

This chapter interrogates the narratives of the boys that were generated during the summer season of their first term at high school. The process through which boys attach meaning to gender as they invest in sport is the focus of this section. Because of the fluid ways in which gender is constructed, these discussions highlight how the investments in sport greatly influenced both their access to gender power and their masculine identities.

This chapter highlights two parts of school sport in which gender and power are implicated: investments in sport and reflections of these investments involving race (Bhana et al., 2011). I introduce the chapter by asking the boys what meaning sport holds for them. Their definitions and investments in certain sports are then analysed. The study then highlights the important influence that race has on these investments in sport by focusing specifically on the accounts of two boys: Carlos and Lamont.

6.1 Sport, race and power

The first section of this chapter describes the more generic conversations of the boys in the group. The first group interview that was conducted with the research group started by asking the boys three questions:

1. What sport are you going to play this term (1st term of grade eight);
2. why did you chose this sport?; and
3. What does sport mean to you?

Initially the boys had been very quiet in the group interview. Some are new to the school and yet it becomes evident from the way in which they speak in the interview that a pecking order of sorts is at play. The conversations with boys already begin to show that their investments in sport are hugely reliant on their construction of their masculine identities. The interview below also begins to reveal the diversity of masculinities. It also shows that because investments in sport are related to hierarchy and exclusion; power relations are beginning to develop.

Me: What sport are you going to play this term and why did you choose this sport?

Carlos: Basketball. I played in the prep school... and we played... like during break time... so I developed a bit of a passion for it... also my brother played... you know my brother... it is a popular sport, so he encouraged me to play... my mum too... she played when she was at school (Individual interview, February, 2012).

Carlos understands the dynamics behind sport at Connaught. Having been in the primary school and because his brother played a sport that is popular at the school, playing basketball for Carlos seems to be the way to go. For him, playing basketball is a way of gaining early recognition from his peers and therefore creating an identity. He is referred to as Carlos the basketball player. In response to the same questions boys have this to say:

Craig: Swimming and water polo. I played water polo last year in the prep school and made the KZN team... so I am hoping that I can fit in and do well this term. You make good relationships with the team... they also go on tours... so I hope I make the A team (Group interview, February, 2012).

Owen: Water polo. I enjoy the water... I can't run ... so swimming is easier... I made the KZN team last year and my folks were proud of me... so I am encouraged to keep going with the sport. My dad played as well... not that they push me... but I can talk to my dad about the sport 'cos he knows the sport (Group interview, February, 2012).

David: Swimming and water polo. Water polo is the reason I came to the high school. The high school team is the best in the country. I played last year ... so it's an easy choice... it's my best sport. I also like outdoor stuff... so polo is perfect... I lose

some of my energy... it's also something to do on a Saturday and Sunday. Early morning training is hard... I have heard from the other boys but it's good... it pushes you before a tournament to play better and train harder (Group interview, February, 2012).

Zaid: Cricket. My grandpa played for KZN and was the SA ladies coach in cricket... all my uncles play... I also go to private coaching for cricket... I made a provincial team last year... it's a good sport to play... I love it... you get out there... I hope to be in the first team (Group interview, February, 2012).

Craig, Owen, David and Zaid certainly answer the question with more confidence and bravado. They have identified that their chosen sport in primary school brought them recognition. This recognition and their selection in the provincial teams (KZN), affords them power. Their past success at sport makes their friends and their school recognise and identify them as being good at the sport. Both Craig and Owen mentioned in the group discussion that they made a provincial side the previous year. By boys mentioning their provincial selection, they are accentuating the power that they possess over other boys. Success in sport warrants power for boys over other boys that have not been selected into provincial teams.

Zaid Grade eight is such a tough year... you have to prove yourself... like make a mark for yourself at the school. Playing sport... and being good helps to be someone.

Owen *Ja...* you want people to know you. Like guys know me as Owen the polo player (Group interview, March, 2012).

Despite the fact that it is possible for multiple forms of masculinity to co-exist, it is the dominant masculinity that is usually highly visible and the one that most young boys aspire to. Zaid and Owen verbalise how important year eight is to young boys in high school. It is when they make their initial 'mark' on the school. By creating a positive image and identity early on in their career at school, they find a place or niche in the school; their choices made early on in their school lives are of fundamental importance in the boys' position of power.

Owen would like to be known as Owen the polo player and receive recognition for his prowess in water polo. Zaid reminds us how grade eight is "a tough year" as one has to "prove yourself" and thus this

creation of identity is an arduous task. Because “sporting success is a key signifier of successful masculinity” (Swain, 2003:302), the boys are using their sport to create an identity that they hope will lead to a successful masculinity. Swain (2003) reminds us that this creation of masculinity can often be vulnerable and hazardous and concurs with Zaid that the grade eight year is indeed a tough year to create ones’ identity within high school.

The boys use sport to create a dominant position and this position is not simply won, but reconstructed and renegotiated throughout their schooling (Connell, 2008a). Positions of hegemony had already begun to appear within the group earlier on in the year. Zaid tells the group about his private coaching lessons and alludes to a talent in this area of sport. He also mentions his provincial selection. The responses from the next boys that follow are more reticent in relation to the confidence exhibited by Craig, Owen, David and Zaid.

Lamont: Basketball... it’s going to be my first time at playing this sport... I hope I can fit in... to the team ... I mean.

Campbell: Basketball. I don’t want to play cricket and I can’t swim, so I can’t play water polo, so I will have to try basketball. I’ve never played before... but it looks interesting... I’d like to try a new sport. I was going to play cricket... but it takes too long and it’s too hot... so I will play basketball (Group interview, February, 2012).

Lamont and Campbell explain to the group that they are playing basketball for the first time. Their explanations for their choices come with reservations. Lamont expresses his desire to fit in and to be accepted in the team. Evidently, social acceptance into the team is highly valued. The positions of power displayed by Craig and Owen clearly left Lamont feeling inadequate. Basketball may not be the sport that bestows the power Lamont needs hence his trepidation.

Me: What does sport mean to you?

Carlos: Sport is everything to me. It’s who I am. People know me for my sport... like my older brother... they... when they talk about him... they say... like Carl (Carlos’s older brother)... the big rugby player. It makes me feel proud of him. When I introduce myself to new staff, I often say, hi, I’m Carlos, Carl’s brother.... Then they know who I am. They all know him... ’cos of his sport. Sport also brings us

closer to our teammates... I can now socialise better... because I can talk to people more. I am more self-confident because of my sport (Group interview, March, 21012).

Carlos defines himself by his skill in sport. Sport is everything to him and *is* him. Here Carlos clearly demonstrates the power that sport affords some men. He believes sport simply is something that he does. Carlos defines himself by his sport with sport playing a major role in his formation of a masculine identity. He sees no difference and cannot separate himself from sport. By identifying with his brother and the accolades and power that were bestowed on his brother, he typifies hegemonic behaviour that is categorized through sport. The staff members at school are aware of Carl, his brother, and his achievements at Connaught and Carlos is desperate to emulate his brother's behaviour. Carlos is a clear example of how prowess in sport and hegemonic masculinity are interconnected. When Craig was asked what sport meant to him, he replies:

Craig: I don't know... you all play sport... boys play sport... it's what we do. It has helped me fit in easier at Connaught... by playing polo, you are accepted... by even the senior boys. My friends don't really have an influence on my sport I play... but most of my friends play polo... and also I love it (Individual interview, March, 2012).

Because sport is often constructed in opposition to women and girls and in the subordination of other men, Craig cannot really understand why I would ask such a question. His answer "I don't know... you all play sport... boys play sport..." reflects that sport is what boys do. Kidd (2013) defines this type of assumption as a male practice that is both developed by males and for males. Carlos and Craig accept that playing sport is part of being boy. It is a part of their identity and hence part of their masculinity. The discourse of 'boys will be boys' is applicable to the ways in which these two boys attempt to essentialise sport as a male domain. The suggestion is that boys are boys because they play sport and sport is one way for them to define themselves. Sport is an avenue for boys to prove that they are 'real' boys. Boys do not contest this. They openly admit that sport enables them to achieve patriarchal power. Sport is a crucial site for the construction of patriarchal patterns and structures. Sport allows them to be manly.

Owen: Boys and staff in the school identify you by what sport you play

Me: Do you really think this?

Owen: Ja, I think many teachers associate us with our sport. It gives them [*the teachers*] something to talk to us about. (Group interview, May, 2012).

While the boys acknowledge that being part of a team is a form of acceptance, they also accept that acceptance and recognition denotes power. People know who you are.

Richard: Sport makes you more well-known... people know who you are... because you are in a team.

David: Playing sport has a huge influence on your social life... it makes you fit in. I have a lot of friends through sport... meeting new people... like at tournaments... it helps me build my self- confidence. I am never bored on the weekends... I always have friends to be with. If you are good at sport you are considered cool by the others.

Campbell: *Ja*, like you are accepted... by like... even the older boys... you feel a part (Group interview, May, 2012).

It is apparent from the data that boys have to prove themselves and prove that they are ‘real’ boys in a manner that determines their masculinity and sport is certainly one area for them to achieve this. Connell (2008a) clearly explains that there is no singular form of hegemonic masculinity, boys continually manipulate and manoeuvre in order to be seen and understood by their peers as possessing power through sport and in this way, create a position of hegemony for themselves. Hegemonic masculinity is created in relation to women and subordinate men; in the case of boys in a boy’s-only school, their masculinities are created to subordinate other masculinities (Connell, 2008a).

The gender regime as explained in chapter four highlights how the performance of masculinity is dependent on the performance in sport at Connaught High. Connaught places significant emphasis on sporting prowess. The boys’ investment in sport for the first term of their grade eight year seemed to come quite easily. However, with the boys’ investment in sport comes a certain amount of power when boys achieve success at sport. The boys carefully negotiate their investments. Some of the boys’ state that they have been previously successful at the sport that they chose (Craig, Owen, David and Zaid) while some only knew one sport and did not want to try anything new (Carlos, Lamont, Richard).

Boys use the sentence, “I hope to fit in” quite often during the interviews. While the boys view it simply as acceptance, it is more than just being accepted by friends. It is a form of male camaraderie

that is built up between members of a sports team. Boys have a sense of belonging in being part of the team. However, it can also mean power. Success, acceptance and good teamwork in sport, brings with it power.

Field Notes – Conversation at break time in the tuckshop – March 2012

A small group of Grade 9 boys are discussing a new lad to Connaught. He does not seem to have fitted in. The boys make mention that he does not play sport, or even try to play sport. While he is small in stature, if he had at least attempted sport, the boys reckon he would at least then be accepted. The condescending talk makes me think that the boys feel desperately sorry for this new lad. Words like, “it’s a shame”, “sorry”, “doesn’t even try” are used to describe him. Playing a sport at Connaught for these boys allows them to become one of the group and become accepted.

Figure 7 Extract from field notes

Success at sport for the boys is important. Hegemony is incredibly important for young boys growing up and even more especially for boys in an all-boys school early on in their high school career. They need to make an impression and need to boost their self-esteem. They need to be seen and become “known” for who they are – and their sport is one area for this to occur. The gender regime of the school emphasises sporting prowess so to gain power through sport is an enormous accomplishment. David states that playing for the first water polo team was his best experience at Connaught. By gaining success at sport and achieving this position, he is afforded a hierarchy over other boys and confidence.

“A good deal of research now shows that peer interaction is a particularly salient site for the definition of masculinities in adolescence. The group interactions in, and around, sport are an important site of this process” (Connell, 2008a:135).

This chapter continues with a story about Carlos. Because masculinities are extremely racialised (Frosh et al., 2002), the first story navigating Carlos’s first exposure to sport in the high school is important, as it highlights the intersection of sport and race. It emphasises the important role that race plays in the development of both his gender identity and his masculine identity. The interview demonstrates the contradictions in the ways in which Carlos tries to make sense of his investment in sport and the linked conversation with other boys’ views of sport and race.

6.2 Race and investment in sport: Black people don't swim

Carlos, from the beginning of the research, defines himself as Carl's brother. He introduces himself to new staff members by referring to his older brother. Carlos is also well aware that Carl has attained power through his sport and Carlos realises that this is also his avenue for power. Carlos, in his first year at Connaught High, is already attaining fame and power through his own sport. However, while Carlos had attained power and recognition through his sport in his first year at school, his story that unravels in his second year at school highlights the contradictions he actually faced when entering high school. Carlos understands the power that sporting prowess at Connaught possesses – and race although not previously encountered, appears to become a factor.

There are class and certainly racialised differences amongst boys in terms of their everyday experiences (Frosh et al., 2002). One cannot simply generalise boys' experiences and identities; considerable understanding and insight needs to be afforded in each situation. Because each boy possesses flexible masculine identities, each individual case warrants research and discussion. While gender stereotypes, such as 'boys will be boys' and all boys have to play sport, are dismissed in this research, Carlos's story underpins the idea of being able to understand boys and allow them a voice. This story of Carlos was recorded in May 2013, a year after his arrival in Grade eight at Connaught High. This is Carlos's story:

Carlos: I actually was a swimmer before I came to Connaught High.

Me: What do you mean by being a swimmer?

Carlos: I swam at my junior school... you know... at primary school... I was in the school team... I was okay.

Me: So why did you not try out for the swim team?

Carlos: (Silence and shrugs his shoulders)

Me: Or play water polo when you came to Connaught?

Carlos: No, I couldn't ... I'd be the only one.

Me: What do you mean, the only one?

Carlos: Ma'am.... I watched the trials on the first day... I would be the only black guy that could have made the team.... I would stick out.

Me: But you are a good swimmer, you would have done well in the sport. The sport requires you to be strong, which you certainly are.

Carlos: (Silence and simply shrugs his shoulders.)

Me: Did you bring your kit to swim on the first day?

Carlos: Yes... but then I watched some of the trials and decided no...

Me: Why? Why not even try?

Carlos: No... it would not have been...because if I made a mistake... like everyone would see me... I would stick out... it would not be good. I was new to Connaught High; I did not want to make a fool out of myself.

Carlos explains how sport is racialised and how the school regime at Connaught has enormous impact on the boys' choice of sport. Carlos is voicing this concept of racialised sport at Connaught for the first time. The concept of masculinities being fluid and dynamic now plays a crucial role. While being a good swimmer in his primary years and having gained both success and power through swimming in the primary school, Carlos faces an early dilemma in his first day at Connaught High. While all boys have to do swimming trials on their first day, Carlos makes a conscious decision not to. He makes a deliberate choice not to swim because, in his opinion, swimming is a 'white sport'. Even though all the boys, of all races, try out for the trials, Carlos does not.

Carlos's defines himself through sport, but makes a conscious decision not to swim, as this would not neither boost his confidence nor allow him power, an area of his masculinity that is important. His masculinity and masculine identity, which is a gendered practice is both contradictory and multiple (Frosh, et al., 2002). His understanding of 'doing boy' is relational and certainly contradictory in certain contexts. Here the school gender regime is playing an important role in Carlos' decision where he is an active participant in reconstructing and reinventing his identity.

Manhood is often related to power. A boy's transition to manhood and the shaping of his identity has been of interest to researchers for some time and therefore, particular paths (like sports in schools) are likely to lead to particular manly outcomes (Morrell, 2012). Power is important to Carlos. He has experienced power through his achievements in sport in the primary school, by being in the swimming team, but deliberately decides not to swim in the high school. Power is everywhere and is materially, socially, culturally and historically embedded and Carlos's swimming trials are a perfect example of this. Patriarchal hierarchy is what is important for Carlos. Swimming is an area where he recognises he will not gain this power. By not participating in the trials, he is avoiding any embarrassment should he not triumph in front of his peers. The swim trial occurred on the first day of their grade eight year and all boys in that grade were brought to the pool. All boys were asked to try out for the swim trials. Nearly all the boys did try while a few watched from the stands. It was a moment for those boys who were good at swimming to gain instant recognition and status in front of their peers. Those who were not good at swimming would come to realise that this was not their place to shine or gain any form of recognition or power. This text is an example of how masculinities suffuse school regimes. Within each example of the school experience, masculinities are being threatened, reinforced or changed through experiences that draw on varying cultural resources (Swain, 2006b; Connell, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002).

Kimmel (2008) offers a theory about the changing status of young men in the United States. He describes this new phase in the lives of young men as 'guyland'. Carlos is experiencing 'guyland' being exposed to a situation in an all-boys' school. Boys, early on in their high school lives need to be accepted and recognised and Carlos battles with these sporting choices that are available to him. While being a good swimmer at his past school, he makes the deliberate choice of not swimming at Connaught High to avoid any form of disappointment or failure (rejection) early on in his high school career. His conscious decision is certainly a contradiction and he is protecting his reputation and position of a black boy and is not prepared to compromise his reputation. Boys' lives are shaped by their peers; who they are seen with and what they are known for, and therefore, power plays a crucial role. Carlos makes the decision in front of his peers not to swim to avoid any form of embarrassment in front of them. For Carlos this is a moment in his masculine identity formation. While it is not classified in one defining moment, it is, however, made up of consistent changes and challenges that affect boys' lives. This moment at the swimming pool is one of the first changes in Carlos's life at high school.

“High school is a starting ground for identity formation and the primary hub of social life in adolescence” (Pascoe, 2003:1425).

Carlos identifies and believes that he will not become more powerful through swimming and power relations are “central to the construction of gendered identities” (Paechter, 2011:237). In order for the boys to create an identity and within it their masculinity, they need to not only associate with their set of abilities, but also to position themselves in a way that they have power and acknowledgement (Paechter, 2011). It was very interesting to note that Carlos, while being a ‘born free’ (children that are born after the apartheid era in South Africa), still views and engages in racially stereotypical behaviour, particularly when it comes to sport. Morrell (2002: 21) states that the “importance of race is unquestionable” when boys make their decisions in sport and this can certainly be borne out in the case of Carlos.

As stated in chapter four, in South Africa in particular, Carlos’s thoughts, fears and behaviour are impacted by the environment and specifically, schools in South Africa. While it may appear to be quite an insignificant experience, and one that may go unnoticed within the school environment, Carlos’s experience is particularly interesting. He still uses race as a definer of his masculinity to create a gender identity. His responses show resonance with research that demonstrates racialised experiences that boys experience in the development of their masculinities. While Carlos has conflicts and dilemmas in his story: weighing up being good at a sport and that of avoiding embarrassment and therefore, exposure to some form of power, it clearly shows the conflicts that boys are also faced with in the construction of their masculine identities. This example of Carlos adds to the body of evidence that shows how the formation of a masculine identity is a complex and challenging practice for boys.

The transcript below differs from the previous account. Lamont, who in this incident does not contest racial decisions, but simply accepts it as the norm. While Lamont is a quiet member of the group, when he has an opinion on a topic, he voices it strongly and with conviction. Lamont’s story links with that of Carlos.

Me: Do you agree that Carlos should not have tried out for the swimming trials?

Lamont: Yes.

Me: Did you try out for the swim trials?

Lamont: Yes... but I already knew that I would not make it (the team)... I am a terrible swimmer.

Me: But why do you think that Carlos should not have tried out?

Lamont: Some people... they judge themselves by the stereotypes... for example... black people can't swim... so they don't even try.

Me: Who does not even try?

Lamont: Us... the black guys... we don't even try to swim.

Me: Do you accept this as you call it 'stereotype'?

Lamont: Yes...

Me: Really? Why

Lamont: It's right... it's what is done.

Me: You don't try and contest it?

Lamont: No, it's easy for me... I know I am terrible at swimming... so swimming did not mean anything... you know... I would not make the team... knew already... but Carlos... if he made the team... that would be difficult (Group interview, May, 2013).

Both Lamont and Carlos have internalised and normalised the 'black people can't swim' discourse and grapple with the issue of race and identity in terms of their swimming ability. This internalisation leads to acceptance that they cannot swim. It appears that Lamont merely participated in trials and had no expectation and thus placed no pressure on himself, as he knows he would not make the team. Lamont has already subordinated himself in relation to those who are talented at swimming. This does not appear to be a concern for him because he uses stereotypes around race to justify his not achieving status in swimming.

Me: Do you not think this is just a, as you say, 'stereotype'?

Lamont: It may be a stereotype.

Me: And do you accept this?

Lamont: Yes, it's right... it's what is done (Group interview, May, 2013).

Power is materially, socially, culturally and historically embedded at schools and both Carlos and Lamont are examples of the power that can be achieved through being successful at sport at school. Masculinity, an area of power, is a social practice that is hugely dependent on peers and peer opinions and this is exemplified in Lamont and Carlos's stories. How the boys appear in front of their peers is of vital importance. 'Masculinising practices' as they are often referred to, relate to power and prestige (Swain, 2006b).

Lesko (2000:16) writes that:

"Masculinities are not individual psychologies but socially organised and meaningful actions in historical contexts; that is, they are a collective endeavour, and in the informal life of a peer group, is one of the most important features of a school setting where pupils try to define, negotiate and perform their own masculine identities."

After having heard both Carlos and Lamont's version of their first day at swimming trials, I returned to all the boys' versions of their accounts of the first impact of school at Connaught.

"It was horrid having swimming trials on the first day. People immediately form an image of you. You can either swim or you can't." (Richard, essay, 2012))

"The swimming trials on the first day were terrible. I knew I was terrible at swimming. So I did not want to make a fool of myself, especially not in the first day at school. You have to prove yourself." (Lamont, group interview, February, 2012)

"It was cool having swimming trials on the first day. Because I can swim, so boys would know me straight away as being a good swimmer. (Owen, group interview, February, 2012)

"Is tough having swimming trial on the first day of grade eight, but also good, because if you can swim, boys get to know you straight away. (David, group interview, February, 2012)

“I hated having to swim on the first day. Because I can’t swim, I just swam one race and then it was over.” (Richard, group interview, February, 2012)

The fact that the boys both write about the swimming trials and when asked in the group interview, talk about the incident, indicates that this experience is a social, cultural and historical moment in all boys’ lives. They are put on display on the first day at school by having to swim in front of their peers. They are thus afforded an opportunity to create a positive gender identity or not. While swimming may be linked to the historically culturally exalted masculinity at Connaught High, many boys do not deem it significant. Carlos, specifically, struggles with being in this situation and being able to challenge the stereotype, of a black lad being a talented swimmer. Yet Lamont has no problem with accepting the racial stereotype. Here, specifically, the issue of masculine identity and racial identity are evidenced. Morrell (2002) points out that it is important:

“... to distinguish between race as a lived identity and race as an historically received, materially located identity” (p322).

