

Grade 2 boys-an ethnographic study of little masculinities, power and violence.

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A research study submitted in the fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of  
Education Degree

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As the candidates Supervisor I agree/ do not agree to the submission of this dissertation

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## **Declaration**

I, Sechvon Anthony declare that

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandparents. They spent hours throughout my schooling years to ensure that I had always done my best. Their encouragement and sacrifices will always be remembered. I know that they would have most certainly been proud of my achievements. I love and miss you both.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation addresses the problem of gender violence in schools. I explore the relationship between masculinities, power and violence among 20 boys aged between seven and eight. My central claim is that hegemonic masculinities and power imbalances in Grade 2 produce violent gender relations.

The theoretical framework for this study draws on critical masculinities studies that offer a lens through which to understand the link between masculinities and gender violence. I conducted this ethnographic study at Charville Primary School (pseudonym) north-west of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in a predominantly Indian township called Phoenix.

This ethnographic study enabled me to navigate the daily lives of the 20 boys. Observation, focus group discussions and semi-structured individual interviews resulted in the collection of rich, thick data. The significance of masculinities, power and violence became apparent when boys constructed hegemonic masculinities and jostled for power among themselves and with boys around them. The findings show that gender violence is not only about physical fights, but is produced and reproduced through bullying, friendships, and the use of derogatory language. The findings illustrate the multifaceted nature of gender violence through the struggle for power whereby boys who led the line were portrayed as the ‘best’, ‘the boss’, or ‘leader’, highlighting the gender dynamics that existed among young boys. These dynamics worked actively with power, which led to gender violence. The boys’ playground experiences encouraged power and hegemonic masculinities and subordinated boys who did not conform to hegemonic forms of masculinities. The study also found that the struggle for power became evident when boys showed interest in doing classroom chores which ultimately led to violence. Another interesting finding was the ways boys formed friendships through negotiating power when they used money as a bargaining chip and a signifier of power. The study also found that body image was closely linked to masculinities and power, with boys who had muscles and six packs positioned as the strongest. The subordination of homosexuality developed violent masculinities when boys degraded gay relationships. The study also found that sport was used to deploy and encourage masculinities of power, domination, aggression and competitiveness. The significance of this study lies in the ways in which hegemonic masculinities and the struggle for power among young boys blend and result in gender violence. The findings are used to provide recommendations to decrease or eradicate gender violence in and around schools.

## Chapter 1

### 1. Introduction to the study

#### 1.1 Introduction

*“No form of violence is justified, and all violence is preventable” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 5)*

Gender violence is both active and pervasive in early childhood (Keddie, 2003; Bhana, 2008; Bhana, 2013). This study investigates the correlation of masculinities, power and violence among 20 boys aged between seven and eight in a predominantly Indian school north-west of Durban in a township called Phoenix. Ethnographic data collection methods were employed to produce rich descriptions of experiences of gender violence through the social construction of hegemonic masculinities and uneven power.

#### 1.2 Why Gender Violence? - Background to the study



The collage above presents newspaper headlines relating to gender violence in 2014 (*Daily News, 2014*).

I begin this dissertation by naming the problem of gender violence right from the start. The frightening newspaper clippings presented above are but a small sample of articles that showcase the fact that South Africa is not immune to the global epidemic of gender violence (Pinheiro, 2006) that Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997, p. 117) describe as one of the “major social problems of our times”. However, while the media have created awareness of violence

in schools, they fail to acknowledge the connection between gender and violence. This limits our understanding of violence. Bhana (2009) notes, that the link between gender and violence is undeniable. Violence is given power because it is mediated through the gender inequalities which exist in society (Bhana, 2009). The clippings displayed above not only underline the urgent need for research on gender violence, but also research with men and boys.

The nature of violence is heavily intertwined in men and boys because of the unintentional development of masculinities (Connell, 1995). The headline, “Grade 2 schoolboys rape girl (5)” (*Daily News*, 18 March 2014, p. 3) alerts us to the fact that men are not the only perpetrators of violence; young boys are also culpable. While not all men and young boys commit acts of violence, some boys develop masculinities and claim their position in a patriarchal world by dehumanising girls. Schools and society as a whole mistakenly assume that children are sexually innocent and thus do not take the things they do seriously. This study reveals how masculinities and power work strategically together, resulting in gender violence. It highlights the need to work with boys in the early stages of childhood in order to promote gender equality (Bhana, 2002; Blaise, 2005).

### **1.2.1 The multi-faceted nature of gender violence**

Before discussing the complexities of gender violence, this section unpacks the various forms of violence that affect children in school. The forms of violence reflected in the above newspaper clippings are also discussed in the literature review (see chapter two) and some of the data produced by this study (see chapter four).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) notes, that violence affects a child’s holistic development and hinders their safety and social well-being. UNESCO’s (2009) World Report on Violence against Children suggests that violence in schools is multi-faceted and takes various forms, including:

- Physical and psychological abuse.
- Bullying.
- Sexual and gender violence.
- Gang related violence (that affects the child internally or externally).

## Physical and psychological abuse

Physical and psychological abuse refers to any form of corporal punishment that a child is subjected to at school (UNESCO, 2009). This can take physical forms like smacking, punching, pulling a child's hair, and so on (UNESCO, 2009). On the other hand, psychological abuse such as humiliating comments in the classroom dehumanises a child (UNESCO, 2009). Power and control are exercised when children suffer corporal punishment at the hands of teachers who are physically bigger than them (UNESCO, 2009). Unite for Children (UNICEF) provided the following statistics on children that were reported to be victims of corporal punishment in 2010: Benin 54%, Senegal 55%, and Central Africa 52%.

## Bullying

Bullying refers to a child's over-exposure to aggressive, physical or verbal abuse (UNESCO, 2009). This usually occurs when there are power imbalances between the perpetrator and the victim (UNESCO, 2009). Children are often bullied for their lunch, money or possessions (UNESCO, 2009). They also experience emotional bullying when rumours are spread about them. Studies have shown that many children are victims of bullying due to their ethnicity or cultural background, sexual orientation or disability. Bullying is rife in West and Central Africa (UNICEF, 2010). For example, a study conducted in Ghana among 11 and 12 year old boys and girls revealed that 62% were victims of bullying. The comparable figure for Benin was 92%. The data presented in chapter four of this study highlights the various forms of bullying in early childhood through the development of toxic hegemonic masculinities.

## Sexual and gender violence

Gender violence is multifaceted and arises out of the power imbalances that exist between men and women or boys and girls (UNESCO, 2009). Gender violence stems from gender inequalities within a social group (UNESCO, 2009). UNESCO (2009) observes that, while there is a paucity of research on this form of violence, it is highly prevalent. Both girls and boys are at risk of sexual violence at school from teachers or peers. Sexual violence takes different forms, including rape and sexual favours. UNICEF (2010) provided the following statistics on sexual violence in West and Central Africa in 2010: Bangui 42.2%, Cameroon 30%, Ghana 82% (by boys from school) and Cameroon 8%, Congo 46%, Ghana 7.7%, Niger

47.7%, Senegal 42% (by male teachers). The Third Annual Women and Justice Conference: Sexual Violence Against Girls in Southern Africa (2012) reported that adolescent girls experienced more than one form of sexual violence. Fifty-four per cent of the 105 schoolgirls interviewed in Zambia reported personal experience of sexual violence/ harassment by a teacher or learner and 84% reported that they or a friend had experienced sexual violence at the hands of a male learner at school. Furthermore, more than half the girls reported that they had been approached by male teachers who used sex or sexual favours as a bargaining chip for good grades or money. This illustrates how men and boys exercise their power over women to satisfy their sexual needs. The study also found that girls were aware who the perpetrator was.

### Gang related violence (that affects the child internally or externally)

Gang violence that occurs outside of school and is observed by children is reproduced within schools (UNESCO, 2009). Furthermore, gang-related conflicts are extremely violent as gang members are armed and in many instances, such conflict results from drug trafficking. Previous studies have noted that men and boys are the primary protagonists of gender violence. This study examines the forms of and explanations for gender violence to understand the correlation between masculinities, power and violence. Evidence shows that children at school confront active forms of gender violence, with tragic consequences.

Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity was employed to understand the dynamics of gender violence among seven and eight year-old boys.

### **1.3 Theory of Masculinity**

The cause of gender violence, masculinities, is often ignored (Kimmel, 2003). Gender violence has an undeniable relationship with masculinities (Connell, 1995) and men and boys are the main protagonists of such violence (Bhana, 2009). This study uses Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity as a lens through which to gain deeper insight into masculinities and their relationship with gender violence.

Connell (1995, 2000) describes masculinities as an ever changing social entity. Moreover, masculinities are based on superficial attributes that are socially constructed rather than being

biological (Connell, 1995). A masculine man or boy is often characterised by aggression, strength, domination, power and ultimately violence (Connell, 1995). Connell (1995) identifies four different stages of masculinities: hegemonic, subordination, complicity and marginalisation (see chapter two). This study shows how these categories are intertwined in the lives of boys through power struggles which inevitably lead to gender violence.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the Study**

My interest in this topic arose from two perspectives, my personal experience and my experiences as a fairly new teacher with two years in the education system.

Reflecting on my life, I have strong memories of the abuse and torment that my aunt and her children endured. They lived within walking distance of my home, where they sought refuge from the daily abuse they were subjected to. As teenager, I witnessed my aunt being physically, emotionally and verbally abused by her husband. She often made excuses for the bruises on her body. I watched her cry and heard her recount the violence perpetrated by my uncle to my mother.

My worst memory is the day my uncle took my aunt's clothes outside and set them on fire. I watched my aunt and her children frantically trying to save the only clothes they had. There were endless excuses for his violent behaviour, from work-related stress to excessive drinking. What astonished me was the fact that my aunt continued to try to make her marriage work despite the abuse. She was so oppressed that she believed that my uncle's violent behaviour stemmed from his love for her. At the time, I did not understand the complex power relations that cause gender violence. Through my new found knowledge of gender I realise that he exerted power and domination through violent behaviour. My uncle was a well built, tall man and my aunt was short and petite. I watched him get his fix of power and observed his need to completely control her life.

This need for power and control was unfortunately produced and reproduced in my uncle's son at an early age. He often got into trouble at school for physically and verbally abusing other boys. As he grew older this violent behaviour was enacted in his relationships. My aunt now made excuses for her son. She often made remarks like, 'what did she (the girlfriend) do?', 'he will grow out of it', or 'he is just a boy'. My aunt had experienced violence to the extent that she constructed the notion that she must have done something wrong for her

husband to react that way. Likewise, her son's girlfriend must have done something for him to react in a violent manner. Her son now has a son of his own. Is this vicious cycle of violence going to be inherited by her grandson?

Furthermore, since I started teaching at Charville Primary School I noticed that boys as young as six are perpetrators of violence. They use their physical structure and gestures to control other boys in their age group. I observed the boys as they pushed each other to stand first in the boy's line and asked them why they did this. I also observed them playing fighting games with one another. Young boys competed to see who could jump from the highest step on the staircase. The boy that won received much praise; he embodied the sense of daring and toughness that many of his male class mates aspire to.

I am a Junior Primary teacher and this study was thus motivated by my desire to understand how and why violence affects young boys at school. I do not believe that violent behaviour is genetically inherited. Rather, it results from observations and interactions with a person's social world which accepts and encourages behaviour such as violence. Hence, I hoped that this research study would enable me to develop a deeper understanding of gender violence.

### **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

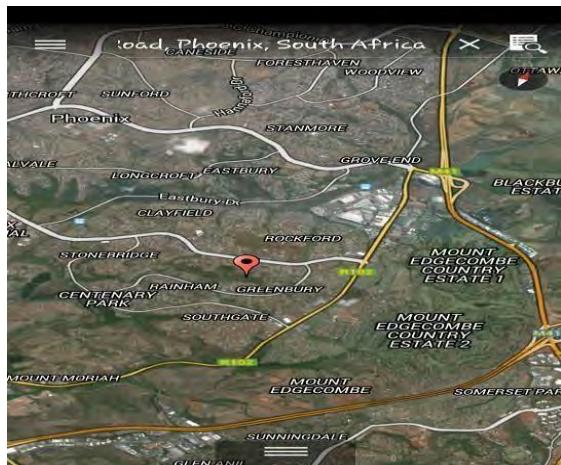
Using ethnographic data collection methods, this study investigated how violence is enacted amongst seven and eight year-old boys. It sought to understand the role that power plays in gender violence and the ways in which power is negotiated amongst young boys. Finally, the study aimed to explore the relationship between power and masculinities and its effects on gender violence.

### **1.6 Critical questions**

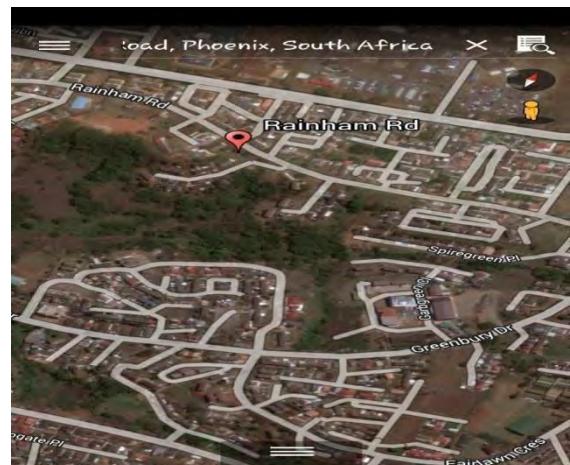
The study was guided by the following critical questions:

1. How is violence enacted amongst seven and eight year-old boys at Charville Primary School?
2. What role does power play in the enactment of violence?
3. How is power negotiated amongst young boys?
4. What does the negotiation of power say about young boys' masculinities?

## 1.7 Research site- Charville Primary School (Phoenix)



**Figure 1:**  
Overview of Phoenix



**Figure 2:**  
Location of Charville Primary School

The research site is located in Phoenix township north-west of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The late Mahatma Ghandi established the Phoenix Settlement in 1904 as a communal experimental farm to promote his principles of *Satyagraha* (passive resistance). The township was established by the apartheid regime in 1976 and houses mainly middle-class Indians. Its population currently stands at 176,989. As Indian people make up the majority of the population, English is the first language in the area and within all schools (see chapter 3 for a detailed description of the research site).

## 1.8 Structure of the dissertation

**Chapter one** presented the background to the study by highlighting the frightening reality of gender violence in schools that affects learners of all ages. It explored various forms of gender violence and presented statistical evidence on different forms of such violence that children are exposed to. Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity that explains how masculinities lend themselves to gender violence among boys was briefly discussed. The study's aims and objectives as well as the critical questions that guided the study, were discussed. The chapter concluded with a short description of the research site.

**Chapter two** reviews the relevant local, regional and international literature on masculinities, power and violence. The review is organised into various themes, including the cultural contexts of masculinities, school and masculinities, violence and masculinities and informal accounts of violence in play, body image, video games, sport and sexuality.

**Chapter three** discusses the research methodology employed to conduct the study. This was a qualitative study that adopted an ethnographic approach. The study lies within the constructionist paradigm which uses interpretive research methods. As noted, the study was conducted in an Indian suburb, Phoenix, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The biographical profiles of the 20 boys that participated in the study are presented. The sample was selected using purposive and convenient sampling. In order to obtain thick, rich data, three methods of data collection were employed: observations, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed and organised into themes. The chapter also discusses how the use of three different data collection methods enabled reliability, validity and triangulation to be achieved. Finally, this chapter highlights the ethical considerations taken into account and the study's limitations.

**Chapter four** provides a descriptive analysis of the thick, rich data obtained during this ethnographic study. Verbatim excerpts of boys' experiences and ideologies of masculinities, power and violence are presented, supported by the relevant literature. The study's findings are compared with those of various other studies on masculinities, power and violence in early childhood.

**Chapter five** presents a summary of the dissertation and an in-depth examination of the study's main findings. Based on the findings, recommendations are made that might assist teachers to address issues relating to masculinities and ultimately decrease or eliminate gender violence in schools.

## 1.9 Conclusion

This chapter set out the rationale for conducting research on gender violence in early childhood among boys. It highlighted the forms of violence that are prevalent at schools and briefly explored the relationship between masculinities and gender violence. The study's aims and objectives and the critical questions that guided it were set out. Finally, the structure of the dissertation was outlined.

Chapter two reviews the local, regional and international literature relevant to this study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2. Literature Review**

#### **2. 1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the construction of violent masculinities in the early years of schooling. According to Bhana (2003), there is a paucity of research on masculine behaviour. The chapter begins by explaining masculinities using the four categories outlined by Connell (1995). While they are not the only influence, schools play a role in developing masculinities. Furthermore, violent masculinities are developed from as young as four years old. Hence, it is important to work with boys from an early age rather than focusing efforts on secondary schools (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Connolly, 2004; Bhana, 2008). Moreover, gender ideologies are intertwined in the development of the masculinities and violence that manifest in schools. McNaughton (2000) and Bhana (2003) note that children learn gender through their observations and experiences in school. This makes it even more important to work with boys and their construction of masculinities from the early years (Connell, 1995; Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Bhana, 2003; Connolly, 2004).

#### **2.2. Masculinities**

While the concept of gender is well-known, the same cannot be said for the notion of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Various researchers have contributed to understanding and theorising masculinities (Connell, 1995). Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity is employed as the theoretical framework for this study.

According to (Connell, 1995; 2000), masculinity is a gendered practice which is constructed by socialisation. Connell (1995) further suggests that in order to understand masculinity one needs to acknowledge that masculinity is not biological; rather, symbolical attributes determine whether a man is masculine or unmasculine. Connell (1995) adds that the qualities which make a man masculine include being violent, dominant, and aggressive whereas a man that is ‘unmasculine’ is seen as the opposite, being peaceful and shy and showing no interest in masculine sport. Moreover, masculinity will always be compared to femininity; as

(Connell, 1995, p. 68) puts it, “masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity”. This suggests that men and women are always seen differently (Fenstermaker & West, 2002). Women are regarded as inferior to men as they have different characteristics which are not on

par with what constitutes being a man (Connell, 1995). This shapes and reveals the power inequalities that exist between men and women (Fenstermaker & West, 2002). In order to understand the social structures of gender and the various patterns of power, Connell (1995) proposes four different categories of masculinities. However, Connell (1995) notes that these categories are merely used to show the differences in individual behaviour and are not fixed entities. The masculinities identified Connell (1995) are hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised.

Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form of masculinity that is most desired and exalted (Connell, 1995). It claims its authority in a variety of cultural and institutional settings. Hegemonic masculinity may not show direct violence but violence and violent behaviour is hidden and embedded in the most powerful authority which is the hegemonic group (Connell, 1995). While this might not be the most powerful group, it possesses the most desirable characteristics which men and boys aspire to (Connell, 1995). The hegemonic group dishonours homosexuality and marginalises and disempowers gay men. In school settings, patriarchal power relations are visible amongst children (Connell, 1995).

The ability to control space on the playground, the competitiveness displayed during sport, and pushing for space in line all display a need for power amongst young boys. This behaviour helps to maintain the hegemonic roles of dominance, power and aggression that exist among boys (Connell, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Bhana, 2008). The development of hegemonic masculinities is visible in early childhood. Young boys want to be seen as ‘macho’ rather than as ‘little boys’; this motivates them to adopt hegemonic forms of dominant masculinities (Keddie, 2003, p. 289). Lombard (2013) argues that the construction of gendered identities thus equates to the construction of violent behavior. Dominant masculinities are often desired and celebrated by young boys, leading to aggression and violence (MacNaughton, 2000).

In contrast, subordinate masculinity refers to the subordination of some men in society (Connell, 1995). It is here that homosexual masculinity is located. Gay men are often subordinated and placed last in the gender order because they are seen as feminine (Connell, 1995). Gay men and boys are exposed to violent behaviour and run the risk of being gay baited by being called names like, ‘wimp’, ‘nerd’, and ‘pushover’ (Connell, 1995, p. 79).

Many men aspire to fit into hegemonic masculinity, because it is regarded as what constitutes being a real man (Connell, 1995). While many fail to live up to its standards (Connell, 1995), they continue to seek entry. Connell (1995) described this as complicit masculinity. Complicit men acknowledge the hegemonic group, but differ in various ways. Connell (1995) provides various examples. A complicit man would rather watch a sport than be actively involved in it, or is heterosexual, but respects their partner and is non-violent. Many men fail to achieve hegemonic masculinity because they draw on their own moral beliefs rather than imitating behaviour that may not always be acceptable (Connell, 1995).

When class and race are infused into masculinities, the picture becomes even more complex. While ‘black’ masculinity (a sporting hero) might be an aspiration among whites, blacks are often portrayed as rapists and criminals (Connell, 1995). Furthermore, unemployment and poverty are linked to black masculinity (Connell, 1995). Nobody in a white community aspires to be an average black man (Connell, 1995). According to Connolly (2004), children that belong to different social classes experience school life differently. Middle class experiences are far less violence than those of the working class, where it is rife. Middle-class parents have secure jobs and are able to access a range of resources whereas the working class confronts unemployment and has far less access to resources (Connolly, 2004). The middle class places great emphasis on their children’s educational achievements, while working class schools focus on providing care to children which they may not always get at home, for example, food, clothing, shelter, and access to health care (Connolly, 2004). Young working class boys develop their masculinities by observing the behaviour surrounding them, which in most cases is violent and focus heavily on physical prowess and strength (Connolly, 2004). While there have been a number of international studies on the development of masculinities in early childhood, few studies have been conducted in South Africa, and even fewer have explored the links between masculinities and race and class (Bhana, 2003). The following section examines how schools and young children’s experiences in school assist in developing masculinities and gender boundaries.

