

**CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITIES
AT A TOWNSHIP SCHOOL
SOUTH OF DURBAN: A CASE STUDY**

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, T. Garey Davis, hereby declare that this is my own work both in conception and execution and that all the sources I have referred to or quoted have been acknowledged and indicated by means of complete references.

T. Garey Davis

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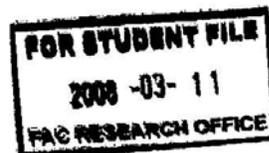
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ABSTRACT

Masculinities are not constructed and performed identically. This research project looks at how male learners at a township high school, South of Durban, define, understand, and perform masculinities. To that end, this study employs varying instruments (non-participant observation, focus group, and individual interviews) to explore the participants' understanding of their own masculine identities as well as that of their fellow male students.

The study was informed by masculinities, sex-role, and black masculinities theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The participants (grade 9-11 male learners) range in age from 14 to 19. These young males discussed early masculinities teachings as well as defining characteristics of an ideal "real men." Their understanding of masculine identities was shaped by family, media, church, peers, and others. They also provide information on the various masculinities constructions and performances at their school. Focusing on the opposition of dominant and subordinate masculinities, I gained firsthand knowledge from the participants about male learners who are excluded from formal and informal school process.

The participants identified and discussed male learners who are said to be performing subordinate masculinities, including admonishment and sanctions used against learners who fall in this category. Emergent masculinities are highlighted from suggestions that participants provided as a means of ensuring that all learners can fully participate in the school process. Lastly, this study provides implications and recommendations for all stakeholders involved in secondary school education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation examines the ways in which Black African boys in a township school construct and perform their masculine identities. The Penguin Reference English Dictionary (2001) defines masculinity as “having qualities appropriate to or usually associated with a man.” Vernacular used to discuss masculine qualities include: violence, power, aggressiveness, strength (physical and mental), provider (income and stability), logic, and rationale. However, this base definition denotes an essentialist understanding of masculinity and ignores the social contexts in which masculinity is often constructed and performed, including those informed by race, socio-economics, history, geographic location, culture, family, and religion among others (Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987), issues that this dissertation aims to explore.

The dissertation moves from a broad to a specific examination of the ways in which Black African boys in a township school in Durban construct their masculine identities. My aim is to give voice to the boys’ construction of their masculine identity beyond theoretical frameworks obtained from the literature; and similar to Howard’s (2006) work, this study is “considering the ways in which a select group of adolescent...boys are narrating, constructing and making sense of their masculine identity” (p. 3). The study was motivated by my observations as well as emerging research that suggest that boys’ experiences in and around schools are characterised by such challenges as poor performance in school, bullying, violence against women and girls and men and boys, the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS, and dominance through sport

(Connell, 1995; Epstein, 1997; Head, 1999; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994, 1996; Morrell, 1998).

Explanations for these behaviours include boys' socialisation into masculine identities and how they come to construct and perform these behaviours. For example, under the gaze of compulsory heterosexuality (Mac an Ghail, 1999; Morrell, 1999) some boys might ascribe to dominant forms of masculinity or what they perceive to be authentic masculine behaviour. Howard (2006) argues, "Boys are likely to struggle (internally and externally) to maintain an authentic masculine self...while subscribing to a masculine identity ascribed by their communities" (p. 2). This is particularly so in authoritarian school environments, or where bullying and violence among boys is rife. For example, in the context of the violent apartheid schooling system, Morrell (1999) has observed that "fundamental pedagogics was the norm, instilling in boys the idea of an absolute truth and authority outside of themselves" (p. 4).

In spite of the democratic policies of post-apartheid South Africa, such pedagogies have survived well into the current schooling system. As such, in the current context of negative peer pressure, as well as crime and violence in township schools (Mahlobo, 2001), this study sought to examine the ways in which boys in a township school in the greater Durban area negotiate their masculine identities. The dissertation attempts to put forward the voices of the boys in defining their masculine identity. The individual interviews used in the study were meant to provide an outlet for the boys to detail their sense of identity outside of the purview of the wider school audience. This was informed by my belief that taking the focus off the public lens in which some of the boys perform violent masculinities would provide access to emergent masculinities.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

My undertaking of this study stems from an opportunity I had to participate in a global education exchange program to South Africa during my last year as an undergraduate student at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia in 2000. During the short period I was in South Africa (June-August, 2000) I noticed striking behavioural and social similarities between Black South African and African-American young men. I was especially drawn to male-to-male banter, heterosexual conquest of girls, and a sense of entitlement in occupying social spaces. As I continued to observe the behaviours of Black South African men in general, I began to pay particular attention to boys and young men's interactions at school. These observations made me want to investigate and understand the ways in which the Black African boys in township schools understand their masculinities and the reasons for their behaviours.

As a non-educator (formally anyway) and as an outsider to Black South African culture, I visited and explored different schools and communities to gain a better understanding of boys and young men performances of masculinities. In relation to my status as a student in a higher degree education program, studying gender in schools, and my goal of getting involved in community outreach, I became involved in a high school located in a Black African township south of Durban. While leading an extracurricular project at the high school I began to ask myself questions that would eventually become the source of this study. My experiences and observations in the school suggested a need to investigate Black South African high school boys' construction and performance of masculinities. This study, therefore, explores the understanding and performance of masculinity among a selected group of boys in the school.

The selection of the school as a site for the study was informed by the notion that masculinities are socially constructed, and while this construction begins at home and in

the community, schools are implicated (Davies, 1992; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994) as important sites for producing and reproducing masculinities (and femininities) (Mac an Ghail, 1994). The selection of the school was also informed by Mac an Ghail's view of schools as "sites for the production of sex/gender subjectivities, where people conform, deviate, challenge, participate and engage in gendered productions daily" (p. 2).

Furthermore, "schools are places where boys' bullying, sexual harassment, physical and psychological abuse are seriously damaging [not only] to girls' emotional and physical lives, [but] to the lives of marginalized boys as well" (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996, p. 104). I had been interacting with boys in township schools for five years (2001-2006); two years (2004-2006) at this particular school, and this provided me with the advantage of identifying subordinate masculine identities. This refers to hierarchic masculinities constructions wherein specific gender relations a system of dominance and subordination between groups of men exist (Connell, 1995). These include gay males, effeminate heterosexual boys, boys differently abled, and non-conformist boys. The school has high standards for academic achievement and extracurricular programs. As such, boys who perform well in both or one of these are rewarded and celebrated, while those who do not are subjected to constant bullying, harassment and ridicule. Subordinated masculinities often escape the gaze placed on boys performing dominant (and sometimes protest) forms of masculine identity at school (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Morrell, 1999).

Morrell (1999) argues, "It is not always easy to measure changes in gender practices...one way of identifying change is to examine the discursive construction of masculinity and to look for contradictory features which may be harbingers of emergent, progressive, masculinity" (p. 9). As such, this dissertation seeks to examine the ways in

which a group of boys in the school construct and perform their masculinities and the extent to which alternatives to negative masculinities emerge.

1.3 Focus of Study

This study focuses on the ways in which high school boys in a Durban township construct and perform their identities in the context of negative dominant masculinities in and around the school. A secondary focus is on the ways in which the school structures tended to act in support of or against the subordinate masculinities among the boys. In particular, the study focuses on the ways in which boys who tend to be subordinated because they fail, in the eyes of their peers, to perform authentic or socially accepted masculine identities, construct and perform their identities.

Identifying challenges faced by subordinated masculinities is crucial given Howard's (2006) fleshing out of Franklin's (1986) findings that, "these differing attributes of masculinity come into conflict, positioning...men in a peculiar place in having to negotiate what is sure to amount to a very complex conception of manhood" (p. 20). If left unchecked, this may lead to the privileging of dominant constructions of masculinities which are often predicated on violence. This dissertation seeks to examine these constructions in the hope that such an understanding might better inform interventions aimed at addressing the negative impacts of violent dominant masculinities.

1.4 Organisation of Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into five chapters: In this first chapter, I introduce the subject topic and purpose of study. Further, I discuss the rationale for this study; and finally I discuss the focus of the study.

Chapter 2 follows with a review of the literature. This chapter begins with definitions of the different typologies of masculinities beginning with a definition of hegemonic masculinity. The literature review focuses on three theoretical frameworks; masculinity theories, sex-role theory, and afro-centric theory (emphasising Black masculinities).

Chapter 3 provides the methodology of the study; including the research design, describing the research site, sample instruments, and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 provides the data findings and analysis in which I present the boys understanding of their construction and performance of masculinities. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation and identifies implications for interventions (policy and practice).

The next chapter reviews the relevant literature that informs this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study examines Black South African high school males' understanding of the construction and performance of masculine identities. The previous chapter provides an introduction to the study including the rationale, focus, and organization of this dissertation. This chapter focuses on literature reviewed for this study.

Boys are not born masculine or feminine. These are behaviours that are learned from an early age and are enforced and reinforced through both their private and public contextualised and developmental lived experiences. Boys learn to perform their masculine identities from the environments in which they live as well as age appropriate behaviour they witness. In other words many young boys replicate behaviours they see older boys and men performing. Boys who do not replicate these performances or who perform subordinate or alternative (to violent and hegemonic) masculinities are sometimes treated harshly verbally and physically by their peers.

Unlike being born biologically male or female, people learn masculine and feminine identities through both public and private institutions such as family, church, peer groups, and school. There is no one way of being masculine (Connell, 1995); individual performances of masculinities are situational and move along a fluid continuum. At an individual level, masculinities are a form of identity, and a way in which individuals understand themselves (Connell, 1994; Connolly, 1995; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Majors & Billings, 1994). Closely associated to the individual level is the wider discourse on masculinities as an ideological construction that includes culturally acceptable and appropriate roles, values and expectations of men. The assumption is that there may be

conflict between private and public performances of masculinities that some boys and men act out in order to fit in their communities, which may not be their real or authentic identities. Some boys and men are forced to act one way in public under scrutiny of peers and adults.

However, it is important to note that constructions of masculinities are not universal. This dissertation reports on findings from male learners in one township high school in the greater Durban area who present multifarious constructions and performances of masculinities. The dissertation is informed by theories on masculinities that provide conceptual analyses of male learners' understanding of dominant constructions of masculinities. These theories also lay out the framework for the participants to discuss their constructions of subordinate masculinities and to apply these applications to their lived experiences.

Data analysis in this dissertation relies on masculinity studies to make sense of boys' construction and performance of their gendered identities. In this chapter, I review Connell's (1995) typology of competing masculinities: hegemonic, subordinate, and complicit. This review is followed by a discussion on the intersection of subordinate masculinities, compulsory heterosexuality and schools.

2.2 Overview of Masculinities

Available literature, spanning many academic disciplines including education, sociology, mathematics, economics, psychology, and others, defines masculinities as socially constructed ideas about attitudes and behaviours, within any given society that define appropriate roles, values, and expectations usually associated with men (Connell, 1987; Connolly, 1995; Mac an Ghail 1994, 1996). Masculinities are different from biological male factors, and there are no essential patterns to masculinities constructions.

They are gendered phenomena and have no social, political, or historical boundaries. Furthermore, masculinities are not universal. It is highly conceivable that in any given setting it is not uncommon to see several different masculinities being performed. Connell (1994) states, “There is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere. We need to speak of “masculinities,” not “masculinity” (p. 10). Further, language, culture, gender, historical context, socio-economic status, and race are all factors that play a role in defining masculinities (Carbado, 1999; Clatterbaugh, 1990; Connell, 1995; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Morrell, 2001). As such the concept of masculinities is always based on context and is never a singular, fixed identity.

Available literature differentiates among different typologies of masculinities. One typology differentiates between dominant (hegemonic) and subordinate masculinities. First, dominant or hegemonic masculinity refers to “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women and other men” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Dominant forms of masculinity include but are not limited to compulsory heterosexuality, power, authority, aggression, and intellect (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1987; Mac an Ghail, 1994). Second, subordinated masculinities are often constructed as gender interactions specifically related to dominance and subordination between groups of men and between men and women (Connell, 1995). To illustrate, boys who are identified as gay or effeminate, and who therefore, perform subordinate or alternative masculinities in a school setting, where sports are favoured, would be ostracised and treated harshly in direct opposition to the boys on the star soccer team.

Subordinated masculinities are not only established relationally to dominant masculinities but are also discussed as opposition between heterosexuality and

homosexuality. Connell (1995) attempts to clarify this noting that while “gay masculinities are the most conspicuous, [they are] not the only subordinated masculinity” (p. 79). Still other theorists often refer to effeminate and/or homosexual boys and men when writing about and discussing subordinate masculinities.

Literature reviewed in this study suggests that subordinate masculinities are in direct conflict with hegemonic and dominant constructions and performances of masculinities. To illustrate, hegemonic masculine identities are often employed to police boys and men into performing dominant or “acceptable” forms of masculinities. In such a culture it may be difficult for a young male who may be more interested in taking sewing or cooking lessons to actively pursue these interests as opposed to playing a sport that he may not be interested in pursuing at all or lacks the skill to play well. However in the sporting culture of many schools this same student may feel pressured to play a sport instead of being overly ridiculed for pursuing different interests. Boys and men who are identified as performing subordinate masculinities are often ostracised, ridiculed, bullied, and beaten by peer group members performing contestable hegemonic (dominant) forms of masculinities (Carbado, 1999; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994). The use of this masculinity typology in this study is central to understanding boys who do not fit in with their classmates.