All boys are affected by a historically conferred identity and this is what makes this type of research in South Africa so important and interesting to understand. By way of the institutionalised gender regime at Connaught, boys are excluded from certain sports and they do not use the opportunity to challenge this historical regime. When further probed, Lamont simply adopts a defeatist attitude in that it is what it is and he accepts it. But for Lamont, this racial stereotype does not affect him. He does not play any sports that are considered to be ‘white’ sports in summer, so he does not see the need to contest the stereotype and supports Carlos’s decision not to participate in the swimming trials. The racial stereotypes are not challenged. Racial and ethnic stereotyping in sport is deeply embedded and plays a key role in how athletes are perceived, how they define their identities and what is expected (Bhana, 2008). Lamont, at a young age, is simply reinforcing this stereotype through his engagement in sport.

What is interesting is that the boys in this group only brought up the issue of race in their second round of interviews. Nowhere among the interviews conducted during the first term, was the issue of race discussed. Carlos had also not mentioned during the first set of interviews that he was indeed a swimmer. It was only in his second year and already into the winter season that this was disclosed. For Carlos it was a different issue in relation to Lamont. Carlos is talented at a sport that is deemed a ‘white’ sport. This shows that sport is an area where boys can create identities for themselves. All boys

felt pressure on the first day of swimming trials. While the swimming trials are simply seen by the sports staff as an opportunity to confirm the swimming teams, for boys, it involves a lot more.

“Swimming on the first day showed us who was good at swimming and who was not. Some boys were immediately recognised as good sportsmen as the trials gave them an opportunity to show themselves as... like being good at sport. But it was not the time for me. I was looking forward to basketball trials.” (Carlos, Group Interview, February, 2012)

Carlos has to navigate this identity at high school from being a swimmer in primary school to not swimming at all in high school, but rather playing basketball. It is Carlos’s time to create for himself a new sporting identity. He would rather simply change his identity from being one of a swimmer in his primary school, to accepting as Lamont reinforces, the racial stereotype that black boys do not swim. Pattman and Bhana (2010) in an article highlight this plight through the accounts of black and Indian boys in formerly white schools in South Africa. The processes of identity construction and forged identities are closely observed in this article:

“... accounts of marginalisation as well as resistance dominated both interviews and these were usually elaborated when they were discussing sport” (2010: 553).

Carlos is applying race as a lived identity that is heavily influenced by history. As described in detail in chapter four, that while schools during the apartheid era in South Africa, and in particular private schools, were modelled on the private schools of 19th century Britain, the race and ethnically entrenched racial stereotypes are still firmly ingrained within this school. Despite South Africa undergoing a major political transformation over the past 20 years, racial stereotypes are still highly evident in the school structures and within the mind-set of the pupils.

“... the expressions of such concerns and anxieties in racially mixed schools may fall on deaf ears and this, ironically may reflect the investments of staff and many learners in their school as melting pots in a Rainbow Nation” (Pattman and Bhana, 2010: 554).

When asked how these stereotypes could be changed or adapted, the boys struggled to come up with solutions.

Lamont: I suppose we could try to change them... but it’s hard.

Campbell: I suppose if everyone had to swim on the first day when we came to Connaught... that would be good... it would prevent stereotyping.... just expected all of us to swim.

Owen: It's not like... like black guys can't swim... it's just a stereotype... I think it is what South Africans think... so we kind of all believed it (Group interview, February, 2013).

Owen rejects the stereotype that black boys cannot swim. The racially ingrained sporting stereotypes are highly evident in the conversation between the boys. South Africans, and these black boys in particular, remain locked into these stereotypes that can disadvantage them.

Carlos and Lamont are doing sport as a way of doing masculinity and to construct identities in such ways as to feel powerful (Mendick, 2002). Their stories do not exist in isolation, but rely on previous studies to support the evidence. It is difficult to separate the stories of the boys from each other as they are interrelated. This is one of the central adages of working with interpretative research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). By applying the interpretative approach to the stories of all the boys, I am using the verbatim language of the boys to try and better understand both the boys in the study and the school (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). The gender regime that was explained in chapter four now is discussed and integrated with stories of boys within the school. Their stories also give me insight into the school and structures that possibly need to be put in place in order for boys to gain a sense of belonging early on in their high school career. Schools take for granted that if nothing "too serious" happens then the boys have settled in and all is well.

Within Carlos's story the race and sport discourse is at work. While there is just a simple explanation of his feelings, it is a start to understanding the dilemmas the boy's face with choices of sport. The discourse of race and sport in teenage boys is highlighted in research by Frosh et al. (2002). Their findings are reiterated by Skelton (2000) whose study on dominant masculinities and primary school children shows how football (and indeed many sports) plays a significant role in racial contestation. "Social and cultural differences in South Africa have generated a particular toolkit of cultural resources upon which the boys drew" (Bhana, 2008: 10). As Bhana (2008) found in her research, boys at Connaught are also influenced by race and cultural difference which have an influence on their decisions and masculine identity.

6.3 **Winning ways: continuing the power discourse**

The next extract diverts from Carlos and Lamont, which shows how race played an integral role in the development of boys' masculinities. Campbell attempts a 'new' sport and in so doing, tries to create a new identity for himself, however, is unsuccessful because the sport of basketball is not a winning sport.

“School sport is not meant to be some kind of innocent pastime, but is often used to create a ‘top dog’ model of masculinity which many boys try to aim for and live up to” (cited in Swain, 2006b: 317 by Salisbury and Jackson, 1996:205).

Boys use sport, not simply as something fun to do, but as a means to create an identity. If they are successful at sport, this identity can be seen as hierarchically higher than boys who are not successful. They can, through sport, become the ‘top dog’.

Campbell: Like basketball... they always lose... they are rubbish... they need better players
(Individual interview, May, 2012).

For all the boys, playing a sport is all about the power. While some do not realise this, it is certainly justified in the manner in which they speak during the interviews. They need to prove to both me as the researcher and to the other boys in the group that they can access power through sport. This power can be achieved as a result of playing in a team that wins, like water polo or swimming. Winning represents power – a power that is a controlling site for the development of masculinities. And, because masculinities are certainly organised around social power (Connell, 1989), for boys to possess this power is important. Some authors describe school as being a race, a race to see who wins (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). While achievement is important it is, however, certainly not accessible to all.

A conversation between David and Carlos ensues after I asked the group what constituted a powerful sport. Both David and Carlos believe that being well known and being admired emphasises the importance of a sport. Popularity is a key to power and this popularity is often associated with winning teams such as the swimming and water polo teams.

David: You know... everyone knows the first team (water polo) guys.

Carlos: *Ja*, they are always being announced and standing up in assemblies.

Owen: I think they are the best sportsmen at the school.

Zaid: And they always win (Group interview, March 2012).

Because the first term summer sports are squash, basketball, cricket and water polo, none represents a real dominant sport in boys' eyes. As a result, the boys need to confirm the dominant sport and explain how they came to that conclusion. At the start of their grade eight year, the boys simply focus on sports that they are familiar with. They participate in sports where they feel comfortable and hope that they can be accepted. Some of the boys had not thought at this time which sports at Connaught were indeed the high profile sports of the first term. It was only after the season had ended and the boys reflected back on the season, that the issue of winning is discussed.

Many boys who play water polo are seen as popular in the school. The players in the water polo teams are well known and have succeeded in becoming the most powerful group of sportsmen. They seem to be automatically accepted by all. The fact that most of the schoolboys know the first team water polo players is important; acknowledgment of who they are and acceptance, brings with it power. Boys from Connaught High have achieved enormous success in the water polo fraternity with boys from all ages representing both provincial and national teams.

Zaid: While I love cricket a lot ... and the boys who play first team cricket are pretty good... I have to agree the water polo boys are very well known... we hear about them all the time in assembly... this tour... that trophy... they win all their games... so the sport is really good (Group interview, March, 2012).

Winning, for Zaid, was an important accomplishment and therefore warrants a high profile at the school as well as the power that all these grade eight boys are so desperate to achieve. Zaid is a good sportsman with high aspirations in cricket, yet he fully acknowledges the water polo players. There exists a hierarchy of sports in this school where sport like water polo assumes a position at the top of the pecking order. When boys choose a sport, like water polo, the sport provides them with a power over other sports and therefore, over other boys.

Cricket has, for some time, been the dominant sport that is associated with a gentleman's sport and boys' only schools (Morrell, 2001b). Colonialism and the impact that the British education system had and still has on South African schools still influence the sport that is considered dominant at schools

today. The boys at Connaught think that water polo is the dominant sport of summer owing to the fact that the teams win. This change of sport by the boys is not encouraged by the masters of sport and traditional teachers who still place cricket on the top of the summer sports. But it is the boys themselves who are making this distinct change.

Owen: When we lose and stuff at cricket... it's only a big thing between the masters who coach... like one master from our school has a bet on with the opposition coach. But it's not so serious with our teams... it's only the masters (Owen, Group interview, March, 2013).

The schoolmasters are still vehemently trying to believe that the most high profile sport in the summer calendar is cricket. But the boys are adamant that in order for a sport to hold high esteem they must win and this winning affords the boys far greater power over a sport like cricket or basketball. Water polo teams are highly successful and while the masters seem to be holding on to cricket, the boys are trying to make the change. This is evident in the first few rounds of interviews held very early on in the grade eight boys' first year at Connaught. The boys interviewed were asked which sports they thought carried the most prestige. Their responses:

Campbell: Water polo is the most high profile sport... as they win all their games.

Carlos: *Ja*, I agree water polo is certainly the most high profile... there are many good players, which are well known by all the boys in the school.

Craig: Certainly water polo – is certainly Connaught's main sport.

Zaid: I think it could be water polo... as a number of the guys play for South Africa and the school is ranked at number one in the country.

David: Absolutely... water polo has the highest profile... we are the best in the country and the younger kids look up to the polo boys and want to be like them.

Campbell: If I had known that water polo was so popular... you know... held in such high esteem... I think I would have tried it in my first year (Group interview, May, 2013).

While “sport has long been perceived as a masculine domain and one of the primary sites for the construction of masculinity” (Drummond, 2002:130), it can also be a place for massive divide. Though sport can be a place for the formation of masculine hegemonic ideology, “in any hierarchy of competitive sport there are going to be many more places for the unsuccessful than for the champions” (Messner 1992, cited in Swain, 2006b: 328). One does not only have to be good at sport, but also be part of a winning team and a winning sport in a school in order to acquire power and to create a positive self-image. Because of the importance that boys place on sport to ‘prop up’ their masculine identities, success is vital. Research has identified sport in general as a place for success, but here I emphasise that sporting stories can also provide areas for exclusion (Bartholomaeus, 2011). Sport alone does not promote one to a position of power and dominance. Rather it is success in sport and success in a particular sport that is the key factor. Boys play sport from a young age for the social contact that is associated with sport but soon learn and recognise if they are good sportsmen or not. As they get older the dichotomy is accentuated (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998).

6.4 Conclusion

While sports are vehicles of identity and areas of masculinity development, boys are also agents of masculinity. The school is a place for boys to recognise who they are, who they are supposed to be and how they are supposed to act (Swain, 2006b). The hunt for status and power is closely linked to the search to achieve acceptable masculinity. This chapter highlights that the boys at Connaught High are no different. The rivalry for status early on in grade eight is important. But race is still a key factor of boys’ investment in sport that is actively produced in schools in the post-apartheid era (Pattman and Bhana, 2010). Two important factors are highlighted by boys during the summer season of sport: race and winning. Both influence the creation of a position gender identity. The boys discussed in this chapter use sport as a way of defining themselves and creating an identity – and race and winning at sport plays a crucial role in this process. Masculinity comes into being by the way the boys act and through their performances at sport (Swain, 2006b). Sporting excellence was portrayed with high value at Connaught High with the value attached to sport in the school almost tangible in the sporting boards on show in the school hall, in the trophy cabinets and depicted largely in the school annual magazine (Swain, 2006b). Boys at Connaught High are exposed to an array of sports at the start of each sporting season, but complications arise for the boys in making the right choices.

Schools are meant to be melting pots of cultures that are racially mixed and that challenge racial divisions. However, the boys at Connaught identify that schools reinforce racial divisions and sport is a way of administering this division. By choosing their sport they are choosing their masculinity and as sports are hierarchically positioned at the school, certain sports allow positions of power. This chapter attempts to add to the current understanding of masculine identity that is produced through the medium of sport by accentuating the importance that both race and winning at sport are in this construction. By understanding and giving meaning to the voice of teenage boys in specific contexts, I have drawn attention to the prominence that sport has in the construction of masculine identities in an all-boys' school like Connaught High, where sport has such a high profile. The boys emphasise firstly how race becomes an important source of identity and differentiation (Pattman and Bhana, 2010) by emphasising that a black identity is important. While it may be a sign of Lamont's inner racial insecurity, remaining black is highly important to him. The second factor is that of winning at sport. While boys may choose high profile sports, if one does not win, one is not classified as successful at sport.

While the department of sport and the minister of sport may state that simple exposure to sport in schools will make boys play a sport, I refute that statement. In this study and particular in this chapter, I have explored and analysed the meanings that boys give to their participation in sport and how they use sport to build their identities. Simple exposure to a sport does not necessarily influence the boys' choices of sport – it is a far more complex phenomenon than that. The teenage boys in the interviews grapple with a multitude of decisions and influences in their lives in order to draw their conclusions. These choices are then linked to their constructions of their masculine identities.

This chapter has highlighted the ramifications of choosing certain sports on the identities of boys. It highlights the search for power that comes with sport and the influence that race and winning at sport has on this selection. Chapter six continues with the theme around power including the power that is inscribed with the choice of sports during the winter season, looking specifically at the choice between hockey and rugby and the supremacy and control that these sports afford the boys.

Chapter 7 Winter sporting choices: Soft boys and tough boys

Introduction

How important is the choice of sport boys make during the winter season at Connaught High in the development of masculinities? In chapter five we investigated boys creating sporting identities and masculinities through their chosen summer sports. This chapter illustrates that the sporting identity created in the summer season is not enduring. Sport plays a central role in creating boys' masculinities and sexuality but chapter six illustrates that this masculinity is indeed fluid and fluctuating. The sporting choices they make in the selection of their winter sport shapes – and are shaped by – the social construction of masculinity. Studies in South Africa (Bhana, 2002; Anderson, 2010 and Salo, 2007) have shown that boys construct their gender identities inflected by race yet this is not the only factor that affects boys' selection of sport. This chapter highlights that the selection of sport is yet again not a simple choice, but a massive investment that separates, according to boys, the tough boys (rugby boys) from the soft boys (hockey). This illustrates the “exemplary status” (Connell, 2005:30) that sport affords certain boys above others.

“Boys’ developing relationship with sport operates as a strategic means to establish status and prestige and through which gender relations and inequalities are produced (Bhana, 2015: 1)

This chapter explores how boys use power to elevate themselves in relation to subordinated masculinities by putting other boys down mostly by engaging in homophobic talk but also through other social processes that include race. Masculinity defines itself by being heterosexual and anyone who does not match up is positioned as ‘lesser male’, ‘other’ or ‘gay’. Homophobic talk is used easily by the boys, yet their understanding of homophobic terms is far more complex. Masculinities are also defined by being tough and physical and this is key to a possessing a successful masculinity. However, with playing a physical sport, like rugby, come injuries. The boys comment on sporting injuries and how this too affects their decisions in choosing a sport for the winter season.

The interviews, observations and written pieces of work link the boys' investment in sport and their physical abilities and prowess on the playing field, as key to the construction of their gender identities, masculinities and sexuality. Two sports are discussed in particular in this chapter: rugby union and field hockey.

7.1 So what is a real man's game?

“Even at school and stuff... the nerdy boys play hockey... they can play it because it doesn't require much skill... also their bodies are soft... so they must play hockey... they can't play rugby... they're too soft” (Lamont, Group Discussion, June 2012).

Sport is central to the construction of hegemonic masculinity at Connaught High. In the above paragraph, one of the participants, Lamont, states that the 'nerdy boys' play hockey and they play hockey because 'their bodies are soft'. Images created through sport are massive in the construction of masculine identity because sport plays such an important role in boys' lives. While the boys at Connaught High choose a sport or a form of physical activity for the winter season, there is more to the decision than simply a choice of sport. In fact it is not only a choice but more of an investment – an investment in their personal identity formation. Their sporting identities that had been created in chapter five are now being either contested or reinforced. Becoming socially visible through their winter sport allows them to remain or become part of the 'macho' (Bhana, 2008) or 'real boy' group and thus separates them from the 'other' or 'soft' boy groupings. This social status that the boys achieve purchases respect and acceptance by other boys and with this comes power. Researchers have shown that certain sports, like rugby, are major signifiers of successful masculinity (Skelton, 2000). Successful masculinity thus equates to power and this power is often associated with 'put downs' with use of homophobic talk as indicated by the conversation between Campbell and Lamont below.

Campbell Rugby boys jump on each other... it's gay... you don't really want boys on top of you!

Lamont Oh really, well you have to be a real man to play rugby... most woman play hockey... so it's a girls' sport... I think your hockey is gay... you play with sticks and balls... you don't really put your bodies on the line. Girls don't play rugby ... so rugby is certainly a boys' game. (Group Discussion, June, 2012)

Campbell uses homophobic language by using the word “gay” in his conversation in order to describe the sport of rugby. The use of the word gay is used in a negative form and is a put down. Campbell tries to place his sport of hockey on a higher level in the hierarchy of sport, than rugby in order to reinforce his own personal masculinity. Campbell uses the analogy of two boys on top of one another as a connection to homosexual sexual activity and thus refers to the actions of boys on the rugby field as

“gay”. Lamont’s retort is that hockey is played mostly by women and therefore equates the sport of rugby with boys. Here Lamont’s use of the word “gay” is used in the context of equating any sport that girls play as being ‘girly’ and thus a lower form of masculinity and therefore defined as gay. The above conversation shows how boys use the term “gay” as homophobic language and use “gay” to describe anything that is considered ‘less masculine’. Rugby, according to Lamont, is a club that girls cannot join and also certain boys cannot join. Rugby consequently becomes a sport that is regarded as a ‘boys club’ and an ‘all-male’ preserve and subsequently rugby is associated with “the type of maleness boys are expected to exhibit which is closely defined in terms of sexuality” (Skelton, 2000: 5).

Paechter (2006) reminds us in her research that the ways in which language is used around gender produces the parameters of how gender is thought about. How the boys talk about their sport and their link to gender is vital in understanding how the boys feel and how boys understand the importance of their sport. Swain (2006b) and Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2012) in their studies reinforce the importance of sport as setting men apart from women, but also in the process, it separates men from men. Skelton (2000) identifies the dominant role that football plays in stimulating boys’ interest in school and how this passion for sport also has the potential to exacerbate divisions. Lamont and Campbell in their above conversation illustrate this. Lamont equates hockey with femininity and thus rugby separates boys from girls in his eyes and subsequently separates some boys from others.

Sport is both complex and multifaceted and “carries with it particular inferences for specific modes of masculinity” (Skelton, 2000:11). Winter sports of both hockey and rugby can either reinforce positive masculinity created in the first term of sport for boys or relegate boys to that of subordinate. Team spirit and camaraderie is also a value that is held in high esteem by sportsmen. Both hockey and rugby are excellent team sports that should bind the boys together, but the choice of rugby over hockey tends to separate the boys more than it bonds. While team sports unify boys together, sports’ greatest threat to other men is the exclusion of many men in the process. Unfortunately, in the hierarchy of competitive sports there are more boys that fail at sport than the number of boys that succeed. Sports that involve a high level of physical contact and where boys run the risk of some injury are seen as a test of manhood (Connell, 2008b). Rugby involves enormous physical contact. The definition of hegemonic masculinity uses toughness as one of the traits of being hegemonic. Boys who do not play rugby are relegated to subordinate positions or classified as ‘other’. Researchers understand that sport is thus a highly gender-segregated area of school life and is an area that provides the “context in which boys measure themselves both literally and figuratively (Morrell, 2001a: 79). Kimmel (1990) reminds

us that rugby is a sport about “remaining a boy and becoming a man” (p56). Rugby is one area that seems to separate the boys from the men.

Zaid I guarantee... if you go to any school in South Africa and ask for a vote they will choose rugby... not hockey... that’s how you know it is a real sport... for real men (Group interview, June, 2012).

Zaid confirms Lamont’s theory, that rugby is the sport of men, real men. The process of masculinising and of developing a gender identity is highly sexualised and important in the heteronormative school environment. Boys confront the inequalities of the gender hierarchy that distinguishes the ‘tough’ boys from the ‘soft’ boys. Boys do not want to be considered ‘soft’ as it is associated with femininity and certainly excludes boys from securing a position of dominance:

“... constructing their masculinity involves publically dissociating themselves from anything feminine” (Renold, 2005:121).

Contact sports are critical areas where bodies can be defined as weak or powerful and by boys “demonstrating physicality and athleticism through performance, endurance and competitiveness, it serves as an entry to the world of men” (Hauge and Haavind, 2011: 9). Campbell, Zaid and Lamont portray this demonstration of performance and competitiveness in both their interviews and their written accounts of the winter season.

“Sport plays a key role in boys emerging masculinities and in the denigration of weak boys and girls through the constant policing of gender identities” (Bhana, 2008: 11).