## **2.3 Schools as sites for developing masculinities**

Schools are highly gendered sites which impact on how boys construct their masculinities (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). While young boys and girls are aware of their sexuality, they are still uncertain about as to what determines who they play with or which group they belong to (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Young children have yet to give meaning to the terms boy and girl; thus, schools are ‘powerful sites’ that influence how young boys and girls create their identity (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 113).

Both the organisation of the school and its practices are gendered (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). The school culture and the way children interact with one another other work together to influence how children see and practice gender (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000). Some scholars have argued that boys’ biological makeup is responsible for their unstable behaviour and thus that schools have little or no influence in the construction of boys’ behaviour (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Bhana, 2003; Connolly, 2004). Children are aware of the ways in which gender plays out at school (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

In contrast, other researchers maintain that the school’s gender regime plays a pivotal and active role in the construction of gender inequalities and how children perceive gender (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). This is visible when men are school principals and in how schools allocate duties that reinforce male or female roles as well as the relationship among male and female teachers, all of which are indicators of who has ‘authority and power’ between the genders (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 114). Children create their own interpretations of the school process. Some may recognise inequality, whilst others may see this as the ‘natural’ way of how schools are run (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 114). Gilbert & Gilbert (1998, p. 115) further suggest that “if we are to understand how masculinities are constructed in schools, we need to see these experiences as part of an articulated set of practices which, perhaps explicitly but often surreptitiously, construct models, ideas, activities and relations which promote particular forms of masculinity”.

The management of the school plays a significant role in it being a gendered site (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Schools uphold the status quo in academics, and sports, which celebrate competitiveness and regard it as natural (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). This creates a picture of masculinities that the staff and children accept (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). The organisation of labour such as teachers’ administrative work, and the division of specialised

subjects creates particular types of masculinities (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Male teachers take up roles which assert their power and superiority over female teachers, for example, by handling discipline and heading the sports department, while female teachers take on the role of mother and planning school events. Men teach mathematics and science, and women teach languages and art or drama (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Teachers also create gender differences by labelling children (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). For example, praising a child by saying ‘good girl’ or ‘good boy’ is a clear indication that they are seen as two separate entities, rather than being seen as a child or children (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Gilbert & Gilbert (1998) note that when male teachers praise boys that play football, this reinforces aggressive and competitive behaviour. They add that when male teachers make derogatory remarks about girls in order to maintain discipline amongst boys, this reflects the joint construction of masculinities between male teachers and the boys which highlights the notion of schools as gendered sites (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

Peer culture plays a prominent role in the construction of masculinities in school (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). According to Gilbert & Gilbert (1998), research has focused on boys who belong to the hegemonic group that do not conform to school rules and who tend to be rebels (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Gilbert & Gilbert (1998) note that studies have shown that boys’ peer culture results in a misogynistic attitude towards girls and women teachers, and disregard for boys who do not have the same beliefs (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Boys that show an interest in their school work and get involved in school activities are marginalised (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). For the macho boys, schoolwork is not worth the worry (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

A recent ethnographic study by Parkes & Connolly (2013) in a predominantly black neighbourhood in London revealed that boys exercise gender power through violent masculinities within their peer culture. Peer culture is becoming a prominent part of school life in the United Kingdom (UK) and is responsible for the creation of an identification with masculinities (Keddie, 2005; Parkes & Connolly, 2013). Parkes & Connolly (2013) found that, while boys were monitored by teachers during lessons and play breaks, during play breaks the toilets are left unsupervised. This was where the popular (hegemonic) group of boys practised violence against other boys (Parkes & Connolly, 2013). Many boys aspire to popular masculinities (breaking school rules and being violent) (Connell, 1995; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Parkes & Connolly, 2013). Being masculine will gain them entry to the popular group rather than beaten up in the toilets (Parkes & Connolly, 2013). In contrast, the study found that some boys prefer to be themselves rather than always trying to fit into a group and

behaving in a certain way. This is an example of complicit masculinity Connell (1995). These boys are masculine, but they choose not to be violent and aggressive towards other boys in order to prove that they belong to the hegemonic group (Connell, 1995).

Gilbert & Gilbert's (1998) study at an Australian primary school found that boys did not like school. They were not interested in their school work and regarded it school as an opportunity to socialise with their friends (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Boys that showed an interest in their work, did their homework, did not play sport and so on were not part of the popular group of boys. They sat alone or in the library. Macho boys dominated the playground and had the authority to determine who joined the group and who did not (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

However, while “physical dominance of the macho boys may place them in a powerful position in the peer culture, all the groups present themselves as powerful and superior in terms of some criterion” (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 142). Boys that are not regarded as macho still want to be seen as cool which contributes to masculinities of aggression, competitiveness, strength and toughness (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Thus, violent masculinities are naturalised in schools (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

Masculinity is connected to violence because boys are under constant pressure to prove themselves superior to girls (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). It is crucial to examine the gender dynamics in schools because there is an invisible connection in their influence on the manifestation of masculinities (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). The following section examines the influence that power and masculinities have on gender violence in schools.

## **2.4 Masculinities, violence and its gendered nature**

Boys are more at risk than girls of being imprisoned for violent behaviour (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Furthermore, boys and men are more likely to be violently killed than girls and women (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). The way boys construct their masculinities is an important factor in understanding the connection between violent behaviour and crime (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). “It is now fairly well understood that the social, cultural and psychic constructions of masculinity are related to violence and that some kinds of masculinity are more directly associated with violent behaviour than are others” (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p. 119). However, there is a lack of understanding of which masculinity is responsible

for certain types of violence (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). Connell's Theory of Masculinity assists in understanding this issue (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997).

Scholars have observed that masculinity only exists in relation to femininities under the umbrella of patriarchy (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). It is crucial to understand the femininities that oppose hegemonic masculinities (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). "The literature suggests that this particular version of femininity involves compliance and service, subservience and self-sacrifice and constant accommodating to the needs and desires of males" (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p. 120). It is evident that masculinities are fluid and affect both males and females; the politics of power that exist between males and females change over time and space and among groups (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, Leach, 2003). Masculinity and violence are related in that men obtain power through masculinity, domination, and harassment that result in violence (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997).

Kimmel (2003) concludes that the root cause of violence, the construction of masculinity, is often ignored. Understanding gender violence requires a move away from biological explanations (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton; 2000; Kimmel, 2003). Kimmel (2003) and (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997) note that violence is also perpetrated against boys who fail to conform to hegemonic masculinity. The American government focuses on psychological explanations for violence. For example, if a boy has an abusive parent, he tends to be a perpetrator of violence. This perspective neglects to take the culture of the school and gender into account (Kimmel, 2003). Kimmel (2003) observes that when girls are the protagonists of violence and this is the subject of newspaper headlines, gender comes to the fore because feminism can cause girls to imitate boys' behavior.

Burman's (2014) study in Sweden supports Kimmel's (2003) observation that understanding violence requires an examination of the perpetrator's internal and external characteristics. Like America, Sweden focuses on psychological factors rather than seeking insight into perpetrators' thirst for power and control over their (mainly female) victims (Burman, 2014). This crucial information is often ignored (Kimmel, 2003; Burman, 2014). Gender and power and control are key issues in understanding violence (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; McNaughton, 2000; Kimmel, 2003; Burman, 2014).

Leach (2003) maintains that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, violence is always gendered. In order to understand such violence, we need to first understand that violent behaviour changes over time in different circumstances and cultures. Leach (2003) notes that, while there is a lack of empirical evidence on the true extent of the problem, statistics from nine Sub-Saharan African countries show that sexual abuse and harassment of girls by boys are rife and have reached epidemic proportions. Violence exists because of the power imbalances that manifest between males and females in the gendered hierarchy (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; McNaughton, 2000; Kimmel, 2003; Leach, 2003; Burman, 2014). Society dictates what it means to be masculine and feminine as well as the behavior expected from each gender (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Leach, 2003). Schools reinforce gender imbalances between boys and girls because they regard them as two different entities (Leach, 2003). Boys are often allowed to dominate class lessons and bullying and abuse are socially accepted as part of being a boy (Leach, 2003). Leach (2003) notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, masculine attributes like aggression are reinforced, whilst being feminine requires one to be obedient and submissive. Thus males perpetuating violence in school and throughout their adulthood is a norm which teachers and society accept (Kimmel, 2003; Leach, 2003).

Bhana (2009) notes that boys are the main protagonists of gender violence in South Africa and that violent acts are highly gendered (Leach & Humpreys, 2007; Bhana, 2009). Like Leach (2003), Bhana (2009) adds that there is a lack of statistical evidence on violence by men and boys against women and children in South Africa. However, she concludes that, “Violence remains men’s virtual monopoly” (Bhana, 2009, p. 2) because there is little or no attempt to change the patriarchal society that we live in. Furthermore, society lacks knowledge on the social inequalities between boys and girls. Bhana (2013) notes that defining gender violence is a daunting task because this is an under-researched field and there are gaps in our understanding of how gender violence is endorsed, facilitated, challenged and imitated in schools (Bhana, 2013). However, the fact that dominant masculinities manifest at an early age highlights the need to address gender injustices in early childhood (Bhana, 2013).

## **2.5 Masculinities, schooling and violence**

Violence is rife in schools and is fast becoming an epidemic (Clark, 2012). Schools are supposed to be sites where children feel safe (Barnes, Brynard & De Wet, 2012), but this is far from the case. While many schools are protected from intruders from outside their premises, violence is increasingly perpetuated from within the school (Clark, 2012). Furthermore, children are often afraid to report the violence they experience (Barnes et al.

2012). Bhana (2009) notes that, because many acts of violence are perpetrated by boys, it is important to work with them (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996) to confront this issue (Clark, 2012). Gender violence is complex and takes various forms in schools. It “includes physical, verbal, psychological, and emotional as well as sexual violence, it also includes the fear of violence, both between females and males and among females and among males” (Leach & Humpreys, 2007, p. 53). Violence in schools is both implicit and explicit and gender power plays a vital role in manifesting violence (Dunne, Humpreys, & Leach, 2006). According to Parkes (2007), boys do not want to be seen as powerless, and in most cases the quest for power leads to violent behavior. This affects other boys and girls in and around the school.

Understanding the school culture of “gender nonconformity, bullying, teachers’ attitudes and the form of school violence” (Kimmel, 2003, p. 1444) would be more fruitful than focusing on the perpetrators’ psychological problems. A proper understanding of violence requires insight into boys’ position in the hierarchy, their interaction with their peers and the development of gendered beliefs and identity (Kimmel, 2003). Kimmel’s study in the US found that the perpetrators of violence were boys that were bullied, previously beaten up or gay baited by being called a sissy, gay or faggot for not conforming to the hegemonic masculinity rather than boys that were focused on their studies or shy (Kimmel, 2003). Such boys are often marginalised for not possessing masculine tendencies (Kimmel, 2003). There is no denying that the behaviour of some boys makes school life daunting for other boys (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Media reports on violent behavior tend to underplay the fact that the perpetrators are boys and that masculinity is the main reason for violence in schools (Kimmel, 2003).

Lombard’s (2013) study on boys aged 11 and 12 notes that, they defined violence as a physical fight between two men in an unknown location and that it only occurs during the adult years. As such, masculinity is perceived as a fixed entity (Lombard, 2013). However, Connell (1995) suggests that masculinities are not fixed but fluid and ever changing.

Furthermore, the boys in Lombard’s (2013) study felt that only physical violence constitutes real violence. This reinforces the assumption that men are physically fit and have more power than women (Lombard, 2013).

The study participants also stated that violence becomes real only when injuries or blood are visible. They did not regard violence at home with siblings or at school with their peers, in places that they play at like the park or at school as real (Lombard, 2013). This is reinforced by the fact that adults do not condemn such violence (Lombard, 2013). The study also revealed differences in boys' and girls' perceptions of violence. Boys related violence to age, while girls associated it with gender (Lombard, 2013). Girls described men and boys as perpetrators of violence. Moreover, boys believed that violence is a natural process in the transition from boyhood to manhood. Lombard (2013) highlights, that violence is conceptualised through power. Men possess more physical power; therefore, they are able to perpetrate and withstand violence.

Accounts of violence in Lesotho are complex and multifaceted. As noted earlier, violence in schools occurs in various forms (Leach & Humpreys, 2007) and is perpetrated in various ways in order to gain power. Ngakane, Muthukrishna & Ngcobo's (2012) study in Lesotho found that boys' were involved in violence through sport. Boys got into fights if they were defeated in a game (Ngakane *et al.*, 2012). They collectively involved themselves in violent behaviour to prove their loyalty to their team. Bullying is another form of violence that is experienced in school (Ngakane *et al.*, 2012). This includes older boys and girls bullying younger boys and girls. This is a form of initiation that is socially accepted in the culture of the school. Dunne (2007) reports, that, in Ghana and Botswana, bullying by older boys was the norm. They bullied younger boys and girls for their money and other possessions (Dunne, 2007). Failure to comply with older learners' demands made one vulnerable to verbal and physical violence.

Ngakane *et al.* (2012) identify corporal punishment as another form of violence in school that is normalised by teachers and learners. It is regarded as a way of disciplining learners and maintaining a culture of teaching and learning. Corporal punishment is not seen as a violation of a child's human rights but as a way of dealing with children who do not comply with school rules and make teaching and learning difficult. Even though corporal punishment is widely practiced, it is often not seen as a gendered issue (Leach & Humpreys, 2007). According to Leach & Humpreys (2007), administering corporal punishment to girls prepares them for being submissive girls and good wives in the future. Teachers hit girls to affirm their authority and dominance, thereby displaying their masculine roles.

Ngakane *et al.* (2012) highlight, that the construction of masculinity and femininity is produced and reproduced in and around the school. Their study also showed that parents accept the notion that boys should dominate the classroom because it is in their nature and part of being a boy. This reinforces the notion of the docile female and the active male (Ivinson & Renold, 2013).

Dunne's (2007) studies in Ghana and Botswana also highlight that violence in the form of corporal punishment has become part of everyday school life. Like in Lesotho (Ngakane *et al.*, 2012), teachers in Ghana and Botswana use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. While state policy in Ghana and Botswana allows teachers to administer corporal punishment, it stipulates certain conditions that teachers do not always comply with (Dunne, 2007). Undermining their own physical power, female teachers often get male teachers to cane boys as they believe that males are more masculine and can exert more power and force, whereas female teachers use subtle approaches like verbal abuse (Dunne, 2007).

Boys also display aggressive and dominating behaviour when girls decline their request for a relationship or sexual intercourse (Dunne, 2007; Ngakane *et al.*, 2012). They feel that they have lost their power over the girl and thus resort to violent behaviour (Dunne, 2007; Ngakane *et al.*, 2012). Ngakane *et al.* (2012) found that girls had been violently gang raped by boys within the school and that the boys boasted about what they had done. Bhana, Nzimakwe & Nzimakwe's (2010) study in Durban, South Africa found high levels of violence among Grade 2 boys and girls. Boys were the main perpetrators. This underlines the need to work with boys from an early age (Bhana, 2003; Connolly, 2004). Girls reported being violently physically abused by boys, by being hit with stones and slapped as well as verbally abused. Even though the girls were inside the confines of the school they did not feel safe (Bhana *et al.*, 2010; Barnes *et al.*, 2012). The girls stated that they hated being around the boys (Bhana *et al.*, 2010). Even at the young age of seven, boys tried to gain power over girls by threatening them in sexual ways (Bhana *et al.*, 2010). This kind of violence discourages girls from forming friendships with boys (Bhana *et al.*, 2010). The following section examines the informal and formal ways boys do violence in the early years with other boys and which affects girls.

## **2.6 Informal and formal ways boys do violence: play, body image, video games, sport and sexuality**

The relationship between masculinities and power and violence in early childhood is under researched. This section examines the informal and formal ways in which violence is manifested in schools, with a focus on early childhood.

### **2.6.1 Play**

Gender play in the early years creates gender boundaries and imbalanced power relations and contributes to the manifestation of violent masculinities (Thorne, 1993; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Connolly, 2004). According to Connolly (2004), gender can be understood in two ways. The first is by explaining how masculinities exist in relation to femininity (Connolly, 2004). Boys construct their masculine behaviour in opposition to feminine behaviour (Connolly, 2004). Connell (1995) suggests that the dynamics of masculine and feminine behaviour are constructed together. For example, Connolly (2004) notes that, boys see themselves as being good at sport, while girls are weak at sport. They compare themselves with girls and define themselves as stronger, faster, or better at sport. Secondly, boys construct their masculinities in the playground through sexuality when girls show that they are attracted to them (Connolly, 2004). Boys may not always approve of girls running after them in the playground and showing interest, but they need this as a way to prove their masculinities (Connolly, 2004). Thus, children police gender boundaries on the playground during their early years (Connolly, 2004).

During play, boys dominate space (McNaughton, 2000; Connolly, 2004). Connolly's 2004 study found that the skipping area in the playground was considered a girls' only zone by the boys and many of the girls. Girls showed a keen interest in skipping and because of the dangers an area is demarcated for it (Connolly, 2004). Some boys kept their distance from the skipping area in order to support their 'masculine identities' (Connolly, 2004, p. 148). According to Connolly (2004), many of the boys plotted ways to disrupt the girls whilst skipping by running and pushing into the area or even the girls. Observing young boys at play is crucial because the playground can become a site that is rife with violence (Connolly, 2004). Connolly (2004) reports, that when two boys saw a boy in the skipping area, this sparked immediate interest

and put him at risk of violent behaviour. It is clear that some boys not only impose gender boundaries on girls but on other boys as well (Connolly, 2004).

## **2.6.2 Body image**

Being muscular gives boys more control over other boys and school spaces (Martino & Chiarolli, 2003). Power relations among boys are evident in the way they exercise their masculinities (Martino & Chiarolli, 2003). Bhana's (2008) study in Kwa Dabeka found that young boys felt that they needed to have a six pack and big muscles. Young boys' notion of the ideal man (boy) is influenced by images on television and pictures in magazines (Bhana, 2008, p. 7). "These images signified the importance of the body, muscles, power and domination" (Bhana, 2008, p. 7). The boys explained that they wanted to be physically fit, go to the gym and develop six packs, physical attributes which enable them to gain power and domination to protect their hegemonic masculinity (Bhana, 2008).

## **2.6.3 Video games**

Video games also promote a culture of violence in the early years of childhood (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). "Like other forms of entertainment, [this culture] ... implicitly speaks a politics of gender: a politics, in this case, that aligns masculinity with power and aggression, with victory and winning, with superiority and strength, and with violence and misogyny" (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p.72). Even though children use video games as a pleasurable pastime, they focus heavily on power (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). For many boys, being better at a specific video game or beating another boy gives one bragging rights (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Parents and adults generally do not seem to feel that violent video games are cause for concern (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). When boys play video games they "enter into a discursive field in which constructions of hegemonic masculinity dominate, and within which they can practise and play at masculinity, and at what it comes to represent" (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 73). Violence and hegemonic masculinity are disguised as 'leisure and pleasure' (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998, p. 76). Video game culture not only allows boys to express violence through games but also verbally at school through the conversations they have about the games (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998).

## **2.6.4 Sport**

During the junior years of a child's schooling career sport is part of the curriculum and is a crucial part of a child's holistic development. While sport develops children's skills and offers them enjoyable activities, its gendered nature reinforces the inequalities that exist between boys and girls (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2008). Masculinity and violence are produced and reproduced through sport (Kreager, 2007; Ashley, 2003).

Connell (1995) maintains that strong power relations exist in sport. For example, during football games, boys maintain the hegemonic masculinity of dominance, aggression and competitiveness within their peer group and among other boys that wish to be a part of this culture (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2008). Masculine traits such as domination and aggression are often admired by teachers and learners; this often leaves boys that do not take part in sport marginalised and subordinated (Connell, 2008). Boys' sports take precedence over the sports girls play, once again reinforcing the notion that boys rank first in the hierarchy (Connell, 1995). Hence sport creates and promotes gender segregation in schools (Connell, 2008).

The Western culture of sport celebrates masculinities of aggression and domination which heavily institutionalise power (Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008). Sports like boxing, football, rugby and so on require physical contact and a form of violence that is regarded as legal during the game (Connell, 2008). Coaches often admire these attributes and use them to test a player's manhood (Connell, 2008). The abovementioned sports are key players in the development of hegemonic masculinities and assist in subordinating other masculinities (Connell, 2008).

Kreager (2007) notes that critical feminists regard sport as a form of channelling ones' dominance and aggression. This is certainly visible in the West (Kreager, 2007) and in South Africa where athletes reinforce forms of masculinities by becoming involved in sexual assaults, fights and bullying.