Third, complicit masculinities are constructed along a continuum of masculinities. In any given group, only a select number of members of the group fall into the category of dominant or hegemonic masculinity. The majority in the group not belonging to dominant or subordinate positions of masculinities are said to be performing complicit masculinities. It is also this complicit construct that provides validity to hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1995) argues that “masculinities constructed in ways that realized the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are

complicit in this sense” (p. 79). This means that the majority of male members in a given group are rewarded with privileges even if they are not performing dominant masculinities. Complicit masculinities are constructed in alliance with hegemonic masculinities and against subordinate masculinities, thus entrenching the good/bad, us/them, right/wrong dichotomy between the two masculinities (dominant and subordinate). Further, complicit masculinities do not stand alone but derive power from and because of alliance with hegemonic masculinities and the rejection and subjugation of subordinate masculinities.

This discussion on complicit masculinities is included in this research project to provide a general overview of the continuum of masculinities that exist within peer group settings. To illustrate how this works, I continue with the soccer analogy used earlier. Supposing that the soccer team wins all or most of its competitions; sets up other sports and non-sports programs in the school to receive attention because of their attendance at the same school with the players of the winning soccer team. For example, students from the school with a winning soccer team may receive discounts or other advantages from local business and community leaders because of their affiliation with a highly regarded sports team. The focus of this research project is on subordinate masculinities and how dominant masculinities are directly implicated in those constructions. The complicit masculinities will be discussed only when their inclusion helps to further explain dominant and subordinate masculinities.

Arguably if one is able to stack masculinities in ranking order, hegemonic masculinity would be considered the dominant form within any given grouping of men (Connell, 1995; Connolly, 1998; Kimmel, 1987; Mac an Ghail, 1996). It is, however, important to remember that it is not necessarily the most practiced masculinity in a given group, but when stacked against other masculinities (e.g., complicit and subordinated) it

would be ranked at the top (Connell, 2000). For example, in a school environment where sports are highly valued, such as the boys' soccer team, the team and its members would be said to be dominant over other sports teams and other school programs as well. Further, hegemonic masculinities are constructed oppositional to femininity and subordinated masculinities. This means that boys who do well on the soccer team are held in high esteem compared to boys who are considered feminine and girls who, often, are treated with less regard and resources. Dominant masculinities' validity is established relational to subordinate masculinities. Its existence is based on a perception of an ideal male figure within a given society who is said to hold that top position within a particular culture. In as much as has been discovered about hegemony, schools become an important site to observe male learners' performance of dominant masculinities and subjugation of subordinate masculinities, a focus of investigation in this study (Connell, 2000; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994).

2.3 Subordinate Masculinities, Compulsory Heterosexuality, and Schooling

Further issues compounding the construction and performance of masculinities is the close, but often misunderstood, association with sexuality (Carbado, 1999; Mac an Ghail, 1994). A reading of sexualities and masculinities is required to understand the importance of each to hegemonic masculinities hierarchal status to subordinate masculinities and sexualities.

Beliefs about sexuality offer an intriguing opportunity for exploring the socially constructed meanings surrounding gender inequality, because beliefs about sexuality define what are apparently biological processes, and therefore they have the potential for offering a "natural" justification for gendered social arrangements. (Kane & Schippers, 1996, p. 3)

These arrangements are problematic at best and are sometimes used as an excuse to harass men and boys who do not conform to socially acceptable constructions and performances.

It does not help the situation that, at schools and in other locations, heterosexuality is seen as “normal” and “natural.” In many instances sexuality is “invisible” in the formal and hidden curriculum of schools (Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994). The wilful suppression of homosexuality, both by gay and non-gay students, is a controlling mechanism enforced usually by peer groups to control “other” students not living up to societal accepted normative gender roles.

Using Mac an Ghail’s (1994) study on the intersections of masculinities, sexualities, and schooling and Connell’s (1987) mapping out typologies of masculinities, an interloping of these texts implicate schools as sites of production and reproduction of masculinities. Students are key informants through which masculinities and femininities construction and performance are experienced. Schools are deeply gendered and heterosexual regimes that construct relations of domination and subordination within and across the school setting. Further, male peer groups act as police agents for restrictive compulsory heterosexual practices and performances wherein boys who perform outside of set boundaries are sometimes punished. This seems to be based on a perceived belief that subordinate masculinities result from rejection of or opposition to dominant (hegemonic) forms of masculinities.

Connell (1987, 1994, 1995, 2000) and Pleck & Pleck (1980) believe the antinomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality are a central component in the hierarchy of masculine hegemony. Homosexuality is regarded as the absence of or a contradiction to masculine identities. One aspect of dominant constructions of masculinities is based on the widely held belief that male homosexuals are effeminate (Carbado, 1999; Connell, 1992; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Pleck & Pleck, 1980). Compulsory heterosexuality coupled with peer group formations police, isolate and demean boys at school who do not fit normative practices prescribed by the school’s hegemony. Boys learn to become men—

heterosexual men—through production and reproduction of strict, same gender regimes and in opposition to the “other” (girls, homosexuals, effeminate boys) (Connell, 1992; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994). Although implied, what is not clear or fully developed in the literature is that boys performing dominant masculine identities need the so-called “other” to justify hegemonic masculinities constructions and performances.

In the following sections this review continues by focusing on gender and race, both of which will expand upon the above discussion.

2.4 Gender and Masculinities

Sex roles “were understood as patterns of social expectation, norms for the behaviour of men and women, which were transmitted to you in a process of socialization” (Connell, 2000, p. 7). Its formation refers, in many communities, to perceived ideal behaviours, attitudes and activities expected for men and women in a particular community or society. They are, however, socially constructed and contestable. Sex role theory, on the other hand, relies on establishing a clear dichotomy of the roles men and women perform, not only sexually, but socially as well (Connell, 1987; Paechter, 1998). Sex role theory is often criticised for its essentialist ideology, about gender performances, which will be addressed later in this section.

Gender roles are socially constructed and are informed from family, community and the wider society. Both men and women, knowingly or subconsciously, direct roles defining maleness and femaleness (Connell, 1987; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Paechter, 1998). Such roles describe behaviour that is considered masculine or feminine and are culturally determined. In the United States, for example, men are generally expected to be independent, aggressive, physical, ambitious, and able to control their emotions. Women

are generally expected to be sensitive, emotional, nurturing, and supportive. Simple observances, such as who does which domestic chores and who leaves the house, for what purpose, shape youth's understandings of the roles they will perform in life (Mac an Ghail, 1996).

In the construction and performance of masculinity, boys learn how to become men through bodily movements and expected gender role performance (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Connell, 2000; Head, 1999; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Morrell, 2001; Paechter, 1998). Mac an Ghail (1996) asserts that "people acquire and perform sex-typed behaviour, like any other kind of behaviour, through a combination of observation, imitation, indoctrination and conscious learning" (p. 101). Little boys and girls pick up gender cues from various people from different places and then have to negotiate, consciously, and apply these observations to their lived experiences. Observing these learned behaviours plays a key role in how young people either follow or reject gender performance. The outcome of accepting or rejecting acceptable gender performance informs who may or may not be accepted in the communities in which they live. For boys the private and public spaces where acceptable performances of masculine gender roles and negation of feminine gender roles are an important aspect in the contestation of said performances. Both private and public social and structural institutions (e.g., government agencies, peer groups, schools, home, work place, and churches) shape gender role performance (Clatterbaugh, 1990; Connell, 2000; Head, 1999; Kimmel, 2000; Lesko 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Morrell, 2001). Most of these institutions have built in controls, such as patriarchy, to police boys and girls as well, that perform outside the purview of expected gender roles. For instance, in the U.S. some boys play games, such as cowboys and Indians, cops and robbers, and soldiers; whereas, some girls play games, such as house in which they pretend to take care of the children and cook. These gendered

games are played within the confines of many of the institutions mentioned above (i.e., home, church, school, etc.) and are strictly adhered to by participating peers as well as by adults who are monitoring, formally or informally, the activities.

Many authors in the academy caution or outright reject the usefulness of sex role theories (Connell, 1995; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Paetcher, 1998). One of the perceived reasons for this cautionary approach is sex role theory's essentialist emphasis on gender performance based on biological sex characteristics. Critics of sex role theory also argue against its use of masculinity and femininity as singular entities without taking into consideration variables such as race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, and location (Kimmel, 2000)—all of which are important factors in how society comes to understand and make use of gender identities. Further complicating discourse on sex roles is a more confounding understanding that “gender socialization develops within a context of gender inequalities and the tendency for social arrangements to reinforce the position of the dominant group, invariably males” (p. 89). Although caution is necessary, incorporating gender roles in this dissertation as a basis for gender analysis provides contextualised discourse on salient points relevant to masculinity performances not only in the literature, but in the lived experiences of the participants.

Although problematic, sex role theory does provide a basic framework for dealing with the complications associated with socially constructed phenomena, such as masculinities. Sex role theory provides a sound framework to address key questions of the research, such as “the forms of masculinities constructed” and “which boys are excluded and why.” Further, sex role theory's approach provides a basis by which the participants can begin to map out not only their constructions and performances of masculinities but that of their peers as well. Moreover, its usage offers crucial points that will directly relate to and be invaluable to understanding the participants' early learning experiences about

socially acceptable role behaviour. Lastly, by providing a space for the participants to discuss socially learnt behaviour, opportunities open up for them to relearn and rethink some of the more rigid gendered practices. These rigid practices can be harmful and sometimes detrimental to both dominant and subordinate masculinities.

This generalised overview does not take race, specifically, into consideration, which is an element that expands knowledge about gender performances and arguably one could write an entire dissertation on that subject alone. As such in the next section the role of race in masculinities construction and performance is interrogated.

2.5 Race and Masculinities

Afro-centric theories focusing on Black masculinities foreground how racist societies have undermined the self-identity of Black men living in predominantly Western cultures (for example, the United States of America and Europe) (Staples, 1978). This initial framework was later expanded to include a pan-African perspective centred on the lived experiences of Africans on the Continent and in the Diaspora, whose lived experiences were also impacted by colonialism and imperialism. Central to this study is the formation of Black masculine identities as constructed by the participants to which afro-centric theories speak.

Literature on Black and/or African masculinities (henceforth referred to as Black masculinities) suggests their constructions are overwhelmingly centred on the Black male body and are established oppositional to white, Western constructions of hegemonic masculinities. Constructions of Black masculinities have for the longest time been developed and understood from a white Western perspective (Carbado, 1999; Clatterbaugh, 1990; Connell, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Majors & Billings, 1992; Staples, 1978). This perspective does not always own up to systematic brutality—slavery,

segregation, and lynching—inflicted on Black males over a 400 year period in the USA and other forms of structural and personal oppressive practices inflicted on Black males in the African Diaspora. There are key components in masculinities studies that do not take into consideration structural and personal challenges Black males' face in their lived experience (Oliver, 1989). Further, literature on Black masculinities identifies overlaps in theories similar to generalised masculinities theories; however, none of these overlaps account for the specific racialised component of Black masculine constructions.

For an example, Marriott in Mac an Ghail's (1996) *Understanding Masculinities* puts forward several themes while addressing, what he believes, is the key question in Black masculinity studies, "What does the Black man want?" Some of the salient points in his argument include: racist stereotyping of Black masculine identities by sociologist and other academics; dysfunctional Black male kinships; substitution of female authority figures; Black male as racial victim; and the Black male as pathological and monstrous. Often these themes are reported in both scholarly publications and in mainstream media (in all formats). Although these themes, as put forward in that text, are contextualized to Western countries, particularly the U.S. and Europe, its impact is felt globally. These misrepresented and distorted views on Black masculinities are a few points that afro-centric theories find problematic with contemporary discourse on masculinities.

As such, studies on Black masculinities have begun to deconstruct Western discourse on the struggles many Black males face in their communities (Carbado, 1999; Connell, 1987; Connolly, 1995; Howard, 2006; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994, Madhubuti, 1990; Majors & Billings, 1992; Mizra, 1999; Price, 1999; Staples, 1978). This is particularly true in Western countries, such as the U.S. and the U.K., that provide statistical data and knowledge of the plight of the Black male noting low/poor birth rate, absent fathers, incessant sex drive, drug and alcohol abuse, poor performance in school,

Black on Black homicide, gang culture, and violence as some of the problems research puts forward as endemic to Black males. Arguably, if the same statistics were stated about non-Black males in Western countries, there would be a huge outcry to find a solution to these problems. One of the solutions is a growing body of scholars, using afro-centric theories, addressing the issues described and also contextualising structural impediments that are contributing factors.

Another challenge with issues of Black masculinities, in much of the literature, is that they are constructed outside of hegemonic masculinities (read white hegemonic masculinities). Morrell (1998), a South African scholar who addresses masculinities in his research, locates Black masculinities as “oppositional, discrete (as in distinguishable) and implicated in constructions of white masculinity” (p. 611). His argument suggests a number of things: first, that Black masculinities are discernable and unique from other masculinities; second, that European foreigners learned to perform a particular brand of masculinity from the Black inhabitants they encountered upon arriving on African shores and third, Black masculinities are constructed in protest to hegemonic masculinities. The implication, corroborated from literature reviewed on masculinities constructions, is that Black masculinities are not always subordinated to white hegemonic masculinities but can be constructed and performed in parallel formations. Morrell’s argument, in this sense, is too simple to grapple with the many complexities of masculinities in general and Black masculinities in particular. Further, his argument does not fully flesh out the complicated history, especially, of South African race relations. Seemingly, his attempt here is to give voice to a Black African identity that existed before colonialism and is missing from historical and contemporary literature. Nonetheless, the knowledge of hegemonic Black African constructions will be useful for this study that focuses on subordinate masculinities as defined by Black African males.