Anderson and McGuire (2010) in their study refer to an “inclusive masculinity” that is encompassing and unorthodox as it allows space for all masculinities to develop alongside one another. Despite Connaught priding itself on being a place of accepting boys for who they are, the area of sport simply does not. The rugby boys embody orthodox masculinity (Anderson and McGuire, 2010) and the young boys in particular are vehemently opposed to including ‘other’ boys in this powerful and masculine group defined by their sport of rugby. Doing masculinity at Connaught High is inextricably linked to doing sport. Unfortunately the colonial importance of rugby still seems to perpetuate sport at the school. Rugby is still considered by many of the staff and boys as the hierarchical sport at the school. Boys ‘buy into’ this mentality, which is then perpetuated throughout the school. However, boys like

Campbell, who enjoy the game of hockey are standing up for their sport and beginning to challenge the preconceived ideas that rugby is the only sport for boys to play during the winter season. But this is more than just boys standing up for their sport – indeed these boys are offering resistance to colonial hegemony that is prevalent at Connaught. Pattman and Bhana (2010) in their study of 16- and 17-year old-boys in public schools in South Africa identify with boys who are resisting the documented history of (former) white public schools who associate rugby with male hegemony. Campbell is a coloured pupil who does not adhere to the conforming of all boys must play rugby. Pattman and Bhana (2010) therefore remind us that choice of sport is not a simple one but also one that depends critically on race when gender identities are being formed. Sport is highly gendered but is significantly intertwined with race. Yet Zaid an Indian pupil, is happy to abide by the colonial hegemony at Connaught by playing rugby. Zaid has bought into the obsession with rugby at Connaught High. Rugby is still noted as the single most powerful sport during the winter season at Connaught. Contact sport and examples of physical contact during a game of rugby, are areas that the boys use as defining moments in their sport and hence their masculinity. Playing hockey does not seem to afford one this contact. The violence and tough tackles that come with rugby also demonstrate more avenues for boys to exhibit their power and athletic prowess. Violence is often a topic of discussion when masculinity is concerned and this is often connected with sport (Messner, 1992; Messner and Sabo, 1994; Giulianotti, 2013). Within South Africa, the level of violence that is exhibited by men especially against women is a growing concern. This is possibly due to “patriarchal notions of masculinity that valorise toughness” (Seedat et al., 2009: 1011). Seedat et al. remind us that “violence is profoundly gendered with many young men engaging in violence both as victims and as perpetrators” (p1011). The sporting world is no different with boys making mention of tough tackles and ‘bouncing’ boys during the season. This affords them more opportunity of being seen as tough and aggressive.

“By far the best moment of the rugby season, for me, was when I bounced Simon in practice. It made me feel so good and all the boys went OOOOOHHHH when I did it (Lamont, Group Interview, June, 2012).

Boys who play rugby are considered possessing a ‘cool masculinity’ that is absent in the field hockey boys. The hockey boys are relegated to the ‘other’ masculinity or “soft”. During the interviews this rivalry comes across as harmless homophobic banter. Boys who play hockey do not belong to the dominant group and are excluded. Homophobic taunts and put downs are common occurrence at Connaught and clearly acceptable both amongst the boys and coaching staff. The boys did not pay

much attention to the banter that occurred between them in the group. Using the word ‘gay’ to describe a sport or to describe another boy was common. While the boys do not see the link between ‘gay’ and homophobia, they believe that the boy is not manly enough. Being ‘gay’ according to the boys’ definition means being linked to femininity.

“Sport is a social context unlike any other, a world in which boys compete with each other, relatively free of supervision of parents or teachers, where rules are simple and the rewards immediate” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998: 61).

The conversation with the boys demonstrates this. Boys see the rules as simple. Boys who play hockey are considered ‘gay’ or soft. Power and control over other boys in the group is emphasised and highlighted with particular emphasis on contact that the sport of rugby requires. Some boys highlight that these practices of power and control exhibited when playing rugby are part of the discipline that builds men.

7.2 Masculinity, physicality and sexuality

“Intimate, passionate, multileveled and sometimes conflictual, the human relationships through which boys develop are starting points for the patterns of relationships which men will build in adult life” (Connell, 2008b: 135).

Schools shape gender and boys’ identities are often shaped through a “variety of mechanisms” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014: 7). Schools are seen as crucial social sites for this construction of masculinity and are also one of the more significant institutions where the formation of gendered selves takes place (Renold, 2007). Displays of heterosexuality are important to boys in the bolstering of their masculine identities. Boys who occupy the hegemonic position, the group that represents the stereotype dominant group are the most researched group, especially in the context of sport (Bartholomaeus, 2011). Boys that occupy this dominant position are the tough boys who often favour aggressive and violent behaviour and heterosexual practices and performances, highlight and affirm heterosexuality (Allen, 2013). In order to affirm their heterosexuality, boys may engage in sports that show toughness and thus they choose sports that portray and are linked to toughness and physicality. The conversations in the winter season highlight the boys’ conflicting thoughts about whether hockey or rugby is a better sport to play and discuss their reasons behind their thinking. The boys have in-depth discussions and argue about the sport, which is perceived as most central to the formation of hegemonic masculinity. The

discussion revolves around whether rugby or field hockey is the ‘most manly’ or which of these sports constitute the ‘real boy’. The boys refer to sports for ‘real’ men. In their opinions, one sport (rugby for example) is seen as superior to the other sports (such as hockey) thus rugby players are afforded power over hockey players.

I start the group interview by asking each boy which sport they have chosen and why they have chosen their specific sport for the winter season.

Lamont Rugby... it was my most favourite season... ’cos it separates the boys from the men. I played in the U14B Team and was reserve for the A team for the season. Also, I played rugby in the junior school... rugby season is cool... if you have problems with something... you can sort it out on the field...

Me How do you sort it out on the field?

Lamont You tackle hard... it solves everything.

Me Is tackling hard an important aspect of rugby?

Lamont But of course ma’am... it proves that you are tough... especially in front of the team. Boys then show you respect... you know after you tackle hard (Group Discussion, June 2012).

The above comments from Lamont indicate the importance that boys place on strength, toughness and physical power when playing sport. These attributes make a sport worth playing, according to Lamont. Sporting prowess and power is achieved through tackling hard and placing your body on the line for the sport and your team. Being tough and physical during the rugby games are displays and performances that can prove to the other boys that they possess physical prowess (Swain, 2003) and certainly boost their masculine identity. Boys are continually trying to confirm their masculinity and, by being tough, “display a coherent heterosexual masculinity” (Allen, 2013: 360) through the game of rugby. The physical contact and robustness of the game of rugby allows boys to distance themselves from ‘othering’ or femininity. Lamont, while playing in the rugby B team can still ‘talk tough’ and show to the other boys that he is prepared to put his body on the line for his sport. An open display of physical aggression during the matches gives him a sense of power. Physical contact in sports like rugby affords boys a certain amount of power. Interestingly, Lamont is only in the B rugby team, yet

still holds a position of power because he plays rugby and participation in rugby is sufficient to acquire some type of social status and to be considered a ‘tough boy’.

“The assemblage of heterogeneous practices that constitute heterosexuality within schools are deployed by young men in order to consolidate masculine identity” (Allen, 2013: 351).

Tackling involves bodily strength and “bodily strength is an important resource and a prerequisite in physical games that are deliberately designed by the boys to test toughness and stamina” (Swain, 2003: 304). Lamont is clearly showing his bodily strength and consolidating his masculine identity in the above conversation. By him making mention of tackling and tackling hard, it bolsters his identity and will certainly make him appear manly in front of the group. Swain refers that the “performance of masculinity can often be vulnerable and hazardous” (Swain, 2003: 306). Boys need to prove to other boys that they are tough and strong and will do anything to prove this. Tackling is Lamont’s way of proving his toughness. Masculinity is certainly brought into existence through performance and by Lamont demonstrating tough tackles on the rugby field, his performance bolsters his masculinity in the eyes of the boys in the research group. Sports that involve physical confrontation are certainly seen as tests of manhood (Connell, 2008b). Tackles can be hazardous as boys place their bodies under immense pressure when tackling and sometimes, regardless of size, will make the tackle to prove their manhood.

Owen You have to tackle in rugby... I know it’s sore sometimes, but it’s what you do.

Carlos Rugby... I played U14A’s... I think I played because I had played the game before... you know in the prep school... also all my friends play rugby. Our team did very well in the season... I also realised I could play quite good rugby... I think because I am Carl’s brother (Group discussion, June 2012).

Here Carlos reinforces the concept of sporting prowess through the sport he plays during the winter season. Being able to demonstrate physical and sporting prowess is vital to his masculine image. He displays a high level of confidence and is aware of the attention he derives from his ability to play ‘good’ rugby. Carlos’s sporting identity is certainly being bolstered during the rugby season. It is an area where he can prove himself and be acknowledged by the other boys. By making reference to his brother Carl, a talented rugby player in the first team the year before at Connaught High, Carlos alludes to some type of familial or genetic affinity for rugby. This school has also clearly identified Carl as

being a talented rugby player and afforded him kudos for his ability. Carlos is aware of the attention he derives from his skill in rugby and attributes his ability to his brother while also thriving on the recognition he receives. The school, through the power that Carlos's brother achieved through his sport, is yet another symbolic reminder of the power of sport in schools. The school must obviously place emphasis on toughness and sporting prowess (Connell, 2008a) and Carlos is capitalising on this. Connell reminds us that masculinity is a social process and is brought into being through practices, in particular practices of the body. Because "sport is a major signifier of masculinity" (Skelton, 2000:4) at Connaught High and affords a measure of masculinity, this skilful rugby player will achieve higher status in the school owing to his sporting achievements (Swain, 2004).

Carlos also makes mention of winning when he states that "...our team did very well in the season", which is a reminder that winning is an essential part of positive hegemonic masculinity. Not only does Carlos play a sport that provides acceptance and power, but by winning, he is affording more power and a positive image for himself through his sport.

Owen I played both rugby and hockey this season... both for the U14A Teams. I like the games... lots of fun... but next year I will only play rugby... both take up too much time. Also... it's not like all hockey players are soft... but most of the soft guys play hockey... it's not physical... but only with sticks... not hand on hand body contact like rugby. At least it gives them something to play (Group discussion, June 2012).

Owen reinforces the physicality and toughness of sport and also reinforces the concept of 'soft boys'. Interestingly, Owen refers to hockey boys as being 'soft' despite the fact that he himself is a hockey player. While he does say that 'not all hockey boys are soft' he certainly implies that hockey players are not considered as tough as rugby boys. He also tells the group that while he played both sports this past term, next year he is only going to play rugby. Clearly hockey has not been seen by the boys at Connaught as an area where hegemonic identities can be formulated. Hockey players need sticks to defend themselves whereas rugby players have real contact in what he refers to as 'hand on hand body contact'.

This bodily contact involved in the game of rugby is reinforced as an important aspect of masculinity and judging by the response of the in the interview, Owen clearly shows that the emphasis on toughness and sporting prowess is certainly an important feature in the construction of masculinity at Connaught High. This "gendered relation is obviously embedded" (Connell, 2008a: 136) in the gender

regime at the school. Owen, while happy to play hockey in his first year at high school, realises that hockey does not afford one the prestige and identity at Connaught; an identity that he desperately wishes to gain from his winter sport. He is condescending and patronising of hockey players in his statement that “at least it gives them something to play”. Hockey players are considered by the rugby-playing boys as being ‘softer’ than the rugby players. Hockey players seem to play that specific sport because they want to avoid tackles. Owen, even though he plays both sports, feels almost sorry for the hockey players and is rather condescending. By Owen making use of the word “them” in this context, he is creating differences and distance between boys who play rugby and those who play hockey.

Craig *Ja... you don't remember a goal you flicked into the net in hockey... but you remember putting someone down in a big tackle (Group discussion, June 2012).*

Craig reiterates the power that is afforded him through the game of rugby. Hockey is described as ‘flick[ing] the ball into the net’ whereas rugby boys put their bodies on the line with ferocious tackles. Hockey boys are again placed in subordinate categories, as they do not put their bodies on the line for their sport. The choice of sport appears to centre on physicality and brute strength. This physical power demonstrated in the rugby field is transferred into social power that rugby players have over boys who do not play rugby. The boys are using discursive techniques to negotiate their sexuality and heterosexuality (Renold, 2009) by referring to power they have over other boys.

Owen When I first chose sport, I did not give it much thought. But now I see that at school... only rugby is really recognised as the big sport at Connaught.

Campbell *Ja, the hockey has some clout, like some of the masters who coach hockey... like think it is only hockey... and the rugby coaches think it's only rugby... like the real boys play rugby and the others play hockey only.*

Lamont You don't give it much thought [*The choice of sport*] but it means a lot. It's only rugby that counts the others play hockey... those that can't play rugby... the soft boys.

Carlos I don't think only the real ‘main boys’ play rugby, but I certainly think some of the masters think so.

Craig The school tries to make out that hockey counts and the real boys also play hockey, but we know it is only rugby that counts... the other boys who play hockey are just that... the others (Group discussion, June 2012).

Their conversations show that meaning attributed to sport is gendered and is achieved through interaction with the school and with other boys. The boys are trying, during these simple conversations, to gain power and recognition from their peers. Words like ‘other’ boys and ‘soft’ boys and ‘them’ are classified as distinct put downs and markings of boys trying to prove their masculinity. Being seen as masculine and a man is an important development in these young boys’ lives. Sport is no longer just for fun and enjoyment; it is now a centre for boys to prove their masculinity. The above response shows the importance that sport has now become in boys’ lives. Sport now plays an enormous role in their identity and masculinity – separating soft boys from real men (Swain, 2004; Renold, 2009).

Connell (2008a: 140), in her research in Australian schools, stresses that contact sports, like rugby, have a high level of “physical confrontation” and is paramount to masculine development. The physicality that is connected to certain sports like rugby is used in the construction of masculine identity at Connaught High. For Lamont, rugby was a place to separate the men from the boys. The nature of the game is a divider of those that are tough enough to play rugby and those who are relegated because they do not match up to the tough image of ‘boy’. While Owen plays both sports of hockey and rugby, he also comments on how “some of the hockey boys were soft”. Both Owen and Lamont manage to create a divide between the rugby players and the hockey boys. By using the terminology ‘boys and men’ and ‘soft’, both boys allude to a place high up the hierarchy that rugby affords them.

Lamont Like I said once before to you, ma’am, rugby is great for releasing anger. You can tackle hard and afterwards, you feel so much better.

Carlos I never really thought of it like that... some days at school are tough... then you go to practice... and after your first big tackle you feel better.

Craig *Ja...* it can also just be tackling the tackle bag... like not only people.

Lamont *Ja...* hockey people don’t have this, that’s why I can’t consider it a real mans’ sport. When do they get to tackle like us rugby boys? (Group discussion, June 2012)

Rugby is also seen as a place to get rid of frustrations and pent up anger; qualities and traits, according to Lamont, that ‘real men’ possess. Tackling for Lamont is a way to release all energy and rage – something that he suggests field hockey cannot do. Tackling for all the boys is a certain way of proving their masculinity. Hockey players are not afforded this opportunity, as their sport does not involve “hand on hand contacts”. Boys’ preferences for either contact or non-contact sport influences their exposure to power. Rugby is viewed as engaging more masculine boys and thus a hierarchy of sports is being developed (Bartholomaeus, 2011). By boys exposing themselves to enormous danger on the sporting field through tackling, they are trying to prove their ‘manliness.’ Tackling is an aspect of sport that is deemed exceptionally manly.

The following boys had a different approach to their winter season sport and when asked about their choice of sport they responded:

David I started the season by only playing hockey.... but then I got called into the headmaster’s office and was told I also had to play rugby...’cos they needed more players. I got bullied into it... it’s because I played rugby for the A team last year in prep school.

Zaid I play U14A rugby... I was going to play squash... but then Mr P (a rugby coach at the school) found me and told me I had to play rugby... he heard I had played in my primary school... so I had to play... you know... he is the coach. I like the competition in rugby... a good fight... not really fight... but hard tackles (Group discussion, June 2012).

It is evident that the schools gender regime, one that places much value on sport, is at work. Boys both respond to the gender routine and reproduce it and others contest it. David is trying to refuse to ‘buy into’ (Skelton, 2000) the obsession of rugby, but is forcibly being made to comply. The school’s staff and the management of the school is obsessed with rugby and this is evident in the schools selection of rugby players. The two participants, David and Zaid, in the extract above talk about how they were coerced into playing rugby by school authorities. Neither boy had opted to play rugby for the season. David even goes so far as to say he was “bullied into playing rugby”. Rugby is clearly a sport that is held in high regard by the authority figures at the school and some boys feel compelled to play, despite not wanting to. These two examples demonstrate how the school’s regime operates and ultimately influences the boys’ participation in sport. The school culture at Connaught High demonstrated by the

headmaster and the rugby master, in particular, emphasises the importance of rugby. This is clearly an example of the consequence of the masculine culture that is perpetuated at Connaught High and is indicative of the gendered practices that are performed at the school (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014). Because the staff ‘force’ boys to play rugby, even just through conversations and meetings, they are placing emphasis on the sport and sanctioning the power that the sport holds. Thus through the school’s ‘hidden’ curriculum, rugby is afforded social authority and makes it culturally powerful (Swain, 2006b). The school’s authority figures inadvertently give the boys who play rugby greater social status over boys who play hockey.

The following boys chose not to play rugby during the winter season.

Campbell I came from a co-ed school where only girls played hockey, but I decided that anything was better than getting my face mauled in a rugby scrum. So not having picked up a hockey stick in my life, I went out to play this new game.

Richard I go to the gym, I didn’t play rugby or hockey... it doesn’t fit into my times... I revise for exams during the time. I run on the treadmill or do the rowing machine... we are not allowed to do any weights... because you know... we are too young (Group discussion, June 2012).

For both Campbell and Richard, rugby is not an option of sport for the winter season. Campbell is aware of the dangers of rugby and is fearful of getting injured. He does not want his face to be “mauled in a scrum”. Campbell’s hegemonic status is now seriously compromised. Boys who do not play rugby are referred to as ‘other’ and the ‘others’. Campbell’s display of fear of injury and pain is often suppressed in the construction of masculinity (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014) and proves that in order to appear ‘manly’, boys must expose themselves to “acts of bravery and take risks” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014: 5). Taking rugby as a sport is certainly one area for boys to perform this bravado masculinity. Facing tackles and putting your body on the line in rugby is an area that boys identify as masculine and important in the construction of a dominant masculine identity. Campbell has chosen not to expose himself to this physicality and in so doing, runs the risk of not being revered for his sporting prowess. In order for Campbell to gain any respect in front of his peers, he must be able to show signs of bravery and risk of injury, yet he is prepared to risk it. Interestingly, Campbell admits at the beginning of the conversation that in his previous school only girls played hockey, yet he still chooses this sport despite its links with femininity. Clearly, he understands the risks he takes in choosing what

he, considers a 'girl sport'. But despite this understanding and the knowledge that hockey is linked to femininity, Campbell would rather compromise his position in the hierarchy of males than risk injury. Richard avoids both rugby and hockey during the winter season and cites that academic performance is more important for him during that term. Owen continues the conversation from Richard after he admits to only being in the gym during the winter season.

Owen Well, at least you do something. Like some boys do nothing... like no sport at all.

Campbell (Shakes his head)

Me Don't you agree with Owen?

Campbell No, not really, it's just like... I feel sorry for Richard not being part of a sport for the term (Group discussion, June, 2012).

Term two at Connaught High is an examination term where boys spend three weeks writing their mid-year examinations. Because Richard has to write examination in the second term, he devotes his afternoons to studying. He frequents the gym during the winter season and while 'gymming' can be seen as an important aspect of the masculinising process, he cannot make this claim. Boys who go to the gym are often the very tough and physical boys, but Richard does not have the physique that matches the heteronormative hegemony as he says he does not lift any heavy weights in the gym. Boys who are in grade eight and nine at the school are not allowed to do weight training in the school gym and thus Richard has not built up the muscles that strong physical workouts afford.

The boys in the group grow silent while Richard talks and only Owen makes a comment on Richard's sporting involvement. Nobody makes any derogatory comments, but Campbell just shakes his head and says that he feels sorry for Richard. Connell (2008a) reminds us that "peer group interaction is a salient site for the definition of masculinities" (p135). Richard's open declaration about his non-participation in contact sports during this season does little for his construction of a positive masculine identity. This is a massive change from the first season of summer sport where Richard is considered a good sportsman and an active member of the basketball team. This clearly shows that there is no fixed trajectory of masculinity and that masculinities are fluid and constantly changing. Masculinities are certainly not fixed but continually evolving as the season of sports change.

Campbell But like... Richard played sport in the first term and now does not play anything at all... really.

Richard *Ja*, I go to the gym... but you can't really call it a sport... I suppose.

Owen *Ja*, you were a part of the basketball team, but now you have no team... really?

Richard But even in the first term, while I was in the basketball team, after that season, I don't think I can call myself ... really like a sportsman, not like some of you guys.

Owen But like next term... won't you play soccer again?

Richard Maybe... but everyone plays soccer... so ... (Group discussion, June 2012)

Richard's sporting gender identity has changed. He is going from being an accepted sportsman and holding onto a sporting identity in term one, to being relegated to that of not really a sportsman but 'other' and 'non-sporty' in the winter term. Many sporty boys attempt to engage and challenge other boys in order to retain a sense of respect amongst their peers (Swain, 2006b), but Richard is simply unable to do so. Possibly he has come to the realisation that he is not proficient in sport and is aware of his sporting limitations. His sporty masculine identity is being questioned by both himself and the boys in the group during this interview and while the other boys continue the banter about the difference between rugby and hockey for another hour, Richard does not contribute further to the conversation. While sport is certainly an area when an authoritative form of masculinity can be developed, Richard does not attempt to involve in, aspire to or contest this masculinity, as he believes he is unable to do so. He simply gets on with his life, a life outside the context of competitive sport and hence competitive masculinity.

Sport is a "major signifier of successful masculinity" (Skelton, 2000:4). Displays of heterosexuality are important to boys in bolstering their masculine identities. The conversation above indicates how important peer group interaction is for the definition of masculinities (Connell, 2008a). When this heteronormative identity is threatened, it is seen as a weakness and the boys are vulnerable and subjected to ridicule. Sport is used in "relation to women and subordinated masculinities and is heterosexual" (Skelton, 2000:4). What is important to note is that "heterosexual masculinity is not only about what men say or do about sex, but similarly about the techniques of power" (Ratele, 2006:54).

Campbell and Lamont begin the banter about rugby and hockey with each trying to prove their chosen sport is better than the other; proving more power over the other.

Campbell Rugby has scrums and stuff... where boys hold each other and touch each other's bums... you know... its gay.

Lamont No it's not, its part of the game... we have to scrum... it shows real strength... like leg strength.

Campbell Also rugby boys jump on each other... its gay... you don't really want boys on top of you!

Lamont Oh really, well, you have to be a real man to play rugby... most women play hockey... so it's a girls' sport... I think your hockey is gay... you play with sticks and balls... you don't really put your bodies on the line. We make contact... its physical!

Me Why do you say gay, Campbell? Do you mean gay as in homosexual?