Swain's (2006) study found that competitiveness is a main source of power imbalances among boys. Being a sporty boy means that, one has masculine qualities that uphold the hegemonic group, rather than being marginalised or subordinated (Swain, 2006). As Ashley (2003, p. 259) notes, playing sport means that one is part of the 'cool' group of boys and this is where

boys protect their “manly prowess”. A boy is highly praised if he shows academic and sporting prowess; this is not always the case when a boy is not sporty but shows keen interest in his studies (Ashely, 2003; Swain, 2006).

According to Swain (2006), competitiveness during sport is regarded as a part of growing up for boys and part of their school life. Boys often want to be better than the other players or the other team (Keddie, 2003). Thus, school sport reinforces hegemonic masculinities among boys (Keddie, 2003; Swain, 2006). Those that are fast on the field and physically fit are part of the hegemonic group. They are idealised by other boys as winners and prove their masculinities through abusive practices (Keddie, 2003, Swain, 2006). There is a constant need for boys to maintain their winning streak and if someone in the team does not perform well, they are often threatened by the other boys (Swain, 2006). Swain (2006) found that boys who did not make the team or perform well were often gay baited by being called sissy, girls or gay. Keddie (2003) notes, that violence takes not only physical but verbal forms among boys.

Kreager (2007) suggests that violence is acceptable during sport because of the superior position that aggression confers on the perpetrator. This is a clear indication that the power relations that exist among boys can lead to violence (Kreager, 2007). Boys that are part of the team are under constant pressure to perform well; if they fail to do so, they are ridiculed by other boys in the team (Kreager, 2007). A boy that is not part of the team risks being subordinated.

Smith (2007) traces the link between music, sport and power. His study found that boys who play football and listen to ‘gothic (goth)’ music have higher status amongst the boys in their class and around school. According to Smith (2007), goth music stimulates aggressive behaviour that enables these boys to secure their position and power in the hierarchy of masculinities. Thus, if a boy does not listen to goth music, he is defying the rule of being physically aggressive and runs the risk of being subordinated and being seen as feminine.

Like Ashley (2003), Smith’s (2007) study shows that playing football gives one the title of ‘cool’, a boy that is normal and comfortably fits the heterosexual norm.

In Mumbai, India, cricket is the predominant sport played by boys (Miller, Das, Trancredi, McCauley, Virata, Nettiksimmons, O’Connor, Ghosh & Verma, 2013). Girls do not play cricket (Miller *et al.*, 2013). This reinforces gender inequalities and inequities amongst boys

and girls. Cricket explores various forms of masculinities and shows prowess in sport (Miller *et al.*, 2013). While coaches as well as players are aware of the gender inequalities that exist, they accept these as ‘natural’ (Miller *et al.*, 2013). Studies in South Africa suggest that sport is a way for boys to exert their masculinities (Bhana, 2008; Bowely, 2013). Sport is an integral part of the South African curriculum and plays a vital role in the lives of many boys in school (Bowely, 2013). A boy that has physical strength, shows skill in a sport, and aspires to be tough and aggressive is considered part of the hegemonic group (Bhana, 2008). Many schools focus on winning rather than sport being enjoyed and bringing people together (Bowely, 2013). This forms an invisible line between the hegemonic group and the boys who are excluded and subordinated (Bowely, 2013).

In the junior years, being a part of the sports team confers a certain status and identity on boys (Bhana, 2008). A boy that is part of the team is seen as physically fit and as having power over boys that do not participate in sport (Bhana, 2008). Bhana’s (2008) study found that young boys feel that having ‘six packs and big muscles’ is an important investment, as they are seen as tough and able to endure pain, and command dominance on the field (Bhana, 2008). Each sport has its own status quo and for each boy’s develop particular skills that value certain masculinities over others (Connell, 1995). For instance, a boy that plays football will display masculinities of toughness, dominance and endurance, which position him within the hegemonic group, while a boy that participates in swimming or dancing may be subordinated even though he participates in sport (Connell, 1995, Connell, 2008).

## **2.6.5 Sexuality**

Primary schools are sites where boys and girls express their sexual identities. While a number of studies have focused on sexuality in secondary schools, this topic is under-researched at primary school level (Renold, 2000). Children engage with and explore their sexuality and constantly take part in gendered activities (Epstein, 1997). Sexuality in early childhood is expressed through fantasies about heterosexual relationships whilst portraying homosexuality as taboo, writing love notes to each other, and playing various games with sexual connotations. It is thus a myth that young children are sexually and gender innocent (Epstein, 1997; Keddie, 2003; Renold, 2004; Bhana, 2013).

From the early years of a girl's life she is able to make her body appeal to boys (Renold, 2000). In order to be heterosexually appealing girls wear short skirts and high heels (Renold, 2000). Boys' and girls' masculinity and femininity work together to legitimatise the gender hierarchy which subordinates women and girls; this is because girls play with their sexuality and portray themselves as fragile and in need of protection (Froyum, 2007). The fact that girls use their bodies as sexual objects in order to make them desirable debunks the notion that they are unaware of their sexuality (Renold, 2000). Flaunting their sexuality exposes girls to verbal abuse (Renold, 2004; 2000). Boys often engage in a form of heterosexual harassment that involves denigrating girls by calling them "abusive names" (Renold, 2004, p. 419). They verbally harass girls that dress in short skirts and high heels by referring to them as 'bitches', 'tarts', 'slut' and 'slag' (Renold, 2004, p. 419; Renold, 2000). The misogyny that boys display towards girls is a way of protecting their masculinity and maintaining their power over a girl, at the same time as being seen as a heterosexual being (Renold, 2004; 2000).

Teachers often fail to challenge boys' verbal abuse of girls (Epstein, 1997), thereby normalising such behaviour and reinforcing gender injustices (Keddie, 2003; Renold, 2000). Connell (1995, p. 220) refers to such behaviour as "taking up the offer". Boys do not necessarily want to engage in misogynistic behaviour but do so in order to defend their masculinity and gain the prestige that accompanies it (Connell, 1995; Epstein, 1997). In order to secure their hegemonic masculinity boys form relationships with girls with the purpose of giving it a title: 'girlfriend' (Epstein, 1997). However, boys use offensive terms to describe girls should something go wrong in the relationship (Renold, 2000).

Whilst Renold's (2000) study found evidence that girls use their bodies as sexual weapons to attract boys by wearing short skirts and high heels, Phoenix, Pattman, Crogham & Griffine's (2013) study of a single-sex group aged 13- 14 found that girls referred to other girls as 'tarts' if they wore a short skirt. These girls believed that it was not right to dress in this way (Phoenix *et al.*, 2013). As a result, at this single-sex school, many girls distanced themselves from those that wore revealing clothes because they did not want to be labelled (Phoenix *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, boys in the mixed gender group did not approve of girls wearing short skirts and revealing clothes (Phoenix *et al.*, 2013). They suggested that girls wore such clothing to attract boys' sexual attention (Phoenix *et al.*, 2013). This reveals gender power relations among girls; the subordinated groups of girls are those that wear revealing clothing and nobody wishes to be like them or be labelled one of them (Phoenix *et al.*, 2013).

Epstein (1997) notes, that, young girls fantasise about romantic heterosexual involvement from the age of five in order to affirm their femininity. According to Epstein (1997), girls are well aware that a relationship with another girl is taboo. A study conducted in Washington in 2007 found evidence that being homosexual was regarded as being deceitful and that there was greater value in being heterosexual (Froyum, 2007). Many of the boys and girls who took part in Froyum's (2007) study explained that homosexuality is not a natural part of growing up. They believed that the only way to have sex is with a penis and a vagina and not with a penis and a penis or vagina and a vagina (Froyum, 2007). Others brought religion into play, adding that in the Bible man was made for a woman (Froyum, 2007). Furthermore, boys and girls believed that homosexuality could occur if one spent too much time with the opposite gender (Froyum, 2007). When guys hang around with girls too much, they are seen as gay, because they learn how to talk, walk and dress like a girl (Froyum, 2007). Due to the fact that homosexuality is regarded as a 'disease', it leads to violence (Froyum, 2007).

According to Froyum (2007), physical violence came into play when homosexual boys approached heterosexual boys. The boys explained that when gay boys touched them they physically punched them or threatened them with violence (Froyum, 2007). While many boys did not belong to the popular group, being heterosexual offered them the reassurance that they were still masculine even though they had no status within the school (Epstein, 1997; Froyum, 2007). In Namibia, being homosexual puts one at risk of violence (Dunne *et al.* 2006). Lesbians run the risk of being raped by boys and men who believe they can 'correct' their sexuality by showing them what it feels like to be with a man (Dunne *et al.*, 2006). Gay boys experience physical and verbal violence as opposed to sexual violence. Being homosexual at school is so difficult that many gay and lesbian learners have left school (Dunne *et al.*, 2006).

Cobbett & Warrington (2013) found that, in the Caribbean, boys sexually harass girls in order to perceive themselves as heterosexual beings. Hlavka (2014) describes a similar situation in the US. The study notes that boys achieve this by asserting their desire to have girlfriends. On the other hand, girls want to be seen as desirable to boys but still maintain their innocence (Hlavka, 2014). The manifestation of power among boys is filtered through heterosexuality and boys show no emotional attachment to their girlfriends (Hlavka, 2014). They maintain their hegemony by referring to girls in derogatory ways (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013). Renold (2000) reports that, in the UK, while boys sexually harass girls in a verbal manner, they also engage in physical harassment.

While girls want to come across as desirable to boys, they do not feel comfortable when boys touch them or remove their clothes (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013). Teachers notice what is going on but fail to reprimand the boys; therefore, normalising this kind of behaviour (Renold, 2000; Cobbett & Warrington, 2013; Hlavka, 2014). In the USA and the UK, girls often accept that boys will touch their breasts or smack their buttocks because they feel it is a part of growing up for a boy (Renold, 2004; Hlavka, 2014).

Few studies have been conducted on sexual harassment in primary schools (Renold, 2004). Renold (2004) found that primary school boys often punch girls on their breasts and pull their bra straps. Girls accept this because they do not want to cause fights with the boys, even though they are not happy about it (Renold, 2004). Dunne (2007) reports, that, girls in Ghana and Botswana gave similar accounts of sexual harassment. In both countries, boys pinch girls' breasts or buttocks. Boys claim ownership of girls by writing them love letters pressuring them to be their girlfriend (Dunne, 2007). Rejecting such an offer makes girls vulnerable to physical and sexual violence (Dunne, 2007).

There is a paucity of research on sexuality during primary school in South Africa because children are seen as sexually innocent and detached from the world of sex (Bhana, 2007). Any form of sexuality is seen as taboo in schools and discussing it in the classroom is offensive (Bhana, 2007; Bhana, 2014). However, it is clear that primary school boys and girls are conscious of their sexuality because they are aware of the 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' relationship (Bhana, 2007; Epstein, 1997). When young children are active players in their sexuality they create the power barriers that exist between boys and girls (Bhana, 2007). Gender power imbalances often spark misogyny (Bhana, 2007). Boys are constantly under pressure to belong to the hegemonic group; therefore, the relationships they form with girls are purely nonheterosexual or misogynistic (Bhana, 2014). Parents are also key players in the formation of relationships with girls, because they assume that their boy child will grow up and marry a girl (Bhana, 2014). Bhana (2014) remarks, that heterosexuality is seen as normal, whilst homosexuality is frowned upon.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature relevant to this study. It noted the need to conduct research on the manifestation of violent masculinities among young boys. While there have been a

number of studies on this topic, gaps remain, particularly in relation to boys' masculinities in the early years of schooling. This study aims to add to the body of knowledge that was reviewed in this chapter. This chapter also set out Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity which served as the theoretical framework for this study, and examined the ways in which both primary and secondary schools are sites for developing masculinities. It was noted that gender is embedded in masculinities and violence. Finally, the chapter examined the informal and formal ways in which boys do violence in the early years through play, body image, video games, sport and sexuality.

The following chapter presents the methodology employed to conduct this study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study examines the correlation between masculinities, power and violence. It sought to determine how seven to eight year-old Grade 2 boys understand violence and their experiences as a victim and/or perpetrator of violence. In order to understand how masculinities and power shape violent behaviour a qualitative, ethnographic methodology was adopted. The ethnography began with observations, followed by focus group discussions and semi-structured individual interviews. This enabled me to gather rich, in-depth data. This chapter presents the methodological approach employed for this study.

#### **3.2 Methodology – a qualitative, ethnographic approach**

The methodology sets out the methods the researcher will use to examine various realities that may unfold during a study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Using a mixture of methods facilitates rich qualitative conversations between the researcher and participants study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). It enabled me to create rich qualitative dialogues between myself and the participants (Cohen *et al.*, 2011) that revealed their experiences and assisted me in understanding the links between masculinities and power.

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative researchers explore personal experiences and events in the lives of the study participants (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The researcher aims to achieve in-depth understanding of a social problem by reflecting on the experiences of a group of people. Qualitative research forms the bases of ethnography which aims to provide a descriptive analysis and interpretation of the behaviour and views of various cultural groups (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), researchers use ethnography to study a group of individuals who give meaning and understanding to larger problems. In this study, gender violence is the larger problem and the data generated from this study will be used in a larger project titled, ‘Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around school’. Ethnography is also used to study a group of individuals that share the same culture and whose behaviour, values and views have been shaped through their socialisation (Creswell, 2012).

The group of individuals that were part of this study was “narrowly framed” (Creswell, 2012, p. 462) because they were a group of seven and eight year-old boys who socialised with each other during school hours, lunch breaks and outside of school. I chose to use ethnography because I teach at Charville Primary School. This methodology enabled me to provide a thick description of violent behaviour among the boys on a day-to-day basis (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, I built a close relationship with the boys throughout the year and I was thus able to build a rich record of their understanding and experiences of violence during the time the research was conducted (Creswell, 2012). This study used the lens of an ethnographer by focusing on each boy’s “patterns of behaviour, belief and language” (Creswell, 2012). I observed these patterns in various cultural settings; when they arrived in the classroom before school, when they were outside during lunch breaks, when they were in the classroom, when they went to the tuck shop and after school (Creswell, 2012). Each setting provided a nuanced description of the boys’ behaviour which is discussed in Chapter four. I also used focus group discussions and semi-structured individual interviews to determine their views on violence (Creswell, 2012). It was evident that all the boys felt that violence was rife at school and that some boys were victims and others were perpetrators. Finally, the ethnographic approach enabled me to understand the participants’ use of language (Creswell, 2012). While they used slang on many occasions among themselves, when they spoke to me, they avoided it. Among their friends they used the words; ‘vy’ (go), ‘chow’ (eat), and ‘lekker’ (nice), but with me they switched to standard English.

I had to switch roles during this study, acting as a teacher and an ethnographer at the same time. It is common for ethnographers to find themselves negotiating their role as a researcher and as someone who wants to get involved in the research (Hesse- Biber & Leavy, 2011). Conducting research at the school I teach in had both advantages and disadvantages. On many occasions, when I witnessed violent behaviour in and around the school, I did not know whether to let it happen and use it as a part of my data or intervene and play the role of teacher. In ethnographic research, a teacher as researcher may want to observe and collect data from all areas of the school (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), while all activities and behaviour may be relevant to the study, it is not possible for the teacher to observe them all. It is therefore crucial that the teacher-researcher forms a total picture of points to study and creates boundaries in terms of what can be noted and what can be ignored (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

Ethnography allowed me to divide my role because of its flexibility. Many informal observations and conversations occurred between the participants and me in various places which I used to build my data; walking to the classroom, conversations at my desk before and after lunch break, and when the boys cleaned the chalkboard or walked to the rubbish bin in the classroom. Explicit and implicit acts of violence took place which I could use as a researcher and step in as a teacher. These types of observations and conversations cannot be generated through questionnaires. Ethnography therefore enabled me to observe the boys by going into the field and learning about their interactions with one another as friends, and with boys who are not their friends (Creswell, 2012).

The next section explains the social constructionist paradigm that informed this study.

### **3.3 Social constructionist paradigm**

Studies conducted within the social constructionist paradigm rely heavily on interpretive, qualitative approaches (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Although social constructivism uses the interpretive paradigm, there is a difference between the two. Blanche *et al.* (2006) state that studies conducted within the interpretive paradigm focus on an idiosyncratic description of experiences and understandings of a person or a group of people. Combining interpretive and social constructionist paradigms assists in understanding where such idiosyncratic descriptions of experiences and understandings come from and how they fit into larger studies. The social constructionist paradigm was appropriate for this study because, as Blanche *et al.* (2006) note, it focuses on how people's thoughts, experiences and feelings are constructed through socialisation rather than individually. Language is a driving force in the social constructivist paradigm as social constructivists believe that people construct knowledge through language (Burr, 1995; Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The focus is not solely on the actual words (language) used by the individuals studied, but also the meaning behind the language (Blanche *et al.*, 2006). For instance, this study focuses on violence. Using observations and interviews, it seeks to determine the hidden language of how masculinities and power drive violence and how maintaining power over other boys or girls leads to violent behaviour. Thus social constructivism is not only about the actual language "but about interpreting the social world as a kind of language" (Blanche *et al.*, 2006, p. 280), in other words, how people construct the social world they live in.

The following section describes the location of the study and research site.

### **3.4 Location of the study and research site**

#### **KwaZulu-Natal**

KwaZulu-Natal is one of nine provinces in South Africa. The colonisation of KwaZulu-Natal occurred during May 1843 and it became a province on 31 May 1910. The capital city of KwaZulu-Natal is Pietermaritzburg and Durban is its largest city. At the time of writing, its Premier was Senzo Mchunu of the African National Congress (ANC). The province has the second largest population in the country, at 10, 694,400. KwaZulu-Natal is diverse both in terms of population groups and languages. Africans make up 86.8% of the population, with Indians at 7.4%, Whites at 4.2% and Coloureds at 1.4%. The four main languages are isiZulu (77.8 %), English (13.3 %), Xhosa (3.4 %) and Afrikaans (1.6 %).

#### **Phoenix, Rainham**

Phoenix is situated north-west of Durban, the busiest and fastest growing city in the province. It was originally part of Natal Estates which still exists in Clayfield and Stonebridge. The late Mahatma Ghandi established the Phoenix Settlement in 1904 as a communal experimental farm to promote his principles of *Satyagraha* (passive resistance). Gandhi had a home in the Settlement and a clinic, printing press and a school called Mahatma Primary were also built. The Settlement was unique in South Africa as it was multi-racial and multi-cultural. Africans that lived on the hillside close by socialised with the Indians. Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Parsees came together to worship and read religious books in their own language. No religion was regarded as superior. Furthermore, the Phoenix Settlement offered women a space where they could break free from marginalisation and patriarchy, as they were regarded as equal to men. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki acknowledged Ghandi's work when he visited the Settlement in the year 2000 and lit a candle in Gandhi's home. Phoenix Township was established by the apartheid regime in 1976 in accordance with the Group Areas Act. Today, it houses mainly middle-class Indians. Its population currently stands at 176, 989. While Indian people make up the majority of the population of Phoenix at 85%, other race groups also live in the township (12.1% Africans, .2% Whites and 1.8 % Coloureds).

This study was conducted in Unit 5 which is known as Rainham. Rainham is situated about 2. 37 km from Mount Edgecombe Country Club Estate. The area has several schools and places of worship, including churches, temples and mosques. Two hospitals, the public Mahatma Gandhi Hospital and the private Mount Edgecombe Hospital are situated about three

to five kilometres from the area. There is a small mall 1. 5 km away with pharmacies, big chain stores like Checkers and Boxer Stores, and popular fast food outlets such as KFC, McDonalds and Nandos. There are also several garages and ATM machines around the area. The price of property is fairly high. At the time of writing, a three bedroom, one bathroom house in Rainham cost around R595, 000.

### **The history of Charville Primary School**

Charville Primary School was established in 1975 to accommodate the growing population in the surrounding areas. However, the school premises were not conducive to learning and sporting facilities were limited. Flood in nearby Springfield led to an increase in Rainham, Unit 5's population. Many families were housed in tents on the soccer ground. Several homes were then built to accommodate them. The number of learners at Charville Primary increased and the school premises were totally inadequate. The school therefore relocated to Rainham Road in 1983, where there was more space for both academic and sporting facilities. The school celebrates its 39<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. Of its 14 principals, only one was female and she served the school for less than a year. At the time of the study, there were 1,004 learners. A total number of 570 were boys and 434 girls.

### **My arrival at Charville Primary School**

I have been teaching at Charville Primary School for two years. I was anxious when I first started, as I didn't know what to expect. In order to get to the school, I travelled down a long road with many speed bumps and houses on either side. I found that Charville Primary School occupied a large space of land and that it was enclosed with a high barbed wire fence. There were two car parks (teacher and parent), each with its own security guard. The car park was full and I parked in the one remaining spot at the end of the gates. I stood in front of the school and wondered which block I should enter through. I decided to walk a little further, and read the sign that said 'admin block'.

I walked into the building, and was greeted by a lovely lady. We shook each other's hand and she walked me up the stairs to the waiting area. As I walked up the stairs and looked around, I realised that I had stepped into a school that strived for excellence. The school had received several awards which hung on the walls and a display cabinet showcased various other accolades. There were two offices, each with an administrative clerk. I greeted each and

introduced myself as the new teacher, Miss Anthony. Many of the other teachers stopped and stared which made me feel uncomfortable. The admin clerk then took me a little further down the hallway where I was greeted by a rather tall and large man.