Majors and Billings (1992) identified “cool pose” as a racial and social construction employed by Black males to navigate institutional racist practices in Western countries, especially the United States. The cool pose is a posturing of oft-described behaviours and attitudes, oppositional to dominant Western constructions. The cool pose is the misunderstood portrayal of negative Black male images (stereotypes) frequently displayed in U.S. and European media and lionised in the literature as dominant Black masculinities. Media representations often portray Black masculinities along essentialist lines, such as violent and pathological. This can be problematic for young Black males—including secondary school age youth who are the focus of this research—who have to learn to negotiate multiple social and cultural identities. This study aims to give voice to Black African, secondary school boys and young men in a Durban township on the ways in which they construct and perform their masculine identities and not to “fit the experience of [these] Black males into foreign or pre-existing frames” (Ratele in Morrell, 2001, p. 239). Masculinities are not universal but are hierarchic, within peer group settings and need to be researched through its varied contexts.

Finally, Jeremy Price’s (1999) study of the lived school experiences of six African-American males details the intersections of race, class, and gender. He argues:

[Studies on African-American men] explain the ways in which race and social class experiences interact in the lives of young Black men in school... [and that] patterns of resistance may take different forms depending upon the historical and situated circumstances of race-class groups in a particular location and national context. (p. 4)

Although the contextualisation of the lived experiences of urban African American males might resonate with Black, township South African males, there are underpinning differences. Location, culture, and language are but a few of the textured differences that should be considered on studies of constructions and performances of masculinities.

Price's scholarship is useful in that it offers a comparative analysis for working with a monolithic ethnicity traversing a broad topic such as masculinities.

2.5.1 Masculinities, race, gender, and youth in South Africa

To place gender roles, race, and masculinity performance in a South African context, I reviewed literature primarily in Morrell's (2001) *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. While not specifically located in schools, this text provides relevant discourse on the key questions addressed in this research project.

According to Campbell (2001), operating under the dual and highly compatible systems of patriarchy and sex roles for Black South African men in the mining industry, performances of masculinity were calculated by heavy risk-taking. This risk-taking was not confined to the arduous underground work these men did to live up to expected heterosexual gender role norms but also how these men pursued rewards and pleasure outside of their work. Campbell offers:

Black mineworkers' social and sexual identities are forged in response to the life challenges of the mining context...In a context where employment is scarce and where mineworkers' earnings support large numbers of people, masculinity is an important coping device. It assists these men in the daily challenge of having to repeatedly place themselves at physical risk in order to earn a living. However, the very concept of masculinity that enables men to cope with their life-threatening working conditions, simultaneously serves to endanger their sexual health. (p. 284)

Moodie (2001) provides a contrasting view of life in the mines. For example, he writes that on the mines, up until the 1970s, there was an interesting system of mine wives.¹ The practice was relegated to the mines and ceased when the men returned to their family and communal environment. In other words, the practice did not preclude the men (either "hubby" or "wifey") involved in the "mine marriage" from returning to normative heterosexual practices when their time on the mine was complete. This contrasting

¹ Set of practices by which young men on the mine compounds would become the "wives" of more senior men, providing them with both domestic and sexual services in exchange for substantial and regular monetary rewards" (Morrell, 2001, p, 303).

masculinity to Campbell's (2001) depiction of mine life provides discourse on hegemonic masculinity performance within a racial (Black masculinity performance), gender role, and subordinate lens. Moodie (2001) puts forth:

Don't forget the boy would never make a mistake of "breathing out" into the "hubby." It was taboo. Only the "hubby" could "breathe out" into the boy's legs...proper "wifely" sexual behaviour was essentially receptive rather than intrusive. Boys might "wish they were so-an-so's wife..., for the sake of security, for the acquisition of property..., and for the fun itself," but they were certainly subordinate, both socially and sexually. (pp. 304-305)

In the single sex migrancy environments described by Campbell (2001) and Moodie (2001), tough recalcitrant masculinities described the former analysis, while sex roles defined the responsibilities of production and division of labour between male workers on the mines in the latter. Pairing these two situations on the mines offers insight into the gender/sexuality scrutiny that is often, in my view and based on the literature, indistinguishable by observers of masculinities. Seemingly regardless of sexual partnering compulsory heterosexuality² defined mine workers' rigid masculine code on construction and performance.

In his seminal writing on performing masculinity, Ratele (2001) looks at the construction of Black South African masculinities from the lens of young, Black, professional, educated men. He explores the use of language as a mechanism to understand the "back and forth constructions of gendered and racialised identities" (p. 241) between a group of "ouens."³ Ratele also addresses questions on the meaning of "being a Black man" or "becoming a Black man." Finally, he offers "the hesitant response to how one raises a son into a Black man may signal a continuing crisis, a dispersal of

² Compulsory heterosexuality: A central practice in the social construction of gender inequality; also predicated on contempt for homosexuality, especially among heterosexual men, is part of the ideological package supporting men's dominance (Connell, 1987).

³ Term derived from the noun/adjective "ou," meaning chap, guy, fellow. It is a common manner of address or reference to a man or boy (Morrell, 2001, p. 240)

hegemonic masculinity, a grappling with many ideal, or the old male-sex role identity” (p. 247). Similar to Marable’s (1996) discourse of Black masculinities, Ratele’s argument indicates the triple consciousness⁴ immersed in Black masculinities constructions. This means that research on Black masculinities must include the various components (e.g., race, culture, language) beyond the milieu researchers discuss when speaking about mainstream masculinity constructions.

Xaba (2001) examines the construction of violent Black township masculinities against the backdrop of new, emerging, post-apartheid, hegemonic masculinities and peer groups. Former comrades came together in “family” units to support each other after being ostracised from the new political hegemony taking hold in post-apartheid South Africa. Their oppositional constructions and performances of masculinities, forged during the struggle days, presently provide them a masculine identity that demands “respect” and “honour” through violence, terrorizing, and protecting community members. Rape, murder, and destruction of local and state institutions were some of the tools used to affirm their masculine identity. Xaba’s discourse on struggle and post-struggle masculinities provides a contextualised reading of Black masculinity through a historical, locational, and situational lens. He adds, “configurations of masculinity forged in one historical moment can become obsolete and dangerous in another” (p. 119). Lauded as heroes in one arena and denigrated in another provided space for these young Black men to “commit violent crimes, as well as display a dangerous and deadly bravado...which resonated with their own conceptions of masculinity” (p. 119)—an incontestable historic moment in which many of the participants of this research project can attest because of contemporary challenges they face in constructing their masculine identities.

⁴ Taken from W.E.B. Dubois (1903) *Souls of Black Folks* discussion on the dilemma of double consciousness (race and national identity) faced by African Americans at the turn of the 20th Century.

Hemson (2001) navigates construction and performance of masculinities, intersecting race, class, gender, culture, sexuality, location, historical, tradition, age, and ability subjectivities, amongst young Black males, and some females, from the township involved in lifesaving. His essay offers discourse on emergent masculinities juxtaposing rural and urban, as well as, old and new masculine identities young men from the township are learning to traverse. Hemson acknowledges that “despite the obstacles, the young African men...are generating a new masculinity which in significant ways diverges from the Black oppositional masculinity of their township peers but which inescapably still draws in some element of that masculinity” (p. 72). Learning to negotiate one’s own sense of masculine identity in relation to peer groups⁵ necessitates further fleshing out performance and construction of Black masculinities.

Black South African masculinities, as addressed in Morrell’s 2001 *Changing Men in South Africa*, are contested along existential intermingling of township, race, youth, and sex role subjectivities. Xaba, Campbell, Hemson, Moodie, Ratele, and others place constructions and performances of hegemonic and non- hegemonic masculinities along racial, gender, sexuality, and age subjectivities. The intersecting discourses around race, gender, and sexuality challenge conventional constructions of masculinities as well as provide conceptual groundwork for presenting the findings researched in this project. This is based on a number of reasons, including nowhere in the literature reviewed were the role schools play, specifically in the construction and performance of Black masculinities. This absence was not lost on the researcher and is another reason to put forward this dissertation.

⁵ Taken from Lesko (2000), peer groups are framed as generating positive or negative influences in the lives of youths in.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature reviewed highlights voluminous readings on masculinities. With the challenge of trying to identify subordinate masculinities from the voices of male learners at a South African township school, I reviewed literature spanning many aspects of masculinities. Race, class, gender, community, school, sexuality, history, location, and age are some of the lenses used to analyse salient points on masculinities addressed in the literature.

In this chapter, three theoretical frameworks were reviewed using literature to support their usage in the dissertation. First, typologies of masculinities were introduced to give an overview on constructions and performance of masculinities and to set the tone for the overarching themes discussed in this research. Second, literature on sex role theory was reviewed as a background to discuss teachings of gendered performances. Third, Black masculinities theory was included to support current literature on Black masculinities constructions and performances and to identify specific information that scholars find missing from mainstream discussions on masculinities. Collectively, the literature reviewed in this section were deliberately chosen as source material that could provide a space for the voices of the participants in this study to discuss issues they face, specifically, as young Black men.

Researching the lived experiences of boys at school provides necessary data to the growing body of work on masculinities in general and in this research project on Black masculinities in particular. Challenges faced at school by boys not living up to dominant forms of masculinities as well as boys constructing and performing dominant masculinities suggest continued grappling with issues referenced in the review of literature. Mass media, families, communities, political leaders, and educators continue to question and address increasing challenges of and to masculinities. The fluidity (continuum) of masculinities,

coupled with contemporary focus on boys' negative performances of masculinities, particularly at schools, is a perfect starting point to assess the issues and offer interventions where necessary. Schools as sites of production and reproduction play a vital role in dismantling some of the negative aspects of masculinities—compulsory heterosexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, bullying, and the subordination of 'other' (girls, gays, effeminate boys)—while providing a way forward for emergent masculinities.

The next chapter provides the methodology used to collect and analyse data in this research project.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research is concerned with how a group of boys (young men), attending a township school in the greater Durban area in South Africa, understand masculinities, and how they construct and perform such masculinities in the school. Moreover, the study explores the ways in which these boys understand and define subordinated masculinities and how their experiences and views of boys who are considered to be performing these are treated by other boys. The following questions were posed to address the key issues of investigation in this study:

1. How do boys in one township school understand, define, and perform their masculinity?
 - a. What are the dominant and or hegemonic forms of masculinities in the school?
 - b. Which boys are excluded and why? And what impacts does this exclusion have on them and their learning in the school?
2. What and who informs these understandings of masculinity?

3.2 Research Design

To address these questions, a qualitative case study design was utilised. A case study methodology was used to observe the phenomena of a specific subject—male learners—in a specific context—at school. Two main types of case study include interpretive and intervening and aspects of both of these types were useful to this study

(Hornberger and Corson 1997). The interpretive case study aspect was beneficial for understanding the data collected, while the intervening case study method was useful in framing recommendations based on the findings. Case study methodology has built in mechanisms for the instruments I would be using for this study. Finally, case study methodology was a natural fit for the qualitative design used in the study. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings that people have constructed, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Guba, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1998; Mouton, Babbie, Payze, Vorster, Boshoff, & Prozesky, 2001). To this end I used observations, focus group interviews, semi-structured individual interviews, and self-reflective journaling as instruments to collect data

Prior to starting the actual research I had to write and submit an ethical clearance which guided me on the research to be undertaken and outlined the processes I would be taking through each stage of this project. Appendices (A) through (E) are outcomes of the ethical clearance. In the following sub-sections I discuss and describe how I proceeded through the various aspect of the research. Also in each of the sub-sections I discuss how I place myself, as researcher, within the different content areas.

3.2.1 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sampling methods are classified as either *probability* or *non-probability*. For this research project non-probability sampling was used. In non-probability sampling, members are selected from the population in some non-random manner (Mouton et al., 2001). In non-probability sampling, the selectivity built into the sample derives from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the

wider population, it simply represents itself. To that end, convenience sampling was chosen, from a range of methods in non-probability sampling, primarily because of limited resource and time constraints coupled with unfamiliarity with the current population of learners at the research site. Keeping these criteria in mind during this process, the researcher found using convenience sampling a useful tool in that samples are simply chosen from an easily accessible population (Cohen et al., 2000). Convenience sampling is a natural fit for this case study design. It does not represent any group apart from itself and does not seek to generalise about the wider population.

The target population for this study was high school boys in grades 9 to 11 ranging between the ages of 14 and 18. The research being undertaken is informed by the boys and young men in the study having agency in their understandings of their masculine identities as well as providing data on boys who do not conform to dominant forms of masculine performances. Using non-probability sampling theory (Cohen et al., 2000), a small sample size provided the space for the researcher to gain insight into selected students' representation of themselves while investigating how those representations fit into the larger discursive of masculinity performances and constructions.

This sampling process placed heavy emphasis on the creation of the focus group participants and discussions. My objective was to include as many voices (as the allotted time allowed) from the males in the target population. Participants were informed from the outset that their initial participation would be in focus group discussions upon which five to eight key informants would be selected to continue with the balance of the research. Because the time frame to complete the study was limited only six informants were selected. Each of the students was given an opportunity to participate in the process for selection. The participants were to submit their name on a piece of paper to inform me if they wished to be selected as a key informant in the research project. Thirteen students—

two students did not turn in their names to be considered—submitted their names from which I selected eight, in private, and informed all of the participants if they had been selected or not. In the end, six key informants and two alternates were chosen. The six were chosen because they were very vocal and shared extensively during the focus group interviews. Two alternates were selected as backup in case any of the six were unable to complete the project. All six informants showed up for their individual interviews and none of the alternates had to be used. In consultation with my supervisor it was felt that six to eight participants would be the maximum number to accept in the full study. While I would have wanted all of the focus group members to participate in the full project, the six selected provided rich data beyond expectation. Below follows a brief description of the participants who contributed to the whole research project.