Campbell No, sis, not like that ma'am... but like girly... you know... not manly.

Me Then why not say like a girl? Why use the word gay?

Campbell It is an easy word to use... it's what we all use.

Me Lamont, do you agree with Campbell and his use of the word gay?

Lamont Sort of... we are not calling them homos... you know... just if you play hockey... its more girly.... so it's more gay than the sport of rugby (Group discussion, June 2012).

Sexuality is “pervasive in the everyday exchanges of peer culture” (Allen, 2013: 348). Boys through their sporting discussions are discussing their sexuality. Sexuality is thus intertwined with sport, masculinity and achievement in sport. Some researchers have linked the lack of sporting prowess and homosexuality (Swain, 2006b; Allen, 2013). “Sport and heterosexuality are intertwined and to be a ‘macho’ or a ‘real boy’ is to be heterosexual” (Swain, 2006b:332). “As all masculinities are constructed

in contrast and in comparison to femininity, those (boys) who are not positioned at the top of the hierarchy of males”(Swain,2006b:332) are compared to girls or to have feminine forms (Allen, 2013).

Boys use the word gay in their description of boys who do not match up to the heteronormative masculinity inscribed within the schools gender regime. While the boys do not mean that the boy is homosexual, they link the participation in hockey to femininity. This ‘fag discourse’ (Pascoe, 2007) as it is often referred to, is being utilised in the group discussion above. Both the boys use the terminology ‘gay’ and by doing this, they are trying to derogate the sport that they do not participate in. The derogatory use of the word ‘gay’ is used to “refer to anything that is undesirable or unmanly” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014:14). However, both boys battle to offer a definition of gay and reject the notion of gay being synonymous with homosexuality. In this instance gay means girly or feminine. Clearly sport is now linked to sexuality. Campbell makes reference to the situation in a rugby game when boys tackle one another and lie on top of each other. Here he is referring to the game of rugby where men tackle each other and have much physical contact. He makes a connection between this close contact of men on men and equates it with homosexual tendencies. His comments are a clear illustration of the way in which he links sporting activity to homosexual activities and hence sexuality. Campbell tries to convince the group that his choice of hockey is due to its physicality and he wants to appear masculine, tough and heterosexual in front of his friends. Homophobic harassment and homophobic banter were common practice in the interviews conducted. When the conversation between Lamont and Campbell occurred, the rest of the group listened intently and nodded their approval and disapproval. As a researcher I simply had to just sit and listen, even though, as a teacher, I knew that to talk to other boys like that in my company was unacceptable. But I had to give the boys the leeway to simply talk. I felt that if I had reprimanded them of their language, the conversation would have come to an abrupt end. Boys calling other boys ‘girl’ or ‘gay’ or ‘wimp’ is common practice at Connaught High and it is also often heard on the sports field being shouted by the coach of a sporting team. This is a reminder to us that the gender regime is highly visible in the school and plays an enormous role in the way boys behave. Homophobia and gender put-downs play an essential role in controlling and constructing heterosexual masculinities (Swain, 2006b) at Connaught High.

“Homophobic bullying can also be used to reinforce sexist ideology and reproduce gender inequality through its implication that a male who wants to have sex with other males is like a woman – which is to say he is less than a man” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014: 6).

Boys in the interviews use homophobic banter in their discussions about boys and various sports. Bantjes and Nieuwoudt consider this banter as a method to reinforce sexist ideology and to separate and discriminate within genders. Boys who put other boys down through homophobic bullying are certainly separating themselves from boys who they consider as being other or less manly than themselves.

Lamont So... like would you call Carlos gay because he plays rugby? Or how about... like... Bismarck du Plessis [South African and Sharks rugby player]... would you call him gay... hey Campbell?

Campbell (Silence)

Lamont No, you would not! It's not, it's part of the game... we have to scrum... it shows real strength... like leg strength. Hockey is the girly gay sport (Group discussion, June 2012).

Contrary to Campbell's discussion, Lamont sees the scrumming technique and action as a sign of leg strength – an activity that adds value and clout to his sport of rugby. He goes on further in the conversation to mention boys at both Connaught and in the South African and Sharks Ruby Team (local provincial rugby team) who play in the scrum are certainly not 'being gay'. Instead, Lamont clearly links field hockey to being a sport that is mostly played by girls and calls the sport 'gay'. Lamont draws on the heterosexuality discourse when referring to his sport and himself in relation to boys he constructs as 'sporty' others (Pattman and Bhana, 2009). This is Lamont's way of derogating the sport of field hockey and in so doing derogating Campbell. Lamont shows that in order to demonstrate his masculinity, he uses the word 'gay' to emasculate other boys – like Campbell – feel less manly, and to reinforce his heterosexuality. This clearly indicates how boys like Lamont use sexuality as a resource to fuel their self-esteem (Pattman and Bhana, 2009) and create a hierarchical gendered identity for themselves. Lamont also uses these homophobic insults in terms of gender recognition by making reference to girls and girly behaviour (Renold, 2002; Renold, 2007). Lamont is clearly equating power and control with the "capacity to direct and regulate subordinates" (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014:5). In the above conversation both Campbell and Lamont link their insults to both gender and sexuality. This is a "good example of the manner in which boys attach meaning to gender and the way in which they fashion their gender identities" (Pattman and Bhana, 2010:553).

“Negotiating an identity and sexuality is critical to boys’ sense of self” (Bowley, 2013: 89).

This section clearly links the obsession that boys have with sport and how physical ability and prowess on the playing field is intertwined with the construction of their identity. This construction is clearly gendered and sexual; and the boys are active agents in this construction through both performance and in their gendered talk. The performance of masculine activities is affirmed by dominant acts of heterosexuality (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014). Homophobic taunts serve to distance boys from other boys who appear effeminate and to reinforce their heterosexuality. The homophobic acts are an affirmation of both heterosexuality and an assertion of power.

However, it was clearly noted, that despite the verbal put downs there seemed no other forms of subordination. Boys who played in a variety of sports teams sat with each other at break times. It was not only the ‘A’ team boys who sat and socialised during breaks. The boys generally seemed to be accepting of the ‘other’ boys. Cultural boys who were non-sporty but participated in the choir or plays at the school sat together with the sporty boys at break. The library was not full of all the non-sporty boys. Thus characteristics of the subordinate group was difficult to highlight. The group of eight boys interviewed seemed to be very vocal in the discussions, and isolated boys by verbal put downs who were non-sporty or not very talented at sport in our interviews but that is where it stopped.

7.3 Injuries, bodies and hegemonic masculinity

“Given the powerful role that sport plays in wider social definitions of gender, the merits of one’s performance in sport and PE can become powerful sites for distributing the sort of gender capital that will determine who’s a real man and who’s not” (Hickey, 2008: 156).

“Masculinity does not exist as a given but comes into existence as people act” (Connell, 2008a:135); in other words, “masculinity is both a social process, and a set of material practices which refers to bodies and what bodies do” (Swain, 2003:300). “During the last decade there has been an increasing interest in body-image concerns in males” (McCabe et al., 2006:409) and the psychological and behavioural problems associated with these concerns. Problems include “low self-esteem, depression and eating disorders to name but a few” (McCabe et al., 2006:578). While this is not a new phenomenon, the body is certainly one of concern for boys (see Chapter Seven).

The game of rugby can be described as a highly structured ‘social institution’, because rugby was originally presented as a game of ‘titans’ and playing rugby assured social acceptance. Rugby is also considered a symbol of white male “gendered and racialised divisions” (Bhana, 2008: 10) within the South African context. Rugby in some schools is still regarded as “a means through which boys and men assert their class and masculine values” (Bhana, 2008:10). Despite the changing political climate in South Africa, the sport of rugby is still considered almost a “national religion” (Bhana, 2008: 4). But township schools and rural schools do not have the sporting fields and resources available to them and thus the sport of rugby, despite all forms of change within the country, is still a sport played by the wealthier schools who can afford field space and coaching. And thus, rugby remains a predominately white sport played by pupils in wealthy schools that are predominately white and thus the sport remains elitist. The affirmation of male physical power underscores this masculinity.

At Connaught High the understanding amongst the masters is that rugby is considered the chosen sport for the winter season. This is demonstrated amongst the masters who either talk to the boys or call the boys in to a meeting to make sure that boys play rugby.

This hierarchy of ‘macho’ heterosexuality appears to influence the boys and certainly the selection of their sports. This masculinising practice (Swain, 2006b) is highly visible at Connaught High. The official backing by the masters render the sport of rugby and those playing it incredibly powerful. Because boys want to be accepted by other boys and do not want to show signs of weakness or be threatened (Plummer, 2005), making the right choice in winter sport is vitally important for their sense of security and approval from the other boys. Unfortunately in the hierarchy of sport there are more places for the unsuccessful than the successful and thus many more boys will fail at sport, comparative to those boys who will be successful at sport (Messner, 1992). While both rugby and field hockey are classified as good contact sports, the boys have clear ideas about which sport is more important and in Lamont’s words, ‘more manly’. “Hegemonic masculinity involves hardness, sporting prowess and coolness” (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002: 77). However, with this hardness comes a risk of injury. The masculine attribute of injury is then discussed amongst the boys in the conversation below:

Campbell There are more injuries in hockey, so that makes it a real mans’ sport... it’s a tougher sport.

Zaid The only reason hockey gets more injuries is the sticks and balls and stuff... rugby has the real injuries ...as you risk your body. Rugby is all about the body and

physicality... it takes real men to play this game. *Ja*, every time you tackle someone, there is a possibility that you may injure yourself... that's what makes it far more manly... that's why it's the tougher sport (Group discussion, June 2012).

The threat of physical injury appears to be the main concern in the boys' choice of sport and sports that involve high levels of physical confrontation are understood as tests of manhood (Connell, 2008a).

Campbell and Zaid debate the topic of injury during sporting matches. While Zaid realises that every time he runs on to the rugby field, he runs the risk of injury, this seems to appeal to him because of the association with rugby as the sport of 'real men'. Injuries related to sporting choices have been of interest to researchers for some time. Researchers (Swain, 2000; Gard and Meyenn, 2000) have tried to understand how boys conceptualise the risk of injury and while injury is high in the thoughts of players, they never the less play the sport.

Zaid My best moment of the rugby season was when I bounced David (all the boys laugh in the interview)... Dave... do you remember... we were having a practice... I ran three steps and then you tried to tackle me and I bounced you... it made me feel good... it was cool (more laughter in the group)

Lamont Me too... I remember my best moment was when I made the big try saving tackle... I got big recognition from my teammates... it was cool.

Me Did you get hurt?

Lamont It hurt a bit (laughs nervously)... but it was worth it... your friends say how good it was... so you don't feel the pain.

Owen I like rugby 'cos you put your body on the line for the school... it feels good that 14 other boys also make tackles for the team. Everyone is more scared of the rugby players.

David *Ja*, I agree, rugby players are much more feared in the school (Group discussion, June 2012).

In this extract the boys appear animated when they discuss tackling and rough play during rugby. Being able to endure pain while receiving recognition for this sense of bravado are markers of their

masculinity (Swain, 2003). Boys who endure pain and manage injuries that come with rugby playing are rewarded with some type of social status. The social rewards for boys are affirmation and kudos from their friends. Possessing the ability to demonstrate and perform athletic competence is a vital aspect of masculine identity. When the boys reflect on the big tackles and hits during the season, they reaffirm their status thereby signifying successful masculinity (Swain, 2006b). Zaid made a 'big hit' on David during the season and even though David is 'bounced', David is still held in high esteem, as he was brave enough to face a tackle from Zaid. While the whole group laugh about the incident, none of the boys appear condescending towards David. While Lamont admits it did hurt getting tackled and making the tackle, he states that it was all worth it for the recognition he received from his peers; this recognition and acceptance is imbued with power. This shows that masculinities are acted out, and that masculinity is performance socially constructed. By Lamont performing a tackle, his masculinity is being played out in front of his team and his peers.

Owen While I love rugby... there is always the risk of injury in the season... you know I don't want to injure myself ... so that I can't play polo (water polo). Also I play flank... which means I run a risk of being injured. But then sometimes it's bad luck.

Craig I play rugby rather than hockey...'cos in grade 4 I got hit in the face (all laugh)...*ja*... and I haven't played since... so many people get hit in the face... you have shin guards and stuff... but I don't want to get hit in the face again... I could get injured for water polo season.

Lamont At school more boys play rugby instead of hockey... it's the more injury prone sport... so you are more manly by playing rugby... most of the Indians don't play rugby... it's mostly the whites and the blacks.

Carlos Injury can be... can affect the team... like Simon (big lad in the team that was injured during the season)... he was a big loss in the season. It's always in the back of your mind... being injured is not good (Group discussion, June 2012).

The boys struggle to justify playing a dangerous, physical sport and risking injury. Owen says it is down to 'bad luck', but injuries and being injured during the season, still worries the boys. Lamont identifies that "one of the techniques to rationalise injury in sport is to claim that it is natural for boys" (Bhana, 2015:7) to tolerate pain as it is a vital part of the masculinising process of becoming a man.

“Refusing to succumb to pain and domination thus fuels normative constructions of masculinity” (Bhana, 2015:7).

These grade eight boys are at a critical time in their lives. The threat of injury is an accepted norm for the boys who choose rugby as their contact sport. Tolerating pain is a part of the masculinising process. Bhana (2015) shows how boys as young as seven years old in South African schools use physical pain as a way to shape a ‘successful masculinity’. The boys in Bhana’s study revealed that within the construction of masculinity, “pain is regarded as non-normative” (p7). As the boys learn that “admitting to pain is associated with a failed masculinity” (p7). Boys in this study who do not expose themselves to the risk of injury by opting for hockey are immediately marginalised and excluded as ‘other’. The risk of injury is not simply a “display of masculine bravery and risk-taking” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014:10), but also an assertion of power. It is certainly an area that needs further research in understanding how boys believe that it is ‘natural’ to expose oneself to dangerous activities in order to gain acceptance and recognition from their peers. For some boys, they would rather run the risk of being injured than run the risk of being exposed as ‘other’. Displaying fear, vulnerability and pain are unacceptable in the construction of masculinity; boys must show acts of bravery and fearlessness in order to be popular amongst their peers.

Carlos is concerned about injury and it is not simply a case of ‘bad luck’ for him. He reveals how his team is seriously affected by the injury of one of their top players in the team. Carlos is preoccupied that injury is a serious threat to him. But by playing rugby, boys are subjected to a contact sport where manhood can be achieved in their eyes. By them pretending not be concerned about injury, they are demonstrating their masculine bravado, an essential cog in their male identity. Being injured in a contact sport means trading pain for recognition and success. All the boys agree that being injured is a concern for them, but all seem to think it is worth the recognition that the risk involves. These group interviews are a platform for the boys to prove that while they are fearful of injury, it is a good trade off to being accepted as macho and cool in the eyes of their peers.

“At trials I was not scared and I just had to do it, so I tackled every single player that came towards me no matter how fast and how big he was! I had to make sure he went down. After trials... found out I had made the B team and I was reserve for the A team for some matches. I was exceptionally proud of what I had achieved” (Lamont, Essay, 2012).

By boys, like Lamont above, justifying injury and pain on the sporting field, this can have serious consequences on boys within society. While it may be seen as character building, boys may not see the difference between violence on the sporting field and violence in day-to-day life (Messner, 1992). Boys talk about their ‘battle scars’ from rugby matches with pride. If we link the acceptance of pain with the development of masculinity, the “practice of masculinity may then encourage the neglect of pain of others” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998: 67). This is a cause for concern. Rugby is a sport that requires power and physical control over opponents using full body contact. Boys learn very soon, that by dominating others through heavy tackles, they gain a sense of power and domination over others. There is no doubt that for boys at Connaught High, the contact sport of rugby brought about significant power and hierarchy but certainly in no straightforward manner.

Violence in South African schools, communities and society is hugely prevalent. Boys defend their bodies in sporting situations but this is mirrored for many boys in society. They need to have tough, pain-resistant bodies in order to survive in society. Bhana’s (2015) boys in her research needed to defend themselves from *izigebengu* (the *isiZulu* word for robber). Rugby boys at Connaught need to defend themselves against other rugby players and also, by playing rugby, defend their masculinities from being classified as ‘soft’ or ‘other’. This aligns with Hauge and Haavind’s (2011) findings where boys need to defend their masculinity by acting in control and being resilient to pain.

7.4 Conclusion

Masculinity is not fixed and is undoubtedly constantly under pressure, contestation and review. Boys in chapter five have created gender identities for themselves through their summer sports but with the onset of winter sport, these identities are now under reassessment. Gender power plays a pivotal role in this area of sporting choices with certain sports like rugby holding positions of power over other sports such as hockey or soccer (Bhana, 2008; Morrell, 1998a). The sport of rugby, a colonial inheritance at Connaught High, seems to remain dominant, with few boys contesting the importance of rugby in the school. The boys’ ideas of femininity and how they in turn classify certain sports as being not ‘macho enough’ is discussed. These taunts and ‘othering’ produce homophobia. This chapter argues and reminds us that boys meaning of sport is both gendered and sexualised contributing to the making of unequal gender relations among boys as well as the uncritical acceptance of homophobia as normal in a private boys’ school (Bowley, 2013). It also reminds us that masculinities are fluid and constantly

fluctuating – gender-based sporting identities that were created in term one summer season are now being contested in winter.

Sport is a complex area of masculinisation. It is a social arena unlike any other in a school structure. For many it provides an area of introduction into manhood. The link with sport is an important factor in the manner in which boys construct a desirable sense of self (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). And thus sport continues to play an enormous role in their sporting identity. Sport is deeply associated with masculinity (Connell, 2008a) and this study argues that sport is a means through which boys assert their power in order to negotiate their masculinities. They do so by drawing on their bodies and its sexualized and gendered power to demonstrate masculine power (Bowley, 2013).

Injury and the risk of injury during contact sport was also a theme in this chapter. My analysis of the boys' discussions suggests that pain associated with contact sport is endured by boys in order to institute acceptable hegemonic masculine identities. The boys use techniques and the excuse of the contact sport to normalise the violent nature of the sport. Hard 'hits' and tackles are simply part of the game and injuries are an acceptable risk for playing hard. After all, playing a contact sport like rugby is worth the risk as playing rugby affords one a place in the hegemonic group of boys. But avoiding rugby altogether because of fear of injury warrants immediate relegation to a position of subordination.

Constructions of masculinities and identities through the medium of sport are relational and “produced through difference – a process that has often been labelled as ‘othering’ ” (Renold, 2007: 283). Scrutinising both the formation of hegemonic masculinity and the link between rugby serves as a productive way of understanding the obsession that boys have with sport and how physical ability on the playing field is entwined with the construction of bodies as sexual and gendered. Bodies do certainly matter for boys in their construction of masculinity (Renold, 2005) and schools sports are perfect places for boys to show their bodies' toughness and prowess. This is exemplified by strict rules on dress codes, discipline, academic excellence, competitive sports teams and gender segregation (Connell, 2002).

Current research on the “construction of masculinity and the role that sport plays forms part of a greater discussion of men, boys and masculinities” (Connell, 2008b:237) as sport is a vital factor in the construction of masculinity, identity and sexuality. This chapter reflects on the debate about gender being a system of social relations (Connell, 2008b) and how sport plays a massive part in the gender identity of the boys in the research. Because masculinities are multiple patterns and there is no single

template of masculinity, it is interesting to begin to understand the pattern of masculinity that is indeed experienced by the boys at Connaught High School. Even within Connaught High, there may be diverse constructions of masculinities.

Success and winning at sport certainly aids in producing a positive masculine identity and a sense of power and status over other boys. Lack of sporting prowess or lack of success in a sport results in subordination. While sport at an early age provides an important socialising role for boys, providing physical, mental and social development (McCabe, Ricciardelli and Ridge, 2006), during adolescence, sport becomes a defining moment in the boys' development of their masculinity (McCabe, Ricciardelli and Ridge, 2006). The notion of simply being accepted by playing sport has changed dramatically. Being successful at sport is now one of the most important rites of passage for many boys. The function of sports and success at sports is to increase social status. Boys' identity development involves an enormous amount of learning and trial and error periods involving contact with others (Connell, 2008b). School settings are the perfect place for boys to negotiate and perform their own masculine identities. However, because of the historical contexts in place in schools like Connaught, there are many factors that still play a vital part in the boys' selection of their sport.

The following chapter discusses the importance boys attach to their body and to their body shape. Thus, further emphasising another aspect of the development of masculine identity and dominant masculine traits.

Chapter 8: Sculpting bodies: The impact of the body in the construction of male identities

Introduction

“An individual’s performance of manliness is aided in having a male body” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014: 4)

This chapter examines the importance and central role the body plays in the lives of the eight participants in this study. The central theme of this chapter hinges on the ways in which boys construct their masculine and sexual identities and the role their bodies play in these constructions. Chapters five and six discussed the role that sport plays in the masculinising process in boys’ lives. The opening quote in this chapter reminds the reader that the body is a vital component in both the construction of masculine identities and a fundamental component of gender. There has been limited empirical research about the importance of the bodies of children in their construction of masculinity despite childhood and especially adolescence, being an important time in their lives as the development of the child’s body is in its most intensive part (Swain, 2003). Swain (2003) argues that boys are bodies and bodies are a key yardstick of masculinities (Bhana, 2015; Hauge and Haavind, 2011; Renold, 2005; Paechter, 2006). The body image a boy possesses “is an important part of his self-concept and identity during the adolescent period” (Knauss, Paxton and Alsaker, 2007:355). The body is crucial to identity formation and “making and becoming a body also involves the project of making self” (Swain, 2006b:320). This chapter discusses boys’ concepts of the body and considers the central role that the body plays in the construction of their masculine identities. Three themes emerge from this chapter. The first is the visibility of the body both by showing skill at sport and the aesthetic nature of the body. The second theme is talking about the bodies within the group of boys and the third is winning and success at sport being seen as a masculine trait.