Mr R. Rover (pseudonym) introduced himself. His friendly smile did not match his appearance. Finally, my mind was at ease. Mr Rover then walked me to Mr Tall's office. I was greeted by Mr Tall with a handshake and a very friendly smile. Mr Tall welcomed me to the Charville family, whilst explaining the rules of the school. I remember his words in his gruff voice, 'Miss Anthony discipline is key at our school, but remember no corporal punishment'. During our conversation I noticed that teachers walked into the office, greeted Mr Tall, and signed a book. I asked Mr Tall about this routine. He said that this was a time sheet which must be filled in when teachers arrive at school and before they leave. He kept this book in his office so that he could greet each teacher in the morning and bid them farewell in the afternoon. Mr Tall walked me through the admin block. Next to the deputy principal's office was the strong room. Teachers were not allowed in this room, as crucial documents were kept there. On the left was the photocopy room. I was asked to send all photocopies to an uncle named Raj (pseudonym). Right next to that was the sick room with a single bed covered with a duvet with pink roses. I was now calm and the tour of the admin block was over. To date nothing has changed in this block, not even the bright orange walls or the pink rose duvet on the bed.

There are a few other parts to the admin block. Downstairs are the teachers' toilets and the staff room. The staffroom has tables at various ends of the room, with chairs. We have a notice board and a chalkboard in the staff room. There is a fridge and a microwave. The school provides sugar, tea, coffee and milk. There are two lunch breaks, the first at 10h30 for Junior Primary and the second at 11h00, for Senior Primary.

The staffroom is always buzzing during lunch break with different conversations ranging from children at school, to school policy or something more relaxed like interesting life events, clothing and food. Only one male teacher joins us during lunch at 10h30. The other 10 teachers are female. However, the conversations do not change to compensate him for being in a room with females. On many occasions teachers cooked food and shared it with the staff during lunch break. This created a relaxed environment. There are 11 females and two male Senior

Primary teachers. In total the school has 40 staff members, 5 males and 35 females. This includes management, admin, and teacher aid staff.

Further down the building is the computer science room and media centre. The school is privileged to offer children from Grades R to 7 computer science. This large room houses 46 flat screen computers. Each work station has a soft cushioned chair. At the front of the computer science classroom is a large white board for the teacher. Children as young as five use the computer science room on a daily basis.

The media centre has a wide array of books for learners and teachers to borrow, ranging from Enid Blyton tales to Nelson Mandela's biography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. Teachers bring their classes to the media centre to watch movies on set books or for enjoyment. Children's art and science projects are displayed and special displays are mounted for Arbour Day, Heritage Day and so on. This is a space where children can enlighten themselves on current events and read for pleasure. Further down the corridor is the tuck shop area. The children have a routine for the tuck shop. If their parents have not given them lunch that day, but money to buy lunch, they go to the tuck shop and place their order as soon as they arrive at school. This will ensure that their lunch is secured. On many occasions I could not resist the sumptuous meals they made. A variety of fresh meals are prepared. For junk food lovers there are sweets, chips, chocolates and freshly made candy floss, but there are also freshly made samosas, bujias, soji with cream, and a selection of Indian inspired home cooked meals like chicken breyani, beans and roti and so on. When children visit the tuck shop, gender also comes into play as they stand in separate lines.

During lunch breaks there is always a teacher on duty and two student leaders. Boys and girls that want something from the tuck shop are first asked to show the teacher or the student leader their money. This rule aims to reduce traffic in the tuck shop area. When boys come to the tuck shop they run past the student leaders to escape the authority they have over them. Many of the boys use this as an excuse to run from the fields to the tuck shop area because it is seemingly an area where they can run about and not be constantly watched by a teacher. Many of the boys that come to the tuck shop come with their friends. When their friends are not allowed to accompany them to the tuck shop they become frustrated and push their way through the student leaders. Teachers and student leaders are placed at the tuck shop to ensure

that it does not become a place for socialising. Girls and boys disperse from the area as soon as their purchase is complete.

Further down the corridor is the Junior Primary block with an open field at the back of the building separating it from the Senior Primary block. The school hall, where assembly and school events are held is attached to the admin block and the Junior Primary block. The Junior Primary classrooms are always decorated with art work and charts. Each classroom has a carpet corner, where reading and discussions take place. The learners have the same routine every morning. On my instruction they come into the classroom, take out a book and read or finished incomplete work from the previous day. Many of the learners start arriving around 07h30 am. The buzzer sounds at 07h45 am. The daily prayer and registration are held between 07h45 and 08h00. For the purpose of my observation I did not instruct the learners to sit down and take out their reading or complete their work. The boys and girls formed their gendered groups in a very natural way. The girls usually got their workbooks out and discussed work, or what they had watched on television. The boys on the other hand argued about stationary, whose turn it was to clean the board, or who would pass books, or compared each other's workbooks to see who had got the work wrong or received stars. During this time, the bin, which was closest to the door, became the meeting point. Nathaniel walked up to the bin first, and Keith made a casual entrance once he had turned back and watched Nathaniel walking to the bin. The last person that walked to the bin was Malcom. The bin became a point for conversation, and the comparison of sharp pencil nibs. The boys tugged and pushed each other to claim their space at the bin. The bin was not only a social hub for the boys but also the space where their power was often exerted. The boys fought over a sharpener. Keith pinched Nathaniel, but Nathaniel did not give him the sharpener. Keith got upset and walked away. In the background Rajesh put himself in charge of dusting the chalkboard. Here violence was portrayed in a more explicit way. Jabu went to offer his help. He got one of the chairs and put it next to Rajesh. Rajesh pushed Jabu, and shouted at him saying 'you are not in charge'. Jabu stepped down. The second time Jabu did the same thing, Rajesh punched him and pushed him off the chair. Rajesh often got physically violent with the boys when they tried to help him.

During lunch breaks the areas around the school are demarcated for each grade. The different grades are prohibited from socialising with one another. The Grade 2 area (where my observation took place) is directly behind the teacher's car park. This is an open area with large green trees, beautiful Bougainvillea plants and luscious green grass. There are brown

tables and benches for the children to sit at and enjoy their lunch. During lunch break there is a natural separation between boys and girls. Only on very rare occasions did I observe boys and girls playing together. The girls would generally sit down and enjoy their lunch, while the boys would multi-task, eating, running, playing and fighting at the same time. The girls would often get annoyed because the boys ran through them. On many occasions, I observed that boys dropped each other's or girls' lunch. During my conversation with the boys, I asked them why they do not like playing with girls. Many responded, 'they are boring', 'they do not run', 'they talk about girlie stuff like shoes and clothes', and 'they sing ugly songs to the boys'. Some of the gendered songs that were sung to the boys were:

*Girls are sexy, made out of pepsi*

*Boys are rotten, made out of cotton.*

Or

*Boys go to Jupiter to get more stupiter*

*Girls go to college to get more knowledge.*

These songs made the boys angry which in turn created disinterest in playing with the girls.

The following section discusses the type of sampling adopted for the study and the sample size.

### **3.5 Sampling**

### **3.6 Data collection**

According to (Maree, 2007, p. 78) qualitative research relies heavily on the data that is collected "through social interaction with participants". Researchers go into the field, observe the participants and conduct semi-structured interviews (Maree, 2007). Collecting qualitative data requires the researcher to spend time with the study participants (Creswell, 2008). The researcher needs to get involved and participate at the site as opposed to quantitative data which relies heavily on surveys and questionnaires. Participants' views are not restricted and they add value to the study (Creswell, 2008). Information is recorded and organised.

#### **3.6.1 Observations**

In qualitative research, observations occur on a daily basis, and researchers observe the selected participants' patterns of behaviour (Maree, 2007). I observed a total number of 20 participants. The number of participants that were observed per day ranged from 4 to 7 participants. Even though I limited the number of participants I had observed per day, I did

not ignore the remainder of the participant's behaviour because something important may have occurred and if I had ignored them I would have lost the opportunity to collect thick, rich data. Every day was an observation day for me. It may not always have been during lunch breaks but it occurred when the boys stood in their lines, when they socialised in and outside of the classroom, and in the way the boys walked and talked and the conversations they had. This enabled me to gain deeper understanding and insight into the problem (Maree, 2007). Observation helps the researcher understand the participants' behavioural dynamics, and enables him/her to listen to and experience their realities through their own eyes (Maree, 2007). During my observation I paid careful attention to the types of behaviours the boys displayed. I also noted their conversations with one another. On several occasions, I asked them to provide a reason for their behaviour, which helped me to gain a better understanding of their experiences. I often used what I had observed during the group discussions.

It is suggested that ethnographers start as a complete observer and then move towards becoming a participant-observer (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). After many days of observation, I decided to start asking questions during the observation rather than being a complete observer. According to Maree (2007) and Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), it is possible for a researcher to become involved in the situation and still maintain their role as an observer. While the researcher remains uninvolved, he/she attempts to understand a participant's behaviour and views and how these fit into the social phenomena under investigation (Maree, 2007). It is imperative that an observer never forces or encourages the behavioural patterns being studied, but allows the behaviour to happen naturally, thus collecting data in its most natural state (Maree, 2007). When I began my observations, the boys were very reserved about the type of behaviour they exposed me to. From a distance I would witness an incident that seemed relevant to this study, but as I got closer, the behaviour stopped. Boys would whisper to each other, 'mam is coming'. This made things difficult at first. I could not question the boys about something that was not happening by the time I got there. However after we had spoken and I had worked on building a closer relationship with them, the boys were not intimidated by my presence. On many occasions they ran up to me during lunch and asked me if I was writing in my book about violence. They would often try and start a conversation with me. As soon as one boy came up to me several would follow, in an attempt to get my attention.

The book I carried around during lunch breaks, after lunch, or at my table was a part of my field notes. During observations ethnographers make use of field notes (Hitchcock and

Hughes, 1995). This is the starting point (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) where the raw data is collected. In most cases, ethnographers do not use the field notes because the data collected through focus group discussions and interviews refines what was written in the field notes (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The field notes are thus an initial and temporary stage in an ethnographer's data collection process (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). I used my field notes that were collected during my observations as a way to provide a first overall appearance of the participants. I was not bound by what was observed or the notes I had jotted down, instead I used it as the starting point of conversations during focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. In some cases what I had observed was validated during focus group discussions and semi-structured interview's, in other instances the participants behaviour was merely momentarily.

### **3.6.2 Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions centre on participants' interaction in a group setting (Maree, 2007). During focus group discussions ethnographers seek to gain rich data and provide thick descriptions of social phenomena (Maree, 200; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Maree (2007) suggests that participants in a group discussion may reveal more data because another participant may trigger them to speak about something they may have forgotten. In-depth data is collected because participants add to what others have said (Maree, 2007). I concur with Maree. When I recall the focus group discussions, I remember that one or two boys always started the conversation, with others adding their comments or experiences to what was being said. Some of the boys demanded my attention by talking louder than the initial speaker. The boys would often say 'oh and yes mam' or 'mam', 'mam', to make sure they got my attention or to add something they had forgotten, but remembered when someone else triggered their memory.

Focus groups are usually made up of five to 12 participants (Maree, 2007). Eighteen boys in Grade 2 at Charville Primary School participated in the focus group discussions. There were four focus groups of five boys. There were a total of six focus group discussions which were held on various days. On some days I had used the same boy in different focus groups. I did this to see whether responses changed according to which group of boys were present. What I had noticed as a teacher is that many children respond differently based on who is present during the questioning and who asked the questions. The group discussions were conducted

during lunch break in order to honour my promise to parents that their child's learning time would not be infringed in any way. The group discussions took place in my classroom. I chose this room because the boys are not used to going to different classrooms. I wanted them to be in a space that was safe and familiar. Walford (2001) suggests that participants should be taken to a location where they do not feel threatened but comfortable and calm. The boys were allowed to eat their lunch and drink their juice during the discussion and on a few occasions I provided them with sweets and chips. I aimed to create a relaxed environment and also to ensure that the boys did not feel that they were missing out on their lunch breaks.

During the first group discussion, even though the boys were excited about participating in the study, they seemed to have reservations as they did not reveal very much. The discussion was thin and described who their friends were, what they enjoyed eating, what they enjoyed doing and so on. I was not too happy with the density of data that I had collected. Gathering in-depth data requires that the participant and the researcher build a relationship rather relying on the hierarchy that may exist (Hesse- Biber & Leavy, 2011). I decided to intervene and called all 20 participants to my classroom during a lunch break. I still played the role of teacher (authority) and they saw themselves as learners (not participants).

I attempted to break down the power relations that existed between myself and the boys. I made them aware that during our discussions we could chat about anything and that during the discussions, they needed to see me as their friend rather than their teacher. According to Walford (2001), ethnographers do not put pressure on their participants but try to establish a relationship which makes them feel comfortable. Sharing personal stories helps build rapport and enables casual, relaxed conversations (Hesse- Biber & Leavy, 2011). I told the boys how I behaved when I was around their age. I often used to run outside with my older brother. We used to play marbles and collect Pokémon discs. I often joined the boys on the road when they played a game of cricket and I enjoyed being a 'tomboy'. I often came first in races during school sports and enjoyed competing with the boys.

When I was seven, I had a doll that was a little shorter than I was. At night I played with my Barbie dolls in my doll house. However, this made my older brother feel a little left out. Hence my Barbie dolls never lasted very long. My sneaky brother would go into my room whilst I was not there and cut off Barbie's hair, or pull off her head. This often made me cry but

brought me closer to him. My brother would rather have me wrestle and play fight with him on the bed than let me have alone time with my dolls.

Relating these experiences brought the study participants closer to me. They saw me as one of them because I shared my childhood memories, some of which were similar to their experiences. They related to me much better and the group discussions became more fruitful. The boys spoke to me about various experiences of violence in school. Many demonstrated what happened. The more interest I showed in what they were doing the more they opened up about what happens at school.

It was important to record the focus group discussions (Maree, 2007). The researcher should also make notes on visual cues, like facial expressions or hand gestures (Maree, 2007). Recording the discussions helped me focus my attention on what the boys said. I was able to take part in the discussion rather than jotting down what was said. When I observed visual cues like laughing, and giving each other looks, I questioned the boys about them.

### **3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interviews followed observations and the focus group discussions. Researchers use interviews to validate the data collected using other methods (Maree, 2007). Semi- structured interviews are usually done over a short period of time and a set of questions is prepared beforehand (Maree, 2007). Each interview lasted approximately an hour and was held during a time when both the participant and myself were available. There were a total of 7 semi-structured interviews which was held. The semi- structured interviews were held with Xolani, Kegan, Ritesh, Keith, Caldron, Kalista and Jabu. The boys were selected after I had conducted focus group discussions. I chose to interview the boys listed above because during focus group discussions they always shared their experiences and feelings openly. These types of interviews offer the researcher face-to-face contact with the participant, which enables the researcher to probe further in order to gain rich data and to clarify any information that was not fully understood or obtained (Maree, 2007). The interviews gave me the opportunity to question the participants when they fell silent or when they gave one-word answers.

A researcher should pay close attention to what the participant is saying and probe their responses. Rich data may emerge from the responses that may not be prompted by the

predetermined set of interview questions (Maree, 2007). The flexibility of semi-structured interviews gave me the chance to ask the participants questions that were not listed on my interview schedule. New questions arose as the participants shared information. For instance, when the boys began to speak about girlfriends and boyfriends a discussion of sex was formulated. I probed the boys about sex whilst handling the conversation with sensitivity by ensuring that the boys felt comfortable with engaging in a conversation about sex. Furthermore, through my experience I noticed that children are unpredictable as they say and speak about issues which may or may not be related to the topic at hand, however with caution this helped me to collect new rich data. This is not possible with structured interviews that do not allow for probing questions (Maree, 2007). I recorded the interviews. This enabled me to concentrate on what the participants were saying (Hesse-Biber&Leavy, 2011) and pay careful attention to their experiences.

The following section explains how the data collected for this study was analysed.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Data analysis involves analysing and interpreting the data collected for a study. Ethnographers start by observing the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The data collection process in this study began by firstly observing the 20 participants of which I had parental consent for. This enables them to learn something about the participants (HesseBiber & Leavy, 2011). Likewise, as it did in this study whereby, I was able to direct certain focus group discussion questions to specific groups of boys. The data gathered needs to be read and made sense of (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The ethnographer then goes back and collects more data to improve what was initially collected (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The recorded interviews were played back and I focused my attention to specific details. After each interview I went back to the participants that were a part of the discussion and collected more data which helped me clarify what was said or collect more data on specific responses.

When researchers use focus group discussions or interviews they need to be transcribed (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Maree, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Transcribing the data oneself enables the researcher to be actively involved in the research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The data that was collected during this research was firstly transcribed by me (the researcher). The recorded interviews were played back as I typed out what was being said. I randomly selected 7 of the recorded focus group discussions (4) and semi-structured interviews (3) and handed them over to a second researcher to transcribe. Thereafter, the data

should be read and reread; this gives the researcher the opportunity to think about what was said (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). I ensured that I had read the transcriptions more than once to ensure that I had not missed out anything that was outlined during the observations, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. After reading my observations and transcriptions more than once, I became involved and created a sound knowledge of this study. The researcher can then highlight the important or relevant parts of the transcribed data (HesseBiber & Leavy, 2011). Once I had proof read the transcriptions from the outside researcher and myself I began highlighting common threads of each transcription. I chose to use the cut and paste method which is a feature found on the Microsoft Word programme. I used different colours in order to make reference to common threads found within the transcriptions. I then cut and paste all of the same colours onto one document and named each document according to a possible theme which I could use. The name of each theme was confirmed at a later stage.

The researcher must read and familiarise themselves with the data in order to code it (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Ethnographic researchers often identify a variety of themes or categories and organise the data along these themes to make for easy reading (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). There are two types of coding (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Analytic codes focus on the researcher's interpretation of the data (HesseBiber & Leavy, 2011), while focused codes involve the researcher analysing all the data in a specific category and providing a clear definition of the category (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In this study analytical coding was used because after I had presented and interpreted the data of the participants, I categorised the data into themes which I had named through the interpretation of the data.

Theory can be incorporated into the data in order for the researcher to obtain a more refined sense of what was said (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Much debate surrounds data analysis and theory (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). For example, should theories be developed in conjunction with data collection or should the researcher collect the data first and then try to find the theory that it fits into? (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) With qualitative data, analysis does not rely on hypotheses or theory but rather the ideas and understandings that emerge from the data (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). This study uses the Theory of Masculinities (Connell, 1995). As a qualitative researcher I found a theory which fits into the study which helps formulate an understanding of boys behaviour. This study was not done to prove the

Theory of Masculinities (Connell, 1995) but rather to understand boys behaviour through the theory.

The following section discusses how trustworthiness and triangulation were achieved in this study.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness and triangulation**

As a qualitative researcher I ensured that this study was trustworthy. Trustworthiness requires the researcher to conduct tests for consistency (Maree, 2013). Consistency checks can be achieved by using multiple data sources. As noted earlier, this study used three methods of data collection. These three methods allowed me to analyse the various responses from the participants and find common threads which can be presented in the study. The data became contradictory because some of participants responded differently when they were placed with different boys. This made the process of analysing the data difficult but also interesting to note their change in behaviour. Triangulation is the process used in order to validate findings; therefore more than one method of data collection should be used, as stated above in this study (Maree, 2013). As previously outlined another researcher was involved in the data analysis process. Once the other researcher transcribed the data the process of triangulation was achieved because my transcriptions and the other researchers' transcriptions of my data was compared to and discussed and the data was validated. My supervisor was involved in the process of triangulation because my transcriptions and the other researchers' transcriptions of the same interviews were e-mailed to my supervisor. She then proof read the transcriptions and commented on the data which was weak and needed more data and on the data which was thick and rich.

The following section discusses the ethical considerations taken into account in conducting this study.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

According to Cohen *et al.* (2011) all researchers should adopt ethical behaviour that preserves the dignity of each individual. This is especially true of qualitative studies that are lengthy and involve face-to-face interaction with people (Creswell, 2008). Permission was obtained from the UKZN Research Ethics Committee for a larger project titled: 'Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools'. I presented my proposal and the study's intentions in April 2014.

The study was approved by the Committee and I then applied for ethical clearance. I obtained ethical clearance in October 2014 and commenced my observations.

Access to school or gatekeepers' permission: According to Creswell (2008), it is crucial to obtain gatekeepers' permission. A gatekeeper is the person/s who plays an official role in the institution under study. In this study, the gatekeeper was the principal of the school. A letter was sent to the principal requesting his permission to conduct the study. I am a teacher in the school and I was able to personally explain the study's aims and objectives to him as well as the data collection methods. The age group was not inserted in the consent letter which was addressed to the principal, however when I had a face to face conversation with the principal he was alerted that the study involved participants aged between 7 and 8. All his questions he had asked were answered honestly and he did not require additional information; he trusted me as I had built a good relationship with him from the time of my arrival as a new teacher.

Anonymity ensures that study participants' identity is not revealed (Creswell, 2008). The identity of both the school and the participants is protected by using pseudonyms. The exact location of the school is also not revealed.