3.2.2 Description of participants⁶

Common: 14-year-old, grade 9 learner who lives in the township but travels by public transportation to school because of the distance. Common was very vocal during the focus group discussions and was selected as one of the six participants.

King-Kong: 17-year old, grade 11 learner who is from the South-coast. His mother made him leave home and stay with family-friends who live near the school. I first approached King-Kong to be a part in the research while I was observing male learners at the research site. He was very active during the focus group discussion and provided very

⁶ Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants. All of the participants made up their pseudonyms. The researcher allowed five minutes before the beginning of the first focus group discussion for them to do so. None of the participants had trouble coming up with an alternate name. The researcher did not inquire about the alias name selections but did become aware of some of the pseudonyms through subsequent interactions with the participants. I will not share what I have learned about their name selections as it is not pertinent to this study and I did not get the participants permission to do so.

relevant knowledge on subordinate masculinities; for that he was selected as one of the six participants.

Oskido: 16-year-old, grade 11 learner who lives in the township. He comes from the Eastern Cape Province and so his home language is IsiXhosa, but he speaks isiZulu fluently. He was very knowledgeable and highly engaged during the discussions. He was selected as one of the six participants.

King: 14-year-old, grade 9 learner who stays with family friends in the township near the school. His family home is in the suburbs of Gauteng. He is the third generation of his family to attend the school. King was very forthright during the focus group discussion often imparting religious dogma when responding to questions. He was selected as one of the six participants

CJ: 16-year-old, grade 10 student who lives in the township in the immediate section of the school. He was quite vocal during the focus group discussions and contributed a great deal. He cleverly defended his arguments in the group sessions. He was selected as one of the six participants.

Dark Messiah: 18-year-old, grade 11 student who stays with his grandfather, a minister, and uncle who live in the township. He is not from the township but has lived with his male relatives for the past three years. A self-confessed hip-hop artist and poet, he had a lot of input in the discussions. He was selected as one of the six participants

To answer the research questions, data were collected from a select group of boys in one township high school. Instruments used to collect data included: observation, focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews, and journaling. Below I provide more detail about the data collection methods used in the research project.

3.2.3 Observations

Through involvement in a service learning organisation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in Durban, I was introduced to the school (my research site) in 2004. While engaging in collaborative projects with learners from the school, I had made informal observations of interactions among groups of boys in the schools and communities around Durban before undertaking this research project. Permission was requested and received from the principal of this particular school. Although I did not participate in the day-to-day activities at the school, my presence was known to various school entities and to the immediate township community as well. Cohen et al. (2000) speak of the continuum of observations within research. He also argues, “All research is some form of participant observation since we cannot study the world without being part of it” (p. 205).

Overall, I had the opportunity of informally observing boys’ interactions at the research site over a three-year period (2004-2006). For the purpose of the study, I scheduled 10, half day sessions (two school weeks) to observe male learners at the school. Initially I had planned to observe the boys inside their classrooms as well as outside in the playgrounds. After the initial classroom observation, I decided the time could be better spent observing the students outside the classroom where my presence was less intrusive and allowed students to act their natural selves.

I had opportunities to observe male learners in other environments where my presence was less interruptive (e.g., playground, taxi rank, residential area close to school, and school parking area). From these observations, I wanted to explore the ways in which boys interacted with each other, with girls, and with adults (both educators and community members). I wanted to know their behaviours amongst and between these differing interactions. Further, I wanted to identify potential informants for this research project

based on behaviours or patterns I witnessed. (A sample observation schedule is included as Appendix A.) From these observations and using convenience sampling I asked 20 male learners to participate in the focus group discussions. From these, 15 agreed and turned in the required parental permission/consent forms. (See Appendix B for a sample parent letter and consent form.)

3.2.4 Focus group discussions

This study was informed by the notion that masculinities are not constructed and performed individually but are negotiated, practiced, and contested in peer group formations (Connell, 1987; Mac an Ghail, 1994). During the observation period, 15 male learners (grades 9-11) were identified to participate in focus group discussions. (See Appendix C for Focus Group Protocol.) I had one large focus group—15 participants met with me for two hours a day on five separate occasions. In hindsight, I should have split the group into three focus groups of equal numbers to manage the discussions better.

To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the learners, the computer lab at the school was reserved for me to conduct the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions began after the school day to ensure the students anonymity and confidentiality and to ensure that the school timetable was not disrupted.

To provide a context in which the male learners could articulate their understandings of masculinities, three vignettes⁷ were designed and read to and with them. Open ended questions were asked at the end of the readings. (See Appendix D vignettes and questions.) The multifarious usage of terms, conditions, and understandings of masculinities supported the use of vignettes as a starting point to elicit dialogue. The use of vignettes was helpful, but participants had to shift from reference to third parties to be

⁷ Short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond” (Finch, 1987, p. 105)

able to personalise experiences and understandings of masculinities. The learners were asked to respond to three questions after the reading of each vignette. The questions were designed to elicit meaning-making of the learners' self-identified experiences of masculinities in a non-judgemental and non-accusatory approach.

Finally, I also drafted questions to further answer the research questions. The 10 semi-structured questions were asked of the learners in both the focus group discussion and individual interviews (see Appendix E). The rationale for asking identical questions in public and private is to determine if there are differences in the learners' language and attitudes about their own sense of masculinity as well as language and attitude towards subordinated masculinities. In other words, I wanted to examine whether there were differences between responses to the learners' public and private understandings of masculinities. The focus group discussions were taped and transcribed for an accurate recording of the participants' responses to questions.

3.2.5 Individual semi-structured interviews

Following a similar format to the focus group discussions, individual interviews were conducted as the next step in the research process. The research proposal and ethical clearance form stated five to eight high school males would participate in the individual interview. However, 13 of the 15 respondents from the focus group wanted to continue with the research process, thus making the selection difficult. In the end, 8 of the 15 focus group members were asked to participate in an individual interview. (For frame of reference, the selection process is described in section 3.2.) Originally obtained parental and informed consent forms remained valid throughout the application of this research project.

One concern that arose while conducting the individual interviews was the issue of power. Each of the participants was asked where he would feel most comfortable being interviewed. I sought to have respondents answer without fear of reprisals from me, the teachers, or other school administrators. After agreeing to participate, all participants selected the location of their interview. Without input from me, the respondents chose their homes, the school, the mall, or church to have their interviews.

Interviews were set up over a three-week period. The initial interviews were scheduled for one-hour time frames. During the scheduled one-hour interview socio-demographic data were collected from the respondents, followed by the 10 interview questions I had drafted (see Appendix E). The same questions used for the focus group discussions were used in the interviews. The relevance of the using the same questions was to provide a level of ease as the students were already aware of the question, to be able to interpret private/public understandings of masculinity constructions—especially relative to subordinate masculinities. The individual interviews were audio-tape recorded to ensure accuracy of the interview.

3.2.6 Journaling

The final instrument used to collect data from the research participants involved the use of journals. Each student involved in the entire research project was given a journal. Participants involved in the focus group discussions, but not in the complete project were informed early in the study to write down and submit anonymously, questions, thoughts, comments, and concerns not addressed or that they did not want addressed publicly in the focus group discussions. The same instructions were reiterated to the research participants who participated in the individual interviews. Beyond the above instructions the interviewees were instructed to note aspects of masculinities they observed, on a daily basis, at home, school, church, and in the community over a two-

week period. The journals submitted were haphazardly kept at best; however, as the information is the participants' original thoughts, they were still useful to the study.

3.3 Research Site

The research study focused on an exclusively Black African township⁸ high school in the greater Durban area. The co-educational school serves over 1,000 students from 8th-12th grade. There are approximately 44 staff members at the school, including the principal, deputy principal, educators, administrators, and other support staff. The school has an active school governing body and a learner (student) representative council. Students at the school come from a cross sectional representation of Black African communities. The school has a long history of academic excellence and success. Although all of the students are isiZulu speaking, not all of the students are ethnically Zulu.

The school is located in a residential area in the township. A number of family homes border the school; along with these are several businesses in close proximity to the facility including: two spaza shops,⁹ roasted meat vendor, fruit and vegetable stands, and a car repair shop. There is a mini bus taxi¹⁰ rank approximately 100 meters from the school entrance.

The school borders two road arteries, one that leads in and out of the township and the other that connects several sections of the township. Not all of the students attending the school live in the immediate area or in the township. The school is a high profile school, attracting students from various parts of South Africa. Many of the students who

⁸ In South Africa, the term township usually refers to the (often underdeveloped) urban residential areas that, under Apartheid, were reserved for non-whites (principally Black Africans and Coloureds, but also working class Indians). Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities.

⁹ an informal business usually run from home. They serve as convenience shops and sell everyday small household items. These shops grew as a result of sprawling townships that made travel to formal shopping places more difficult or expensive. They have also served the purpose of supplementing household incomes of the owners.

¹⁰ Over 60% of South Africa's commuters use shared minibus taxis (16 seater commuter buses)

attend the school live in the immediate school district and use various modes of public transportation to get to the school. Others come from different parts of KwaZulu-Natal and other provinces and live with relatives and family friends in the township or within public transportation distance to the school. The school is well resourced and has high academic standards—but costs significantly less than private schools¹¹—two reasons students from various parts of the country attend the school.

Four areas (spaces) of the school are important to discuss because of their significance during the research process. One of the first areas I used as an observation point for the project was the school entrance. From this vantage point I had many opportunities to witness students walking up from the taxi rank and could see students in the front yard as well. The school is surrounded by a wrought iron fence with a rail gated entrance. Security guards who sit in a guard shack inside the school grounds control entry to the school. All of the guards are Black African males and strictly patrol the school grounds. During visits to other schools in the township, I noticed male students smoking, fighting, harassing girls or just hanging out just outside the school grounds. While I did not notice any of these behaviours at the research site, I was informed during the focus group discussions that these things did happen at the research site as well. Just beyond the guard shack is the school administration building.

Immediately behind the administrative building is a spacious playground with a basketball court as a prominent feature. The playground was the second area I used as an observation point because male students dominated this area. During breaks between classes, several male students would proceed to the basketball court to play a quick game

¹¹Private schools in South Africa have various price ranges. I do not have the actual figures for the research site but was informed from members of the school that the monthly cost is approx. R750 per month. Two close family friends whose children all attend private schools in KZN pay approx. R1800.00 and R1950.00 per child per month, respectively. The two most expensive private schools in South Africa are in KZN province, St. Johns and Michael House cost approx. R114, 000.00 and R117, 000.00 per annum, respectively.

or just shoot the ball. Immediately after school these games would intensify and several boys would play 3- man-on-3-man half court or 5-man-on-5-man full court games. These games were always all male, and the spectators were also primarily male with a few females in the audience.

Behind the basketball court is another building that houses the computer lab. Students have access to the computer lab only if they are in the computer technology class. However, during the course of the study, there was a proposal in place for students and community members to access the computer lab after hours. The focus group discussions were held in the computer lab because of its limited access and general out of bounds area for students. The participants seemingly enjoyed the exclusivity as well as the privilege of using the computer lab for the project.

Across from the computer lab is another building that serves as a library. A path between the computer lab and library leads to the school's auditorium. The school auditorium is a large imposing building that can accommodate all students, faculty, and staff. Across from the auditorium and up a short incline are the classrooms. There are 24 classrooms in four school blocks (that is, buildings). All classrooms are on the ground level. Three of the classroom buildings form a U-shape with a garden court in the centre. The fourth block, a new addition to the original site, parallels one of the classroom blocks. I initially intended to sit in the classrooms as an observer but had to abandon this after the first class where I was a curious spectacle more than a non-participant observer. The students soon learnt that I was an American student and at several points in the class would indirectly ask me questions about U.S. culture. The students seemed to be more on guard with me in the classroom and I felt my presence was disruptive to the lesson and to this study. As such I felt it best to give up the classroom observation and opted to focus attention of the study towards outside observations.

3.4 Data analysis

One of the main reasons to analyze data is to note patterns in individual data sources as well as to make connections across several data sources (Cohen, et al, 2000). To ensure I was fully able to capture the experiences discussed by the participants, each focus group and individual interview session was recorded. After each session I made a point to replay the discussion, as soon as feasible, to make notes so that I could also place other variables (tone of voice, non-verbal cues) in proper context. When the focus group and individual interviews were typed, I did comparative analysis to find major themes within and across the participants. These themes were then incorporated within the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review and written in corresponding sections in chapter four.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two key components in qualitative research. Both are quality control mechanisms used in research, particularly quantitative, to place an evaluative critique on the trustworthiness of a study. In the case of qualitative studies reliability and validity rely on triangulation of instruments for these measurements.

Triangulation is an approach incorporating multiple data sources; multiple informants and multiple methods to confirm or validate research findings (Cohen et al., 2000). A primary goal of triangulation is to gather multiple perspectives to gain a complete understanding of phenomena. As such I incorporated several instruments in the study (e.g., observations, focus group, individual interviews, and reflective journaling) to obtain varying points of view from the participants.

3.6 Limitations

This research project asserts the voices of 15 young, Black African, high school males' understandings of masculine identities, constructions, and performances. The findings therefore, cannot be generalised outside of the variables of the research site, the investigator and the research participants. It would take massive resources and time to be able to coordinate the vast demographics included in the canon of masculinities.

The language barrier was also a challenge I experienced both in the development of the study as well as conducting the research. Terminology used to discuss masculinities and the absence of an interpreter to relay and translate information from researcher to participants and vice versa posed these challenges. This fact became quite apparent during the observation schedule. On several occasions I observed presumably negative interactions with students but because of my lack of understanding of the student's mother tongue, the full context of the situations was never understood fully. Nevertheless, I made notes of what was happening and asked follow-up questions to the actors when feasible; otherwise, I asked questions of educators at the school to give me a more detailed understanding of these observations.