Because the male body is used in masculine performances, the discussion in this chapter describes how boys’ bodies are constructed with certain “symbolic values of both power and status” (Swain, 2006b:333). Swain (2003) describes in his empirical study of age ten and 11-year-old boys in the United Kingdom, the manner in which the boys use their bodies to become *somebody*. In that study, the area of both school and school sport is observed where the body becomes *somebody*. The concept of embodiment (Allen, 2013; Swain, 2003) is used as a term to describe the social process in terms of what boys do with their bodies in the development of their masculinity. Connell (1995) argues that

boys use their bodies and see their bodies as “objects and agents of practice” (p 61) and maintains that this social process of developing the body is a lifelong process for boys. Boys are highly aware of the significance of the body and the importance it plays in their development of their self-image and their masculine identities. The body does not play a passive role in the boy’s life, but there is “on-going tension between the body as an object and as an agent, thus making the “boys’ bodies continually in motion, both literally and metaphorically” (Swain, 2003:300). Connell’s (2005) observation of bodies being “objects and agents” describes that the bodies are continually performing and practicing and their bodies can be described and defined by both themselves and others as skilful, strong and fast. This endorsement can result in the body of the boy and thus the boy, achieving an enormous sense of power. What is important to note is that while gender is an institution that reinforces and creates inequality (Dozier, 2005) good bodies within the group of boys also provide division and reinforces inequality. Boys are classified as being powerful or possessing a level of hierarchy of masculinity owing to their physical ability and body type. Displays of heteronormative “proper masculine bodies and ruggedly traditional manly traits, such as competitiveness and mesomorphic, athletic bodies” (Kama, 2014: 91) affords the boys both power and privilege.

“Particular body characteristics are not important in themselves but become important because of social interpretation” (Dozier, 2005:300).

In this chapter boys’ bodies are the central focus. How the boys view their bodies and how they view those of other boys, plays a fundamental role in the dominance and power boys hold over each other. Masculinity is certainly a social construct where society dictates the qualities of an ideal body. By boys being continually exposed to a barrage of media advertisements and articles, they develop concepts and ideas about what the ideal boys’ body should look like. There is enormous pressure placed on boys by popular culture, peers and society in “terms of archetypal male bodies and what they should look like” (Drummond, 2003:137). Millington and Wilson (2010) explain how “intensely our culture is inundated with socially constructed images of what a ‘real’ boy should portray” (p41). Boys’ “bodies that show strength, aggressive and emphasised heterosexuality are (seen as) naturally residing in the male figure” (p92). Boys who do not possess these bodies or perform these acts of toughness suffer various symbolic and concrete penalties (Kama, 2014).

“Schools are sites which shape how the intersection of masculinities, sexualities and bodies are played out” (Allen, 2013: 352).

Schools and particularly the area of school sports have also been “shown to shape gender relations within societies” (Kama, 2014:92) in a variety of ways. This chapter looks at yet another area of this institutionalised gender regime: that of the body, and how it is inculcated into the gender regime that is exhibited at Connaught High.

The group interviews start by asking the boys who they view as the most popular sportsmen both in their year group and school and to explain their choices. The discussion immediately turns to certain bodies and body types. This was not quite the direction I had intended the line of questioning to follow, but it proved to be a highly valuable and important area of talk for the boys. However, when I started questioning them on their answers about body types, the boys are reticent to talk about the concept of the body. Allen (2013) in her photographic study of bodies in schools describes this concept as “boys’ sexual bodies are both everywhere and nowhere at school” (p348). This is rather a conundrum in research. Although bodies are an important aspect in the boys’ lives, they do not want to discuss them. Despite the interviews giving the boys the opportunity to discuss their bodies and body image concerns in a non-threatening environment, the interviews were short and made some of the boys feel uncomfortable with the topic.

Research has shown that boys’ performances are aided by having a strong male body (Swain, 2003; Bhana, 2008). This strong, muscular body aids in the boys’ performance on the sporting field (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014) thus adding another important aspect to the concept of power that is achieved in the masculinising process (as discussed in chapters five and six). Yet despite the importance of the body, the boys battle to discuss the topic. Masculine performances are enhanced if the boy has a strong and powerful body (Swain, 2003). For the rugby boys in chapter six, the performance of masculinity involved placing their bodies under pressure and treating their bodies almost harshly, in order to display ferocious tackles and unconcern for injury. Masculinity comes into practice depending on what the body can and cannot do (Connell, 2000). Because sports are times when boys especially experience their bodies as lacking in skill, clumsy or even at risk of injury they can therefore be described as ‘other’ or ‘unmanly’ and ostracised by the hegemonic boy group (Swain, 2003; McCabe et al., 2006; Bhana, 2008). Boys at Connaught use the words like strong, tough and fit to describe acceptable and possibly hegemonic type bodies. By listening to the boys and their understanding of acceptable bodies, the bodies also have to be skilful and the boy has to be talented in the sport in order to gain hegemonic status.

This chapter delves further into the concept of body, by looking at how boys view their own body images and those of their peers. Research in the area of boys' bodies (Skelton, 2001; Connell, 2005; Martino, 1999; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003) has given prominence to the topic of gender and masculine performances but has avoided the connection to the way boys embody sexuality. This is despite gender and sexuality being interrelated (Allen, 2013). Hauge and Haavind (2011) found that "young people's bodies were marginalised as objects of research in educational contexts" (p14). Much of the past research has been on "normative gender roles and gender power inequalities" (Shefer, 2015: 3). Thus, what is often missed is that the topics of gender and sexuality are interrelated (Allen, 2013).

"... sexuality is pervasive in the everyday exchanges in peer culture and staffroom talk, yet simultaneously denied and highly regulated in these schooling contexts" (Allen, 2013: 348).

The boys in this study are seriously concerned about their bodies and what their bodies can and cannot do when playing sport. The body is thus an important part of their identity as the "process of making and becoming a body also involves the project of making the self" (Swain, 2006b: 320). Bodies are structures and features that are highly regarded by boys. The body can create openings into and facilitate activities or can constrain by being weak or restricted; this all depends on their bodies.

"The body is inescapable in the construction of masculinity; but what is inescapable is not fixed" (Connell, 1995: 5).

Connell (1995) describes the boys' as being active in performances and practices and this is a place where the identity becomes defined. But the development of the body is also a process that is continually at practice as shown in examples from the data. If the body is both strong and powerful, it is classified by others as being fast and tough and therefore, with a probable chance of the boy being successful at sport (Swain, 2003). Bodies possess value in many social settings and the sporting field is certainly one area for this to occur.

As described in chapter six, where the boys explained a hierarchy within sport, the discussion in this chapter focuses on the body and how different body types also have a hierarchical order.

"...where masculinities are enacted and practiced, but also in a sense 'worn' as embodied manifestations of one's self-worth and social positioning" (McCaughy and Tischler, 2010: 188).

Bodies that are tough and strong are afforded greater prestige and admiration than those that are smaller and thinner. As a result, boys with stronger bodies are provided with greater sense of power and domination over others. The same applies here as did in chapter six; boys with good bodies are high up the masculine hierarchy whereas bodies that are seen as weak or small are symbolically equated with femininity.

8.1 Bodies as active agents

“Boys, by playing sport, are both the objects and agents in performances and practices in which their bodies/identities become defined by others” (Bowley, 2013: 88).

The topic of bodies is brought up incidentally during one of the group interviews. The boys argue and discuss which boys in the school they think possess the best bodies and how they arrive at this conclusion. The bodies and the bodily practices determine for many of the boys that specific individual's identity (Swain, 2006b; Bowley, 2013). Boys' bodies and the construction of their body, is enormously important to them. Certain sports, like rugby, require bodies to be tough and strong. While their affiliation to different sports divide them into strong boys and weaker boys, for example, hockey and rugby as described in chapter five, their bodies can also play an enormous role in this division. Bhana (2015) observes that “bodies bring agency to boys”(p7). The discussion about sport provides the boys with a platform to discuss their bodies and body images in a non-threatening environment. Some of the boys in the group are reluctant to talk about their own bodies at first and rather make reference to other boys in the school who they deem to have good bodies. The first question is open-ended and initiates the conversation on bodies. The boys identify varying aspects of the body that they regard as being a ‘good body’. Some view big strapping muscles as being the perfect body type while others make reference to the perfect body type, which is a body that is perfectly designed to play a specific sport.

Me So who do you classify as having the best body in the school and why?

Zaid I would say the water polo guys... the A-team only guys, not really the B-team guys.

Me Why the (water) polo boys?

Zaid They train the hardest out of all the sports in the school... every morning and afternoon... so I imagine that they are the best bodies. Also you see their bodies... 'cos they are in speedos all the time (all laugh).

Richard Certainly the water polo boys... it has made them fitter... they do a lot of fitness... there are no fat boys playing polo... all are fit and strong. Their bodies are lean... they are all strong (Group discussion, October, 2012).

Two factors of significance emanate from the above conversation: visibility of bodies – both by showing skill at a sport and the aesthetic nature of the body – and the concept of being fat. Sport and physical education classes are times when boys are active and also a time when boys should develop an understanding of “health-related fitness, physical competence and positive attitude about their bodies in order to achieve healthy and physically active lifestyles” (Allen, 2013:349). However, for many boys it is a time when public humiliation is a possibility, as certain sports require the boys to wear only their swimming costumes or when their bodies are exposed in the communal showers after a match. This is a perfect opportunity for boys’ body sizes and weight to be an object of scrutiny and ridicule by boys. If boys’ bodies do not exemplify the perfect expected shape, they are exposed to banter, ridicule, exclusion and bullying during sporting exercises and physical education lessons. Studies by Kehler and Atkinson (2010) and Norman (2011) revolved around masculinities and the body at school during physical education lessons. These researchers found that boys used both sport and physical education lessons as ways to construct masculinities (Allen, 2013).

“The space of physical education is conceptualised as regulating and rewarding the display of embodied masculinity that privileges muscularity, endurance, speed and competitiveness engendering a physical capital that has social currency” (Allen, 2013: 349)

Sports and physical education lessons provide opportunities for bodies to be on display. The boys in the above conversation identify the water polo players in the school as having the best bodies. The first water polo team at the school is ranked at number one in South Africa and generally wins all its games throughout the season. Because the water polo boys have a winning mentality it affords them status above the other boys and other sports. Their bodies are also continually exposed as they walk around the swimming pool area. The visible display of their bodies is an important aspect of this image. Because boys have to practice in training costumes they are continually on show both to their peers and fellow water polo players. This sport highlights the body more than other sports do. Richard makes

reference to there being “no fat boys who play water polo”. Being lean and exposing your body in a bathing costume in a highly visible manner acquires much attention for boys. I note later in the group discussion with Owen that the water polo players also understand the pressure they find themselves in. When they play water polo they need to match up to the body that the image of the sport requires.

After the first group discussion about bodies, I observed the water polo boys as they got themselves ready for a training session. They changed in the bathrooms and then ‘paraded’ around the pool with a definite sense of pride in their bodies. The strenuous nature of the game, especially for the top-level players, demands an enormous amount of time and training in the pool. Most of the boys are lean with Adonis-type bodies. The second and third team boys also train at the same time as the first team players and some boys are certainly concerned that their bodies do not match up to the bodies of first players. Those who do not feel as confident with their bodies, walk with a towel around their waists before they jump into the pool. While the first team boys are certainly more on display and took their time to jump into the pool. The first team boys display frivolity and were laughing, while some of the second team boys walk and quietly slide into the pool. This phenomenon of boys acting out and performing in front of their peers is a way of boys practicing culturally constructed manliness and masculinity (Kama, 2014). The senior boys are not part of my study and therefore I cannot fully explain their reasons for walking as they did around the pool, but the display is clearly visible. The display by the first team, who are all well-built boys, embodies a masculine image that has their bodies at the centre of this construction. The first team boys are positioning themselves in a way that compels the other boys at the pool to look at them. I ask one of the first team boys why they walk around the pool as they do and not cover up their bodies like the second team boys. The boys answers is simple: “Ma’am, because we can!” This study concurs with Allen (2013) who states “male sexual embodiment... must be achieved through a series of corporeal enactments” (p358). The boys parading around the pool is certainly an enactment of sexual embodiment. Research on male sexualities within South Africa has emerged from studies on a larger scale of boys, men and masculinities and has “contributed to the international field of critical masculinities studies” (Shefer, 2015:4).

“A plethora of research has explored the significance of heterosexual prowess, together with a distancing from ‘feminine’ or gay youth, and male physicality and violence in performances of hegemonic masculinities among young men in diverse South African communities” Shefer, (2015: 4).

The performance of heteronormative rules and displays, as seen around the swimming pool and during rugby matches, “bolsters heterosexual norms and, by default, annihilate other subjectivities” (Kama, 2014: 91). Sports in schools certainly do privilege particular groups of sporty, well-built boys. While it may not be their intention to be ‘observed’ by the other boys, the pool performance certainly gives them opportunity to show off their bodies. Norman (2011) writes that the body and masculinities are “almost exclusively framed in terms of the functional – as opposed to the aesthetic purposes, in the production of a fit, sporty, male body” (p434). However, at Connaught High the water polo boys are clearly visible and aesthetic. This performance of display of bodies can seriously affect other boys (for example some of the second and third team boys) especially since their “sense of otherness and alienation is highly involved with gender presentation” (Norman, 2011:434). It is an understanding that in order to develop a normative masculine identity, one has to portray a physically developed body. The first team boys are certainly comfortable in their heterosexual identities and parade their bodies with pride. Kehler and Anderson (2010) collected articles in a book entitled *Boys’ bodies: Speaking the Unspoken* in which these articles highlight the “social, psychological and cultural mechanisms that bolster traditional masculine gender roles” (Kama, 2014:91). They find that the areas of sport and physical education lessons play a vital role in the developmental process. The area of parading around the pool during the start of a water polo training session is indeed a time to bolster gender roles. Boys who have good bodies are highly successful in the developmental process, while boys, who classify their bodies as being lesser, do not benefit from this privilege. Many of the second and third team boys are experiencing a sense of ‘otherness’. They are facing, alienation and are therefore, being considered as ‘lesser’ or ‘other’ (Kama, 2014).

This concept of ‘otherness’ and the concept of a fat body are further mentioned by Owen, a junior water polo player, in the individual interview. (March, 2012)

Owen Remember ma’am... in the prep... I was a fatty... now my body has grown ... because we train so hard in the high school.

Me But were you honestly worried about your body in the prep school?

Owen Certainly... we may have laughed at some of the jokes... but I couldn’t wait for my body to grow up.

- Me But your body shape did not represent your level of water polo you played. You still made the KZN team that year?
- Owen *Ja...* I got the recognition for playing well... but in order to fit into the (water) polo world... I needed to be thin... not thin... but *dak*. [strong]
- Me You mean *dik*?
- Owen No ma'am, *dak*... strong and muscular. *Dik* means fat.

Here Owen openly admits feeling inadequate because he believed that his body type did not match up to that of his peers. I had coached Owen as a water polo player in the primary school the previous year. He had been obsessed with his weight and body during his grade seven year. An extremely talented young man and a happy jovial type, he constantly made comments during his grade seven year about his body and his eating habits. He spoke about how he loved to eat, but how he had to limit his eating in order to lose weight. There were many instances where Owen referred to himself as a 'fat boy' and gambled with the male coaches about his weight loss and determination to develop a 'six pack'. Nichter (2009) coined the phrase 'fat talk' that is used when both boys and girls discuss fat bodies. It is often self-derogating talk and is potentially harmful to their self-image. Research on this 'fat talk' has been mainly studies of girls and especially adolescent girls, as the "tendency to disparage their own body is often described as something that most often occurs amongst girls" (Standbu and Kvaalem, 2012:9). But the reality is that boys are just as affected by their bodies and talk about being fat. Despite the extant scholarship that pays attention to male appearances (Stanford and McCabe, 2005) there is still a need to do further research on boys and body talk.

Owen has grown this past year and has the body he had aspired to in grade seven. He uses the word "*dak*" (not *dik* which means fat) which is a South African term that means strong and muscular – an image he has aspired to. In this conversation, Owen realised that his body did not have the physical qualities he so desired. Looking good and possessing a body that 'fits in' is important, especially when his body is continually on display around the pool. While Owen again uses the phrase 'fit in', it is more than just fitting in. Owen is desperate to adhere to the ideals that are prescribed to him as a water polo player. His poor body image impacts on his masculine identity. McCaughtry and Tischler (2010) discuss boys who feel they are marginalised due to the shape of their bodies. They discuss a "subtle language of pain, guardedness and uneasiness" (Allen, 2013:349) in the ways these marginalised boys

carry their bodies during sports. This anguish is in “stark contrast to the confidence that the physically developed boys and confident bodies” (McCaughy and Tischler, 2010: 188) display. Owen and some of the second and third team water polo boys are certainly examples of boys who felt marginalised owing to the shape of their bodies. While Owen expresses his concerns and perceived himself as fat.

While he may have laughed at the jokes of being fat, he was seriously concerned about his body being fat. The peer harassment and alienation that Owen expresses warrants further discussion. Even though Owen is accepted as a sportsman and a talented one, playing a highly successful sport and achieving status in the sport by being a provincial player (KZN), he still felt alienated. Sport and the aspect of the body and sport are certainly not all-encompassing and unifying – even for the boys who are successful at sport! My own perception of Owen was misguided. In my interaction with him he seemed like a successful sportsman with high self-esteem but talking to him during this research proved me wrong. Owen is seriously affected by the shape of his body, which affected his self-image.

By boys being exposed to harassment and constant marginalisation at sport due to their body shape, it is “less likely that they will engage in recommended levels of physical activity” (O’Connor and Graber, 2014:405). This “continual hegemonic masculine environment with respect to boys’ bodies within a sporting context causes many boys to abstain from physical activity completely” (Drummond, 2003:137). Obesity levels and non-participation in any form of healthy activity is being hampered owing to the ways some boys are subjected to harassment and ‘otherness’ because their body types do not fit the ideal body image. The adolescent years of a boys’ life is a critical time for them to achieve status and power and here the body plays an enormous role in their success or failure in this area. Boys are therefore, constantly reminded and pressurised as their bodies pass thorough the pre-pubescent phase into adulthood. Social development can be seriously hampered if boys are excluded or harassed due to the shape of their bodies. Physical experience and “activity is certainly not a pleasurable experience for all males in school” (Drummond, 2003:138). Just as sport is described in chapters five and six as no longer simple activities that all boys do, here in chapter seven the body image is accompanied by conflict and hardship. Sport and aspects of physical activity are areas where the mode of masculinity are enforced and embodied (Kama, 2014). As teachers in schools, one has to be exceptionally careful in highlighting boys bodies, knowing the influence and importance it has on their lives. Kehler and Atkinson (2010) remind us as teachers to be incredibly aware of those boys especially who have been excluded, marginalised and targets of ridicule by the agents of heteronormativity. Not all boys are privileged by masculinity and physicality. Social dominance and power can be achieved at

the expense of weaker boys who are seen as possessing weaker bodies. The image of an athletic body that is seen to be tough, dominant and competitive, is the type of body boys aspire to achieve. While talking about bodies has been classified as a task mostly of girls, research is slowly starting to show that the body is a vital cog in the boys' construction of their masculinity as well. Appearance is important to boys. While discussion of the body is still sometimes classified as taboo when in public, boys still need to talk and discuss body images and ideals. This is certainly a paradox.

Bodies play a key role in gender identity and masculine hierarchy, yet boys are reluctant to discuss the topic. "Bodies are used to classify boys within the school structure" (Swain, 2003:311) and this chapter makes it very clear that boys' use the body as one of the main resources to create their masculinity and to achieve peer group status. The boys identified that the "body is a clear focus in determining success and some boys' bodies simply fail them" (Drummond, 2003:131). The body is an integral site for the construction of masculinities,

“... where masculinities are enacted and practiced, but also in the sense ‘worn’ as embodied manifestations of one’s self-worth and social positioning” (McCaughy and Tischler, 2010: 188)

Owen's teammates obviously gain power and improved social standing over Owen by humiliating and putting him down owing to his body shape.

Owen is prevented from having a feeling of well-being due to the banter and jokes from his teammates. While Owen now 'makes light' of the situation he endured in the primary school, it was obviously a moment in his life that had profound emphasis on his self-esteem and masculinising process. Gard and Meyenn (2000) explain that "gender is not simply something in the 'head' but rather something that is felt, enjoyed and suffered through a literate body which learns the postures, movements and social scripts of masculine bodies" (p21). Schools, teachers and coaching staff may classify these incidents as meaningless and possibly even joke about it, but they certainly have psychological ramifications on the boys who are exposed to this type of harassment and exclusion. One needs to consider the "bodily dividends and trade-offs associated with male participation in sport" (Gard and Meyenn, 2000: 21) and decide how beneficial sport is for many boys. "Boys use the somatic body as an important component to construct their masculinity and to receive peer group status" (Swain, 2003:302). The body allows the boy either hierarchical status or subordinated forms of masculinity. What the body looks like and what the body can do, are vital in the construction of the masculine identity. Bodies can be defined in many

ways as being ‘good’ with the media exposing the boys to ideal images that they hope to aspire. Being thin is not the only feature of ideal bodies for boys. Being well toned and healthy is also important. “For too long the relationship between boys and their bodies has been avoided in research and boys and their bodies are seen as unproblematic” (Drummond, 2003:132). Boys find different areas of the body as ways to define a ‘good’ body. Boys make mention of possessing strong abs (abdominal muscles) as being a key component to fitness. Being fat is not an ideal image for any sport or any image a boy wants to possess. The boys are quite blunt in their descriptions when talking about the body and being fat. While the boys are reluctant to talk about their bodies, the interview proved very interesting. Talking about other boys’ bodies, rather than talking about themselves or boys in the group was evident. Owen talks easily about his own body in front of his peers and describes his journey from being classified as a ‘fat boy’ to now being accepted by his peers and his water polo team players with pride and ease. Perhaps because he no longer considers himself fat it is now an easy topic to discuss. If he still felt left out and excluded, it may not have been that easy to discuss.

Participation in sport by boys is not simple nor is it what all male heterosexual male bodies do. Rather it is a highly complex process that boys grapple with in their high school years.

The discussion between the group of boys then continues: (October, 2012)

Campbell I think maybe Carlos has the best body... (all in the group laugh)... no really... you are much stronger than any of us in your grade... you also gym a lot.

Me Why do we laugh at Campbell’s comment?

Owen Ma’am... it’s like weird to say...like in front of the guy... that another boy has a good body.

Lamont *Ja*, like... like kind of gay!

Me Really? But do you agree with Campbell that Carlos indeed does have a good body, Lamont? I saw you nod your head when Campbell mentioned it.