Confidentiality ensures that the school and the participants' personal information is not disclosed or discussed with anyone (Creswell, 2008; Cohen *et al.*, 2011). I explained to the school and the participants' parents that the information obtained would not be discussed or presented to anyone else using their true identity.

Parental permission: the participants' parents were required to sign letter of consent that included information on the study. The letter also emphasised that their child's anonymity and confidentiality would be protected by the use of pseudonyms. Parents were also made aware that their child could withdraw from the study at any time. Initially, many parents did not fully understand that the study's intention was not to victimise their child in any way.

Neither did they fully understand that their child's identity would be protected. Only 5 parents signed the consent letter. I then wrote letters to the parents explaining to them that their child would always be protected and that his identity would not be revealed should I wish to make use of his understandings and experiences of violence. I had also given them a much more detailed explanation of what the study requires through telephonic conversations and formal letters. A copy of the focus group discussion and semi- structured interview questions were

handed over to parents. Parents were always kept in the loop about the study and the questions that were being asked as I encouraged the participants to discuss the focus group discussions or semi- structured interviews with their parents. After sending this letter, 15 more consent letters were signed. I had received permission to interview 18 boys and observe 2 boys.

Permission from the child: permission from the child was obtained through the parent. I also explained the study to the learners and explained to them that it was part of the stop the violence project. I added that even though their parents had given them permission, if they did not want to participate I would inform their parents. This did not occur. I had thoroughly explained the study to the boys and the types of questions they were required to answer. The boys were boys that were willing and excited to participate and there were boys who showed no interest in participating. I did not pressure or sternly try and convince the boys to participate as I did not want them to do anything they did not wish to do. Before each focus group discussion or semistructured interview I made certain that I made the participants aware of the fact that they do not have to answer questions they do not want to or if they feel uncomfortable participating in the study they can leave, even if it is in the middle of the data collection process. The participants were not bound by their parent's consent of their participation in the study.

Researchers may give their participants small rewards for their cooperation, especially when sensitive information is sought (Creswell, 2008). I sometimes gave the boys sweets during discussions or chips afterwards as a small token of my appreciation. This was much appreciated.

After the completion of the study I personally left a copy of the study in the principal's office and called each parent to school to view the content of the study as well as the data. If parents could not make it to school I asked them to provide me with their e-mail addresses of which I could forward the study to the parents. Parents forwarded their reservations and queries to me and I cleared out any concerns they had. What was comforting to the parents is the fact that they were not aware of the children who participated in the study because their names were not revealed. The parents could not recognise the response of their child and felt at ease because I had promised their child's anonymity and it was delivered at the end.

The participants were given access to the study as did the parents of the participants. Throughout the study the participants were given back the typed out transcripts to read. Many of the boys did not want to read it so I had read it out to them. This ensured the openness in terms of the study and the relationship we had. No part of the study remained a secret from the principal, parents or participants.

The final section of this chapter sets out the study's limitations.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

At first, soliciting participants for the study was difficult. Most of the parents read the consent letter and declined my appeal for their son to participate in the study. I then wrote a letter in each child's homework book explaining the purpose of the study and that their child would not be victimised. This resulted in 15 more parents agreeing to their child's participation. Another further limitation related to time constraints. The interviews were held during halfhour lunch breaks. One of the school's Heads of Departments (HOD) teaches in my classroom. I did not want to disrupt her lessons by taking the boys out of class, nor did I want the boys to miss out on crucial work. After speaking to the HOD she agreed that if I wanted to interview the boys for a full hour during my free time, she would send them to me after they had been given their work for the day, provided they were not doing assessments or tests. This helped me to conduct group discussions and interviews over an hour or more and collect the thick, rich data that I required for the study.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter set out the rationale for conducting a qualitative, ethnographic study. It described the location of the study, Phoenix, Rainham and the research site, Charville Primary School. The sampling procedures used were discussed and the biographical profiles of the participants were detailed. The chapter also discussed the data collection methods employed, namely, observations, focus group discussions and individual interviews. The data analysis methods and the identification of the themes that form the basis for the discussion in the following chapter were explained. Finally, the ethical considerations that were taken into account and the limitations of the study were highlighted.

The following chapter analyses and discusses the data collected for this study.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Data analysis and discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the various ways in which masculinities are negotiated among young boys in their jostle for power, using violence. In order to understand the ways in which boys construct violence it is vital to establish the link between violence and the different types of masculinities (Connell, 1995; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). According to Keddie (2003), young boys aspire to be seen as macho lads because of the manifestation of hegemonic masculinities in which power is embedded. This chapter identifies five major themes through which hegemonic forms of masculinities are forged, thereby creating a space for violence to be produced and reproduced.

In the first place masculinities, power and violence are intertwined through the construction of hegemonic masculinities.

Masculinities, power and violence.

Secondly, hegemonic forms of masculinities are constructed in the everyday experiences of the boys in line, on the playground, in the classroom and through friendships:

Young boys leading the line, playground dynamics, in the classroom and through friendships- negotiating power.

A third defining feature is Connell's (1995; 2005) argument that heterosexuality is the key to masculine success. Blaise (2005), and Bhana (2013) attest to young boys' investment in heterosexuality:

Strong, smart and handsome, cool and smooth: heterosexual prowess.

Fourthly, the ways in which masculinities are carved out involves active repudiation of gay/homosexuality:

“I’m not a girl”- subordinating homosexuality.

Finally, hegemonic masculinities are manifest in interest in and playing sport:

Karate, boxing and soccer.

Verbatim quotations from the participants are presented in order to gain insight into how violence is active among seven and eight year-old boys through developing hegemonic masculinities and jostling for power.

## **4.2 Masculinities, power and violence**

### **4.2.1 Perspectives of violence**

I began my discussion with the boys by asking the participants to outline their understanding or definition of violence. The evidence shows that many of the boys derived their definition from their own experiences. Bhana (2013) notes that violence is always gendered; therefore, children at school should be protected from violence. However, this is difficult as violence in schools is active and pervasive. The perpetrators are found within the boundaries of the school (Clark, 2012). Defining violence is not always easy as it is multifaceted; it may take physical, emotional, verbal or sexual forms (Leach & Humpreys, 2007). Furthermore, there is a lack of research on how gender violence is facilitated, imitated and perpetrated (Leach & Humpreys, 2007; Bhana, 2013).

**Darryn:** Violence is when someone hits you bad or scolds you and (pause) throws you on the floor and bully you.

**Jake:** Violence is something that (pause) people who bully you and use power over you and (pause) take you down.

**Rajesh:** Violence is when someone pushes you on the floor and hits you...when someone pushes you and (pause) hits you badly and makes you cry and tells you stops doing that (pause) I am not your friend anymore and (pause) I am not going play with you anymore because I am not your friend you only like to fight with me and think they think they bully you and all.

**Kalista:** Swearing, fighting and bullying.

**Ritesh:** Slang language and bullying.

**Jabu:** Take people's money and run with it and hide.

**Jerald:** Take peoples lunch tins and bully them around.

**Caldron:** Taking your lunch tin and throwing it.

**Keagan:** Chasing you around and then you cannot finish your lunch.

**Jabu:** Tripping people when they walking and you laugh at them.

**Keith:** Mam kicking, pushing, punching.

The above narrative unpacks various definitions of violence. While a detailed explanation is not provided for each response, it is vital to acknowledge that boys construct their knowledge of violence through their own meanings and understandings. Gender lends itself to all kinds of violence (Bhana, 2013). The observations, discussions and interviews show that the participants construct their ideologies based on their personal experiences. Some state that violence is physical. They define violence as hitting, pushing and punching. Others see violence as emotional. This takes the form of scolding, bullying (taking other children's money or lunch), crying, being laughed at and threatening each other with a loss of friendships. For some of the participants violence is seen as verbal. This includes swearing and using slang language. A recent study conducted in North England (Sundaram, 2013) found that violence accounted for various types of behaviour. According to Sundaram (2013), violence was associated with screaming, pushing, calling one another names, getting into physical fights, because of jealousy and so on. In contrast, Lombard (2013) found that boys in school felt that violence occurs between men and is only defined as such if blood is shed.

#### **4.2.2 Violence among the boys**

As each of the participants highlighted their perspectives of violence, they provided evidence of how such violence was enacted. There were several accounts of physical violence in and around the school. Observations and school records highlighted the pandemic of violence at this school. There are daily reports of physical violence among boys. As a researcher and teacher, I witnessed violence on more than one day. While all the accounts of violence cannot be described in this thesis due to ethical considerations, it is highly pervasive. The excerpts below focus on physical violence and how it intertwines with the participants' perspectives of violence.

##### *Excerpt 1*

**Rajeev:** Jabu he took me at 2 o'clock...it was on Monday then he took me on the ground and hit my head then Jabu came and pushed Xolani and then Xolani woke up and then they started fighting and then Jabu hit him.

**Caldron:** Mam one time I saw Peter when (pause) Rajesh dropped his lunch tin Peter was hitting him...I told him to stop it but he kept doing it.

##### *Excerpt 2*

**Kalista:** Mam Rajeev and Keagan fight.

**Ritesh:** They punch each other.

**Jabu:** Mam one day...

Ritesh interrupts... last time I saw Jake and Jabu they were fighting. **Jabu:** Mam I do not do anything to Jake. Jake starts me.

**Ritesh:** Mam the boys say: Fight! Fight! Fight!

**Caldron:** Mam they say: Fight! Fight! Fight! (chanting with his hands in the air).

**Kalista:** Mam Rajeev and Keagan always fight.

### *Excerpt 3*

**Preshalen:** I only know some boys they are like very irritating they are always holding my legs and all...and (pause) carrying me and all...I feel angry, like so angry...(shaking his head). But Caldron when I do not do anything he just comes and irritates me.

Each of these excerpts provides a snapshot of the boys' daily lives. They complained about fighting for money, and being punched, kicked or pushed. It is clear that violence is prevalent in the early years of schooling; this not only suggests that research on young learners is important, but that it is crucial to work with boys (Connell, 1995; Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Bhana, 2003; Connolly, 2004). Masculinity and power are strongly linked to violence. Boys develop their masculinities and gain power through enacting various forms of violence (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). Similar to other studies (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Kimmel, 2003), this study found that violence is pervasive among boys who seek to construct hegemonic masculinities as well as those that have the same aspiration, but are subordinated through rejection by boys that belong to the hegemonic group. The excerpts also reveal that violence is encouraged among the boys. During fights, other boys shout, 'fight, fight'. Thus, the boys encourage the development of hegemonic masculinities such as dominance, aggression, authority and competitiveness which lead to gendered violence.

**Caldron:** Mam Preshalen always pushes me and stuff...mam and when he comes with his lunch tin (pause) sometimes he plays when he plays with Kalista they take their lunch tin and they push hard together so they get hurt (action of two people pushing each other).

**Ritesh:** Mam on Friday Caldron ran and pushed Preshalen down and Preshalen ran and punched him in his lunch tin hard. (Showing action) ...the lunch tin was on his stomach and Preshalen punched his lunch tin hard so it hurts his stomach).

All the learners in the school carry a lunch box. This snapshot shows how the boys use their lunch box as a violent weapon, with the sole purpose of inflicting pain. On various days I saw boys pushing each other with their lunch box. They would eat their lunch and then use the lunch box as a weapon. They came from the back so that their victim was unaware of the impending attack, and hit them on the head.

**Kalista:** Even Jashay and Shelly they do that (push with the lunch box).

**Sechvon Anthony (SA):** Why?

**Kalista:** It is like a game you have to play and you have to push the lunch tin and who goes back and gets hurt or who stands still.

**Jabu:** They take the lunch tin and push people.

**Kalista:** Darryn always plays with me and he always pushes hard.

**Ritesh:** Oh and mam Caldron went by Preshalen and he was taking his bottle (juice bottle-plastic) and hitting him on his shoulder and then Preshalen grabbed his hand and kicked him on his leg.

These participants suggest that this is a game that one of the girls and the boys play during lunch break. It not only tests the players' strength and power by pushing hard enough to see who moves and who stays still but also causes pain. Kalista emphasises the pain he feels by using the word 'hard' when Darryn pushed the lunch box against him. Ritesh notes the use of another weapon, water/ juice bottles. Even though the bottle is plastic, Caldron uses it as a weapon to inflict pain on Preshalen. Preshalen retaliates by kicking Caldron on his leg. Violence was not negotiated but enacted due to the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities of power and aggression.

**Alista:** After school Thabo and Philani they fight (pause) they fight...the real fight...they throw each other on the fence and punch and fight.

**Nathaniel:** Once my baby cousin was using the toilet in school and one boy came and punched him...so he came and told me and I went there I twisted the boys collar and I held him like this (action) and held him against the wall...the boy did not do anything he was scared...I took my knee and hit him on his stomach (with a proud smile on his face).

**Keith:** In class as well something happen to Shiv so we took him out the class and then in the toilet Thabo and Philani suddenly they start fighting...Thabo and Philani...they was fighting. Then in the class Philani throw Thabo on the table and he fell on the mat and all... they fight for real...one time Philani kicked him (Thabo) on his head and he fell down.

Connell (1998) suggests that hegemonic masculinities of dominance may be peaceable at times in comparison with other forms of masculinities, but at other times they are active in a negative way, which results in violence. Due to the validation of hegemonic masculinities, violence is highly pervasive among boys in the early years of school. Physical fights between boys take place daily at school. Several studies have been conducted on violence in the senior years in primary school and in high school (Lombard, 2013; Parks & Connolly, 2013; Ngakane *et al.*, 2012; Dunne, 2007; Leach & Humpreys, 2007). However, this study shows that violence is also pervasive during the early years of schooling. The field, classrooms and toilets are sites where boys produce and reproduce violence. Bhana *et al.* (2010) also found that young boys were the main perpetrators of violence.

The next theme looks at masculinities and violence among boys who lead the line, playground dynamics, classroom experiences and friendships.

#### **4.3. Young boys leading the line, playground dynamics, in the classroom and through friendships- negotiating power**

##### **4.3.1 Leading the line**

Gendered lines are a feature of schools. Lines are formed when learners report to class in the morning, at assembly, at the end of study periods when learners change classrooms, before they go to lunch and when their teacher fetches them after the buzzer sounds at the end of break. In my interactions with the boys I noted that claiming first place in line was crucial in establishing hegemonic masculinities.

**SA:** Why do you all like being first in line?

**Jake:** Being first in line means you want to be like the leader of the whole class.

**Kalista:** Mam every time when its line up time Preshalen pushes me and comes in the front of me.

**Caldron:** Mam because when they go to class they can put the light on.

**Jabu:** And they say: "I am the first boy".

**Ritesh:** No they say: “I am the best”.

**Kalista:** Mam and Jabu and Rajesh always say...when I meet them by the stairs they run upstairs and Jabu says: “I am first and Rajesh second”...

**Preshalen:** I do not know... I think they think if you first in line then you are the leader.

Being first in line plays a crucial role in boys developing their masculinities. Each of the boys in this group discussion is aware that being first in line means that he will lead the rest of the boys. The boy in front develops a form of masculinity which positions him as the first and the best, thus encouraging the formation of hierarchies. In order to claim and uphold his position, he will not give up first place, even if other boys resort to violent behaviour. My observations and interviews with the boys thus revealed that hegemonic masculinities are also characterised by aggression and dominance within the line.

**Peter:** When I was in the front and he (Jabu) was second he pushed me down to be first.

**Ritesh:** Mam one time when we was going for computers we was walking down the stairs

Jerald pushed me down the stairs... I almost fell a big drop down... But luckily I put my hand down and held my balance (pause). Mam when I'm in front of the other children but I am not first the other children come running and push to go before me ...they run

first in the class and say: “I beat you all, I beat you all”.

These participants illustrate that many of the boys become aggressive when they are in danger of not being ahead of other boys. Ritesh and Peter were the shortest boys in the class. School policy states that when teachers call for learners to form lines, the children should line up in order of height. Ritesh and Peter were placed first and second in line, respectively. This led to them being the targets of violent behaviour. Kimmel and Mahler (2003) suggest that the gender dynamics within a school are invisibly connected to violence.

**Rajesh:** Peter says: “Why you cutting line?” And he pushed me down when we was walking... because I was cutting line...

During the individual interview with Rajesh, he showed that Peter behaved aggressively when his spot in the line was taken. When Rajesh tried to go in front of Peter, he pushed Rajesh in order to protect his place. Peter is not only subjected to violence in the line but is also a perpetrator of violence when he is in danger of losing the power and dominance he has over Rajesh by being ahead of him.

**Joel:** Kalista he says to Ritesh: “If you let me stand in front of you on Friday I will give you money”... and he told me that on Friday I am going give Ritesh money because he let me stand in front.

Kalista tries to retain his power in the line by offering Ritesh R2 for the spot. Ritesh is always first in line. The R2 is used as a bargaining chip to gain power, reinforcing that being number one in line is crucial in the jostle for power amongst the boys. Boys do not want to be seen as powerless (Parkes, 2002), so they will do what they have to in order to protect their power or retain it. According to Swain (2000), boys use various resources to gain power within their peer group, including intellectual capability, money, fashion, games and sporting prowess (Swain, 2000). Each resource represents a specific symbol of power which is determined by the spatial context (Swain, 2000).

#### **4.3.2 Playground dynamics**

Charville Primary School plays an active role in the manner in which boys develop their masculinities. According to Gilbert & Gilbert (1998), schools hold much power in determining how girls and boys give meaning to their identity. Although not the only influence, the school culture influences how children interact and practice gender (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). This study concurs with Gilbert & Gilbert (1998) by providing evidence that the culture of gender segregation is rife in school and that it creates power imbalances between girls and boys as well as boys and boys. While Charville Primary School is a coeducational school, there is unspoken agreement that girls and boys are separated during lunch breaks. Even though teachers expect boys and girls to form friendships and interact with one another, teachers are often responsible for placing the boys and girls in separate locations on the field.

**SA:** Do you boys sit with girls?

**Jerald:** (pause to think)...yes we do.

**Ritesh:** Mam we only sit with Shelly.

**Caldron:** Mam the other girls sit far from us.

**Ristesh:** We are here in the centre and they are here (showing with hand action their position on the playground).

Bhana *et al.*'s (2010) playground observations revealed that boys and girls preferred to play separately and formed single sex friendships. The construction of gender and sexuality reinforced single sex friendships because boys that showed interest in a girl or were seen

talking to a girl were perceived as having heterosexual intentions. My observations and daily interactions with the boys confirmed that the majority of the boys did not sit with or play with girls. The boys positioned themselves around the playground, whilst the girls occupied small spaces at the corners. Thorne and Luria (1986) also found that primary school boys in the US took up more space during play. The above extract shows that, even though there are many girls on the playground, interaction is rare between boys and girls. Ritesh highlights that ‘only one’ of the girls joins them during lunch breaks or on the playground, while the remainder position themselves at separate locations around the playground away from the boys. Bhana *et al.* (2010) established that boys and girls were mocked if they were seen talking to each other; this encouraged single sex friendships. Boys and girls were afraid of being labelled ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend’ (Bhana *et al.*, 2010). Their study also found that boys played rough games with the girls, which deepened resistance to cross gender friendships (Bhana *et al.*, 2010).

The boys were not happy when Shelly sat with them:

**Joel:** Kalista does not like Shelly to sit with him because she is a girl and only boys are allowed (pause)...so only Ritesh and I will tell him it is not right to do that (pause)...For two months we have been telling him.

**Caldron:** Mam when Jashay comes and to sit with us and when Shelly comes he says:

“No! (With eyes wide open) Go away”!

This narrative shows that Kalista did not feel comfortable when Shelly sat with the boys. As noted above, Bhana *et al.* (2010) found that cross gender friendships were frowned upon in the playground because they were associated with heterosexual relationships. Thorne and Luria (1986) note that boys prefer single sex friendships because the games they play require physical aggression and fighting. This study confirmed Thorne (1993) and Bhana *et al.*’s (2010) findings that when boys name their friends, they only name boys. Although Ritesh and Joel tried not to conform to the ideologies of the other boys and spent months trying to convince them that, girls should sit with them, Kalista rejects the idea. The evidence shows that boys who develop hegemonic forms of masculinities fail to conform to school rules (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). According to Gilbert & Gilbert (1998), boys that imitate hegemonic masculinities create a peer culture that does not encourage heterosexual relationships and that is misogynistic to girls and boys who do not display the same behaviour. Parks & Connolly’s (2013) study in London found that peer culture reflects the fact that gender power exists because violent masculinities are developed. Keddie (2003) also found that peer culture

proactively shaped boys masculinities and their understanding of it. It regulated masculinities of aggression, violence and domination, which signified girls or femininity as negative (Keddie, 2003).

The peer culture that is developed among boys results from the development of hegemonic forms of masculinities. I observed that different types of groups were formed during lunch breaks and at other times at school. As noted in chapter two, Connell (1995) identifies four categories of masculinity; hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised. I often positioned myself with different groups during lunch break. From my observations and discussions with the boys, I noted that they strategically placed themselves in groups. Kalista and Jake formed a club during lunch break. This club only allows specific boys to join.