3.7 Conclusion

The data were limited to responses to the questions asked in the focus group and individual interviews. This means that the credibility of the findings of this study was dependent on the validity of the questions posed as well as the feeling and attitudes of the respondents.

The fluidity of masculinities and the heavy volume of research about the subject in the recent past have provided significant insight for people, organisations, communities,

and institutions working with males across a plethora of demographics. This chapter outlines the processes I used to gather information and write a research report using qualitative methods.

The next chapter analyses the data collected in this research project.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study examined the ways in which a group of boys in a township high school in Durban, South Africa understand, construct, and perform their masculine identities. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do boys in one township school understand, define, and perform their masculinity?
 - What are the dominant and or hegemonic forms of masculinities in the school?
 - Which boys are excluded and why? And what impacts does this exclusion have on them and their learning in the school?
2. What and who informs these understandings of masculinity?

Based on data gleaned from participants' responses to these question, the study concludes with implications for what can be done in the education system and the school to address the plight of boys and girls negatively affected by dominant masculinities in their contexts.

The study was informed by such theories and concepts as masculinities, sex role, and Black masculinities. Informed by these frameworks, the last chapter presented the research design and methodology (qualitative case study) used to address these research questions. This involved the use of observations, focus group discussion, individual interviews, and self-reflective journaling from informants who participated in this research

project as data collection methods. This research is predicated on data obtained primarily from Black African, male, high school learners.

In this chapter, I present findings from the study. The chapter is divided into three sections, according to the research questions: First, findings on how the participants define their own sense of masculine identities are presented; second, the participants' reports of how and where they learnt their early masculinities, including gender roles and divisions are presented. The last section considers the core of this study: the ways in which the participants understand, construct and perform their masculine identities in the school setting are presented.

4.2 Locating the Self

This section considers an important aspect of this research project: how the participants in the study define their own sense of masculine identities. Data collected during the research process provided an array of themes the participants considered characteristic of masculinities and the ways they understood their own masculinities. For example, when asked: What are some of the descriptors have we learnt about being men, the following emerged: "patient," "expensive," "status," "possessions," "sacrifice," "sexually active," and "married" were characteristics respondents stated as ideal qualities of being a man. These descriptors were not necessarily the participants' view of their own sense of masculinity but ideals and qualities they felt a man should embody. Chronological age, being married, and being sexually active were strong identifying characters of masculinity for all of the participants.

When specifically asked: What does it mean to be a man, the participants offered gendered, sexual, chronological, race, and cultural practices and essentialist

understandings of masculine identities. For example, one participant answered that “being a male is when you are like having a penis and all that stuff” (Maklash, focus group, 2007). Another participant believed that being a man is having a heterosexual normative nuclear family, stating, “I think if you are a man firstly you must have a wife and children” (King, focus group, 2007). Still another participant viewed becoming a man as a chronological inevitability, stating, “A man is a man when they reach a stage of 21 up to 20 something and that now is a man; and leaving the teenage hood behind and that’s when a man would be called a man” (Small, focus group 2007).

Race, ethnicity, and cultural practices were interjected into the discussion whereby respondents discussed Zulu and Xhosa practices of becoming men. To illustrate, a participant declared:

When I thought of being a man, Xhosa culture bumped into my head, and the Xhosas they believe that you become a man when you go to the mountains (initiation school) and being circumcised. When you come back, if you come back, if you survived, you come back as a man. (Oskido, focus group, 2007)

Some participants felt that there was an erosion of traditional Black masculine practices and a move towards Western or white hegemonic understandings of masculinity. For example, Dark Messiah provides a historical content on how men formerly received that designation and presently incorporate “white” practices:

I’m in Africa or may I say South Africa. There are many cultures, but I’m gonna focus on the Blacks and Whites. Blacks...what we [inaudible] them, the olden amaZulu at the time of uShaka and stuff, they felt that manhood is presented to by elders, the ancestors, you see for only your actions...The Whites tend to see manhood as of responsibility. When you take care of your family you know, you provide, breadwinner. Nowadays Black people tend to adapt to the functions of the white men of...adapt to the whole criteria of manhood, they see eye to eye with the white. (Dark Messiah, focus group, 2007)

Some of the learners equated masculinity with sexuality including proving one's manhood by being sexually active. One participant in particular gave a telling understanding of masculinity:

You know when you are a man you must be sexually active because let's say like if you have your wife or girlfriend. In your house you come to your home, you are not sexually active, and she's still interested in having sex maybe, and so now she's says, "Okay, I must go find, they call it *makhwapheni* (name given to someone you having an affair with) – I must go find 'umakhwapheni." Okay, the wife say, "I must go and find a boyfriend the one who'll satisfy me sexually because no you no long doing your job," and maybe she will end up with that boyfriend and you will be left alone because you no longer performing. (Common, focus group, 2007)

In this regard, Common believes that men prove their masculinity by engaging in sexual activity with a female partner. The absence of being sexually active with a female partner provides her license to go and find a "real man" a fate detrimental to masculinity.

Intersecting age and sexuality, one participant discussed what it is to be a man, stating, "It depends on how old you are. If you are 25 or 28, and you are not sexually active, man, there's something wrong with you!"

Throughout this process, none of the participants gave an individualistic description of their own masculine identity but rather talked about an ideal or a future "ideal man." Mostly, they related manhood (thus masculinity) to age, cultural practices, sexuality, and rites of passage.

For more analysis of the participants' masculine identities, we began to explore their early teachings of masculinities.

4.3 Development of Early Masculine Identities

It was imperative in this research project to understand where and how participants learnt early masculine identities. Many of the participants reported that their early messages about masculinity constructions and performances were derived from the family, community, church, school, media, and peers. These early codifiers tended to inform and police young boys' constructions and performances of masculinities.

In the following sub-section I present the participants' responses regarding how and where they derived their early learnings vis-à-vis masculinities.

4.3.1 Family

Parents, older siblings, and other relatives play significant roles in shaping the masculine constructions among the participants. The participants received a continuum of cues—observing behaviours of others to chastisement—in learning about their own masculine identities. To illustrate, one participant reported:

I've distinguished how my older brother acts and how my older sister acts. He always told me that I mustn't act like her because when you grow up, you'll act like a girl. You'll always cry. I usually cried, and he said you mustn't cry because when you grow, boys will hit you, and you'll cry. (Makaveli, focus group, 2007)

Another added:

Yah, yah, yah and you see like at home there's an alarm, and if the alarm goes off I'm the first one to run and go hide, and then my mothers says, what type of a man am I? (Sbenghani, focus group, 2007)

For these two participants and others in the study, family played a significant role in informing them what non-masculine behaviour is. All of the boys expressed having respect for the elders in their families and this plays into how they learn to be men by

having their non-masculine behaviours chastised—such that when an older sibling or parent told them a particular action is not becoming of being a man, they picked up that cue and did the alternative. Consequently, they learnt that men should not run away from a threat or that men should not cry.

4.3.2 Media

Several respondents reported watching television as a favourite pastime. In the following excerpt a participant provides a lengthy speech about the role of the media in shaping good men:

In nowadays there are TVs. Say you are sitting and watching TV, and you see there's a man in a movie who has a family, and you see how the man must act. Like how the wife treats his man and how the man treats his wife. You try to imagine your family because the other is wrong. The man laughs or he doesn't laugh. So if you see that you think I mustn't do like that and if the mother says, "Your father is not a good man he once was," then you see from a movie that my father is not a good man when he does this because even in movies there are good men and bad men. You can see that this person is not a good man, but this one is a good man. I [must] try in my life and do things like this in order to be identified as a good man. (Tatazela, focus group, 2007)

In this instance Tatazela takes his cue of how to treat his family based on how actors on TV treat their families. His ideal masculinity is derived from what his character does or does not do in relation to the family. Moreover, he takes what he learns from the media and applies it to his home situation. This knowledge learned from the media serves to reinforce information about masculinity performance in the home.

4.3.3 Church

The majority of the focus group participants reported that they attend organised religious (mostly church) services on a weekly basis. Several respondents reported receiving messages about how a man is supposed to act from attending church.

Being a man I can say I learnt from church because if you can recall from my definition I said it's a person who stands for the truth, who does good things, who's not afraid to... to... to speak what he thinks. So I learnt that from church. Do good things from people and stand for the truth. So I learnt from church. (King, focus group, 2007)

However, one of the participants was not sure about the messages he learnt from church. The one thing he mentioned that stood out the most from what he did learn about being a man from church was:

I think it's Deuteronomy 18 verse 13...a guy who wear girlish clothes and who acts girlish is not a man ,and a female who act manly and wears like pants, is not my children. (Dark Messiah, focus group, 2007)

Organised religion set and established a rigid code informing boys (and girls) how to act. When asked to clarify what it means to act girlish or manly, participants demonstrated using hand gestures—such as holding a limp wrist to describe a man acting girlish—and a hearty laugh—signifying how a man laughs as opposed to a high pitched girl laugh.

4.3.4 School

In schools, the main focus of this research project, participants addressed both negative and positive views of teachers and other learners influence on masculinities constructions and performances. To illustrate, the following discussion took place in the context of a focus group discussion with selected participants:

Tatazela: We have men which are humble. We have men who like sports. We have men who love school. We have men who respect others...When there's a teacher in the class, they listen. By loving school I mean they concentrate in class.

King-Kong: Here at Mandini I have noticed negative things, positive things, I don't know if it has decreased. Positive things are happening here at Mandini.

Dark Messiah: We have programmes like many people are in poetry, in sports, in...in so many positive things. What we are doing here is one of them. Hip Hop.

Moses: There are many people who care for other when they are in a problem they are able to help those people. Even if you don't have enough money, there are people who can provide for you.

CJ: I think here at Mandini we have many different kinds of men. We have men who are good and men who can turn the good men to do bad things. For instance, in class if there's a teacher and they find that teacher boring, and they tell this other man that no this teacher boring lets bunk class.

Mashaya: Ok. We've spoken about men in the school, but no one has spoken about teachers because there are some teachers, which cannot handle men. You find that there's no more corporal punishment, you find them pushing, they kick, they smack, they curse students.

Formally or informally schools are sites of production and reproduction of masculinities (Mac an Ghail, 1994). Depending on the context students engage in behaviours they feel defines their masculine identities or their understanding of being a man. Through the varying discussions, all except one participant stated they learnt about being a man outside of themselves. The one respondent notes, "nobody taught me how a man must act. I just figured it out on my own." This remark is indicative of challenges faced in understanding constructions and performances of masculinities. It can be inferred from the data that there is a process wherein which they actively learn how to be "real men." The multiple variables of the early teachings collectively play a role in shaping how the respondents learned what men do as a way of understanding their own masculine identities.

In the next sub-section, I present the participants' understandings of gender roles as signifiers of masculine identities.

4.3.5 Gender roles

The participants placed heavy emphasis on gender roles in understanding their sense of masculine identities. Responses to questions on gender roles and division of labour correspond with early learning processes, including from where and who passed messages to participants. The intersection of gender and sex role was dominant throughout the discussion. The participants' understandings of masculinities and femininities centred on physical labour and who is relegated to do what task. For example, CJ believes, "Men must be able to cut down trees, women don't do that." Common thinks there is division of labour "because you cannot ask the women to dig a grave for someone who's... Never ask women to dig a six feet hole for someone. So there is a division of labour." In this sense the participant is rationalising that even in death there is a clear distinction of roles between men and women. Further, Makaveli proclaims:

Men must be able to do all the hard chores, women the easy ones... Well, as I said men should do the hard chores, for instance, you mustn't see your wife under the car fixing it. The man must do that. All the wife must do is serve them food and say, "Here eat. You've been working all day." Not under the car with her legs out. No. No.

The participants base their responses to gender-specific roles on things that they observe in their immediate communities. Also their responses are based on stereotypical notions of men being physically stronger, thereby being able to do more strenuous work than women.

Participants used biblical references to validate their positions on gender roles. They used loose (and sometimes misunderstood) bible quotations to defend their current masculinity constructions as well as r future performance of gendered masculinities. To illustrate, King offers:

Ahh...even in the Bible men have to work hard. Men have to go hunt for food and have to bring it inside the house, and the ladies have to make us the food because

we brought the food. We are the breadwinners at the house. We can't bring food and have to make it.

Again the church plays a significant role for the participant, and although he cannot give a specific reference, King's belief is solidified because according to him, it says so somewhere in the bible.

During a focus group discussion on the discursive practices of gendered roles, respondents used modernity and culture to defend their positions:

Sbhengani: We should go 50-50 because you find women driving buses and doing men's jobs.

Maklash: But at the previous years we used to get only the men driving buses. But now we even get the women driving buses. So that is 50-50.

King: I hear you saying that we have 50-50, but you know that we have many things as you have said like there are...like there are...like I've never seen a woman slaughtering a cow. I went into many rituals, and I've never seen a woman carrying a...what do you call these things...a spear to like kill the cow.

Small: I think there are decisions that must be taken by mens. Some things at home wants mens not women. Women must be treated...like maybe they must be given 30, mens get 70 because mens are the one who make the child in this world and women are the ones who deliver the child I this world.

There seemed to be a slight shift in this group of respondents from cultural understandings of masculinities where men only do designated tasks (e.g., slaughtering, digging graves) to understandings that acknowledge that women can now do some jobs that were traditionally designated only for men (e.g., driving a bus).