Lamont *Ja*, I agree with Campbell. But it’s still weird (laughs at himself). Carlos and all the rugby boys have the strongest bodies for sure. It’s because of the sport... you have to be strong to play rugby.

Me Do they go to rugby because their bodies are strong, or does rugby make them strong?

Lamont Rugby makes them strong.

Carlos I think a bit of both... weak players don't start off in rugby... they don't come near.

Two other themes emerge from this conversation around the body. Firstly, Campbell refers to the body of someone who is a member of the group. Then the notion of which body types suit which sports becomes the subject under discussion. Campbell is the target of the banter and the laughter of the group when he mentions someone in the group whom he thought had a strong body. While Owen's conversation revolves around his own body, the conversations prior to Campbell's comment had revolved around boys outside the group. But here Campbell makes specific mention of Carlos in the group. At first, the boys seem uncomfortable talking about boys' bodies to each other and especially when they discuss one of the participants in the group. They all giggle and laugh awkwardly when Campbell makes mention of Carlos's body. Carlos has been identified as being the strongest in the grade and therefore held in high regard by Campbell and certainly amongst the other grade eight boys. Yet even though the boys identify Carlos as being the strongest in the grade, when they hear Campbell talking about Carlos's body, they find the conversation uncomfortable.

Carlos's fit body and physical attributes are an asset for his sporting ability and indeed for his sport of rugby (McCabe et al., 2006). "Existing research in writing about the body and masculinity are almost exclusively framed in terms of the functional – as opposed to aesthetic purposes, in the production of a fit, sporty male body" (Norman, 2011: 434). But the boys in this research group are concerned with both aspects of the body: the functioning and the aesthetic looks of the body. Lamont describes how strong bodies can play rugby well, but Campbell makes mention of the actual body and how structured the muscles are when referring to Carlos's body.

"Boys' sexual bodies are both everywhere and nowhere at school" (Allen, 2013: 348).

What I understand about the above quote from Allen is that images of the body are experienced everywhere in the school, yet the boys themselves do not discuss the topic; the topic is nowhere. Schools have "clearly demonstrated that the practices of school sport are closely linked with society and the attitudes about the body and gender appropriate behaviour" (Kama, 2014:92). Society plays a

part in the way in which boys view their bodies with images in the media being constantly thrust upon the boys. By boys being continually bombarded with media images of what sporting images should be like, they are continually striving to embody the ideal body images in the media. They measure themselves against the media images. There are complex issues that many boys face when discussing their bodies (Drummond, 2003).

“Sexuality (and sexy bodies) is pervasive in everyday exchanges of peer culture and staff room talk, yet simultaneously denied and highly regulated in these schooling contexts” (Allen, 2013: 348).

After trying to study the link between the boys’ bodies and sexuality, what emerged is the resistance that boys put up in avoiding the topic – bodies are both everywhere but nowhere. The boys spoke with far more confidence in chapter six because the discussion was about what the body can do physically and with regard to sport, rather than the link between bodies and sexuality. Describing hard tackles and ‘hitting’ a boy at rugby is far easier to describe and talk about, than describing a boy who possesses a good body. The boys identify the movement and the physical attributes of the body, but they do not talk about the appearance of the body. The boys assert that when one boy looks at another boys’ body and talks about it publicly, there is suspicion that the boy is ‘gay’. In chapter six during the discussion the label ‘gay’ was problematised. It has different meanings for different boys. Boys really battle to explain why they use the term gay and clarify that they do not mean that the other boy is homosexual, but referred to him as gay in that he appeared somewhat effeminate. Boys use the term ‘gay’ loosely and often do not understand the connotations and implications of labelling. In chapter six the boys said that it was just an easy term to use. The ideas of boys as sexual beings, is been totally avoided by them. They want to completely avoid the discussion on sex and sexuality.

“To deploy boys as sexy bodies, positions boys’ bodies as the desired object of another’s gaze – a corporeal position traditionally occupied by the feminine” (Allen, 2013: 350).

Both Owen and Lamont’s comment reveal that they do not think that Carlos’ body should be discussed while he is there or perhaps even discussed at all. Further probing on whether a discussion on boys’ bodies was considered a feminine topic, that is a topic that should only be discussed amongst women, was quickly silenced.

Me So should only girls talk about bodies?

Lamont *Ja*, mam... like at girls schools, they talk about bodies all the time. Not us boys.

Me So Lamont, in your group of guys you never discuss bodies?

Lamont No... its just not what boys do.

Me Do you agree with Lamont the rest of you?

Silence from the group. No replies from anyone. (Group discussion, October, 2012).

The boys hastily gave me the impression that discussions on boys' bodies were taboo. Boys' bodies, while highly visible are still topics of silence during conversation with other boys. Bhana (2015) agrees that "an overwhelming categorisation of children in the early years of schooling is the notion of childhood innocence and where matters around gender (and sexuality) are subsumed" (p3). And Paechter (2006) agrees that far more research needs to be done on ways in which boys use their bodies to create identities. Boys are far from innocent about their bodies in these early years. Rather they are highly aware of them. Despite Owen being happy to talk about his own body in front of his peers, they appear uncomfortable to discuss other boys' bodies. The "body is certainly used as a symbol of expression and displays of masculinity are often contingent on the presence of other males for whom the display is intended" (Swain, 2004:11), and providing the opportunity to talk about their bodies is certainly seen as problematic and awkward for them. This area of research is vitally important to further understand the boys and this research provides an opportunity to discuss their fears and dilemmas when required to talk about the body.

 "... the body forms a major constituent of dominant and subordinated forms of masculinity"
 (Swain, 2003: 311).

The above conversation is interesting to hear the boys' thoughts and feelings about the body and its relationship to rugby. Are boys with stronger bodies naturally drawn to rugby or is it actually the sport of rugby that enables the boys' bodies to develop in such a manner? McCabe et al. (2006) explain how boys with stronger, well-defined bodies are drawn to the sport and then, due to the nature of the sport, they are allowed arena platform to flaunt their bodies and show their strength. Lamont disagrees and says that the sport of rugby simply makes for better, stronger bodies. By boys playing rugby, they

develop strong bodies. He firmly believes that the sport and the nature of the game is what makes the boys' bodies strong. Carlos reasons that boys who try out for rugby in the first place have to have strong bodies before they even attempt rugby. He believes that the sport of rugby excludes boys from playing if they initially do not possess the strength and body type required for the sport.

Lamont *Ja*, the thin boys come to trials and they don't last long... you know they break things.

Carlos Rugby is not for all bodies... not for weak bodies... you have to tackle... so you have to be... have a strong body.

Lamont *Ja*, but some thin guys come... to rugby trials... just to show that they can be tough... but they don't last. (Group discussion, October, 2012)

Owing to the nature of the sport of rugby, with all the tackling and physical contact, it requires a body that is strong. 'Weak' players, as Carlos refers to them, are not going to try out for rugby due to the extreme physicality of the sport. The inclusion or exclusion of boys into the rugby fraternity is highly reliant on body type. Competitive sports such as rugby demand physically strong bodies. Lamont confers that physical injury to boys' bodies is likely if the boy is thinner or weaker. While all physical movement contains elements of risk, rugby in particular provides higher risk than most sports on offer at Connaught High. Lamont reminds us that some boys place themselves at risk of playing rugby with smaller and frailer bodies as they would rather run the risk of injury than appear to be scared in front of their peers. Despite their bodies been frail and weak they would rather attempt the sport of rugby in an attempt to gain recognition.

Masculinity is certainly a social construction and is hugely evident and visible for all the boys under discussion. The media too plays an enormous role and has massive influence over boys' body image (Kama, 2014). Millington and Wilson (2010) demonstrate how socially constructed the image of the perfect male figure is and how boys who do not subscribe to this perfection are objects of ridicule and exclusion. There is a body and gym image that is made by the media and society, and all boys aspire to look like this. Unfortunately, the boys revere this certain body type and all boys aspire to attain this.

8.2 Body types for certain sports

“The physical body is intimately connected to gendered performance” (Allen, 2013: 351).

The conversation between Carlos and Lamont introduced the next theme that focuses on bodies and specific sports. The connection is made between the body and the specific sport being played. Playing the sport of rugby requires stronger and fitter bodies. The nature of the sport demands this of the players. Lamont reminds us that the sport of rugby demands one’s body to be strong and fit.

“... all the rugby boys have the strongest bodies for sure.” (October, 2012)

Carlos has remained quiet during the discussion about his body. It seems that he feels uncomfortable as well about boys discussing his body and tries almost to change the direction of the conversation.

Carlos Paul... I think Paul has the best body. It’s strange... he does figure skating... but he has strong core... he works out a lot in the gym.

Lamont *Ja...* (laughs) maybe a good body... but a bad sport.

Me What do you mean by a bad sport?

Lamont You know, ma’am... not a manly sport... it’s a sport for girls. (The other boys in the group nod in agreement at Lamont’s comment)

Carlos It may be... but have you seen how strong his body is? I saw him change in PE... his abs are so strong. (some boys laugh in the group)

Me Why do you laugh at that comment, Owen.

Owen Ma’am... it’s weird to say that a boy is strong... you know and to say you looked at a body. We may think it... but it’s quite funny when we say it out loud... you know... when we actually discuss it.

Me Why’s it weird?

Owen Boys just don’t do that! (Group discussion, October, 2012)

The above conversation highlights the sexuality involved in being boy. Research (Renold, 2005; Kehily, 2002; Paechter, 2006; Epstein et al., 2001; Pascoe, 2007) highlights the junction of sexuality and masculinities at school. Yet, Allen (2013) comments “boys bodies as ‘sexy’ are not part of what we understand schooled bodies to be” (p350). Neither boys nor schools view boys’ bodies as being sexy. Allen’s research (2013) emphasizes “the body as being sexual and provides understanding” (p350) of the link with masculinising processes. Paul is a figure skater in the school and in the same grade as Carlos. For many boys, including Lamont, figure skating is not classified as a ‘manly’ type of sport but considered a sport for girls. Yet Carlos, who epitomises the strong sporty type, recognises and gives kudos to Paul for having a good body despite not playing a contact sport like rugby. Figure skating does not require the physical contact that is necessary in rugby and other contact sports, yet Carlos considers the sport worthy of mention. Carlos identifies Paul’s core strength as a powerful attribute and an important part of the physicality of a boy. He clearly values this aspect of the body as being important. This clearly indicates that boys actually do see their bodies as sexual, yet seem to battle to relate or communicate this. Lamont admits that while Paul may have a good body, the fact that he participates in a sport like figure skating, does not afford the sport any further mention. The boys, Lamont in particular, in the research group do not view figure skating as a very masculine sport. Carlos finds it unacceptable to categorise Paul as unmanly simply for the choice of his sport. However, Lamont tends to disagree with this. While Paul openly chooses figure skating, he runs the risk of being considered unmanly. Figure skating is classified in this research as being ‘unmanly’ and therefore linked to femininity.

“Heterosexual masculinity is not only about what a male says or does about sex, but equally about the techniques of power” (Ratele, 2006: 54).

The above conversation among the boys, describing their bodies and the bodies of other boys, is clearly linked to sexuality. Bodies for the boys represent their masculinity but also represent their sexuality and ways of being sexual. Public display of bodies is a way of boys reinforcing both their masculinity and sexuality.

Chapter six highlighted that while boys use the word ‘gay’ in reference to a sport like hockey, the boys are actually referring to hockey being a more feminine type sport – a sport that is not up to the physical standards that the boys deem necessary to warrant being called manly. A contact sport like rugby provides the opportunity for boys to establish their masculine identity via strong tackles and endurance

of physical pain and injury, which is absent from the sport of figure skating. The open display of heterosexual activity is vital for boys to develop an identity they desire – one that is far removed from homosexuality.

The discussion of bodies remains an uncomfortable topic. Carlos mentions amongst his peers that Paul's "abs" (abdominal muscles) are strong, and this comment is not well received by the boys. After much probing, the boys still battle to articulate their reasons for not talking about male bodies in front of their peers. Even though I gave them the forum to talk openly about their bodies, they were still reluctant.

8.3 Winning at sport and the importance of the body

“Success is an important ideology underpinning contemporary masculinity” (Drummond, 2003: 135).

Many boys “perceive winning and success as a masculine trait” (Drummond, 2003:135). Gaining power though is something that is on the minds of the boys as they enter their first year at Connaught High. The boys write articles on their first few days at Connaught:

“...like every grade eight boy walking into their first year as a high school boy, we all wanted to make friends, but more importantly we wanted to fit in. While I was quite shy and scared (that I wasn't going to fit in), my sport, especially my water polo helped me. Being part of a team is a wonderful confidence booster” (David, February, 2012).

By being successful early on their arrival at high school at sport can afford them this power that is so desperately required. Campbell explains the concept of power and acceptance when it comes to the topic of winning and being successful at sport. When I first interviewed the boys, the criteria for selection were if they viewed themselves as ‘successful sporty boys’. Campbell had been identified by his peers as one of the sporty year-eight boys early on in the term. During the course of his Grade eight year, Campbell experienced two setbacks to his confidence and identity as a sporty boy. The first set back in his confidence occurred during the first term in basketball and the second during the second term in hockey for the winter season. In both sports, he was part of a losing team for the season. While practices of sport and sport discourses, shape boys, schools can also affect the ways boys experience sport (Swain, 2003) and the boys' identities in the process. Sport, despite being a social arena for boys to experience

acceptance and power, can also be an area for boys to realise that their bodies and their skill at the sport do not match up to the norm. The conversations below were completed a year apart. Both of Campbell's choices and investments in sports result in him being part of a losing team. This first individual interview occurred at the beginning of his Grade eight year.

Me Campbell do you think you are a good sportsman?

Campbell *Ja*, ma'am... I was in the primary school.

Me Your peers say you are.

Campbell *Ja*... some people say I am quite good at sport... so I guess I am okay.

Me What, in your eyes constitutes a good sportsman?

Campbell You have to have the body... so I think mine is okay.... And you also have to win at your sport... you know... be the best at it. (February, 2012)

It is during this conversation that I decide to ask Campbell to be one of my participants. He is quietly confident that in his eyes and the eyes of his peers that he is a decent sportsman. To Campbell, being successful at sport and possessing a good body, is what constitutes a good sportsman.

This conversation occurred a year later in a group interview.

Me Campbell would you classify yourself as a good sportsman here at Connaught High?

Campbell No... I'm just one of the guys... you know... I like sport and everything... but... but... now I like being part of the tech team now... think I am better at that now... you know... better than sport.

Me So you wouldn't classify yourself as a sportsman?

Campbell (Laughs) No... I thought I was... you know at the beginning of Grade eight... coming from the prep school... I played good sport... my teams won... in the primary school that is... and I also had a sporty body... but not now.

Me What changed your mind?

Campbell Ma'am... all the boys have great bodies... the sportsman... if you have a good body at Connaught, then you are pretty much considered a good sportsman. Also, I picked basketball... that was horrid... we lost all the time. And then... in the second term...the hockey team... also bad... losing most games.

Me But does a losing team constitute bad sportsmen?

Campbell You have to win... in sport, winning is nearly everything... and also having a body.

Owen But you do a good job on the tech team... [*voiced to me*] ma'am... those guys are really good at what they do. (June, 2012)

Campbell arrived at Connaught High believing that he was quite a good sportsman. He chose basketball for the summer season and their team lost all their games during the season. He then chose hockey as a winter sport and their team lost again. Because of his choice of sports and with both sports losing most of their games, Campbell was excluded early on his career at high school and was not included in the 'sporting group' of boys. Clearly his investment in sport was one that proved not to be successful. Sporting prowess is associated with sports that are winning. With both his basketball and hockey teams losing most of their matches throughout the season, Campbell excludes himself from the 'sporty boy' category. This may have been a subtle exclusion or could even have been a forced one as a result of banter and comments.

Winning at sports and possessing a good physical body play a vital role in the hierarchy and masculine identity that can be formed. Success at sport is key. This success is also seasonal as boys move in and out of different sports. Campbell experienced failure at both his summer sport of basketball and his winter option of hockey. Neither the sports of basketball nor hockey were sports that won matches thus Campbell, in his choice of these two sports lacked any form of sporting success. This resulted in him not classifying himself as a successful sportsman. Campbell rectifies this situation for himself by trying out the role of member of the tech team and this proves successful for him and affords him some form of pride and acceptance by his peers.

At the beginning of the research he was 'Campbell the sporty boy', both in his view and in the view of his peers. But now he does not consider himself a sporty boy at all. Sport, therefore, clearly creates a

space for the embodied masculinity and affords power and privilege to those that possess the bodies showing muscularity and strength (Allen, 2013) and who win at sport.

No-one in the conversation says that they still consider Campbell to be good at sport. Instead Owen sarcastically tries to make Campbell feel better by saying that he does a good job with the technical team. (The technical team are a group of non-sporty boys who assist with putting up the sound and technical machines for all functions held at Connaught High). Campbell makes a complete turnaround from when he first attended Connaught High. He goes from being sporty, to taking an interest in technical matters at the school.

“Body image is an important part of the self-concept during the adolescent period” (Strandbu and Kvalem, 2014: 2).

Campbell also reminds the reader that bodily images also prove or show if one is sporty or not. Campbell does not think his body can be considered sporty any more. Sport and sporting images have certainly affected Campbell’s social relationships. Campbell has realised that his body has failed him in achieving success and therefore turns his attention to other areas, like the tech team, in order to achieve success. This correlates with the concept of the school gender regime and body images. Good bodies are synonymous with successful masculinities. Campbell undoubtedly feels excluded because his body is not able to match up to the expectations of the other sporty boys at Connaught.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the importance of the body and the fact that boys use their bodies when constructing masculinities. Boys become somebody by “conducting their bodies in ways that position them within or against discourses of masculinity that address the male body” (Hauge and Haavind, 2011: 1). The focus and research on junior bodies and the connection to boys’ identity formation has not been sufficiently explored (Drummond, 2003; Bhana, 2015). Boys strive to achieve a body that is acceptable amongst their peers and also accepted by the gender regime of the school. While the boys recognise the importance of the body to their image and masculinisation process, they encounter difficulties in discussing male bodies amongst their peers. The concept of the body is still seen by the boys as a complex and perplexing subject, yet an integral part of their identities. How the boys perceive their bodies and the way they perform with their body, cannot be deemed purely accidental, but rather as purposeful and directed (Hauge and Haavind, 2011). Research in the areas “of how the body is

experienced and given meaning” (Hauge and Haavind, 2011:2) is therefore fundamental in the area of masculinity.

While discussions of bodies and the correlation with sexuality are highly important aspects of boys and their construction of masculinity, the boys themselves, are reticent discussing this. Boys can however, express their concerns with their bodies in relation to sport. Sport is an area where the body plays an enormous role. Boys who do not comply with the dominant body type are under serious threat in the sporting world as this is an area where the body is highly visible. Those without these aspirational types of bodies are relegated to subordinate positions. This chapter reinforces the way the body is used as a way to classify and stratify boys within the school regime and within the peer groups. The boys’ concerns are highlighted and their excitement evident when given the opportunity to address the topic of the body yet they still find difficulty verbalising the concept. It is important for the boys to be able to verbalise the role of the body and to understand it as a place of “intersection for both masculinities and sexualities” (Allen, 2013:361). Male body aesthetics is a difficult concept for boys to discuss and even when given a platform to discuss the topic in a non-threatening environment, the boys remained reluctant (Strandbu and Kvaem, 2012). This does certainly not mean that “body image is not a salient part of the boys’ concept of body image and identity” (Strandu and Kvaem,2012:14). Bodies are held in high regard when masculine identity is discussed and reviewed.

Boys learn from a very early age that the body is a definer of their masculinity. It separates them and allows them to use their bodies as symbols of worth and identity.

“Boys’ bodies become the basis for differentiation with regard to the many ways of being and becoming an adolescent male, and it is through the acquisition of some bodies or some capacities that certain masculinities become possible” (Hauge and Haavind, 2011: 14).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter reflects back on the previous chapters that have been discussed by making reference to the original critical research questions that were asked in this thesis. A brief overview of all the chapters will be presented where the main findings will be discussed and further recommendations will be offered. The main themes that have emerged from the analysis chapters will then be précised and this will form the focus of this chapter.

I then review how this study has contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the topics of boys, sporting identities, masculinities and sexuality. I also examine how teachers in private boys' schools in South Africa in particular can utilise the findings to enhance the lives of boys in the schools and to address gender inequalities and masculinities that permeate the school. Finally, I reflect on any limitations, both anticipated and unanticipated, that occurred during this study and what future research can be undertaken to contribute to an even better understanding of boys, sport and masculinity.

9.1 Research questions

The focus of this thesis has been based on boys' masculinities, sporting identities and sexualities at Connaught High School in Durban, South Africa. I have looked particularly at the different seasons and how the sporting identities of boys have been contested, changed and challenged with power being at the forefront of most of the discussions. The school regime at Connaught High that forms the mainstay of the boys' understanding of sport is investigated. Despite Connaught harbouring colonial sporting ideologies, the boys challenge and question the dominant forms of masculinity that are reproduced by the school. I return to my original research questions, which were:

- How do sporty year-eight boys give meaning to their masculinities?
- How do the boys use their sport, specifically, to assert their masculinity?
- What discourses do they deploy in doing so?
- What are the effects of these masculinity-making practices for boys, other boys and equitable relations?

This thesis and discussion of the data obtained, seeks to highlight the contradictory and highly contested nature of boys performing masculinity within the context of Connaught School. The construction of masculinity through the medium of sport, which is the backbone of this research, attempts to understand how some boys become the privileged few and top of the hierarchy of males. How they position themselves with positions of power and exclude and marginalise other boys in the process is highlighted.

“... sport is a crucial site for the reproduction of patriarchal structures and values, a male dominated secular religion.” (Pringle, 2005: 256).

The hierarchy of masculinity is contested and monitored throughout this study. Boys aspire to be recognised and this recognition from their peers translates into social status and power. The study acknowledges the various strategies and symbolic resources the boys rely on to achieve this power. Unfortunately, in this power struggle there are more losers than victors (Ratele, 2014a).