**Rajesh:** When we used to go for lunch break, by the trees, where the teachers car park is... they had a space by the stairs... Jake use to say: "this is our club do not come and play here" ...Jake acts like his the boss (pause)... he says: "you must move from here. You must ask the boss first".

**Joel:** And Kalista he does not like us all to like Jerald (pause)... He does not like Jerald, Xolani and Jabu to sit with him because he is not their friend. He had a group which had a code, you can only try one time to enter, and then only his friends could enter because he is the boss of the group.

Jake and Kalista describe themselves as 'bosses'. Their group that holds the most power during lunch breaks. They position themselves in the hegemonic category. Observations and school records showed that they often found themselves in trouble because they failed to do their school work, were talkative during lessons, and were bossy, domineering and aggressive towards the boys at school. Jake and Kalista sought to gain the most power in the playground through mediating it in such a way that the other boys acknowledged them as the 'bosses' of the playground. Studies show that boys who want to maintain their position in the hegemony try to control the spaces in the playground, show competitiveness during sport, push children in the lines and display domination, power and aggression (Connell, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Bhana, 2008; Morojele, 2011). The vignette below gives an indication of the boys' response to the formation of the club.

**Kalista:** Mam first it was Jakes idea. He had it (the club) by the stairs. He had a code (pause), where the scholar patrol is (showing me directions with his hand). He used to have a club

with all his friends and then when I came to talk to Jake, he said: “No! What is the code”?

**Jake:** Mam they made a club (pause) they made me a boss, the leader or something (confused look on his face, shrugging his shoulders).

Jake and Kalista illustrate that they do not want to take responsibility for forming the group. They blame other people. The boys downplay their involvement in forming the group because it often marginalised other boys on the playground. Jake and Kalista fail to take ownership of the club because they want to come across as boys who play with everyone on the field. Whilst Jake and Kalista’s club take up much space on the playground, if the boys do not rush over to the bench, they face the challenge of sitting alone. The word ‘code’ highlights that the group is not open to all the boys in the playground; only those that know what the code is will gain access. Many of the boys tried to enter this group during lunch breaks. The ‘code’ was the name ‘Jake’- the boy that was partly responsible for forming the group. Failure to know the code left boys feeling disheartened and they had to try and join another group on the playground.

**Peter:** You do not let me sit with you (speaking to Jake).

**Rajeev:** They say: “Ay! Ay! Ay! Do not come” (hand action of being pushed away).

**Rajesh:** They say: “you was not sitting with us the other day so do not come” (to the club).

The above narrative illustrates that some boys try to become part of the popular (hegemonic) group. These boys are subjected to subordination. They want to fit into the hegemony even though they are not able to do so. During this session, the participants argued with Jake and tried to explain how they attempted to get into the group, with no success. Their expressions showed anger and resentment towards Jake. Even though the boys fail they still try to gain power (Connell, 1995) by showing that they have the attributes that characterise hegemonic masculinities. Their subordination sharpens their desire to belong to the hegemonic group. It was reported that Peter, Rajeev and Rajesh, who pushed in line to achieve first place, had been called in by teachers for fighting, pushing and bullying and their names were recorded in the defaulters’ book for various reasons. Due to their rejection by the hegemonic group, they joined with a group of boys that did not conform to the hegemonic group, but were complicit.

**Peter:** Mam, even Caldron says I must not sit with him I must go sit with Jake.

**Rajesh:** Caldron says: “Do not come sit with us because you was sitting with them” (Jake, Kalista).

**Rajesh:** Jabu told Joel not to play with me because I am naughty (sighing).

Ritesh, Caldron and Joel acknowledged masculinities, but were complicit. These learners achieved high marks at school, were student leaders that complied with the rules and regulations of the school and were referred to by the teachers as ‘good role models’ for other boys. Thus, despite the fact that they were seen as masculine, they did not enact hegemonic, but complicit forms of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The above excerpt shows how Peter and Rajesh try to become friends with boys who develop hegemonic forms of masculinities (Jake and Kalista), and that their rejection made them want to become friends with Ritesh, Caldron and Joel. However they were also rejected by Caldron and Jabu. Caldron does not like the idea of Rajesh coming into the peaceable group because the image of the complicit group may be tainted if they allow boys in the group that try to enact hegemonic forms of masculinities and that are deemed ‘naughty’. Caldron declines Rajesh’s offer to be in the group because he may possess masculinities that are not accepted in this group. Jabu also

tries to taint Rajesh’s character when he labels him ‘naughty’.

**Jabu:** Mam I went to sit with Ritesh and when I came back Jake was asking me: “What is the code”? (Pause) ... When I did not know, he asked me to get out.

**Caldron:** Mam and Rajesh told Jake must be with us (complicit group)... and when Jabu came (back to the hegemonic group) Rajesh said: “No”! But Jabu still came... then Jake pulled his t-shirt and pushed him away and said: “Go”!

**Jabu:** Mam I was not supposed to play with him... he pushed me and asked me to go.

The narrative shows that the boys who develop hegemonic forms of masculinities do not like boys who try to gain entrance to the complicit group of boys. Jabu is allowed access to Jake’s group; however, when he goes to Ritesh’s group he faces the dilemma of gaining access back into Jake’s group. Jake is violent towards Jabu because he went to Ritesh’s group. Jake claims his power and possession of the boys that belong to his group by being violent to them if they decide to go to another group. They are punished and not allowed back into the group. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinity only positions itself as the most powerful group when compared with complicit masculinity and heterosexual females.

### 4.3.3 The classroom

Classroom experiences are partly responsible for the way power is fashioned, its fluidity and how boys define power in terms of dominant boys and boys who face subordination (Mills & Keddie, 2007). Constant jockeying for power is rife among boys when it comes to classroom duties. Several duties are part of the daily routine in the classroom. These include the classroom monitor, the chalkboard eraser, switching the lights on at the start of a day and off at the end of the day, sweeping the classroom, making sure the charts are neatly pinned, dusting the cubicles and the fire drill monitor whose duties include checking on the boys and being first in line whilst carrying a class list.

Teachers allocate duties to boys that they regard as responsible and as good leaders. The boys often fight for duties in the classroom. Peter and Jabu get involved in numerous verbal and physical fights because they want more duties than the other. According to Connell (1995), power relations are formed through the division of labour among girls and boys. However, this study shows that boys are switching roles and jostle for power through the division of labour among themselves.

The carpet corner is the area behind the teacher's desk. This is often where the children read to their teacher. During the period after lunch break Peter noticed that the mats that the children sit on during lunch break had been left untidy. He walked to the carpet corner and decided that he needed to fold the mats. On his way there he discreetly nudged Jabuto come and help him. This sparked curiosity among the other boys. Peter and Jabu were folding the mats when Darryn offered his help. Peter and Jabu were not happy. They both pushed Darryn and told him to 'go away'. Rajeev saw what happened and ran to the back, shouting, 'stop fighting'. Rajeev suggested that the boys play 'eenimeenimyneemo', a game that is usually played to decide who is a part of the team and who is not. Peter then shouted, 'you all just sit down!', 'I will tell you who stays and who goes!' This got the attention of all the boys behind the carpet corner. Their complicity led to their subordination, which resulted in Peter being able to construct hegemonic forms of the masculinities of dominance and authority.

During the individual interviews, Rajeev and Joel recounted their classroom experiences.

**SA:** Do boys fight in the classroom?

**Joel:** Yes...Jabu...he always comes and pushes Xolani and I (pause)... just now when he came to class he pushed the table front so I can hit my head...this happened when I was taking out my lunch tin (from his bag)...when he saw you coming he went and took his lunch and he left.

**Rajeev:** He (Jabu) use to go and sharpen his pencil and go leave the dirt and empty his sharpening bin...he should throttle me and (pause) he should always irritate me when he used to go past me.

This illustrates that these participants have been victims of violence in the classroom. Both the boys experience physical violence inflicted upon them by boys that they see as ‘friends’. The perpetrators exert their force in an implicit way. The boys are aware that if the teachers see what they are doing they risk getting into trouble. Jabu waits for Joel to get his lunch box and uses the desk to hurt Joel. He also discreetly throttles Rajeev when he goes to sharpen his pencil. Jabu uses sharpening his pencil as a diversion so that he can exert his power over Rajeev.

#### **4.3.4 Friendship**

Power is also fluid through friendships. Friendships are negotiated in various ways. As already noted, Thorne and Luria (1986) suggest that gender segregation is highly evident among young children. It characterises their school lines, their playground experiences, the groups they form and work with in the classroom and their friendships (Thorne & Luria, 1986). This study found that gender segregation leads to the construction of separate, gendered identities which results in the development of masculinities.

**Caldon:** Mam Rajesh does not want me to come there because one time when he wanted an eraser I said no.

**Joel:** Nathaniel gave him money to go buy his cold drink and then when I asked Nathaniel why he gave him money to go back to the tuck shop he said: “He went to go buy my cold drink”. And I said: “Are you happy that Kalista took half your money”... He said: “Yes”. And when I asked he said: “it is okay and he is my friend and he went to go and buy my cold drink for me”.

The fluidity of power is evident in friendships through the negotiation of what is appealing to the boys. The first statement shows that Rajesh does not want to be friends with Caldron because he did not lend him an eraser. Caldron subordinates Rajesh by rejecting his appeal to borrow an eraser. Rajesh tries to redeem his power by not allowing Caldron to sit with them during lunch break. The second statement illustrates how friendship is negotiated through bribery. In order to protect his friendship with Nathaniel, Kalista does him a favour, but in return Kalista wants a cold drink. Kalista wants to help his friend but also protects his hegemonic masculinities by persuading Nathaniel to buy him a cold drink.

After an observation period during lunch break, I witnessed an impromptu conversation between Jashay and Jerald about their friendship which I recorded. The boys were standing alone at the corner of the stair case whilst their friends had gone to their classrooms.

**Jashay:** I am not your friend.

**Jerald:** You better be my friend (pushing out his chest, walking towards Jashay, with an angry face and hitting him with his chest).

**Jashay:** Okay! Okay! I will be your friend (puts his head down and walks towards Jashay).

Jerald explicitly states that Jashay cannot reject his friendship. He exercises his strength, dominance and authority to pressurise Jashay into being his friend. Jashay illustrates his compliance by agreeing to the friendship because he is threatened with violence. Even though Jashay tries to exert power when he rejects the friendship, the fear of being backed into the corner and being physically attacked led to him agreeing.

Boys often use their body image and strength as a way to construct their masculine self. The next theme showcases data that provides insight into how power and masculinities are fashioned through heterosexual investment and prowess.

#### **4.4. Strong, smart and handsome, cool and smooth: heterosexual prowess**

##### **4.4.1 Body Image**

Before conducting the focus group discussions and individual interviews I decided to hold a session with all 20 participants. I asked them a simple question: What makes boys special? The boys were excited and shouted out their answers, jumping off their chairs and attempting to get my attention.

**Nathaniel:** I am strong and brave.

**Kalista:** Boys are strong.

**Peter:** We are healthy.

**Jerald:** We are handsome.

**Joel:** Strong smart and handsome.

The boys try to exalt their personal attributes. They do not see themselves as weak, powerless, shy or any other characteristics that would suggest that they are unmasculine (Connell, 1995).

This study strengthens Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity by providing evidence that masculinity is not biological but is strongly related to the symbolic characteristics that determine whether one is a masculine or unmasculine man. The boys describe themselves as strong, brave, handsome, smart and healthy and always as better than girls. These are the qualities that Connell (1995) used to describe masculine boys or men.

**Jerald:** Boys are better because they are strong (picks up his shirt and shows his 'six pack' to the class).

**Xolani:** (stands up and lifts up his arm)... Look this is strong.

**Jashay:** I am stronger and braver.

The participants were eager to stand up and show their muscles to the others. They not only listed the qualities of a masculine boy but demonstrated the physical aspects by showing off their muscles. Jashay stands up whilst the boys are showing off their muscles to the class and shouts in a loud voice that he is much stronger and braver. Afraid of subordination, he not only compares himself with other boys but wants them to see that he is better. Jashay also harvests the power relations that exist between the other boys and himself to show his domination and strength, but this cannot be compared to the boys that are showing off their muscles.

This study adds to the body of literature (Martino & Chiarolli, 2003; Bhana, 2008) by providing evidence that boys invest time in developing their muscles to achieve bodily strength which is linked to manly prowess. The boys highlight the power relations that exist among them when they compare their strength and toughness.

**Rajeev:** Mam I can do push ups and clap my hands (showing the action and screaming from the back).

**Peter:** (screaming from the back)...Mam! Mam! I do push ups till 100.

(They all try and talk at the same time until Rajesh gets his point across).

**Rajesh:** Mam you know that exercise?

**SA:** No, which one?

**Rajesh:** You lay back and lift up big weights?

**SA:** Yes.

**Rajesh:** I did the light thing (showing action) because I am small and I picked it up.

This excerpt shows that boys develop their masculinities through daily exercise. As they develop the masculine characteristics of strength and toughness, the power relations among

them become active because each attempts to do exercises that test their strength and agility even more. Rajeev shows that he can do push ups with one hand, and Peter interrupts him by saying that he can do 100 push ups which needs more strength. Finally, Rajesh tries his best to interrupt them when he adds that he lifts heavy weights even though he is small. Rajesh compares the size of his body to the weights in order to prove to the boys that he has more strength and is tougher, thereby demonstrating the power relations that come into play when boys exercise their masculinities (Martino & Chiarolli, 2003). The boys in this study not only invest in their body image but also see themselves as heterosexual beings, even though this might not involve heterosexual relationships.

#### **4.4.2 Sexuality**

While children are often regarded as innocent sexual beings (Bhana, 2007, Renold, 2000), a growing body of literature suggests that they are not ignorant about their sexuality (Epstein, 1997; Keddie, 2003; Renold, 2004; Banha, 2013). Children constantly engage in sexuality through their gendered identities (Epstein, 1997). Power and violence are deeply embedded in the way boys understand their sexuality and their sexual knowledge. Implicit forms of power and violence are as damaging as physical forms of violence.

During the interviews, there was a lot of laughter and resistance when I asked about girlfriends. This suggested that the boys were either not interested in girls or wanted to keep it a secret. They did not feel comfortable admitting to heterosexual interest. They looked at and nudged one another and denied that they engaged in heterosexual relationships.

**SA:** What is the meaning of a girlfriend?

**Rajesh:** When you know... if you like one girl and one girl likes you.

**SA:** Do you all have girlfriends?

Loud screams and laughs No! Never! No mam.

**Rajeev:** My cousins are always asking me that.

**Rajesh:** Peter likes Shantal.

**Peter:** No! No! No! (showing hand actions).

**SA:** Why did you all make those sounds? You boys do not like girls?

Screams and shouts from boys... No! No!

**Rajesh:** One day during lunch break okay... Peter was running and saying: "I like Shantal! I like Shantal!"

**Peter:** (chanting) No! No! I do not.

The fact that the boys were aware of the terms, 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' confirms that they acknowledge their sexuality (Bhana, 2007; Epstein, 1997). However, Renold (2000) notes that boys often confront contradictions in developing their attitudes to girls. The study found that boys do not develop or show any feelings towards girls in a heterosexual way. It also found that violence goes beyond hitting, pushing and shoving one another and is also about the gender inequalities that exist between boys and girls and their formation of relationships.

As a result, Renold (2000) suggests that when boys were teased about a girl it opened the way for girls to be ridiculed by boys. The boys became defensive when they were teased about having feelings for a girl. Gender power imbalances manifest in boys protecting their masculinities by encouraging misogynistic relationships with girls (Bhana, 2007). Bhana (2014) suggests that this is the result of boys being under constant pressure to conform to hegemonic masculinities. Power and violence are manifested in the ways boys respond to relationships with girls.

When the boys' heterosexuality was questioned, they became upset. Renold (2000) suggests that when boys are teased about heterosexual relationships, they are afraid of being linked to femininities. Encouraging heterosexual relationships led to questionable masculinities (Renold, 2000). Initially, the participants in the current study denied having heterosexual interests. When I probed and questioned them further it came to light that they were merely against having a girlfriend at an early age, when developing their hegemonic forms of masculinities is of paramount importance. The boys show that mediating and asserting their power over girls by not showing interest in them develops their macho image.

**SA:** What is wrong with girls?

**Peter:** Maybe when we get bigger.

**Rajesh:** When we get bigger ... when you get like 24 and then like you can have a girlfriend.

**Peter:** Mam and Mam also when you get 26 you get married. **Jake:**

My mum said only when I am bigger I can get a girlfriend

**SA:** So, you boys do not want girlfriends now?

Boys scream ‘No! No! Not now’.

Renold (2000) found that some of the boys in her study had no desire to form heterosexual relationships, but would like to do so when they were older (Renold, 2000). Likewise, the participants maintained that they were too young to form heterosexual relationships. They underline their masculinities and heterosexuality by stating that, when they are older, they will be allowed to have girlfriends. Their parents also play a vital role in choosing who to have a relationship with. The boys said that their parents had told them that they would marry a girl when they were older. Bhana (2014) notes, that, parents play a pivotal role in the relationships their children form, by asserting that they will marry a girl when they grow up. This encourages heterosexual relationships and strengthens the notion that homosexual relationships are taboo (Bhana, 2014).

**SA:** What about having a girlfriend?

**Nathaniel:** Yuck!

**Keith:** Ugghhh!

**SA:** But lots of boys have girlfriends.

**Nathaniel:** Only when I am in college.

The other two boys nudge each other and giggle and Keith tells Alistar to ‘spit it out’.

**Alistar:** I do not like anyone ... (laughing).

**Nathaniel:** Only when I am in college.

During this focus group discussion the boys have a very lengthy discussion about the girls they like. Nathaniel’s first reaction to my question sparks a negative comment across the table. However, after my comment that forming a relationship is natural, their views change. The data illustrate that the boys show a keen interest in having a girlfriend but, like the other group, feel that they are too young to do so. Through their language discourses it is evident that Alistar likes someone and Keith attempts to get him to tell me about it. Boys do not want to have girlfriends now, but keeping up appearances is important.

**Keith:** Must be cool with girls... like when I wear high tops (Converse sneakers) and shirts.

**Alistar:** Boys we use like jackets we pull our sleeves up, pull our shirt (rolls up his school shirt sleeves)... we use high tops (touches his feet)... girls like it.

According to the participants they have to invest time and effort in their appearance in order to attract girls; even though they might not want to have a girlfriend now, they need to show the girls that they are ‘cool’. Martino (1999) suggests that boys who develop a ‘cool’ image harbour hegemonic forms of masculinities that enable them to gain prestige and acceptance amongst the other boys and girls at school. While Renold (2000) found evidence that girls dress in a certain way in order to attract boys, this study shows that boys also want to dress and look a certain way to attract girls and develop a ‘cool’ image in order to develop hegemonic forms of masculinities, rather than form heterosexual relationships .

**Alistar:** When they come and see us they will be wearing a short dress...we will be cool and smooth... then they will dress more with high heel shoes...I do not like high heels because if she trips and falls I cannot catch her...I like flat shoes...pumps.

**Nathaniel:** My dad will kill my mum if she wears short dresses.

**SA:** Why do you say that?

**Nathaniel:** Because ...

**SA:** Because?

**Nathaniel:** My dad will kill her... short dresses shows her body.

**SA:** Do you like girls in short dresses?

**Nathaniel:** Never! Yuck!

Alistar likes it when girls wear short dresses. Having a girl next to him with a short dress and heels allows him to be seen as ‘cool and smooth’. However, he does not fancy high heels because his strength and bravado will be questioned if she falls and he cannot catch her. In contrast, Nathaniel loathes girls in short dresses. His reaction is based on contextual factors. Nathaniel’s dad will not allow his mum to leave home in a short dress because it exposes her body. He insists that his dad will kill his mum if she leaves home in a short dress. Nathaniel emphasises his feelings about girls in short dresses by using the word ‘yuck’. He shows that his mum could be subjected to physical and verbal forms of violence when he uses the terms ‘kill’ and ‘yuck’. His distaste and beliefs are based on his father’s attitude. He also shows how his dad asserts his power over his mum by having the authority to control what she can and cannot wear.

The boys that participated in Phoenix *et al.*'s (2003) study also felt that girls should not wear short skirts. Girls who wore short skirts around the school were denigrated and referred to as 'tarts' (Phoenix *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, they attracted negative attention from boys (Phoenix *et al.*, 2003).

The findings of this study also suggest that boys are aware of their sexuality and the attachment and meaning it has in terms of sex. Thorne and Luria's (1986) study at a number of elementary schools in the US found that children are aware of sex through the different words and labels that are used when people talk about it.

**SA:** Do you boys know about sex?

(Chanting) No! No! (Laughing)

**Rajesh:** When the girl takes the clothes of and the boy takes his clothes of they go in under the bed and they only kiss each other and they make the boy go on the girl and all.

**Peter:** When I was going outside to play by the parking lot I saw one girl and one boy I was going down I just saw them kissing I went quickly by my friends.

**Rajeev:** My brother opened the gate for a friend and they went in the back and she wanted to hug him but she never hug him he kissed her and I was holding the broom stick and I caught him kissing her.