Although the participants had very specific understandings of the roles women and men hold in society, there were other respondents who provided a continuum of gender perspectives. The respondents' language by and large focused on division of labour between masculinities and femininities.

Furthermore, the discussion that follows highlights the participants differing views on the intersections of history, sexuality, gender roles and masculinities:

Maklash: It's 50-50, could be cool because nowadays women do same jobs as men. For instance, nowadays you get a man who is a nurse. Right! In the olden days there were only the nurses were only women. Now you get a man being a nurse to deliver a child.

Common: — Mina [me], I think 50-50 is wrong because if we had 50-50, that means there would be more gays because like if you give...you make a man a nurse you are telling a man to be soft, to be gentle and those aren't the qualities of a man. If make a woman a cop – like a cop is supposed to be protective, a cop is supposed to be brave – you are turning a woman into a man.

Maklash: *Yima ke. Indoda ibawunesi, uwena yini omdesaidelayo abeyisitabane?* (Wait! If a man becomes a nurse, do you now decide for him that he's gay?)

Maklash and Common's responses to the division of labour between the sexes describe differing points of view on roles ascribed to people based on gender. King's voice speaks of an emerging gender performance that provides equal access to everyone. Common, however, is steadfast in his belief that allowing equality in gender roles will be a direct threat to dominant masculinities.

The focus of this study was on boys' understandings of masculinities in a township high school in the greater Durban region. Thus the following section turns specifically to this question.

4.4 Masculinities Go to School

The participants in the study did not readily understand the term masculinity as it is used in the academy, so language that could be used to get them to think about masculinity was used. When initially discussing the topic with them, I used the question: What does it mean to be a man and/or boy? The participants extended this understanding to include language that described being a "real man" and not being a "real man."

Based on my interviews (both individual and focus group discussions) as well as my observations at the research site, informed by Connell's (1995) typology of

masculinities, three masculinities constructs can be identified. These are discussed in the next section.

4.4.1 Dominant masculinities

According to Connell (1995), dominant masculinities refer to the configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees or is taken to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women and other men. Also, dominant forms of masculinity include the following: compulsory heterosexuality, power, authority, aggression, and intellect. To illustrate, in this study, this sense of dominance could also be observed in the research participants when they discovered they would be using the computer lab for our focus group discussions. They were high-fiving (celebratory clasp of hands) each other, and there was an air of dominance as they made their way to the computer lab amongst their fellow learners. In their discussion with each other, they marked themselves as one of an elite group of learners having access to coveted space at school that is only accessible to few.

In the school environment, several characteristics can be identified as hegemonic masculinities. To illustrate, respondents in the study were asked to identify dominant masculine performances of male learners.

Oskido: They earn high marks; they participate in political; participate in programs like this one; they are into sports, debates, and other programs that are positive.

Maklash: Here it goes like we have many men serious about their academic results. So like being...they are involved in sports, and they are good in class. So when it comes to their school, they are excellent. When it comes to academics, they are excellent.

Based on Connell's dominant typology coupled with Mac an Ghail's (1994) and Lesko's (2000) research on masculinities and schools, this grouping of male learners are considered to be privileged above their peers and performing dominant masculinities.

4.4.2 Complicit masculinities

According to Connell (1995), complicit masculinities refer to male behavioural patterns that are constructed along a continuum of masculinities. In any given group only a select number of members of the group fall into the category of dominant or hegemonic masculinity. The majority in the group not belonging to dominant or subordinate positions of masculinities are said to be performing complicit masculinities. To illustrate, in this study, I observed a group of male learners engaging in lively conversation that included such topics as school, religion, girls, politics, teachers, sports, music, movies, etcetera. There is an ebb and flow of discussion sometimes sedate, at times heated. Based on their conversations, particularly about girls, all members of this group are expected to be heterosexual based on the information being shared. The conversations were primarily in Zulu providing me with limited first hand knowledge; however, when asked about their conversation from a respondent the following information was gained:

You'll find about 10 boys standing in front of me, and I'm telling them stories that I'm creating or some have happened, but I'm adding up like "spice." Maybe I was going to the shop, and I saw a beautiful girl, but I didn't touch her. I didn't greet her, do anything. But then I come here and say I greeted her, and she asked my name, and I told her. She said she wants my number and all that. And they will go like, "Wow, this is a guy." (Makaveli, focus group, 2007)

Complicit masculinities do not stand alone, but are constructed in peer group environments. Makaveli establishes a useful understanding of its formation with his above description of a gathering of male learners. The group is not the dominant group nor is it

marginalised or subordinate. Another respondent sums up this masculinity construct stating, “Not many people can be good in class, be good at sports, and be good at changing. At the end of the day, he does not lose himself.” (Oskido, focus group, 2007).

To illustrate further, the contextualised complexity of complicit masculinities, early in the research process I observed a group of boys engaged in a game of basketball. The sheer physical aspect of the game coupled with verbal taunts of opponents and calling of plays to other team members provide interesting entertainment to the informal gathering of students, primarily male with a few female students watching the game. However, the boys’ dominance on the court does not carry an automatic dominant masculinity performance at this research site; although in other locations, this group of boys may very well be considered the dominant masculinity.

While these learners perform multiple masculinities, depending on context, in the situations described and in the context of the school, they can be considered as performing complicit masculinities. Contextually, each group receives the benefits and rewards of hegemonic masculinity without being the dominant masculinity at the research site.

4.4.3 Subordinate masculinities

Lastly, according to Connell (1995), subordinate masculinities refer to gender interactions specifically related to dominance and subordination between groups of men and between men and women. Within hierarchal masculinities constructions, specific to gender relations, a system of dominance and subordination between groups of men exists. Further, subordinated masculinities are not only established relationally to dominant masculinities but are also discussed as opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality as well as being symbolically assimilated to femininity (Connell, 2000)

To illustrate the range and reasons for subordinate masculinities among the participants in the study, the following sub-sections explore examples from the data. Not all subordinate masculinities were constructed and/or performed the same and did not hold the same weight among the participants in the study. Masculinities constructions, in this typology, were addressed differently by the respondents. Peer pressure was an influencing agent in policing male learners to perform acceptable, albeit subordinate masculinities (non-conformist) while others were loathed (stylish and studious) and still others hated (effeminate/gay). Using the language “not men” and “not real men” was the preferred terminology of the participants to discuss male learners they considered not to be performing acceptable masculinities and also contributed to their understanding of subordinate masculinities. The range of subordinate masculinities, as described by the participants, included three categories: non-conformist, stylish and studious, and effeminate and gay. There are distinctions between all three categories, and in some places there are overlaps.

4.4.4 Non-conformists

During observations of males learners at the research site, I witnessed a group of boys smoking tobacco, drinking a brownish colour liquid—passing the cup to each other—and playing cards in an isolated location just outside of the main gate of the research site. During a focus group discussion, I asked about this behaviour to which participants responded:

Small: I think most of the men influence each other to do bad deeds, and they end up doing these deeds because of peer pressure. So that’s why we’re having more gangsters in our school and smokers. Yes.

Daddy Bhaka: Some people act weird at school. They smoke. They are gangsters. They are bullies. Come to his house, he’s like maybe...I don’t know...some “Jesus.” [not acting out or causing trouble] sitting by the couch,

waiting for mum to tell him what to do, but at school they are behaving negatively.

Further, CJ writes in his journal:

- I saw men smoking at school;
- I saw a man selling cigarettes at school
- I saw men not wearing school uniform because they say they can wear whatever they want

He then asks the following question: “Why do we characterise being a man by doing wrong?” This is then followed by:

Today I was told by my friends that I’m not a man after I had told them I don’t drink or smoke. They use words like *awusiye umfana*, meaning you are not a boy/man. They said you need to show that you are a “man” by drinking or smoking.

CJ’s use of documentation and questioning masculinities provides insight into his grappling with and trying to decipher his own understanding of this particular masculinity construction and performance. Although boys who drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, put down others, bully other students, and disrespect teachers were said to be “not men,” there was a distinction in the meaning that did not resonate the same as when the respondents discussed male learners they considered gay or effeminate. For example:

G: What is the different between talking to a person one to one as opposed to talking in a group?

King-Kong: In a one on one conversation, it’s more like me and him talking about, it’s the way we are, we have something in common so we talk about stuff that will build us. But as a group there are some of those rotten potatoes you see I’m calling us like we are potatoes. Yes, we talk about the negative stuff then we end up like being influenced, and we like go with them and do stuff, and it usually happens and it just happened yesterday, yeah so it always happens

G: So tell me more. Yesterday was an example. Tell me more about what happened yesterday.

King Kong: We were like sitting together and anytime someone passes us, they say that we are gay that we are in love an all that.

G: The group or your one friend?

King-Kong: When I'm sitting with my one friend who was here before me they say we are gay and in love and all that.

King-Kong was initially forthcoming with that information but did not dwell on his peers questioning his sexuality for long. He quickly proceeded to discuss a challenge he and other school learners (male and female) were having with alcohol abuse. His shift from talking about being called gay to drinking suggests that drinking alcohol is more acceptable than being identified as gay in the range of subordinate masculinities in the school environment.

4.4.4.1 Stylish and studious

This particular group of boys are considered sharp, stylish dressers, studious, respectful of teachers, gentle mannerisms, and possibly effeminate but not necessarily gay or homosexual. For example, one participant states that male learners who fall into this group are called, "Cheese boys, *upusu* (like it's the same as cheese boys). There are others who call them *obarts*, *amatatatsi* and all that. All of the boys who act like that will be called these names like that here at school." (Common, focus group, 2007)

The use of this terminology was a way that males practicing dominant township masculinities differentiated themselves from males who did not live in the township and especially used towards those males who live in the suburbs. At school, the language was used to police boys who were not performing acceptable masculinities. To further illustrate, during one of the individual interviews, one respondent clarified the subtle difference in the use of language employed to identify negative and positive aspects of male learners who were considered "not men" or "not real men."

G: And what about the positive ones?

CJ: Yeah they do, the positive ones a little, they're not looked at as being men as opposed to those who are doing negative stuff. So, if you respect the teacher then they call her like your mother. So for me I respect my physics teacher, so they call her my mother because I'm respectful to her and to all the teachers so I am like, they call me like danon.

G: denon? Spell it.

CJ: Danon, like the yogurt [*laughs*].

G: Oh! Danon. Oh ok, they say you're like yogurt. So, what exactly does it mean to be called Danon?

CJ: Like maybe like I'm always wearing full school uniform if you are like always clean, neat and respectful of teachers they call you Danon. You don't tease ladies or others. You don't do stuff. I don't drink, I don't smoke so they like call me danon. You are not a man.

CJ highlights a discrepancy in subordinate masculine identification in which male learners who perform negative behaviours (e.g., disrespecting teachers, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes) are considered to be performing one type of subordinate (non-conformists) masculinities and are singled out differently, as opposed to male learners who are targeted, policed, and/or punished for performing other subordinate (stylish and studious) masculinities.

4.4.4.2 Effeminate and gay

Male learners who received the harshest admonishments in relation to subordinate and all other masculinities from their peers are boys who were identified as gay or effeminate. The respondents had strong feelings about boys who were effeminate or homosexual, some of which bordered on outright hatred. All of the respondents stated that effeminate and gay learners are always targeted and received some sort of rebuke or exclusion because of their mannerisms or sexuality. When asked who is not considered a "real man" at school, one respondent states the following about boys who are excluded:

Girlish, can't stand up for yourself. People push you around yeah there are other people who get pushed around but they push you around all the time. Like every

time when they see you they think, “This is something you can play with push him around make jokes of him.” Yeah, these are people, people, yeah, these people who are like gay, I’m sorry, but I have a problem with gays, I really hate gays. People who are gay are like, a person is like hugging maybe it’s been a long time since he like seen you and he comes and hugs you and he screams, and you’re like, “*Hawu!* What’s up with him? Is he like gay or something?” Like um like people who are gay. Gays! Gays! Gays! Gays! Gays! (King, individual interview, 2007)

King provided further information regarding the treatment of gays at school. When discussing homosexuality in English he was free to detail his strong dislike; but he was reluctant to inform me of language used in isiZulu at school in reference to gay learners. He asked permission before he would relay the following information to me. “Here at school they are like vulgar, I don’t know if it’s okay for me to tell you because they are like vulgar words like say um *isistabane esi yama a simba*,” which he loosely translated its meaning as “taking a shit and not wiping yourself clean, you are then the residue that is left behind like a dog.” King then goes on to discuss his belief that “straight” males will be molested by gays if they (straight guys) hang around them (gays). This seems to be the crux of the challenge, as put forward by the respondents, of why straight male learners are troubled by effeminate and homosexual learners. There seemed to be an intense fear that their hegemonic sense of masculinity will be challenged or derided by associating with or being identified as homosexuals.

The participants identified same-sex relationships along strict gender patterns, including the role each partner must take depending on who initiates the relationship. One respondent put forward, “If I went to him, I should be the one to protect him. If he’s the one who came to me, he should be the one to protect me. The one who’s able to protect the other is the one who is masculine. There has to be the one who’s girly and the one who’s masculine” (Mashaya).

Mashaya identifies gender role based on the initiator of the romantic liaison wherein one respondent is masculine (dominant) and the other is feminine (subordinate). In this context he and other male learners do not look at effeminate and homosexual males as having a masculine identity. As such, in the eyes of this and other learners at the school, gay equals girl. Therefore, it is important that programs that target dominant masculinities towards female-bodied students also include discussion on the full complement of gender and sexuality intersections.