9.2 Review of chapters

This study at Connaught High has explored social segregation, seclusion and possible inter-group conflict between boys that are inherent in the socialisation process such as the sporting world. Gender is deeply imbedded in social divisions and dynamics (Ratele, 2014a) and Ratele reminds us that indeed “the context in which gender is constructed and gender power is organised constitutes how equality/inequality is apprehended” (p4). The study highlights the inequality that is produced through sport and sporting activities. It identifies how boys develop identities “through empowering experiences inherent in participation of sport” (Burnett, 2010:31) in a private boys’ school in South Africa. It goes further in not only identifying, but through discussions, learns to understand and interpret the boys’ victories, challenges, concerns, frustrations and inadequacies when talking about sport, their contribution to the game and the role their bodies play in this construction.

The introduction (chapter 1) provides a background and rationale for the study. It also highlights the main objectives and research questions and provides an understanding of the approach and direction this thesis would take. In this chapter a brief description of the research context is provided. Additionally it outlines what each chapter will entail.

Chapter two offers a background to the theories, as well as international and local research that has already been undertaken in the field of boys, sport and masculinity. This chapter highlights the theoretical frameworks that have been adopted as a lens to analyse the data. Gender, in particular, is discussed and the difficulties the actual term has when applied to the lives of boys. Gender cannot adopt the sex-role theory but has to be understood in a social world context. Boys do gender in their process of creating gender identities for themselves. Raewynn Connell's theory of masculinity and specifically her theory of hegemonic masculinity, play an important role in this analysis. Power, embodiment and identity are also key areas of masculinity that interlink throughout this thesis. Specific argument is made that boys do not simply accept ways of being and where forms of masculinity are thrust upon them, but that they themselves are "active agents in this masculine construction" (Connell, 2008a:132). Boys, who do not hold positions of power through their sporting prowess, are subordinated and marginalised. Connell offers these other types of masculinities (subordinated and marginalised) to help us understand that not all boys can aspire to positions of power.

Chapter three explores the existing literature that has been conducted both internationally and locally within South Africa on the topic of masculinity. Leading researchers' findings are explained in context to their study and thus providing a background to this study.

Chapter four discusses the methodology of ethnographic research. Ethnographic research allowed me as a researcher to become part of the research. Boys became part of my life as I pictured their experiences through their conversations, discussions and practices. Observing and discussing ideas and actions of the boys at Connaught High allowed me insight into the habits, customs and traditions that make up the gender regime of the school. The one-a-half-year ethnographic study allowed me access to the diversity and richness that is ethnographical research. It afforded me profound insight and allowed for an intensive qualitative research study to be completed. Connell (1996) describes how important it is to be aware of the gender regime in a school and frequently uses the phrase to describe the institutional routines in a school that shape the performances of gender within the school. The semi-structured individual interviews and focus discussions yielded important data over the boys' sporting seasons. This chapter also shows that the boys are both highly knowledgeable and experts in their fields of development of their masculinity and that their information provides meaningful data for this research. Chapter three also introduces the boys by providing some biographical data on each of them. It covers the basic background and understanding of the boys and their history of sport. By having an understanding of the boys' history and an understanding of the school environment that is created at

Connaught, it becomes possible to understand how the boys position themselves within their peer group.

Chapter five provides a description of the gender regime at Connaught High. This facilitates an understanding of the way boys create and construct their masculinities in relation to and within their school environment. The study illustrates the manner in which sport is policed at Connaught High and is thus an integral part of their masculine identities. Providing a background and a snapshot of the history of the school also enhances an understanding of the influence of British colonialism on the school culture. The snapshots of the school rituals and activities provide some understanding of life at the school. The chapter provides the reader with some insight into the heteronormative environment that is experienced at the school and how this has influenced the boys' construction of masculinity. The school's ethos and racial demographics also play a role in boys' lives. Chapter four highlights the importance that sport plays in a single sex boys' school and the importance that is placed on it. While the boys' experiences are varied one can gain an understanding of the dilemmas and concerns boys are faced with when doing gender and performing masculinity. The battle for power is continually contested and challenged. The regime of the school permits an understanding of the pressures that the boys place on both themselves and on each other. Sport is central to the lives of many of the boys and the regime of the school places pressure on them to perform, conform and adapt. In order for the boys to be recognised and gain power over other boys, they must be successful in sport. Thus the concept of inequality through sport is highlighted.

Chapters six, seven and eight discuss in detail the empirical findings of this research and link it to existing masculinity theories and theories of social constructionism.

9.3 Main Findings

Boys' lives at school are all about the process of masculinity and involved in this process, the acquisition of power. The school gender regime contributes importantly to these practices and in the manner in which they define themselves as boys. The theories of both masculinity and social constructivism allowed me to understand the meaning the boys made of their construction of masculine identities through the medium of sport. While eight boys' stories cannot truly capture the diverse masculine identities that are created using sport, it does give a valuable insight into the perspective of boys' lives. The study also allows me to compare it to other studies of a similar nature (Swain, 2001;

Renold, 2003,2007; Bhana, 2008; Bartholomaeus, 2012;) and to draw on common patterns that emerge. Masculinity is certainly contextually and culturally specific (Swain, 2001) and every opportunity at school draws on another area and symbolic marker that boys utilise as ways to define themselves. Playing sport is not simply a fun, recreational activity but a means and vehicle to promote and create accepted masculine identities. And with this identity comes power and areas of dominance over other boys. While sport can be a place for bringing people together and making them feel part of a team, it is also an arena where many are excluded due to lack of competence or skill. Sport thus becomes a place for reinforcing gender hierarchy (Bowley, 2013) and marginalisation.

Five major themes emerge from this research. Firstly, boys were found to be active agents of masculinity, purposefully constructing their masculinities in order to build their identities at the school through their choice of sport. Secondly hegemonic masculinity was strongly identified as a part of this construction of masculinity. Throughout this study, boys tried to outdo one another; they wanted to be better, tougher and stronger than their peers in order to gain ascendancy in the hierarchy of males and with this, a position of power. Race plays an important part in the boys' choice of sport. Despite the boys attending a private school regarded as a melting pot of race and culture, race is still an important consideration in the boys' choice of sport. Fourthly, heterosexuality and homophobia were prominent in the boys' masculine construction and formed a notable part of the boys' conversations when discussing success or failure at sport. Finally, the role of the body and theories of embodiment were discussed. Bodies formed a conspicuous part of their lives, but the boys found difficulty discussing this aspect of their lives.

Schools have been recognised as significant sites where masculinities are formed, negotiated and constructed (Bowley, 2013; Swain, 2004; Connell, 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Connaught High is no exception. At any given time a multiplicity of masculinities are being played out and boys are continually aware of this. The jostle for power is continuous. Boys, by playing sport in schools, are "both agents and objects in performances and practices through which their identities become defined by others" (Bowley, 2013:88). Chapter five demonstrates that gendered power relations in connection with masculinity and sport are "more complicated and contradictory than any simplistic discourse that 'boys will be boys' suggests" (Reay, 2010:120). The boys' stories, choice of sport and relationship with sport, also influence and shape their masculinities as their masculinities are shaped by sport.

The summer season of sport described in chapter five, highlights two areas of school sport in which gender and power are implicated: the effects of their investments in sport and reflections of these investments involving race (Bhana and Pattman, 2011). The boys constantly remind the reader that while sports form a part of boys' identity and areas of masculine development, boys are also negotiators and managers of masculinity. Boys actively negotiate and are part of the masculine identity formation. Masculinity is not simply achieved, but the boys purposively use sport as a vehicle to create identity and power over other boys. Chapter five revolves around interviews that were conducted early on in their school careers in their first year at high school and looks at the important position that sport takes in the lives of the boys in this research and in the construction of their masculinity. While the boys view their 'choice' of sport as simply an easy choice, it has far greater ramifications than that. It is not simply a choice of sport, but an investment in power; power that certain sports offer over one another. Boys have to choose a sport each season. Unfortunately at Connaught High some sports seem to offer greater 'power' than other sports and by boys choosing a sport, they are exposing themselves to criticism and placing themselves under pressure; pressure to gain social status. The pursuit of status and power is closely linked to the quest for acceptable forms of masculinity. Being new to the school and in their first term at Connaught High, boys need to make an impression on both their peers and teachers. They need to be seen and be identified. The boys use the word being 'accepted' but it is more than straightforward acceptance. Being successful at sport affords the boys positions of power over others. The boys use participation in sport as part of their masculinising process by drawing on gender power and by subordinating boys who do not play sport or who lack sporting prowess (Bowley, 2013). The distinctive character of gender, separating the successful sporty boys from those less competent is a distinct characteristic of society and mass culture (Connell, 2000) and accords with existing literature. Connaught certainly shows it is no exception. Boys feel the pressure to achieve through sport and to produce results and be recognised. Sport thus reiterates gender inequality, not between genders (boys and girls) but within a hierarchy of males (boys over other boys). Boys deliberately separate and distinguish themselves from one another through their sporting prowess or lack thereof. For the eight boys in this research group hegemonic status is only associated with success sport. For them there is no other form of hegemonic status. On observing the school as a whole, boys who were leaders in the school, were certainly not only the sporty type. The prefect boy constituted an array of types of boys: certainly some were the highly successful sporty group as dominated by the group of eight researched, but others were academics, highly successful academics. Some boys were culturally involved in school plays and in the choir. Thus showing, that despite the group of eight boys only wanting hegemonic

status through sport, the school did notice and recognise other forms of hegemony. It seems that once the boys got older and were higher up the school, the concept of success at sport was less noticeable. Rather success in any area was more important.

Race is another aspect that forms a significant function of masculinity making at Connaught High. Chapter five emphasises the important function that race plays in the development of both gender identity and boys' masculine identities. The boys find difficulty in negotiating their present masculine identity and concepts of race when faced with choices of sport at Connaught. The boys still use race as a definer of their own masculinity and in creating their gender identity. The racialised experiences of the boys in this study resonates with much of the research that state that boys experience vastly different racialised experiences in the development of their masculinity (Bhana, 2008). Despite the dissolution of apartheid, race still plays an important function and part in the establishment of boys' masculinities and identities. Masculinity is also a social practice that is hugely dependent on peers and peer opinions. 'Masculinising practices' as they are often referred to, relate to both power and prestige (Swain, 2006a). Power, that the boys in this study so importantly desire, is materially, socially, culturally and historically embedded. Two of the boys are affected by racial undertones when defining their masculinity where they appear motivated by a historically influenced culture pervading the school. The gender regime at Connaught clearly excludes boys from certain sports and does not allow them the opportunity to challenge the existing regime. Schools are meant to be melting pots of culture that are racially mixed and that challenge racial divisions. However, the boys at Connaught draw attention to that the ways in which schools reinforce racial divisions, sport certainly being one way of promoting this division. Despite being a teacher at Connaught High for so many years, I was totally unaware of the influence that race played in boys' choice of sport. I too believed in the ideology that sports were catalysts for unifying pupils of different races. This school, 20 years after the advent of democracy still struggles with racial tensions and division. While being a school that is only 12 years old, legacies of racial division were still highly evident. This is an important aspect for teachers and pupils at private schools in particular to understand.

By being both successful at sport and possessing a muscular fit body, boys are immediately afforded positions of dominance and supremacy. Thus, bodies are a vital component of boys' masculinities, particularly during sporting events. Hegemonic masculinity, the dominant masculinity, has been extensively theorised (Connell, 1995; Messner, 1992; Swain, 2001; Connell, 2005). The media, through advertisements, promotes images of how boys should look and behave. Through these images and from

the gender regime that is perpetuated at the school, boys create ideas of what ‘real men’ should be and how they ‘do boy’ (Swain, 2006b). All other masculinities are considered subordinate and therefore, do not fit the heteronormative ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Boys whose bodies do not aspire or match up to the images in the media are considered subordinate or not ‘real men’. Because identity is of vital importance to boys, without having a foundational, permanent identity, boys experience difficulty in defining who they are and where they belong (Brueggemann and Moddelmog, 2002). Gender identities are therefore conditional, hugely subjective and highly meaningful. Thus, one can understand the immense time boys devote to developing their identities.

Power is materially, socially, culturally and historically embedded. Playing sport affords boys patriarchal power; power over girls and power over other boys who are less skilled in the sporting world. This long-established pattern of patriarchal domination through sport is a historically complex process that continues in schools today. Sport allows one to be ‘manly’ and chapter six places further emphasis upon this aspect.

“... negotiating an identity and sexuality is critical to boys’ sense of self” (Bowley, 2013: 89).

This research has shown that boys’ investment in sport is highly sexualised and sport also creates inequalities within gender. Chapter seven highlights the gay and homosexuality taunts that are associated with sporting prowess or the lack thereof. By allowing boys a voice in this research, boys were allowed time to discuss topics that are often considered taboo amongst high school teenage boys – that of teenage sexuality. This concurs with Bhana’s (2008) research that finds that boys and in fact children, are highly sexualised beings and researchers cannot avoid this area of research. Kimmel’s (1994) research on masculinity and homophobia accentuates the fact that boys are desperate not to be perceived as gay and therefore almost exaggerate traditional forms of masculinity to prove their heterosexuality. Boys utilise words like ‘gay’, ‘soft’, ‘them’ and ‘other’ to gain a sense of power over boys who do not acquit themselves to the dominant hegemonic masculinity. Here I troubled the boys with the usage of the concept ‘gay’. Boys in this study did not initially link the word gay to homosexuality but rather as non-heterosexual. The notion was further exacerbated when boys were probed about their usage of the word. Boys who were classified as gay were not ‘male enough’. Boys that played hockey (as discussed in chapter six) were classified as ‘gay’ and ‘soft’ as the sport of hockey was not seen to measure up to the physicality that was associated with rugby. Hockey did not really entail tough, physical tackles that were usually associated with rugby. Rugby was perceived to be

a sport that tests strength, physical ability and physical prowess which hockey did not. Ratele (2014b) reminds us that “hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity that gains its symbolic force and familiar status from a series of hierarchical relations” (p118). Hockey boys in this study were regulated and certainly subordinated. Gendered identity is relational and for this study boys are performing in relation to other boys. Homophobic taunts and put downs are used to ensure and regulate heterosexual masculinities in schools. Boys use this terminology in their description and understanding “of what it means to be a ‘real boy’” (Bowley, 2013:91). Boys who do not match up to qualities around strong, tough and physically well-built are relegated to ‘gay’ and ‘soft’, synonymous with feminine. Hegemonic masculinity is produced in order to create subordinate forms of masculinity. Displays of prominent heterosexuality are important to the boys to bolster their masculine identities. If they are seen as being slightly vulnerable or weak they become open to ridicule and taunts.

The link between sexuality and bodies is again highlighted in chapter six where the boys in the research place enormous emphasis on the association between tough bodies and rugby. Boys that cannot or do not play rugby are considered ‘soft’. The term ‘soft’ is a put down or taunt of rejection and certainly not desirable nor a concept of masculinity to which boys would aspire. The put downs and homophobic taunts are often referred to as the ‘fag discourse’ (Pascoe, 2007). “Boys need to prove that they are ‘real boys’ in ways that make them appear to be masculine, tough and therefore heterosexual” (Bowley, 2013:91). “Sport, masculinity, bodies and heterosexuality are intertwined and to be a ‘macho’ or ‘real’ boy is to be heterosexual” (Swain, 2006b:332). “As all masculinities are constructed in contrast and in comparison to femininity, those (boys) that are not positioned in the top of the hierarchy” (Swain,2006b:332) are compared to girls or to have feminine forms (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Connell (1995) refers to subordinate masculinities, which she describes as being seen and classified as lesser male. The boys do not think that boys who play hockey are homosexual, but rather use homophobic terms to try and position them towards the bottom of the male peer group and classified as almost non-exemplars of male. These homophobic insults are thus made in reference to gender and not simply to sex (Swain, 2001). The use of the word ‘gay’ is again used pejoratively to “refer to anything that is undesirable or unmanly” (Bantjes and Nieuwoudt, 2014:14). However, boys struggle to verbalise their use of the word gay in the conversation.

The themes of chapter seven and eight overlap by incorporating the notions of homophobic taunts, sexuality and teenage bodies, but chapter seven emphasises the vital role that bodies play in the construction of masculine identities. The concept of embodiment is highlighted as a term to describe

the social process in terms of what boys use and do with their bodies (Turner, 2000; Swain, 2003). Boys use their bodies to their advantage in order to afford them power. Yet for some boys, their bodies become a huge disadvantage to their masculine identities and hence absence of power. The body is an important topic for the boys and in their classification and understanding of masculine identities. The boys are hugely aware of the significance of the body. The conversations allowed boys a voice to talk about their bodies and their body image concerns in a totally non-threatening environment. While boys found difficulty in discussing the notion of bodies, once involved in the discussion, they found the topic of body vitally important to understand the relationship between their bodies, their skill involved in sport and their masculine performances in sport. Boys need a voice and place to talk about their bodies yet studies of such topics especially amongst young boys are notably absent. Researchers such as Swain (2003), Allen (2013) and Bhana (2015 in print) remind researchers that the body is inevitable when discussing young boys and girls and their development of identities. Masculinity comes into practice and existence when boys act and this is often conceived as what their bodies can and cannot do (Connell, 2000; Swain, 2003). The body symbolises value to a boy and has enormous power.

“The body forms a major constituent of dominant and subordinated forms of masculinity and how the boys are positioned by the shape of their bodies and the things they can do with their bodies” (Swain, 2003: 311).

And thus the body is a significant symbolic marker for the construction of masculinity. Schools need to understand that boys need to discuss the concept of embodiment. Often the subject and topic of the body is silenced or ignored in schools. Life sciences may be the only opportunity for boys to discuss the human body. However, I would highly recommend that boys' only schools allow boys to talk about their bodies at any opportunity as my study certainly shows that it is an area for discussion and concern for many boys. Schools need to understand the way boys think and talk about their bodies. Bodies play such an integral part of who they are and who they aspire to be, yet boys find the discussion of the body difficult. Such narratives need to be flagged as they are used to “police and control the general behaviour of boys and their sexuality” (Swain, 2006b: 333) and to keep an oppressive gender hierarchy in place (Bowley, 2013). Bodies mean everything to the boys in their formation of their masculine identities. And because masculinities “are constructed in relation and in contrast to femininity” (Bhana, 2015:4), “boys who are positioned at the bottom” (Bhana: 2015:4) or not considered to be hegemonic enough and are linked to femininity. ‘Real boys’ possess bodies that match up to the heteronormative stereotype body that are constantly on display in the media as a reminder to the boys of what their

bodies should look like. Appearance and body language is continually monitored by the boys and plays an essential role in their masculine gender identity. Opportunity to expose their bodies is limited within a school as the school's dominant regimes police the appearance of the boys, with strict rules governing clothing and hairstyles. Boys are coerced to comply with these specific rules or run the risk of being punished. Thus when opportunities arise, such as the water polo boys parading around the pool, the boys use their bodies as symbolic markers to determine their masculinity due to the restrictions by the regime of the school.

The role of language and the manner boys express themselves in both individual interviews and the focus group discussions is an important feature of this research. Investigating the word 'gay' in the conversation of putting other boys down, or making them feel inferior in the discussions, gives some insight into the use of the word 'gay'. Boys also use language and words that are associated with strength and physical prowess. They use words like 'dak' (strong) and make reference to 'bouncing boys' in tackles to implicate strong, physical bodies. How the boys view their own bodies and how they view those of other boys, plays a fundamental role in the dominance and power they hold over each other. Masculinity is certainly society-based and society dictates how boys' bodies should aspire to look like through images in the media.

9.4 Contributions to research

The purpose of all research is the generation of new knowledge and for me provides an opportunity to contribute new knowledge to South African research, in this instance research on private schools and masculinities. Some findings from this research confirm existing knowledge and theories and others offer new ideas of masculinity. This thesis contributes to knowledge in the following areas:

- The study of boys' masculinity in South Africa, post-apartheid within private schools
- At Connaught, choices of sport are still decided on racially inscribed lines and thus
- The structure of the school is dominated by the gender regime which is still determined along historical and racial structures
- Boys do not remain fixed in one 'type' of masculinity, but move between masculinities as the seasons of sport change
- Sport is enormously powerful
- Homophobia is a prevalent part of Connaught High's culture

- The body and the sexual nature of the body plays an enormous role in the construction of masculine identity
- The term ‘gay’ is often used as a form of femininity rather than as homosexual
- Sport is certainly an area of exclusion and segregation as well as inclusion and camaraderie within boys in a boys’ only school.

Besides the research from Bantjes and Nieuwoudt (2014), there has been limited research in the area of post-apartheid private schools within South Africa. Having access as a teacher within such an environment has provided enormous opportunity for descriptions and evidence to be heard from within a private schools world. Boys’ voices have been heard and documented and ideas and concepts have been analysed. Despite Connaught being a school that has been multi-racial for some time, the evidence is clear that aspects of race still permeate the school gender regime and the decisions made by the boys with regard to sport. This has enormous impact and impetus. Regardless of the fact that South Africa has progressed racially and tried hard to become the “rainbow nation” that Desmond Tutu investigated, the boys in a melting pot of culture still harbour and preserve aspects of racial segregation with regards to sport and choices made of different sports. Race and sport and the connection between the two in South African schools is still rife. Boys still making sporting choices along racially inscribed lines. Jansen’s quote below has resonance at Connaught.

“South Africa’s original sin was not race, but difference” (Jansen, 2002: vii).

Despite South African schools and private schools in particular, being considered melting pots of culture and race, boys still feel the “difference” between races and as such make their sporting choices along racial lines. Despite there being a few boys in the schooling system that are trying to defy racial stereotypes, boys still feel the pressure to conform to racial stereotypes – ‘black boys don’t swim’. As long as the schools still advocate that sport is associated with ‘white male character development’ (Pattman and Bhana, 2010), boys will still be compelled to make decisions on sport with regard to race. This brings the question to the fore that gender, race, sexuality and class need urgent discussions in schools. Boys themselves do not perpetuate the racial exclusion of sports in schools, but it is often maintained by the gender regime of the school. Connaught is proof thereof with a school dominated by white male teachers. It may be seen in a light-hearted manner and humorous, but sport and race is a critical aspect to avoid marginalising some pupils. Our schools ‘multicultural’ sports programmes need to be true to themselves, they really must become ‘multicultural’ in every aspect of the word.