The boys reveal their knowledge when they note that sex involves kissing a girl, taking one's clothes off and getting naked. They do not know about sexual penetration, but they sound knowledgeable about the various physical acts and engagements between a boy and a girl which may lead to sex. Thorne and Luria (1986) found that children's understanding of sex was not equivalent to that of older children or adults, but was based on superficial words. Kissing, touching and 'going under the blanket' are terms that relate to sex. Even though young children's knowledge of sex is limited, they are aware that certain gestures have a distinct meaning and are illicit (Thorne & Luria, 1986). The above excerpt also portrays boys as dominant and girls as submissive during sex. Rajesh refers to the boy being on top of the girl and Rajeev says that a girl went to hug his brother but instead the brother kissed her. This places the boy as the dominant participant during sexual activity, encouraging hegemonic masculinities and subordinate femininities.

**Jake:** Sex is something that for people who want to open their clothes and go and have a 'dinner party' the blanket.

This suggests that when Jake asked his parents about sex and his parents called it a ‘dinner party’ Jake lives in a small home with two families. He might have witnessed his parents engaging in sex and questioned them about it. This questions the notion that young children are sexually innocent. The participants gained their knowledge of sex from what they heard or saw or through their socialisation.

**Rajeev:** Mam I saw two boys in the toilet and one went in the first toilet and he closed the door and then he said he got a girl at home and he said he was doing sex at home and then he covered himself with the blanket with the girl, and took out his clothes to be naked and then he did that (sex).

**Peter:** Mam mam (touching my hand to get my attention) I think so my cousin took his girlfriend under the blanket.

**Rajesh:** It is when you go under the blanket with a girl and you start to kiss her.

Rajeev constructs his knowledge of sex through a story that he hears during a visit to the boys’ toilets. He also understands that a girl and a boy have sex under a blanket. Peter and Rajesh then construct their knowledge of sex from what Rajeev says. Throughout the discussion, the common thread was that sex involves a boy and a girl, kissing and going under the blanket. During the group discussion the boys related different stories and observations which seem rather farfetched. However, they construct these make believe stories to forge their masculinities of competitiveness and bravado, so they do not seem ignorant about sex. As Thorne and Luria (1986) show, young children do not always develop their understanding about sex from adults. Furthermore, they seldom knew the actual meaning of sex but are aware of the words and labels that relate to sex that are used during play (Thorne & Luria, 1986).

The following theme illustrates the denigration of homosexuality among the boys.

#### **4.5 “I’m not a girl”- subordinating homosexuality**

Many of the boys spoke of being gay and lesbian as taboo. They expressed misogyny and disgust towards anyone that was gay or lesbian. This created the impression that they do not accept gays and lesbians as a part of society and the world they live in. Froyum’s (2007) study suggested that boys saw homosexuality as an unnatural way of life. The current study shows that boys relate being gay to being a girl; for a boy of seven or eight that is trying to build his masculine profile among both boys and girls, this is distasteful. Furthermore, Froyum’s (2007) study found that homosexuality was seen as somewhat deceitful and that more respect was accorded those that developed heterosexual relationships.

Being gay seems to be strictly prohibited among the boys at school. I noted two occasions when Jake referred to boys as ‘gay’. Jake tried to affirm his hegemonic status by subordinating the other boys by calling them gay. This caused a lot of anger and frustration among the boys. Rajesh and Jabu both resorted to violence. Rajesh was enraged when Jake called him gay. He verbally abused Jake, calling him a ‘dumb face’. On the other hand, Jabu used physical violence. When I reprimanded Jabu for his behaviour he defended himself:

**Jabu:** Mam I am not a girl, and I do not like the boys, so I hit him.

According to Lombard (2013), the construction of gendered identities results in violent behaviour. Boys construct their masculine identities of dominance and aggression (MacNaughton, 2000) in order to portray themselves as masculine rather than feminine. Jabu protected his masculinity through violence and body image. Whilst explaining what happened, Jabu still expressed his rage. He went towards Jake, pushing his chest out, insisting that he is not a girl. Jabu tried to defend himself by asserting his strength and body image towards Jake and with the boys that were standing around them. He refused to let the other boys believe that he could be seen as feminine. He felt the need to assure the boys that he was not gay, so he hit Jake. He stood tall, pushing out his chest to show the boys that, girls (whom the boys personify as gays) do not hit and girls do not have strong bodily images.

I noted that many of the boys wanted to be like Jabu because he was not only eight (the other boys were seven) but was also the tallest boy. Thus, gendered and masculine identities are constructed through strength and body image.

Seven-year old boys are capable of homophobic behaviour. During my focus group discussions I tried to gain deeper insight into their understanding of gays. According to Connell (1995), homosexuality lends itself to subordination and gays are the bottom of the gender order. Connell (1995) suggests that, boys within the hegemonic group prohibit homosexuality. To achieve hegemonic masculinities, boys marginalise gay men and portray them as powerless

(Connell, 1995). This played out in the participants’ responses to gays.

**SA:** What is the meaning of gay or lesbian?

**Darryn:** It means that when you teasing and you say you gay it means that you are a girl.

**Rajesh:** Mam I know... I do not want to be a girl.

**Darryn:** It means that when they say that word it means you are a girl

**Jake:** Mam I know the real meaning. The real meaning of gay is when a boy dresses and puts makeup like a girl and (pause) and if a girl dresses like a boy and puts pants and all like a boy and (pause) dresses like another girl.

**Keith:** Because girls must use dresses and boys must use pants...because if they both use the same clothes we would not know the difference.

**Darryn:** It also means that you a boy and you like another boy.

Masculinities cannot develop in isolation from femininities (Connell, 1995; Fenstermaker & West, 2002). Connell (1995) notes, that, men see themselves as superior to women. Jake suggests that gays can be singled out in public by the way they dress and act. His idea of being gay is superficial. He classes gays as dressing like a girl, with makeup and dresses, all of which are feminine characteristics. Keith feels that dress is important in signifying gender. If girls do not wear dresses and boys do not wear pants, it will be difficult to determine their gender. This illustrates that boys do not feel comfortable when they are called gay, because it means that they are girls, and thus powerless and inferior. Instead of the boys' masculinities being praised they are questioned. Being gay means you are a girl which does not sit well with macho boys that are developing their hegemonic masculinities. The data also shows that boys construct their meaning of gay and lesbian in terms of contextual factors.

**Peter:** Last time I think so Monday when I went by my house one boy was in the side there and I saw them kissing.

**Rajesh:** Mam you know what lesbian means mam?

**SA:** No, what does it mean?

**Rajesh:** It means when you kiss another girl. One time I went (pause) I went to my friend's house okay...I went to buy sweets with him and his sister in Grade 8...and then we went to the shop and we saw one girl and girl was kissing in the corner.

The boys are exposed to homosexual relationships outside of school. Their meaning of what constitutes gay and lesbian is informed by their observations in the community. These boys witnessed sexual contact between boys and boys and girls and girls. They thus create and develop their meaning of gays and lesbians through what they see outside their house, or behind the shop. Both boys indicate that this sexual contact was not meant for public display. As stated, the boys were kissing in the corner and the girls were kissing behind the shop. This reinforces the notion that sexual contact between boys and boys and girls and girls should be hidden and not displayed in the open as a boy and girl would.

**SA:** Do you like to be called gay?

(Chanting) No! No! No! (laughing at each other).

This clearly shows that these boys feel that being gay, or being called gay, is not acceptable.

**SA:** Will you marry a boy?

**Keith:** Oh No! No!

**Nathaniel:** Yuck!

**Alistar:** Nope.

**Keith:** It is okay... but I will not marry a boy.

**Nathaniel:** Because we are not gay.

**SA:** What makes you think you are not gay?

**Keith:** We play rough and all the boys play rough...if both of us are playing or talking the other people would not know what to say...brother...or husband...who is that? (all the boys giggle). Husband and husband do not make sense...both of us we like girls (points to Alistar).

The language that the boys use to express their feelings about gays is alarming. They shouted ‘no!’, while Nathaniel said ‘yuck’. Marrying another boy is taboo. Keith says that, while it is acceptable to marry a boy, he would never do so. Being married to a boy does not make sense. Once again, the boys characterise gays as feminine because they cannot play rough games like masculine boys do. Keith suggests that all boys play rough and if you do not play rough but talk, people will not recognise who you are and see you as gay. At first the boys proclaim they are not gay because they enjoy rough play, then they state that they have heterosexual interests. They protect their hegemonic masculinities by rejecting homosexuality and embracing heterosexual relationships. Bhana (2014) highlights, that, boys are pressured to belong to the hegemonic group and thus form heterosexual relationships based on misogyny. In so doing, they acknowledge that homosexuality is frowned upon in society (Bhana, 2014).

The final theme provides snapshots of how boys use sport as a platform to exercise their hegemonic masculinities and power.

#### **4.6 Karate, boxing and soccer**

Studies show that violence is enacted through sport in the production and reproduction of masculinities (Kreager, 2007; Ashley. 2003). Connell (1995) highlights that sport creates power relations between boys. Boys want to maintain their hegemonic masculinities of

domination, strength and toughness, which produce power relations during sport (Connell, 1995). Furthermore, sport also produces gender segregation (Connell, 2008).

Charville Primary School segregates sport along gender lines. Girls are coached in various sporting codes by female teachers and boys are coached by male teachers. During physical education (PE) lessons boys and girls are separated. The male PE teacher has the boys whilst the female teacher has the girls. If the class has a male form teacher, his timetable is rearranged for a female teacher takes over his PE period. This heightens competitiveness between boys and girls during sport (Connell, 2008).

**SA:** You like playing with the girls when it comes to PE?

The boys softly say ‘yes’.

**Ritesh:** Only once... because I was teaching them something ... you said I must help the girls... Tim and I.

**Caldron:** Mam we are like separate.

**Jerald:** No!

**SA:** Why? What do you think of that?

**Jabu:** Because when we run we have to beat them... they cannot even flip.

My observations and discussions showed that the boys wanted to be separated from the girls. During PE lessons when the boys and girls are required to warm up by jogging around the grounds, the boys always ensured that they were ahead of the girls. When they tackled obstacle courses the boys always cheered one another on, shouting ‘beat them, beat them’. While the boys agreed that they enjoyed doing PE with the girls, their responses were contrary to what they had said. Ritesh said that he only did PE with the girls when I ask him to help them. The boys demonstrate masculinities of competitiveness and bravado. Jabu highlights this when he says that girls cannot win races, or do flips. According to Bhana (2008), boys often vilified girls by comparing them to weak boys.

During assessment, the learners are required to do forward rolls. Many of the boys laughed and pointed at the girls when they could not do this. A few of the girls did not want to try because they were afraid of being mocked by the boys. The boys marginalised the girls and portrayed them as incompetent at sport. Their dominance during sport celebrates their masculinities which encourages power relations and subordinates the girls, reinforcing the notion that boys rank first in the hierarchy (Connell, 1995).

**Nathaniel:** Boys are rough.

**Alistar:** The girls are boring they act like they so pretty.

**Keith:** They go to slow... last time when the PE sir put us to run they said must not cut but we could not leave our legs we flew and ran ahead of them and we cut them.

**Alistar:** The boys are better.

**Nathaniel:** That is what Caldron and I do... we go in the side and bullet in front of them.

**Keith:** But it is better when you go in between them...they move aside.

The above excerpt shows how boys marginalise the girls during their PE lessons. Alistar suggests that girls cannot be good at sport because they are boring and they think they are too pretty. He enforces his masculinity by creating a misogynistic relationship, demonstrating their powerlessness and linking them with feminine attributes.

Girls are marginalised and subordinated by many of the boys because they do not match up to what it means to be a masculine boy. The boys explain that girls are expected to move aside as soon as they see the boys coming. They demonstrate and celebrate their masculinities of power, aggression, dominance and competitiveness.

Studies in the West have shown that boys engage in sport that encourages masculinities of domination and strength which later institutionalise power (Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008). Connell (2008) notes, that, sports like football and boxing portray a legal image of violence because of the physical contact involved. Likewise, this study found that soccer and karate were the two main sports taken up by the boys.

**Rajesh:** I do boxing.

**Peter:** I do karate too.

**Jake:** I do martial arts.

**Ritesh:** Mam we have a body builder in karate school, he is a MMA fighter (Mixed Martial Arts)...he also does Jejutso.

**SA:** And do you do karate?

**Ritesh:** Yes mam.

**Caldron:** I also do karate mam.

**Kalista:** I play soccer with my club.

**Jabu:** Mam I play soccer with my friends.

At school, the only sport the boys play is soccer. The boys take extra classes outside of school for karate, boxing and soccer. Swain's (2006) study found that football (soccer) lends itself to the hierarchy of sports, but this study found that karate takes precedence over other sports.

**Rajesh:** I do boxing. Because it's nice to teach you if anyone comes for you then you will be safe.

**SA:** So does boxing make you feel safe?

**Rajesh:** Ya.

**SA:** How does boxing make you feel safe?

**Rajesh:** When anybody comes to fight with you, you fight back.

Boxing and karate offer a sense of safety. Rajesh says that boxing keeps him safe because it teaches him how to fight back. Kreager (2007) observes that, critical feminists regard sports as a way of channelling masculinities of aggression and domination. Rajesh's masculinity of aggression is reinforced when he uses boxing as a tool to learn how to fight back, thereby promoting violence. Furthermore, sports are used to form friendships, and boys who do not play sport have difficulty making new friends (Swain, 2006). This study also found that the participants only played with boys who do not participate in karate on rare occasions.

**SA:** Do you play with the boys that do not do karate?

**Rajeev:** I play with them little bit.

**SA:** Why do you not play with them a lot?

**Rajesh:** Because they do not do karate like me.

**Peter:** Because they are not strong and healthy.

This illustrates the subordination of boys that do not do karate. Swain (2006) suggests that competitiveness during sports activates power imbalances. In order to belong to the hegemonic group, one has to demonstrate masculine qualities in sport (Swain, 2006). Ashley (2003) suggests that boys who play sport are seen as cool which proves their manly prowess. Morojele (2011) observed that sport was used by boys to legitimatise their masculinities of strength and domination which often led to the subordination of boys who did not show an

interest in sport and were thus regarded as feminine. This study adds to the literature in the sense that the boys who do not do karate are subordinated and characterised as physically unfit and unhealthy. In contrast, boys that do karate are seen as strong and healthy, placing them in the hegemonic group and validating their power over other boys.

**SA:** What is so nice about playing soccer?

**Keith:** Like when you get hurt on the goal post and all... it is like when you can name your players for example; I am Suarez and I bite everyone...because I watch on television

(TV) he bites everyone ... so I bite.

**Nathaniel:** I like Ronaldo... he is the best player...his soccer skills makes him the best...I like boxing (giggles)... (silence)... I punch people...today Jake was irritating me I took my lunch tin and gave me baa (sound effects and action).

**Alista:** Suarez is better because his stroke is better...and he bites.

**Keith:** It has rough playing when you can kick the ball only you cannot touch it.

Many of the boys idealise the sporting heroes that they watch on television. Popular soccer stars like Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, and Luis Suarez came up during the discussion. The boys enlightened me on the various reasons why they enjoy watching their favourite players. They showed interest in the way they kick the ball, do back flips when they score a goal and so on. The above excerpt is taken from discussion with the boys about how their sporting heroes enhance their enjoyment of soccer. According to Connell (1998), sporting heroes are examples of hegemonic masculinity and are under constant pressure to prove themselves. Gee (2014) states that popular icons are key players in the construction of social identities and the development of certain forms of masculinities. The study shows that boys enjoy playing soccer because it is closely linked to rough play. Violence is embedded in the way the boys perceive soccer. Connell (1995; 2008) suggests that this is the result of the power relations that exist in sport which develop hegemonic masculinities of competitiveness, dominance and aggression.

Keith's favourite player is Luis Suarez because he bites players during the game. He reproduced what he saw on television during his soccer games. Nathaniel shows how violence

in boxing is not only produced but reproduced when he punches people as well as reacting violently when someone irritates him. Sports thus create a form of violence that is legalised (Connell, 2008). In common with previous studies (Swain, 2000; Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008) this study also shows how boys encourage masculinities of strength, aggression, dominance and competitiveness in sport that are made manifest in power imbalances and violence.

**SA:** Why is karate important?

**Rajeev:** Because you have to practise and fight, and tackle them down.

**SA:** Do you do that? You like doing that?

**Rajeev:** Yes! Ya mam I will become like Ritesh (a boy in class) and get a medal (Ritesh brought the trophy and the medal that he won at a karate tournament to school).

**Jake:** Mam I got 11 medals.

**Rajeev:** Mam...mam I went to boxing and on Saturday I won so many.

Rajeev wants to emulate Ritesh. At Charville Primary School, teachers encourage learners to talk about their activities outside of school. Ritesh won a national karate tournament. I encouraged him to bring his medals and trophy to class and discuss the tournament with the learners. Likewise, the teachers at a primary school in London exalted boys' achievements and successes in sport when they were called up in assembly and presented with trophies (Swain, 2006). This idealises sporty boys which in turn creates a peer culture that honours hegemonic masculinities through sport (Swain, 2006). Rajeev uses Ritesh's victory to illustrate his sporty prowess which creates a platform to display his masculinities of competitiveness and bravado. The boys also demonstrate their competitiveness by suggesting that they win as many, if not more, medals than Ritesh. Kreager (2007) suggests that this is a result of the power relations that exist among boys in sport because they are under constant pressure to perform well and if they do not do so, they face being ridiculed. Rajeev shows, that, the significance of karate is that, it enables one to win medals and that the way to achieve this is to practice fighting and taking opponents down. However my experience of karate suggests that one wins trophies for demonstrating katas and learning how to defend an opponent with no physical contact. Rajeev contradicts this by suggesting that karate equips people with the skills to 'fight' and 'tackle' people to bring them down, again perceiving sport as a legal form of violence (Connell, 2008).

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the ways in which young boys invest in masculinity, power and violence. As many other researchers have noted, this is cause for concern and calls for positive action (Jackson & Salisbury, 1996; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Bhana, 2003; Connolly, 2004). The chapter also highlighted the gendered nature of violence through the development of hegemonic masculinities and the jockeying for power that occurs among young boys. It offered insight into how hegemonic masculinities and violence coexist among young boys under five major themes: gendered lines, playground dynamics, classroom experiences and friendships; heterosexual prowess; sport; homosexuality and violence (physical, emotional and verbal). Implicit forms of violence are perpetuated through the dynamics of gender power which cultivate active forms of violence (Lombard, 2013; Parkes, 2007; Dunne, Humpreys& Leach, 2006).

It was found that boys use their gendered lines to promote hegemonic masculinities. Protecting their first place in line resulted in negotiations through money and violence. The playground dynamics in this study showed how boys categorised themselves into developing hegemonic masculinity, subordinated masculinity and complicit masculinity. Furthermore, it was evident that their playground experiences promoted gender segregation and single sex friendships.

The participants' classroom experiences not only helped them create gendered identities but also subjected them to emotional and physical violence. Boys used walking to the bin to sharpen a pencil or picking up a lunch box from the floor as a pretext to perpetrate physical violence. Boys were often emotionally broken because those who they saw as friends were perpetrators of this violence. Many of the boys negotiated friendships using bribery and violence. If boys wanted to gain or protect their friendship, they had to pay. If boys felt that they were losing their friends, violence was used to make them stay. When it came to friendships, power was often exercised in a fluid manner. This study also revealed that body image was important to the boys. If boys were labelled 'fat' they were ridiculed, but boys that went to the gym and showed an interest in their bodies were admired. Boys invest time in their body image because it is linked to manly prowess (Martino & Chiarolli, 2003; Bhana, 2008).

Studies have shown that children are aware of their sexuality (Epstein, 1997; Keddie, 2003; Renold, 2004; Bhana, 2013). The participants were aware of ‘boyfriend’ and ‘girlfriend’ relationships even though they believed they were too young for one. This study also revealed that the boys’ understanding of sex was constructed through what they heard and in some cases what they had seen. However, their knowledge was superficial. They did not speak about sexual penetration between boys and girls even though they were aware that kissing, touching and ‘going under the blanket’ led to ‘sex’. According to Thorne and Luria (1986), while children’s sexual knowledge is not comparable with what older children and adults know, they are aware that it has special meanings and involves acts that are forbidden to them.

Thirdly, masculinities were policed through sport. The participants used sport as a way to perform their hegemonic masculinities. Similar to the findings of other studies (Swain, 2006; Kreager 2007; Connell, 2008), the boys in this study performed masculinities of aggression, dominance and competitiveness through sport which were made manifest in power relations among the boys.

Fourthly, this study highlighted the misogynistic relationships that boys created due to their perceptions of homosexuality. Connell (1995) notes, that, this is the result of building hegemonic masculinities that degrade homosexual relationships.

Finally, this study demonstrated that violence is pervasive in early childhood. It is for this reason that it is important to work with young boys. Violent forms of hegemonic masculinities are formed through their daily interactions with one another in the classroom, the field, and the toilets and outside of school.

The following chapter presents a synopsis of each chapter, the main findings of the study, and recommendations for working with boys in the early years of schooling.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5. Conclusion**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a synopsis of each chapter and what it set out to achieve. This helps formulate the principal ideas outlined in this dissertation. The chapter also offers recommendations based on the study's findings to enhance our understanding of masculinities and power and their links with gender violence.

The data in this study is drawn from an ethnographic study of seven and eight year-old boys at Charville Primary School in Phoenix, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It shows how masculinities, power and violence are intertwined in the daily lives of these young boys in various forms. The study reveals the need to conduct research with young boys as they invest in poisonous hegemonic masculinities. The struggle for power and the development of poisonous hegemonic masculinities are thus the primary reasons why violence is rife among young boys. The study highlights that violence does not always take explicit (pushing, shoving, hitting) forms but is also visible in implicit (play, friendships, body image, sexuality, homosexuality and sport) ways.

**Chapter one** presented the background to the study by highlighting the frightening reality of gender violence in schools that affects learners of all ages. It explored various forms of gender violence and presented statistical evidence on the different forms of violence that children are exposed to. Connell's (1995) Theory of Masculinity that explains how masculinities lend themselves to gender violence among boys was briefly discussed. The study's aims and objectives as well as the critical questions that guided the study, were discussed. The chapter concluded with a brief description of the research site.

**Chapter two** reviewed the relevant local, regional and international literature on masculinities, power and violence. The following five themes emerged from the literature review:

Masculinities

Schools as sites for developing masculinities

Masculinities, violence and its gendered nature

Masculinities, schooling and violence

Informal and formal ways boys do violence: play, body image, video games, sport and sexuality.

**Chapter three** discussed the research methodology employed to conduct the study. This was a qualitative study that adopted an ethnographic approach. The study employed the constructionist paradigm which uses interpretive research methods. The study was conducted in an Indian suburb, Phoenix, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The biographical profiles of the 20 boys that participated in the study were presented. The sample was selected using purposive and convenient sampling. In order to obtain thick, rich data, three methods of data collection were employed: observations, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed and organised into themes. The chapter also discussed how the use of three different data collection methods enabled reliability, validity and triangulation to be achieved. Finally, this chapter highlighted the ethical considerations taken into account and the study's limitations.

**Chapter four** provided a descriptive analysis of the thick, rich data obtained during this ethnographic study. The key findings were presented under the following themes:

Masculinities, power and violence.

Young boys leading the line, playground dynamics, in the classroom and through friendships- negotiating power.

Strong, smart and handsome, cool and smooth: heterosexual prowess.

“I’m not a girl”- subordinating homosexuality.

Karate, boxing and soccer.

## 5.2 Main findings

The various data collection methods employed (discussed in chapter three) enabled me to collect data which reflects the thoughts and actions of 20 Grade 2 boys. The main findings are presented in this section.

### **Masculinities, power and violence**

Gender violence became apparent among the boys through the construction of hegemonic masculinities which led to engage in a battle for power. The boys revealed their knowledge of gender violence when they related their own experiences in and around school to me. Gender violence was not only physical but verbal and emotional. It was experienced through physical fights, bullying, friendships, the use of derogatory language, and through using their lunch boxes and juice bottles, that every child has, as weapons to inflict pain on one another Connell (1996) suggests that men/boys who develop hegemonic forms of masculinities display violence, dominance, power and aggression. Furthermore there were not only perpetrators but victims who became perpetrators in order to reverse the power relations that had developed.

Physical, emotional and verbal accounts revealed the development of negative masculinities of power, aggression, dominance, and competitiveness. The study found that gender violence is highly pervasive during early childhood. Unlike Lombard's (2013) study, this study found that boys acknowledge that violence takes various forms and is not restricted to physical violence and that it happens in early childhood. Lombard's (2013) study participants suggested that violence occurs during adulthood and is only regarded as real when blood is shed. Like Leach and Humpreys' (2007) study in Lesotho, this study found that violence is multifaceted.

### **Young boys leading the line**

Charville Primary School had created a gender regime whereby gendered lines separate boys and girls. In each of the two lines the shortest boy and the shortest girl stand at the front of the line. Gilbert & Gilbert (1998) note, that schools are gendered sites and that this results in the construction of masculinities. Furthermore, a school's culture and gender dynamics determine how boys and girls practice gender (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000, Kimmel & Mahler, 2003). The gender dynamics in line were internalised differently among the boys. The boy at the front was positioned as the 'leader', 'best' or 'the boss'. Because the boys attached hierarchical and masculinised meanings to the person closest to the front, their space was not compromised in any way. The closer the boys got to the front of the line the greater the chances of being exalted by being labelled the 'leader', 'best' or 'the boss'.

Hegemonic masculinities and a thirst for power caused fights, resulting in violence. Other scholars have confirmed that jockeying for power and the development of hegemonic forms

of masculinities among boys are highly visible when boys push for space in lines (Connell, 2000; Keddie, 2003; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Bhana, 2008). The study participants believed that first place meant power and they were not happy if they were seen as powerless (Parkes, 2002) by other boys. The participants also revealed that boys often offered money as a bargaining chip to attain or sustain first place in the line. Swain (2000) notes, that boys use bribes to gain power in their peer group.

### **Playground dynamics**

Another interesting aspect of gender violence resulting from the integration of masculinities and power was playground dynamics. The participants revealed that the power of hegemonic masculinities and subordination were the key in understanding violence. Other studies have noted that gender play in schools harbours masculinities due to the gender boundaries and power relations that exist (Thorne, 1993; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; McNaughton, 2000; Connolly, 2004). There was active gender segregation on the playground. Boys chose to play with boys and girls with girls. Cross gender friendships were unheard of. Boys believed that girls could not play ‘rough’ games and often spoke about boring things like clothes and shoes. The boys suggested that girls were often on the playground to look pretty whilst the boys were meant to have races and play fighting games. This concurs with the findings of Thorne and Luria (1986) and Bhana *et al.*’s (2010) studies that note that single sex friendships are formed because boys play rough and violent games with girls.

Hegemonic masculinities were developed in the playground when some of the boys created a group. Boys who belonged to this group appropriated characteristics like being ‘tall’ and ‘strong’ and saw themselves as ‘bosses’. Boys could only enter this group if they knew the code. The boys that belonged to the group took up much space on the playground. When boys did not know the code, this led to their subordination. The playground not only revealed hegemonic but also subordinate and complicit groups of boys. The subordination of some boys from the hegemonic group and the complicit group led to their need for attention from either group. The power that the hegemonic group of boys had, led to behaviour shifts among the boys who had been subordinated; they were reported for rough play, bullying and violence. The boys in this study thus positioned themselves in the four categories of masculinities described by Connell (1995).

### **Experiences in the classroom**

I chose to observe the outdoor experiences of the boys, and to research their indoor experiences in the classroom. The boys used classroom chores as a signifier of power. Some flaunted their ability to do certain chores in the classroom such as dusting the chalkboard, sweeping the classroom, closing the windows or folding the mats. These chores gave them power over other boys in the sense that they were now perceived as the one ‘chosen’ by the teacher to carry out these chores. Boys that were often assigned duties used this power to decide if other boys could or could not help.

In some cases, when help was offered it was rejected because the boys wished to maintain their status quo in the classroom. Some of the participants also reported hidden forms of violence. Examples included perpetrators that used sharpening a pencil or picking up a lunch box as a decoy. The participants’ classroom experiences revealed that power was active and fluid.

### **Friendships- negotiating power**

Another fascinating aspect of this research was how friendships were formed. Violence, power, and money were used to negotiate friendships. Violence was also used to sustain friendships. If boys threatened to leave a group, they were at risk of violence and they stayed for fear of repercussions. An eraser ended a friendship when Cladron did want to lend the eraser to his

‘friend’ (Rajesh). Power was regained on the field when Caldron asked to be included in Rajesh’s group and he refused. The study also revealed how boys used money to bargain friendships, which shows their hunger for power. If boys were asked to do things for other boys they made sure they were rewarded with money or else the ‘job’ would not be done.

### **Strong, smart and handsome, cool and smooth: heterosexual prowess**

The participants also showed off their masculinities when they described themselves as ‘handsome’, ‘smart’, ‘brave’, ‘strong’ and ‘healthy’. These characteristics were valued and were used to create hegemonic groups and subordinate boys who did not display one or another trait. Their body image was used to strengthen their masculine personalities and assert their manly prowess. Seven year-old boys charmed me with their desire to go to the gym every day in order to invest in their six packs; this gave them power and projected them as strong. Similarly, Martino & Chiarolli (2003) and Bhana (2008) found that boys used their body image to control spaces and invested in six packs and big muscles which exalted their strength, power and domination.

The participants not only glorified their masculinities through superficial attributes but confirmed this by noting that they were heterosexual. Even though these boys were only seven and eight, they debunked the myth that children are sexually innocent. This is line with the findings of other studies (Epstein, 1997; Keddie, 2003; Renold, 2004; Bhana, 2013).

In common with Bhana (2007) and Epstein's (1997) study participants, the Charville Primary boys displayed knowledge of the terms, 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend'. However, if they became attached to a girl they were teased and marginalised by the other boys. In order to protect their masculinities they showed no open interest in girls. Studies (Connell, 1995; Epstein, 1997) have confirmed that boys formed misogynistic relationships with girls in order to protect their masculinities. However, the study participants confirmed their interest in heterosexual relationships when they said that they would have girlfriends when they were in college at the age of 24 or 26. The participants revealed that in order to get the girls they want, they need to invest time in the way they dress. They wished to be seen as 'cool' and 'smooth' to the girls which reinforced their macho image. Some of the boys also displayed their interest in girls who wore short skirts and high heels, but one felt that girls should never wear short skirts. Renold (2000) suggests that girls express their sexuality through the way they dress in order to attract boys.

Many of the participants' ideas about sex arose from they heard from people much older than them. While there was no evidence that the boys were aware of sexual penetration, their idea of sex involved a boy and a girl, it was done under the blanket, and they kissed and undid each other's clothes. One of the participants said that sex is for people who wish to take off their clothes and go under the blanket to have a 'dinner party'. As Davies and Robinson note, many parents do not feel comfortable talking to their children about sexuality and sex. This is illustrated by the boy whose parents explained sex as a 'dinner party' that involves two adults.

### **"I'm not a girl"- subordinating homosexuality.**

Violence was also perpetrated among the boys through homophobia. Boys subordinated and marginalised homosexuality because they associated it with the characteristics of a girl. Due to the socialised association of gay men with femininities they are often subordinated and placed last in the gender order (Connell, 1995). The boys reacted violently if they were called gay. Two participants got into physical fights when they were called gay by one of their

friends. The participants shunned people that were gay and said that they never want to be gay. Masculine boys could not be ridiculed when the term ‘gay’ was attached to them because they refused to be seen as a girl. Homophobia was rife among the boys.

### **Karate, boxing and soccer**

Finally, this study revealed the hidden agenda in sport. As other studies have shown, masculinities and power, and consequently violence, are deeply embedded in sport (Connell, 1995; Ashley, 2003; Keddie, 2003; Kreager, 2007; Swain, 2006; Bhana, 2008; Connell, 2008; Bowely, 2013).

The boys showed the type of bravado and prowess that sport created among them. Sport was no longer sport but was used to harness hegemonic masculinities of competitiveness, dominance, aggression and power. Firstly, the boys said that they do not enjoy playing sport with girls. Girls were not seen as ‘rough’ enough and were perceived as slow when they raced. Secondly, karate, boxing and soccer were the three sports that sparked interest among the boys. Karate and boxing were not favoured because they promoted discipline or defence, but used to learn violent moves in order to fight back. Boys who did not do karate and boxing were subordinated and regarded as boys who lacked strength. Soccer also enabled boys to enact violence. The boys demonstrated that soccer offers a legal way of being violent because they can push and bite one another and play rough.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

*“The malleability of gender identities and subjectivities in the early childhood years points to an opportune time to begin work with children in exploring, questioning and problematising taken-for-granted and restrictive notions of gender. Within an understanding of gender as constructed through the social, this lens also illuminates how the boys’ masculinities are multi-faceted, complex, contingent and changeable rather than unitary or inevitable and fixed”* (Keddie, 2003,p. 302-303).

Based on Keddie’s observations, Bachelor of Education Degrees offered at universities should include compulsory modules on gender, masculinities, power and violence so that teachers

are equipped to understand boys as gendered agents before they complete their preservice training.

Gendered power relations are invisible because teachers do not understand masculinities. Furthermore, the Department of Education should run gender programmes for teachers already in the system. Since masculinities, power and violence are evident in early childhood, Foundation Phase teachers need to broaden their knowledge of violence and its link with gender. Awareness programmes should demonstrate that violence is gendered and that boys invest in power and will use that power.

Workshops should also be held to assist teachers to promote alternate forms of masculinities among learners (Connell, 1996; MacNaughton, 2000; Morojele, 2011; Anderson, 2009) in the classroom and the community. Teachers and the boys themselves should be made aware of the negative effects that hegemonic masculinities have on boys and how developing such masculinities can lead to violent behaviour because of the power relations that are attached to them. Spaces need to be opened up to show how boys can do gender in non-hegemonic ways (Renold, 2004).

The notion that sport during the early years of schooling is free from gender disparities and violence needs to be debunked. According to Bhana (2008), sport is a key player in creating gendered identities. Hierarchical boundaries are formulated through masculinities of competition, domination and power which are inculcated through sport (Bhana, 2008). Bhana (2008) observes that policies on sport and recreation in South Africa need to promote gender equality. This study concurs with Bhana (2008) that masculinities are constantly changing; thus it is important to work with boys from an early age. A starting point would be to ensure that all boys, as well as girls, have equal access to sporting experiences and resources.

Finally, this study found that parents are reluctant to discuss sexuality with their children. Parents need to open lines of communication with their children on sexuality and issues pertaining to sex from an early age (Davies & Robinson, 2010). This study, and that conducted by Davies and Robinson (2010) found that many parents believe that young children are sexually innocent. However, children demonstrate sound knowledge of sexuality through information that they pick up which is later constructed to formulate their own meanings. According to Davies and Robinson (2010), children's knowledge of sexuality plays a pivotal role in their health and well-being. In the current study, the participants revealed that their

parents avoided discussing sex. Parents need to acknowledge that young children are sexually knowledgeable and that they should replace the dubious knowledge that they have constructed through their socialisation. If parents speak to their children about sexuality and sex from an early age, it might be possible to prevent risky sexual behaviour and violence during adolescence or adulthood.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the study's key findings. It also raised the need for research on early childhood in the South African context. The study showed that the primary source of gender violence is the active enactment of poisonous hegemonic masculinities and jostling for power.

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## **APPENDIX 1- Ethical Clearance**



UNIVERSITY OF TM  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU.NATALI

17 September 2014

Ms Sechvon Anthony (209522753)

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0494/014M (Linked to HSS/1197/013)

Project title: Grade 1 and 2 boys — An ethnographic study of little masculinities, power and violence

Dear Ms Anthony,

Full Approval — Expedited Application In response to your application dated 30 April 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above mentioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shenuka".

.....  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele

Cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

## APPENDIX 2- Change of Title



UNIVERSITY OF TM  
KWAZULU-NATAL  
INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU.NATALI

31 July 2015

Ms Sechvon Anthony (209522753)

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Dear Anthony,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0494/014M (Linked to HSS/1197/013)

New project title: Grade 2 boys — An ethnographic study of little masculinities, power and violence

### Approval Notification — Amendment

Application This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 08 July 2015 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in Title

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

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

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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benuka Singh".

Benuka Singh (Chair)

Drs

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Deevia Bhana

Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele

Cc School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo / Ms Bongi Bhengu

**APPENDIX 3- Letter to the school: Request for permission to conduct research**



**Date:**

The Principal

Name of School

Dear Mr/Mrs/Dr.....

**Re: Permission to conduct a research study in the school**

I am writing to request your permission to conduct a study of the experiences, meanings and understandings of gender-based violence (GBV). The research project is titled: **Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools.**

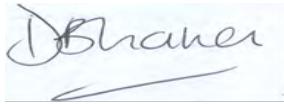
The project aims examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools. Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for some learners. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV. The study aims to analyse how school learners, experience, witness and observe and talk about GBV and how this differs for boys and girls. The project will involve interviews with learners, teachers and school managers, as well as observations of learners' interactions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. Questionnaires will be distributed to learners and teachers to ascertain a broad understanding of the scope and nature of GBV in schools.

All participants in the schools and the names of schools will be anonymized. In the various publications that will result from this study I will not use participants' real names or the names of their school. They are also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty.

Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being/other learners' is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely



Project Leader

Prof. Deevia Bhana

Tel: (031) 260 2603

Email: [bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za)

### **Permission Form**

I..... (Full names of  
PRINCIPAL/SGB  
CHAIRPERSON) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I grant permission to the learners and teachers participating in the research project and give permission for the school to be used as a research site.

I understand that both the learners and the school are at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time.

.....  
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

.....  
DATE

.....  
SGB CHAIRPERSON

.....  
DATE

## **APPENDIX 4- Letter to the parent**



Dear Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Sechvon Anthony. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am part of a study conducted by my supervisor Professor DeeviaBhana.

Am writing to request your permission to allow your child/ward to participate in a study examining the shape and form of gender-based violence (GBV) in and around schools. The research project is titled: Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools. The project aims examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools. Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for some learners. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV. The project will involve interviews with your child/ward, the completion of a questionnaires, as well as some observations of your child's/ward's interactions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. With your and your child's/wards' permission, the interviews will be audio-taped and these tapes will be transcribed. The tapes and transcripts will be stored in locked file cabinets and only I and groups of students who will form part of the research team will have access to the tapes and transcriptions during the project. These will be destroyed when the project ends.

Your daughters'/son's/wards' identity will remain anonymous throughout the study and in the various publications we will produce from it (we will not use their real name or the name of their school). In addition, her/his participation in the study is voluntary and he/she may decide not to participate without any penalty. She/he is also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter.

## **DECLARATION**

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

### ***Additional consent, where applicable***

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES/NO

Kindly discuss your daughters'/son's/wards' participation with him/her, and if you both agree and you give his/her permission, fill the form below and return to me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

I can be contacted through:

Email: [sechvon@gmail.com](mailto:sechvon@gmail.com)

Cell: 081 513 5226

My project supervisor is:

Professor DeeviaBhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

CnrMariannhill& Richmond Roads

Ashwood

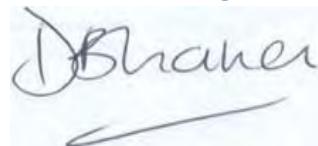
3605

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You can also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Research Office: Ethics  
Govan Mbeki Building  
Private Bag X54001  
Durban  
4000  
Tel: [+27 31 260 8350](tel:+27312608350)  
Fax: [+ 27 31 260 3093](tel:+27312603093)  
Email: [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za)

## **CONSENT FORM**

I..... (Full names of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my daughter/son/ward participating in the research project.

I understand that he/she is at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should he/she so desire.

### SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE

## **APPENDIX 5- Observation schedule, Focus group discussion and Semi-structured interviews**

Observation Schedule:

- How is violence enacted in the boys' line?
- How do boys relate to boys in the classroom?
- What shape does violence take in the classroom?
- How is masculinities and violence produced and reproduced during play breaks?
- How do boys negotiate masculinities and violence on the playground?
- How is violence enacted during physical education classes?
- What are the forms of violence that occur before school?

Focus group discussion

- Who are your friends? Boys/ girls. Why? Why not?
- What does power mean to you?
- What games do you play on the playground?
- What is your understanding of violence?
- Do you like violent boys? / Do you like being violent?
- Have you experienced violence in school or at home?
- Do boys fight for first place in the line? Why do boys fight for first place in the line?

What does it mean to be first? Semi-structured  
interviews

- Who are your friends at school?
- Why are they your friends?
- How would you define violence?
- What do you know about violence?
- Are you affected by violence or are you a perpetrator of violence?
- What kind of games do you play at lunch breaks?
- What do you know about relationships? Provide a definition of a 'girlfriend'.

## **APPENDIX 6- Turn-it-in Originality Report**

Turn-it-in Originality Report

Full Dissertation by Sechvon Anthony

From Gender Education article (Masters)

- Processed on 06-Jun-2015 11:27 AM CAT
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<http://adt.waikato.ac.nz/uploads/approved/adt-uow20070629.143600/public/02whole.pdf> 7

< 1% match (Internet from 25-Mar-2014)

[http://resorgs.org.nz/images/stories/pdfs/thesis\\_benchmarking%20the%20resilience%20of%20organisations.pdf](http://resorgs.org.nz/images/stories/pdfs/thesis_benchmarking%20the%20resilience%20of%20organisations.pdf) 8

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<http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-07082010-180040/unrestricted/dissertation.pdf> 9

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[http://gala.gre.ac.uk/11885/9/Timothy\\_James\\_Collins\\_19\\_Jan\\_2014.pdf](http://gala.gre.ac.uk/11885/9/Timothy_James_Collins_19_Jan_2014.pdf) 10

< 1% match (publications)

[Jane Kenway. "Masculinities in Schools: under siege, on the defensive and under reconstruction?", Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 1995](#) 11

< 1% match (Internet from 04-Apr-2014)

[http://www.ciimu.org/webs/wellchi/reports/workshop\\_4/w4\\_sakka.pdf](http://www.ciimu.org/webs/wellchi/reports/workshop_4/w4_sakka.pdf) 12

< 1% match (student papers from 12-Dec-2009)