4.4.5 Room for all

There was a lot of enthusiasm from the respondents both in the focus group and individual discussions about ensuring no learners were excluded because of performing differing masculinities. Sports programs were overwhelmingly identified as a way of bringing students together. School sports are very competitive as well as a way of mobilising the school population in showing school spirit. Seemingly, the respondents believed that through sports programs students would find a way to have a common ground in which everyone could find his place.

Sbenghani stated:

Yah. I think that the boys are common in like sports. Like sports brings people together. You see and that's a good thing because if you play sports you like get...you like learn how to play as a team, you like to be confident and all that stuff...and to share yah.

Sbenghani's belief about sports programs is common amongst the participants in the research study. Although, learners involved in sports was a rallying point for many of the respondents, literature on masculinities (Connell, 2000; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994) offers varying discourse on the implication of sports in masculinities. This includes

discussions on the very competitiveness of sports that can be an isolating factor for boys who are already on the margins. Male learners who are not able to or do not desire to engage in sporting activities risk being further marginalised for not being able to or wanting to participate with their peers.

Other thoughts on ensuring inclusivity of all learners were to establish dialogue programs, peer support programs, and other programs where students are given the opportunity to provide leadership.

I think as a group to change others, we have to like have a programme whereby we gonna call all the guys in the school, teach them how, what it means to be a man all that stuff and ask the ones who feel they are left out, “What do you like?” “What are your interest and all that?” Maybe the other ones will say, ‘I’m good in music’ you know, then we’ll try to organise that. If he says ‘I’m good in music’ then ok we make a plan, singing, start singing. (NK, focus group, 2007)

King-Kong made another suggestion:

By calling each other and gathering as a group try get some advising other boys or guys because we’re finding our way to manhood by sitting together and trying to brainstorm like...yah, that...because I think like serious advice from your peer it more touches you because you sometimes tend to think that where did this person get this because this is the real thing. I think we more understand each because we are not having that strange gap in ages and...yah, I think we more understanding each other (King-Kong, focus group, 2007)

Finally, one participant offered:

I think that we should let go of the pride because when it comes to pride some people just and to protect pride and by doing so fighting with each other. Like listening to the old sayling like the Zulu, *‘inkomo...inkun eyimbili ayihlalli esibyeni esisodwa’* (you cant keep two bulls in one kraal). That is bull! You can live civil...two men living civilised, both of them. (Mashaya, focus group, 2007)

All of the respondents spoke positively of having this experience and a desire to reach out to fellow male learners to deconstruct the many aspects of masculinities and come up with their own emergent masculinities constructions that will propel their school and themselves to new understandings of being men.

In summary, the participants in this study tended to define masculinities constructions and performances at school in terms of “real men” and “not real men.” The stated performances of these masculinities included dominant and complicit (identified as real men) and subordinate, which was further broken into three distinct categories: non-conformists, stylish and studious, and effeminate and gay—(identified as “not real men”). Generally, the boys themselves readily accepted and located themselves as dominant masculinities and tended to police and enforce boys who they considered performing subordinate masculinities.

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided findings and statements of results from key informants about constructions and performances of masculinities at the research site. These findings have provided insight into the respondents’ sense of masculine identity including variables that helped them to inform these identities. Further, the findings informed which boys are identified as performing subordinate masculinities and the challenges these learners face at the school as well as inclusion strategies discussed by the informants about. As such each research question was addressed in this chapter and an analysis was provided.

The above findings and statements were analysed using masculinities, gender role, and Black masculinities theoretical frameworks accordingly. The analysis of the research project offers empirical evidence that masculinities are fluid, based on contextual variables. The context in which the respondents and other male learners at the school find themselves on particular days and locations inform the masculine identities they perform or are assigned. Nothing within the schools authorised code of conduct precludes or

includes any of the above male students to fit into any one category. This suggests that male learners at the school tend to police and enforce strict gender codes, formally or informally, that other students adhere to or in the case of subordinate masculinities face ridicule and punishment and sometimes violence.

There are a range of masculinities constructed and performed at this research site. These include dominant (academic achievers), complicit (athletes, womanisers, heterosexuals) and subordinate (drinkers, smokers, gangster wanna-be's, cheese-boys and danons, and effeminate and gay). At any given location, within the research site, a variety of masculinities can be identified. Each situation is different depending on the individuals in each grouping and the context in which they perform the range of masculinities analysed above.

The respondents were initially challenged by the term masculinity; however, as they began to understand it as a social construction, they were forthcoming with ideas for emerging masculinities to challenge existing masculinities. Using a quote from Ghandi that he most likely heard repeated by Mr. Mandela, Maklash challenges his peers stating, "We must be the change we want to see here at Mandini" (focus group, 2007).

The next chapter focuses on discussions of major findings, implications for policy, curriculum content, and school and classroom practice, as well as for research on masculinities and sexuality education in schools.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study focused on a group of boys' understandings and performance of their masculine identities in a township high school in Durban, South Africa. The study was informed by the following research questions:

1. How do boys in one township school understand, define, and perform their masculinity?
 - What are the dominant and or hegemonic forms of masculinities in the school?
 - Which boys are excluded and why? And what impacts does this exclusion have on them and their learning in the school?
2. What and who informs these understandings of masculinity?

To address the research, an in-depth literature review chronicled current and historical texts that highlighted and addressed contemporary issues in masculinities. The study adopted a qualitative case study design to address the research questions. To this end, observations, focus group interviews, semi-structured individual interviews, and self-reflective journaling were instruments used to collect data. Data analysis was informed by three theoretical and conceptual frameworks (masculinities theory, sex role theory, and Black masculinity theory) to make sense of the data within the context of the respondents' narratives to address the above research questions.

While there are a significant number of studies that focus on masculinities, few seem to take into consideration how young men define their own sense of masculinity and how they identify and label other boys (their peers) who are seen as performing alternative masculinities.

The first research question asked: *How do boys in the research project understand, define and perform masculinities?* In response, the participants in this study tended to define their own masculinities in terms of an ideal masculinity predicated on being a “real man” or “not being a real man.” To that end the following emerged: patient, expensive, status, possessions, sacrifice, sexually active, and married as characteristics respondents stated as ideal qualities of being a man.

- One of two sub-questions asked in this research project: *What are the dominant and or hegemonic forms of masculinities in the school?* In response the participants identified high academic achievers as the dominant masculinity at the school.
- The second sub-question asked in the research project: *Which boys are excluded and why? And what impacts does this exclusion have on them and their learning in the school?* In response the learners identified male learners who perform subordinate masculinities as being excluded. There were three distinct characteristics in this typology that includes: non-conformists, stylish and studious, and effeminate and gay—(identified as “not real men”). Isolation, ridicule, object of bullies, and performing inauthentic or inappropriate behaviour are some of the problems faced by learners identified in this category.

The next research question asked: *What and who informs these understandings of masculinity?* In response male peer groups who were not considered to be performing subordinate masculinities were the primary instigators of policing and enforcing strict gender codes of masculinities performances.

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 4 and highlights their implications for policy, curriculum content, and practice, focusing on developing positive masculine identities and the performance thereof in schools.

5.2 Discussion

The participants in this study tended to define masculinities constructions and performances at school in terms of “real men” and “not real men.” These included: dominant and complicit (real men) masculinities and subordinate—non-conformists, stylish and studious, and effeminate and gay—(“not real men”) masculinities. Understanding masculine constructions and performances have been a worldwide effort by academics, healthcare professionals, business leaders, politicians, parents, and others to address a range of issues related to young boys to adult men. Academic achievements and problems at school have been highlighted in Mac an Ghail’s (1994) and Lesko’s (2000) seminal works on school and masculinities in which they place schools as sites of production and reproduction of masculinities. As such this research attempted to find out from the source of masculinities (high school male learners) how they understand the broad term masculinities in regards to themselves.

In accordance with Connell’s (1995) typology on masculinities, high academic achievers are considered the dominant form of masculinity at the school. Male students who fall in this category are highly favoured by school educators and administrators

comparative to other male learners who fall into other masculine constructions. Students identified in this construction also were active in extracurricular school programs (e.g., sports, debating team, etc.)

Although the participants named academic achievement as the dominant masculinity at the school, there were challenges, such that some of the learners identified in this category were also teased or called names by other male learners because of this distinction. Contrary to literature on dominant masculinities constructions (Connolly, 1995; Kimmel, 1987 and comparatively with Connell's (2000) discourse on multiple masculinities coexisting, as well as masculinities being constructed in contestation to femininity, it is possible for female learners to earn the distinction of high academic achiever, causing the disambiguation in the data findings for this research project.

Similar to literature on masculinities (Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994), the participants stated that effeminate and gay learners were overwhelmingly isolated from other male peer groups. Homophobia and heterosexism, like masculinities, are social constructions and in a patriarchal society, there is limited to no room for minority gender or sexuality performances.

Male peer groups often bond together and often exclude girls. At the research site many learners are taught, in the home, church, media, and community that male homosexuality is wrong and associated with femininity. They, in turn, exclude effeminate and gay learners similar to their exclusion of girls. This is not to say that the dominant and/or complicit groups always initiate the isolation. Boys who fall into the subordinate category sometimes remove themselves or simply do not disclose their sexuality for fear of reprisals and harassment from male learners and others.

Boys who misbehave and underperform are other groups who, arguably, sometimes get excluded from dominant male peer groups. However, with these two groups there are usually heavy-handed programs and attempts to provide them with resources. These two groups receive a lot of attention from the school system either through educators offering discipline or remedial interventions. The literature on masculinities does not discuss similar interventions for boys based only on their homosexuality.

Further, expanding the literature that places the focus of mistreatment of subordinate masculinities on negative dominant masculinities, this research suggests that a broad range of masculinities constructions, including subordinate, are implicated in policing and enforcing strict codes of masculine performance. Although the literature (Connell, 1987; Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Morrell, 2001) provides contextual knowledge on multiple masculinities taking place in any grouping of men, there is only an implied knowledge of their collusion in enforcing and reinforcing masculinity constructions and performances. The participants in this study provide contextual knowledge of this collusion, which adds another dimension to current masculinities constructions.

5.3 Implications

This study is limited to male participants at one secondary school in a Black South African township. The range of masculinities constructions and performances at the research site are most likely found in other secondary schools; however, the actualisation of these may vary significantly from the research site as well as include other forms. Further, female-bodied learners should be included in similar studies; the absence of

which does not present a full understanding of masculinities as constructed by the participants in this and other similar research.

Many, if not all, of the participants equated effeminate and gay male learners with female-bodied learners. Thus, gender-based initiatives in schools need to have a multi-prong approach that incorporates the full range of gender and sexuality; instead of focusing on primarily male/female binaries. The exhaustive amount of research on gender relations in the past 20 years has done much to delineate constructions and performances thereof; however, it is time to move beyond contemporary understandings and establish discourse that takes all genders and all sexualities into consideration inclusively.

5.3.1 Policy

A school-based policy on gender education was not identified although, sexuality education and life skills were indicated to be taught in grade 8 and 9. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has precipitated discourse that has also lead to the inclusion of life skills training in schools. Research (Lesko, 2000; Mac an Ghail, 1994) has shown that some educators are reluctant or unqualified to teach gender and sexuality curriculum. As such tertiary level training on gender dynamics in the classroom needs to be required for all new educators. Educators bear the brunt of classroom curriculum presentation and may need support and knowledge about including gender-based resources in both the formal and informal curriculum. This should also include in-service training to keep educators abreast of current trends that offer best practice implementation.

Further, the national education department needs to commission studies on gender and sexuality issues in the classrooms to expand the information obtained in this study. Appropriate age level content that incorporate the varying aspect of gender relations (e.g.,

race, culture, sexuality, history) should be developed in consultation and collaboration with experts across many disciplines. Also, a national hotline should be created so that students who are harassed, based on gender or sexuality inequalities, have a place to report and reconcile problems that arise both at school and at home.

5.3.2 Curriculum content

The national education department must begin to select and approve text that highlights and celebrates the accomplishments of many diverse peoples and cultures across gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity that should be the starting point for curriculum change. Life-skills programs should be administered ensuring age appropriate course content that focuses on the range of gender and sexuality subjectivities, including peer pressure, romantic relationships, career selection, hate crimes, social justice, responsible sexual choices, body image, proper sex-barrier use, cultural practice, race-relations, and capitalism. Schools should ensure that educators designated to lead this course work are well trained on the topic. In cases where educators are under or not qualified to teach subject matter, resources need to be administered to bring in qualified experts.

5.3.3 Practice

School educators, support staff, and administrators could also initiate and support learner peer groups where students having challenges in the school could turn to other students who have been given peer education training. There should also be an opportunity for follow-up discussions to assess the value of the interventions. Schools should be encouraged and provided with resources to bring in experts who could augment text that

excludes or reduces the significance of any person or group based on gender or sexuality disparities.

Further, school administrators should seek to establish safe places in the school where any student can go when they are experiences challenges based on gendered relationships. Another example would be to establish suggestion boxes throughout the school wherein learners are encouraged to ask questions, report violations, or make suggestion for change; this can be done either anonymously or outright. Peer leaders, after training, would be responsible for collecting the information from the boxes on a daily basis and making arrangements with the school administration to address issues raised by other learners. Lastly, the school governing body in coordination with educators, administrators, and learners can provide open forums where local community members can attend discussions on school initiatives of inclusion for all students.

5.4 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have explored masculine constructions and performances of male high school learners. The study took place at a secondary school in a Black South African township in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The participants in the study were given an opportunity to detail their own masculine identities, including where they learnt these from and to discuss male learners who they and others identified as performing subordinate masculinities. The participants in the study further identified interventions that they and the school body could implement to ensure that all learners had an opportunity to do the one fundamental thing learners should be doing at school—learn without the impact of dominant masculinities, heterosexism, and homophobia. To that end, further opportunities need to be created to build in systems where the process of this research project could be

continued. The participants were eager to request that the school administration provide space where they could continue to engage in conversations about masculinities. With the right support and encouragement it is this group and similar males who will provide the changes of current constructions and performances of masculinities that lead to greater emergent masculinities.

A lot more work needs to be done with learners, educators, administrators, family, and the wider community to address the challenges young people face at school. Age and cultural gaps remain factors in the continuation of negative dominant masculinities. The respondents in the study alluded to placing a significant amount of weight on familial social influence of constructions and performances of masculinities. As such including conversations with family members would have provided an opportunity for learners to open up with their families and discuss the challenges they face as young men navigating the milieu of masculinities.

The methods employed in this research project could have been better defined and utilised to guide the overall process of the project. For instance, three-quarters of the way into the research I discovered sex role strain as a theory that would have been better suited to discuss issues in the research related to gender role. The initial research proposal aimed to address and shed light on multiple issues of masculinities constructed and performed at high school with the expressed purpose of highlighting each role accordingly. As the project progressed it became necessary to focus on male learners who were excluded from curricular and co-curricular activities and practice and not address all aspects of masculinities. Last, the inclusion of female-bodied learners in the study would have further advanced many aspects of the research and especially the public/private dichotomy male learners face when addressing issues of masculinities.

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APPENDIX A: NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Through my involvement with a service learning organization at UKZN, I was introduced to the H.S. in question in 2004. During my subsequent visits to the school I informally began observing performances of masculinities. I have requested and received permission from the school principal to make formal and informal visits to the school for the purpose of balanced observation.

For the purpose of this study I chose a one-week period in which I observe the behaviours of male learners at the research site. Some of the visits will be announced (e.g., classroom observations) while others will not be announced (e.g., playground, common areas, administration building, school entrance).

The following is a schedule of observations

Day	Duration	Location
Monday	1—hour	playground
Tuesday	2—hour	classroom (science and language arts 1 hour each) (<i>abandoned</i>)
Wednesday	2—hour	dining hall and auditorium
Thursday	2—hour	common area (between buildings)
Friday	2—hour	school entrance and administration building

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PARENT AND CONSENT FORM

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian:

November, 2007

My name is Garey Davis. I am an African-American male from Washington, DC, and I am a Master student at the University Of KwaZulu-Natal School Of Education. I will be conducting a research project during this school year. Male students in Grades 9-11 are being invited to participate in this study of township boys' understanding of how boys learn to act and behave like boys/men.

This is a voluntary research project in which students can decline to be included. Students who volunteer will participate in a focus group discussion from which five to eight boys will be selected to be interviewed and to participate in the study over the next two weeks. Although I am interested in how boys define their masculinity, this is not a study of their sexual behaviours or knowledge.

I will be asking questions related to their understanding of becoming men, the expectations others have for them, and how they understand these expectations in determining their own identity. Participants do not have to answer any questions to which they would rather not respond, and all interviews will be kept confidential. Students will not be penalized for not participating or from withdrawing from the study. My results will be written up for my Master's dissertation only and will not be published to a wider audience. I will not use the students' names or other identifying characteristics to ensure that the participants' identities remain anonymous (will not be known by others).

I look forward to learning how the boys describe and understand their masculine identity. Their participation will not only help my learning but also the ways teachers, counselors, and other adults can help the boys in their personal development. I also hope the boys will find participating in the study to be fun and a good learning experience and an opportunity to teach others about their high school experiences. When my findings are ready to present, I will distribute a summary of my results to the participating students, providing their confidentiality will not be compromised by this act. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at 079 560 3685 or via email at tdavisl@gmu.edu or my dissertation supervisor, Professor L. Moletsane, (031) 260-1169 or via email at moletsaner@ukzn.ac.za

If you give permission for your son to participate in this study, please sign the attached form and have your child return this form to school. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

T, Garey Davis

Parent's/Guardian's Consent Form

I _____, the parent/guardian of _____ who is doing grade _____, at Vukuzakhe High School hereby agree/disagree to give permission for my son to participate in this research study.

Signature

Date

Mzali/Mphathi

Igama lami ngingu-T.Garey Davis owenza izifundo zeMasters e-University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. NgingumAfrika ongowokudabuka eMelika edolobheni elibizwa ngokuthi iWashington D.C. Ngigunyazwe aboMnyango Wezemfundo ukuba ngiqhube ucwaningo lwami kubafundi baka-grade 9 – 11, ema High Schools aselokishini kulonyaka. Lolucwaningo kuhloswe ngalo ukuthola izimpendulo mayelana nokukhula kanye nendlela abafana abaziphatha ngayo ezindaweni zasemadolobheni/emalokishini.

Abafundi abanesifiso sokuba yingxenye yalolucwaningo, kuzomele bakulindele ukuthi bazoxoxisana futhi bayophendula imibuzo ka Mcwaningi (Researcher). Lolucwaningo luzothatha amaViki amabili kuphela. NjengoMcwaningi ngifisa ukwazi kabanzi ukuthi yini eqondwa abafana ngomuntu wesilisa (umfana/indoda). Ngifisa nokwazi ukuthi yini abayilindele nokuthi yi elindeleke kubona empilweni. Abafundi aphoqelekile ukuba baphendule imibuzo elukhuni nabangahambisani nayo. Ngifisa ukusho ukuthi izingxoxo, imibuzo kanye nezimpendulo kuyogcinwa kuyimfihlo phakathi kwabafundi kanye noMcwaningi. Ngokufanayo, imiphumelo yalolucwaningo iyoshicilelwa ebhukwini lami leMaster's Dissertation kuphela. Amagama abafundi angeke ashicilelwe kulelibhuku ukuvikela isithunzi sabo.

Angingabazi ukuthi imiphumela yalolucwaningo iyoba usizo olukhulu empakathini ekutholeni izindlela zokukhulisa abafana.Nginethemba elikhulu lokuthi abafundi bayokuthakasela ukubamba iqhaza kulolucwaningo njengoba bazobe bethola ithuba lokuzithuthukisa ngolwazi.Abafisa ukubuza ngalolucwaningo bangangithinta ku:079 5603 685 noma bangithumelele kwi-email ethi: tdavis1@gmu.edu. Noma ningathinta u Supervisor wami u Dr Moletsane kwinombolo ethi 031-260-1169 noma nge email ethi moletsaner@ukzn.ac.za

Mzali/Mphathi, ngizocela usayine lelifomu uma uvuma ukuthi indodana yakho ibambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo.

Ngiyokuthokozela kakhulu ukubambisana kwethu ekwenzeni lomsebenzi ukuthi ubeyimpumelelo.

Yimina Ozithobayo
uGarey T. Davis

-----**IFomu Lemvumo YoMzali/YoMphathi**

Mina Mzali/Mphathi ka _____, ofunda uGrade:_____ ngiyavuma ukuthi umfana wami u_____ abambe iqhaza kulolucwaningo.

Sayina

Usuku

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Focus group participants

Andile Mchunu	Oskido	Tatatzela
#-14	Sbenghani	Mashaya
CJ	King Kong	#-15
Dark Messiah	King	Small
Common	NK	Makaveli

Note: The focus group will initially focus on students' responses to proposed vignettes after which I will ask a series of semi-structured focus group questions. The vignettes are offered to generate the learners' thinking about masculinities. The semi-structured questions are designed to inform the researcher how the participants understand and describe masculinity as a group.

First, let me begin by thanking you for participating in this research study. The purpose of this research is to learn about your understanding of manhood and masculinity. I am interested in learning about how you would describe yourself as a young man and the kinds of things you learn from others about being a man (e.g., your friends, family, church, school, community). Do you have any questions for me at this time?

Note: Remember to tell the students that you will be taping the discussion, and then proceed to turn on the recorder and explain to them how it works.

(Provide overview of process and what is a vignette.)

Okay, today I'd like to ask you all some questions about being a young man, First, I'd like for you to respond as a group to a series of short stories about three young men. These aren't real people but stories about young men that I created to get your response to their interactions. Everything that we say in this session is confidential. If at any time you feel uncomfortable please ask me to stop the recorder or ask to be excused. For clarity of understanding, please raise your hand when you want to speak and only one person at a time speaks to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

Semi-structured questions:

- a. What does it mean to be a real man among your school peers?
- b. What do real men do? (Probe to see if there is a difference based on age; break down between how the boys act with each other at school and then inquire about men outside of their school circle.)
- c. How do real men act with each other? (Probe to differentiate between school age boys and men outside of the school circle.)
 - With girls?
 - With educators?
 - With administrators?
 - With parents?
 - With other adults (e.g. community member, clergy, traditional leader, law enforcement) ?
- d. Which of these behaviours of real men do you consider to be positive? (Probe students to define positive attitudes, characteristics, language, etc.)

- e. Which of these behaviours of real men do you consider to be negative? (Probe students to define negative attitudes, characteristics, language, etc.)
- f. What is the behaviour of boys who are not real men? (Probe to identify characteristics of male students the participants do not consider to be “real men.”)
- g. Are there any sanctions levied against boys who do not act like “real men”? (Probe: if yes, what sanctions?)
- h. Do you feel sanctions are necessary for boys who do not act like real men? (Probe why? Have them elaborate on why/why not sanctions should be given.)
- i. If you could change how these boys are treated, what would you do?

APPENDIX D: VIGNETTES WITH QUESTIONS

- A. Thami is a 15-year-old young man who lives in KwaMashu Township (North of Durban). He lives with his mother and three siblings. He has an older and younger sister and a younger brother. Thami likes to hang out with his friends in his neighbourhood after school. They usually go to the school yard to play soccer or just hang out at one of the guys' house listening to music. A neighbour of Thami, named Justin, is not into sports and does not like to hang out with the guys. Justin prefers to read silently or debate current affairs with Thami. Justin is often teased by the other boys in the neighbourhood because of his mannerisms. (Some of the boys say he acts like a girl.) When Justin is teased, Thami feels bad for his friend, but does not help him.

Questions (F:A)

1. Have any of you ever had a situation similar to this?
 2. Why do you think Thami does not help Justin?
 3. What could Thami have done differently?
 4. What do you think of Justin?
 5. What would you do if Justin was your friend?
- B. Menzi is 16 years old. He lives in Phoenix. He attends Durban Boys High (which is an English speaking only school); he is a high achiever in class and is a very good basketball player. On the weekends Menzi goes to his father's house in an informal settlement in Inanda. When visiting his father Menzi hangs out with three local boys who are known for being tough (bullies). Menzi imitates his friends when he is in Inanda, even speaking tsostital (South African slang) but is much different when he is at his Phoenix neighbourhood and at school.

Questions (F:B)

1. How would you describe the two Menzis or are they the same?
 2. Why do you think Menzi acts differently when visiting Inanda?
 3. It is possible for Menzi to act the same in both locations, why or why not?
- C. Siya is a 17-year-old student at ZYA High School in Umlazi Township (South of Durban). Siya is a good student and is very popular amongst his classmates. Recently Siya discovered that he likes boys. Siya is battling with the feelings he has for guys and has become very distant to his school work, friends, and family. Everyone is beginning to notice that Siya is acting differently and when questioned, he tells them that everything is fine.

Questions (F:C)

1. What do you think Siya should do?
2. What would you do to help Siya if he confided his feelings to you?
3. What kind of support should Siya receive from friends? School? Community?

APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

Five to eight learners from the focus group will be asked to do a more in-depth, one-to-one interview. Based on my period of observation and discussions in the focus group, I will select five to eight learners that I believe will be forthcoming during the individual interview process. I will watch for students who are expressive and engaging. The students will be informed that only a select number of students will be able to continue with the balance of the research. I will not give further information on the selection process.

I will be looking for the learners to be more reflective of their personal sense of masculinities as opposed to a general sense of masculinities expected to be discussed during the focus group. I realize that their private (individual) understandings of masculinities may not differ from their public (focus group) understanding of masculinities.

The five to eight learners will be asked the same questions from the focus group to identify if there are different responses to their private and public responses to questions about masculinity constructions and performance. I also include additional biographical questions to get a better understanding of the learners and possibly relevant information concerning their construction and performance of masculinities. I will ask the following biographical and additional information from the five to eight learners:

- Biographical: Questions about family history will be asked (e.g. parents, siblings, home[s], age, etc).
- Additional questions: In addition to the semi-structured questions, the following questions will be asked so the researcher can obtain greater insight into the

participants and will be analyzed to identify any correlations to the learners' sense of masculinity.

Who are your role models?

What is your favorite subject(s)?

What are your goals for the future?

What is your favorite pastime?

What are your fears for your future?

- Semi-structured Individual Interview Questions

1. What does it mean to be a man among your school peers?
2. What do men do? (Probe learners to identify different groupings of men and then discuss the things that they do in the groupings.)
3. How do men act with each other? (Probe to differentiate between learner's actions with self identified group(s) and with other groups learner's identify).
4. What positive behaviours do you notice about male learners at your school? (Probe students to define positive attitudes, characteristics, language, etc.)
5. What negative behaviours do you notice about male learners at your school? (Probe students to define negative attitudes, characteristics, language, etc.)
6. Are there learners at your school who are not considered men? How would you categorize male learners at your school who are not considered men? (e.g. athletic, lots of girlfriends, etc).
7. What is the behaviour of male learners who are not considered men? (Probe to identify behaviours of male students not considered to be men)?
8. What happens to male learners at your school who do not act like men? (Probe: are these learners excluded in any way? Are they verbally or physically harassed?)

9. How do you feel about the things that happen to male learners who do not act like men?
10. What can be done at your school to include male learners who are not considered men?