This study shows and resonates with many authors that boys do not remain fixed in one type of masculinity. While hegemonic masculinity is studied in particular, it also describes other types and forms that masculinity may take within the sporting world of boys. Right from the beginning of the study, I chose to use the term 'sporty boys' when describing the boys in the group under research. I thought it a perfect way to describe the group of boys who were seriously involved in sport and considered themselves skilled at sport. It certainly defined the content of the category (Swain, 2006a), but soon proved to be a static label that was soon contested. Researchers have battled with this concept for some time. Mac an Ghail (1994) used the term 'sporty boys' in his study, but too realised the limitations. Swain (2006a) asked his boys under research for a name to describe the groups and these boys used the term 'sporty group' to define one group of boys at the school under study. But Swain too realised that this was too simplistic and rather tried to classify boys into friendship groups, but still became dissatisfied. Thus proving the limitation of typologies when discussing the topic of masculinity. Boys proved, from my group under research, that the topic of masculinity is fluid and continually under pressure to change or be revised. Typologies thus prove to be "simplistic, limiting and restrictive" (Swain, 2006a:335) when discussions of masculinity are involved. However, despite the limitations, it was the simplest manner in which to choose boys for the group.

While boys are desperate to be part of the dominant form of masculinity, there is not place for everyone. Boys in this study soon realise that they do not form part and are side-lined or excluded. Past studies on the topic and understanding of hegemonic masculinities that view dominant-type masculinity, concur with this study in that "hegemonic masculinity defines what boys idealise to be or what a 'real boy' should be" (Bowley, 2013:91). Connell does remind us not to compartmentalise boys' into groups but by utilising the terms hegemonic and subordinate in this study, it is easier to describe the groups that the boys fall into. The study shows that boys are not fixed in these groups, but as seasons of sport change, so to do the groups that the boys seem to fall into. While not all boys can achieve this position of power afforded to boys in the hegemonic group, boys at Connaught High still aspire to attain this power through their sport. Those that do not achieve this power are referred to as 'soft', 'gay' or 'other'. Notably this dominant group that hold positions of power is not fixed or secure. Different sports group boys into categories that are defined quite clearly by the boys. Sports like rugby, irrespective of how skilful one may be, afforded boys positions of power. Different sports in different terms provided boys with opportunities to attain power and status, but the sport was not the only factor. The aspect of winning at a sport and the social factor such as race also played a determining factor in their selection of sport and hence their acceptance or rejection into the dominant group. The use of the

word ‘soft’ to describe boys who do not match up to positions of power through sport was used often by the boys.

Homophobia and homophobic talk was prevalent in the discussions with boys at Connaught High. Being in a boys’ school probably serves as a constant reminder to the boys that they are indeed boys (Pattman and Bhana, 2010). Boys did not make mention of girls throughout the study, but rather used the term ‘gay’ and other homophobic talk, to describe anything that did not match up to the ‘real man’ ideology and therefore equated to femininity. The link to femininity was exacerbated by the homophobic talk that was utilised by the boys as taunts. Researchers (Pattman and Bhana, 2010; Swain, 2006b) have described sexual and homophobic talk utilised by boys as an important factor of ‘performing masculinities’. Boys, through the utilisation of the word ‘gay’ and making sexual innuendos are dynamics used to prove to their peers that they are indeed ‘young men’. It is a celebration of heteronormative behaviour exhibited by the boys. Most conversations using homophobic talk, were met with humour and laughter by the boys in the group. This indicates that homophobic talk is seen as acceptable and humorous by boys. Homophobia in boys’ schools is a real problem. Over the past two decades there has been growing concern throughout Africa about gender inequality in particular in relation to homophobia, lesbianism and gay rights. When working with men and boys in South Africa, there are numerous factors that influence and add to the levels of inequality. Race and racism and class differences all have influential impact on gender equality. Connaught High is no exception. Ratele (2006) implies that this dynamic of racialised inequality is experienced in all countries in Africa that have experienced racialised imperial and colonial structuring. Teachers in boys’ schools need to be aware to the talk that is deemed acceptable by boys and realise the implications that are connected with homophobic talk. By facilitating a forum for boys to talk about homophobia and concerns with heterosexuality, I believe will allow them to come to terms with and possibly understand homosexuality. This can only be seen as a positive process in South Africa (and indeed Africa) allowing boys to voice their concerns and be able to talk about homophobia. Ratele (2006) reminds us that:

“A ruling masculinity is powerfully capable of organising ideas on sexuality and human rights. The same association holds between masculinity and development: the notion of masculinity can and does shape ideas on development” (Ratele, 2006: 53).

How our government views homophobia and sexuality is important and has significant impact on the way boys in the country behave and respond to homophobia. Jonathan Jansen (the rector and vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State in South Africa, 2002) comments that while South Africa may have “one of the best and most progressive constitutions in the world” (Jansen, 2002: vii), we indulge some of the most offensive cultural, religious and social practices. Jansen makes this comment by looking especially at school children in our schooling systems and the injustices that are inflicted on them with particular reference to gay and lesbian rights. Unfortunately,

“Legislation does not all correspond to lived reality” (Bhana, 2014b: 2).

Our schools do not act or protect our children as stipulated in the constitution. But our schools can play a vital role in emphasising the importance of talking about sexuality and addressing fears of homophobia in order to allow the country to progress in ideas of sexuality and gender equality. Boys’ schools in particular, “can play an important role in this area of gender equality” (Bhana, 2014b:6). Bhana (2014b), in her book *Under Pressure*, has conducted extensive research in the area of homosexuality and homophobia in South African schools. Despite Bhana’s research and revealing the injustices occurring in our schools, the schools’ remains silent in response to homosexuality (2014b). Gender stereotypes in schools require urgent attention and while young men are beginning to emerge and contest stereotypes in schools, there has been little documented work on “different ways of being men” (Shefer, 2015: 7).

“Homophobia, both in its more extreme or subtle forms, can be understood as driven by anxieties of gender” (Bhana, 2014b: 6).

Anderson’s (2009) research in schools that found boys almost totally accepting of homosexuality is hugely encouraging. If boys in schools were given more opportunity to discuss gender issues, then potentially the anxieties that are attached to gender and the production of gender identities can be minimalised.

A further aspect of importance to this study was the strength of the gender regime prevalent at the school and the important role it played amongst the boys. While boys did not always believe in the regimented sporting regime of Connaught, many were simply abiding by the regulation and very few contested it. This demonstrated the enormous pressure that the gender regime places on these boys at school, both silently and verbally through masters and coaches. Masculinity is indeed a social practice

that is demonstrated through actions and for these boys this action was sport. While there are, according to research (Swain, 2003), numerous ways of doing boy, boys at Connaught High found that doing boy was doing sport and vice versa. While this theory may be open to future contestation and challenge, few boys dared challenge this regime at Connaught. Individual boys will not be able to contest the school routines on their own but will require collective action from boys to initiate any form of change.

Bodies and the complexity of discussing bodies were found not to be simply a 'girl-related' topic. While bodies are 'everywhere but nowhere' (Allen, 2013) in the school environment, the topic proved to be a major contributing factor to being a 'real boy' and in the attainment of power. Boys need to discuss their bodies and the angst they feel regarding their body inadequacies. The media, society and to some extent, the regime of the school, set a norm for what boys' bodies should look like and the boys continually aspire to this ideal image. The boys find that they are particularly susceptible to the performance of masculinity and in conforming to its demands (Swain, 2003) of what their bodies can or cannot do. They continually rely on symbolic markers, such as performances in sport, to perform masculinity. Possession of a strong, fit and able body allowed and regulated forms of power that the boys were so vehemently desperate to possess. The aspect of power was continually prevalent in the discussion and analysis of the topic of the body.

This study has confirmed that sexuality cannot be divorced from young boys' development of masculinity. There is almost a 'binaristic manner' (Shefer, 2015) in which gender is researched and linked to heterosexual behaviour. Boys are sexual beings and while sexuality is not linked purely to images of sex, it is hugely prevalent in their actions and language. While much literature has been published on homosexual and resistant voices to heterosexuality, there is little resistance to dominant forms of masculinity in South Africa in particular. Studies by Bhana (2015), Allen (2013) and Kehily (2001) all indicate that while sexualities are difficult to understand in "contemporary culture" (Kehily, 2001: 81), it is necessary. Boys are sexy bodies and while it may "disrupt normative understandings of gender" (Allen, 2013: 361) it is essential in the understanding of boys' constructions of masculine identities. Qualitative, ethnographic studies such as this allow boys' a voice to discuss concepts of masculinity that they find troubling, such as sexuality. Aspects such as bodies, homophobic taunts and hegemonic masculinity are discussed during personal individual interviews and focus group discussions. The boys from Connaught High add to the current body of research of literature by being one of the few groups of boys being researched in private schools in South Africa. This research

provides an understanding of and highlights the problems boys face when developing and constructing their masculinities in a school setting. Boys are vulnerable and feel threatened when confronted with diverse masculine forms from which to choose.

Race, homophobia and marginalisation are important areas of research for schools and their staff to be aware of. Many teachers take boys' masculinities and the construction thereof as part of everyday life and something that does not require thought or discussion amongst the boys. However, the eight boys in this research certainly showed that the construction of masculinity is a topic that requires dialogue. Personally, I can see that masculinity and its construction could become part of the life orientation programme at the school. Boys need to talk, and be afforded opportunities to do so in a non-threatening and non-critical environment in order for both boys and staff to come to terms with the masculinising process. If we are to become a true 'rainbow nation,' South African schools need to give boys a voice and a platform to discuss concerns raised in respect of race, homophobia and marginalisation in their masculine development.

Past research resonates with this study in that they both found the world of sport to be extremely inclusive and an area for camaraderie to develop amongst boys yet also, at the same time, to be hugely exclusive and segregating. Sport is not all-encompassing arena and does not necessarily bring boys together. Sport is also used by the boys as a vehicle to marginalise and exclude or discriminate against boys and separate them into groups of boys who are competent and those who are not. Boys also define and separate themselves from each other by accessing power through sporting prowess. Connaught High is no exception.

9.5 Conclusion

The White Paper developed by Sports and Recreation South Africa (2008), outlines "how sport and recreational activities contribute to the general welfare of all South Africans, emphasising the 'building of groups of people' through active and structured programmes and participation" (Burnett, 2010:34). "The 'getting the nation to play' campaign highlights the significant role that sport plays in bringing communities together" (Burnett, 2010:34) and also about bringing children off the streets and actively involving them in sporting programmes. This involvement in sport is hopefully an attempt to lower the levels of crime in South Africa and to unite children through the playing of sport (SRSA, 2008).

“The School Sport Mass Participation Programme was introduced in all nine provinces in 2006 in South Africa. The idea was to develop a sporting culture among the majority of participants in schools. However, the emphasis was on the major sports such as rugby, cricket and soccer and inevitably limited the opportunities for equitable gender participation” (SRSA, 2008: 38).

While understanding the approach of using sport as a means to provide opportunities for equitable gender participation, this study has indicated that sport can also be an area for exclusion and segregation amongst groups of boys. Boys feel isolated, vulnerable and powerless if they do not achieve in sport.

“Many NGO’s advocate an ‘evangelist’ approach of sport offering as antidote for many illnesses of society.” (Burnett, 2010: 32).

While sport can unite and rectify many children, it must be understood that sport in schools is also a place for exclusion and marginalisation. Schools are places where boys meet institutionalised forms of masculinity. Boys ‘do masculinity’ by trying out various forms in an attempt to be recognised and accepted by their peers and ultimately by society. While the boys may voice this as ‘acceptance and recognition’ it can also be seen in terms of claim to power. Power is held over other boys; excludes them and positions them as ‘other’, as marginalised or as subordinated. This study shows that masculinity is continually negotiated and played out and boys are seen as active representatives in this construction (Connell, 1995). Boys’ complete identities are transformed and contested throughout this study, from being sporty and young men contesting in sport, to becoming totally excluded. Some boys make conscious decisions in their lives that may make their lives easier, by excluding themselves from the quest for hegemonic hierarchy. Others continually engage themselves in areas of contestation, by playing rugby and exposing themselves to tough, physical sports. While there are multiple masculinities and a range of masculinities, boys aspire to a singular masculinity at Connaught High, that of sporty masculinity which attains dominance and power. There are various ways of doing boy, but being a sporty boy was one that afforded power, privilege and prestige. Connaught High’s gender regime reinforced this singular sporty masculinity. Both the staff and pupils endorse this as being the most powerful and thus affording dominance within the school. While here in South Africa, poverty and class inequality have been major contributing factors to violence and dominant constructions of masculinity, these are not contributing factors at Connaught.

This research offers some insights into the thoughts, ideas and experiences boys hold about sport, bodies, power and acceptance and the discursive techniques they used to negotiate issues of sexuality and heterosexuality (Bowley, 2013; Renold, 2007). Sport is highly gendered, as is the construction of masculine identity. Doing sport is doing masculinity. Doing masculinity at Connaught High is inextricably linked to doing sport.

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Appendix 1:

Summer sports timetable

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| ACTIVITY | CRICKET | CRICKET | CRICKET | CRICKET | CRICKET |
| AGE | UNDER 14/UNDER 15 | UNDER 16/UNDER 19 | UNDER 14/UNDER 15 | UNDER 16/UNDER 19 | ALL A TEAMS |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 14H00 – 15H30 |
| ACTIVITY | WATER POLO | WATER POLO | WATER POLO | WATER POLO | WATER POLO |
| AGE | 3RD AND 4TH | UNDER 14B-C/UNDER 15B | 2ND, 3RD AND 4TH | UNDER 14B-C/UNDER 15B | 1ST SQUAD |
| VENUE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE |
| TIME | 15H15 – 16H30 | 15H15 – 16H15 | 15H15 – 16H30 | 15H15 – 16H15 | 14H00 – 15H30 |
| AGE | 2ND | UNDER 14A/UNDER 15A | 1ST | UNDER 14A/ UNDER 15A | |
| VENUE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | |
| TIME | 15H15 – 17H15 | 16H15 – 17H45 | 16H30 – 18H00 | 16H15 – 17H45 | |
| AGE | 1ST | | | | |
| VENUE | AQUATIC CENTRE | | | | |
| TIME | 16H30 – 18H00 | | | | |
| ACTIVITY | SWIMMING | SWIMMING | SWIMMING | SWIMMING | SQUASH |
| AGE | ALL | ALL | ALL | ALL | SOCIAL |
| VENUE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | AQUATIC CENTRE | |
| TIME | 05H30 – 07H00 | 05H30 – 07H00 | 05H30 – 07H00 | 05H30 – 07H00 | 14H00 – 15H30 |
| ACTIVITY | BASKETBALL | BASKETBALL | BASKETBALL | BASKETBALL | BASKETBALL |
| AGE | UNDER 14/UNDER 15 | UNDER 16/UNDER 19 | UNDER 14/UNDER 15 | UNDER 16/UNDER 19 | ALL A TEAMS |
| VENUE | OUTDOOR COURTS | OUTDOOR COURTS | OUTDOOR COURTS | OUTDOOR COURTS | OUTDOOR COURTS |
| TIME | 14H45 – 16H30 | 14H45 – 16H30 | 14H45 – 16H30 | 14H45 – 16H30 | 14H00 – 15H30 |
| ACTIVITY | TENNIS | CANOEING | CANOEING | TENNIS | TENNIS |
| AGE | 1ST/2ND/SOCIAL | ALL | ALL | 1ST/2ND | 1ST/2ND |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 16H30 |
| ACTIVITY | GOLF | | | | MORNING RUN |
| AGE | MATCHES | | | | ALL |
| VENUE | TBC | | | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 17H00 | | | | 05H30 – 07H00 |
| ACTIVITY | ORATORY | DEBATING PRACTICE | ORATORY | DEBATING LEAGUE | |
| AGE | ALL | GRADE 8 - 10 | ALL | SENIOR, JUNIOR AND GRADE 8 | |
| VENUE | | | | VARIOUS | |
| TIME | 10H30 – 11H00 | 15H00 – 16H30 | 10H30 – 11H00 13H10 – 13H30 | 14H30 – 17H30 | |
| ACTIVITY | SCHOOL PLAY | | SCHOOL PLAY | SCHOOL PLAY | |
| AGE | ALL | | ALL | ALL | |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 17H30 – 19H30 | | 17H30 – 19H30 | 17H30 – 19H30 | |
| ACTIVITY | CHOIR (WEEK 2) | | CHOIR (WEEK 1) | | ORCHESTRA |
| AGE | ALL | | ALL | | ALL |
| VENUE | MUSIC ROOM | | MUSIC ROOM | | MUSIC ROOM |
| TIME | 13H00 – 14H30 | | 13H00 – 14H30 | | 07H15 – 08H00 |

Appendix 2: Winter sports timetable

| CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMME: Term 2, 2015 | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| ACTIVITY | RUGBY | RUGBY | RUGBY | RUGBY | |
| AGE | UNDER 14 AND UNDER 15 | UNDER 16 AND UNDER 19 | UNDER 14 AND UNDER 15 | UNDER 16 AND UNDER 19 | |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 17H00 | 15H00 – 17H00 | 15H00 – 17H00 | 15H00 – 17H00 | |
| ACTIVITY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY |
| AGE | UNDER 19 | UNDER 14 | UNDER 16C AND D | UNDER 16A AND B | UNDER 16C AND D |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 17H00 – 18H20 | 15H00 – 16H45 | 15H00 – 16H45 | 15H00 – 16H45 | 14H30 – 16H00 |
| ACTIVITY | | HOCKEY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY | HOCKEY |
| AGE | | UNDER 16A AND B | UNDER 19 | UNDER 14 | GOALKEEPERS |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | | 16H45 – 18H20 | 16H45 – 18H20 | 16H45 – 18H20 | 16H00 – 17H00 |
| ACTIVITY | CHESS | | SQUASH | | SQUASH |
| AGE | ALL | | ALL | | ALL |
| VENUE | IT CENTRE | | | | |
| TIME | 14H45 – 16H30 | | 15H00 – 16H30 | | 14H30 – 16H00 |
| ACTIVITY | TENNIS | SURFING | SURFING | TENNIS | TENNIS |
| AGE | SOCIAL | 1ST AND 2ND | 1ST AND 2ND | 1ST AND 2ND | 1ST AND 2ND |
| VENUE | | NORTH BEACH | NORTH BEACH | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 16H30 | 15H00 – 17H00 | 15H00 – 17H00 | 15H00 – 16H45 | 13H30 – 15H00 |
| ACTIVITY | CROSS-COUNTRY | | CROSS-COUNTRY | | MORNING RUN |
| AGE | ALL | | ALL | | ALL |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | 15H00 – 17H00 | | 15H00 – 17H00 | | 05H30 – 07H00 |
| ACTIVITY | DEBATING PRACTICE | DEBATING PRACTICE | DEBATING PRACTICE | DEBATING PRACTICE | |
| AGE | GRADE 8 - 10 | GRADE 8 - 10 | GRADE 8 - 10 | GRADE 8 - 10 | |
| VENUE | | | | | |
| TIME | BOTH BREAKS | BOTH BREAKS | BOTH BREAKS | BOTH BREAKS | |
| ACTIVITY | SCHOOL PLAY | | SCHOOL PLAY | SCHOOL PLAY | ORCHESTRA |
| AGE | ALL | | ALL | ALL | ALL |
| VENUE | | | | | MUSIC ROOM |
| TIME | 17H30 – 19H30 | | 17H30 – 19H30 | 17H30 – 19H30 | 07H15 – 08H00 |
| ACTIVITY | | | CHOIR | DEBATING LEAGUE | CHOIR |
| AGE | | | ALL | SENIOR, JUNIOR AND | ALL |
| VENUE | | | MUSIC ROOM | GRADE 8 | MUSIC ROOM |
| TIME | | | 13H40 – 14H35 | VARIOUS | 13H20 – 14H10 |
| | | | | 14H30 – 17H30 | |

Transport is provided on all week days to and from all the practice venues, returning to the school.

Appendix 3: Examples of interview questions

Example of open-ended questions used for initial individual interviews:

1. What sport have you chosen to play this season?
2. Have you given any thought as to why you chose this sport?
3. If so, can you explain to me your reasoning behind choosing this specific sport?
4. Why did you not try out for the other sports on offer at Connaught?
5. What does sport mean for you in your life?
6. Do you consider yourself as a sporty person?
7. Do you think others also classify you as sporty?
8. If yes, what characteristics make you sporty?

Appendix 4: List of Year-Eight boys interviewed

David (13 years old)

Craig (13 years old)

Campbell (13 years old)

Lamont (12 years old)

Carlos (13 years old)

Richard (12 years old)

Owen (13 years old)

Zaid (13 years old)

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance



Research Office (Govan Mbeki Centre)
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Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

7 February 2012

Mrs Barbara Anne Bowley (934356223)
School of Education

Dear Mrs Bowley

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0043/012D
PROJECT TITLE: Boys, sport and the construction of masculinities: An ethnographic study of sporty year eight boys in a single sex private school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

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 Professor Deevia Bhana
cc Mrs S Naicker/Mr N Memela

Appendix 6: Letter of consent sent to parents

Barbara Bowley

Connaught High

Dear

I am currently part of the PhD programme at the University of KwaZulu- Natal. In order to complete my doctoral degree, I need to complete a study in a school. Connaught is a unique environment and I feel that I will gain the necessary data for my study from the school. The title of my thesis is:

Boys, sport and the construction of masculinities:

An ethnographic study of sporty year eights boys in a single sex private school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The objective of this research is to explore the prominence of sport in the lives of thirteen year old South African high school boys in an elite, boys' only, private school. The focus of the study is how boys give meaning to their masculinities concentrating particularly on their involvement in sport.

I would, hereby, like to gain permission for your son to be a part of my study. The research will involve interviews with your son. He has been chosen to participate in the research given his enjoyment of sport at the school. I anticipate that each interview will take, at maximum, half an hour. I will make sure that interviews are not done during school time or be an interruption to the school schedule. The acceptance form to be completed below should allow him to be a part of the study. He may withdraw from the programme at any time and he will not be disadvantaged in any manner if he decides to withdraw from the programme. He may also choose not to answer questions if he does not feel comfortable. Pseudonyms will be used for both the school and your son's name at all times during the transcription of the research.

My supervisor from the University is Professor Deevia Bhana. She can be contacted on:

should you require further explanation on the research.

Should you require any information from me I can be contacted on:

Yours faithfully

(Mrs) Barbara Bowley

Return slip:

Date:

I, _____ (name)

Hereby:

- (a) Give permission for my son to be part of the research task
- (b) Do not give permission for my son to be a party of the research task

Signed:
