

# *'In the Name of Honour'*

An exploration of the masculine culture of violence in the  
South African context

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## **ABSTRACT**

Research on masculinity has become an area of increasing interest internationally and in South Africa. Research in South Africa focussing on masculinity and its impact on violence, sexuality and HIV/Aids has begun to escalate. Researchers and social scientists have come to the realisation of the need to investigate how men feel about being men in a society in which they have been dubbed sexist, violent and rapists.

This thesis is an attempt to study the linkages between a culture-of-honour and violence. It does so by conceptualising culture as ‘a set of affordances and constraints that channel the expression of coercive means of social control by self and others’ (Bond, 2004, p. 62). By examining the subjective experiences of South African men in relation to concepts of masculinity and pride, it is hoped to determine whether honour norms generate hypersensitivity to insults and threats to the reputation of men which encourage men to respond with violence in order to reclaim or save ‘face’. This aggression may be directed at other males as well as result in heightened tensions in heterosexual relationships that lead to violence (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen & Vandellos, 2003).

A qualitative methodology was adopted for this investigation and semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight young men from comparable educational backgrounds and differing cultures. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The notion of honour in men’s construction of masculinity was evident and reveals commonalities as well as difference in the salience of honour constructs. Future studies are proposed to explore in more detail the relationship between honour and masculinities as well as the role of women in perpetuating honour norms in society.

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Thank you to the young men who gave so unselfishly of their time to try and make me understand the vicissitudes of being a male in this society.

## DECLARATION

This thesis was undertaken at the School of Psychology, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. This thesis is a product of the author's own work.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

*We women suffragists have a great mission – the greatest mission the world has ever known.*

*It is to free half the human race, and through that reason, to save the rest.*

*Emmeline Pankhurst (1857-1928)*

### 1.1 In the Name of Honour

Feminism as practice and research has over the past few decades challenged restricted notions of femininity and sought to empower women and redress gender inequities. But femininity and masculinity are related concepts and feminist advocates have learned that improving the health and wellbeing of women requires engaging men in an alliance of cooperation and dialogue. ‘Feminism represents a belief in justice and equity’ (Loots, 2005, p.1). Feminism and the commitment to gender equity must not remain a theoretical endeavour, nor remain the rhetoric of politicians who speak against gender abuse and then as Loots suggests, ‘go home and silence the women in their own families’ (2005, p.1). From a feminist perspective and alongside growing literature on men and masculinity it is critical therefore, to explore accounts of men that are located within men’s own experience.

Men are shaped by their own histories and the histories of the societies in which they live (Epstein, 1998). South African masculinities Epstein suggests, ‘have been forged in the heat of apartheid’ (p.49), which has served to imbue masculinity with significantly greater aggression. It is significant to note that South Africa has one of the most gender equitable constitutions in the world but male dominance, escalating rates of violence and sexual harassment remain deeply entrenched in this society (Morrell, 2001; Bentley & Brookes, 2005). There are clearly links between masculinity and violence. However, highlighting these issues does not imply that all men are inherently violent nor is this research an attempt to excuse violence in our society. There is without a doubt an imperative to explore alternate gender socialization for both males and females and to

develop a culture of peace. To do this Morrell suggests, is to explore with men new ways of being a man in this society (UNESCO, 1997).

Both historically and comparatively men have responded to gender challenges in diverse ways. On the one hand the “crisis of masculinity” in the 1990s generated differing philosophies among men. The so-called backlash movement against “feminism” demanded the re-institution of the male role as head of the household. Reclaiming this position of respect would ostensibly restore the self-esteem of men albeit at the expense of women’s autonomy. Critics of the mythopoetic movement inspired by the works of Sam Keen (1992) and Robert Bly (1992), suggest that this does not necessarily engage men in the struggle for gender equity and instead only fosters greater male bonding to the exclusion of women (Morrell, 2005). On the other hand, there has been an international drive by middle-class men to re-evaluate their “male roles” in society and their contribution to gender equity or inequity for that matter. Morrell (2005) claims that more enterprising work can be witnessed among men who ‘embrace gender equity in family and relationship contexts with women and children’ (p. 86). These “new men” are those who have taken more responsibility in the domestic realm and focused more on healthy fatherhood models of masculinity. This approach appears to have dissolved rigid gender boundaries and sexual divisions of labour in the family. As Morrell (2005) argues, this model of masculinity has driven home the value and importance of families to men and for men.

The idea that masculinities are socially constructed can be traced back to early psychoanalytic theory which formulated the concept of the “male sex role” (Connell, 2000). Sex role theory is based on the premise that masculinity and femininity are internalized sex roles, which are products of socialization, usually through identification with the same sex parent (Bandura, 1977). But, according to Connell (1987), sex role theory is inadequate for understanding diversity in masculinities and for understanding the power and economic dimension in gender. As a result, recent research on men has shifted beyond the abstractions of the sex role approach to a more concrete examination of how gender patterns are constructed and practiced.

Constructionist studies have used a range of social-scientific methods to explore the situationally formed gender identities, practices and representations of men and boys. These studies as cited by Connell (2000), range from quantitative surveys, to studies of organizations, life-history studies and finally cultural forms such as film, novels and plays by people such as Buchbinder (in Connell, 2000). Research on men and patriarchy is slowly developing in South Africa through the work of Morrell (1998) and Morrell and Richter (2004). Nakamura (in Morrell, 1998) has critiqued traditional Japanese patterns of masculinity and issues about men and sexuality and fatherhood have been debated and researched in Brazil by the likes of Arilha et al., (in Morrell, 1998). The debate around masculinity and specifically violent masculinities has moved onto the international arena with the 1997 UNESCO - sponsored conference on masculinity, violence and peacemaking, which drew interest from all over the world.

Historians and anthropologists have shown that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere (Morrell, 1998; Shefer & Ruiters, 1998). However, Gilmore describes a core set of traits which are transculturally associated with men across the globe (in Morrell, 2001). Different cultures and different periods of history construct masculinity differently. By extrapolation this implies that in a large-scale multicultural society such as South Africa, there are likely to be multiple definitions of masculinity. Studies in the USA and Australia reveal differences in expression of masculinity between Latino and Anglo men in the USA and between ethnic (Greek, Lebanese) and Anglo boys in Australia. These differences extend to class differentiation as well and research suggests that the meaning of masculinity in working-class life is very different from its meaning in middle-class life and the very rich or the very poor. In fact some masculinities are more respected than others are and some are disregarded such as homosexual masculinities (Connell, 2000).

Contemporary masculinities according to Connell (2000) are implicated in a range of toxic effects. He quotes various researchers (e.g. Tomsen, 1997; Walker, Butland & Connell, 2000), who illustrate the extent of these effects. Australian men are four times more likely to be involved in road crashes than women are and men are over-represented

in crime and imprisonment. In Australia for instance, 94% of prisoners in jails are men. Statistics in the USA report that 90% of those charged with aggravated assault, murder and manslaughter are male and that although both genders can be involved in domestic violence, men are far more likely than women to be the perpetrators of serious injury against their partners.

Connell's research describes the influence of contemporary masculinities on the lives of others such as rape, domestic violence against women, racism and homophobic violence. Statistical evidence of similar effects in South African society will be discussed in the following chapters. Robert Connell seems to draw a clear connection between men and violence. 'In all contemporary societies for which evidence is available, men are the main agents of personal violence' (2000, p.9).

How does research understand this connection between men and violence? There is a widespread view that men are naturally prone to violence because of their genetic makeup that is, greater levels of testosterone in the body and the concept of a "male brain" which functions differently than the "female brain". On closer examination however, this biological-determinist argument is fraught with improbabilities and serves to perpetuate a notion of "natural masculinity" that may serve to excuse men's violence. Connell's argument is that the reproductive differences between men and women do not cause violence and that social process and personal conduct are always involved (Morrell, 2001). However, the fact remains of men's specific involvement in violence and to understand this malaise we have to look at the different social situations in which men and women are placed by their societies. Boys grow up inducted into many rituals of violence. They are fed stories about legendary heroes who kill the enemy, they are given toy guns and soldiers and are encouraged to play combative games such as football and rugby (Memela, 2005). By the time they are adults, young men have been socialized into models of conduct in which recourse to violence is normal and where this is presented as admirable masculine behaviour. A common scenario of public violence according to Connell (2000) is between men in a situation where a challenge has arisen. For example,

between bouncer and patron at a club, and each one feels his manhood is at stake in not backing down.

The culture of masculine violence becomes a broader global problem of family and community violence because of the underlying inequality of gender in a society that remains largely patriarchal. Many men have a sense of entitlement to respect, deference and service from women, which if not forthcoming, is seen by some men as punishable. Some will see it as a challenge to their dignity or authority to which the appropriate response is to control and punish (Connell, 2000). Secondly, the absence of education around human relationships becomes problematic as young men are seriously underrepresented in those areas of learning which deal with relational problems such as the humanities, social sciences, psychology and the performing arts.

Studies by Hearn (1998), suggest that violence is an important means by which gender inequalities are maintained. This culture of violence against women both subordinates and harms woman and together with other forms of violence such as homophobic violence and racist violence have common origins in men's beliefs in hierarchy, narrow conceptions of masculinity and anxieties about their own status. Femicide and gender-based violence studies have identified that domestic violence may be instrumental, that is, a way of maintaining control over women or it may be intended as a form of punishment to put women back in their place. It is reasonable to consider that gender-based violence may be seen as a means to solve a crisis of masculinity especially when women's claims for autonomy are viewed as a violation of men's entitlement (Ptacek, 1988).

South African writers such as Bennett (2000, 2005), Robertson (1998) and Vetten (1997), explicate the rise in gender violence in South Africa today and consider our violent history and the transition to democracy as possible influences. Vetten (1997) goes on to suggest that not all South African men experience transition as conflict-ridden and react with violence. An acceptance of violence is not a general phenomenon among men in this society and the circumstances under which violence becomes embodied and incorporated into practices of masculinity requires further discussion. To do this is to explore the

perpetuation of scripts of masculine as well as feminine behaviour. Criminological research suggests that criminal violence is not just a consequence of a pre-existing masculinity. 'In many situations crime is a resource for constructing masculinity – it is a way by which men can achieve status, acquire resources and assert their dominance' (Connell, 2003, p. 18).

Khumalo (2005) states that, 'masculinity like femininity operates politically at different levels' (p.93). These levels referred to by Khumalo view masculinity as a form of identity that structures personal attitudes and behaviours as well as a form of ideology in that it presents a set of cultural ideals that define appropriate roles, values and expectations for and of men. This perception of superiority of men over women extends to rights, entitlements, as well as physical and mental capacities. Khumalo (2005) claims that,

'These cultural ideals of masculinity have become part of a bigger malaise confronting us as a country and points to the persistent and disturbing ideology of male superiority and female inferiority which continues to pervade South Africa at all social and formative levels, entrenching false myths about women's and men's roles. It is imperative that we begin to acknowledge that culture has created and supported a false ideology of superiority of men over women' (p. 93).

The focus of this research is to explore the existence of a culture-of-honour among men and its possible relation to violence. It is thus helpful to provide a definition of the concept of honour and consider the studies that link this culture-of-honour with acts of violence among men. Peristiany (in Gilmore, 1990) refers to honour as a fluid and changeable concept that can be described as an expression of social and cultural relations. It changes with various cultures and within cultures according to sex, class, status and geographical location. Notions of honour exist in virtually all cultures in the world and Vandello and Cohen (2003) suggest that honour is assigned varying importance in cultures around the world. There are two definitions of honour, one of which is consistent across most if not all cultures. This definition of honour pertains to virtuous behaviour, good moral character, integrity and altruism as described above (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen &

Nisbett, 1994). Synonymous with the concept of honour are words such as esteem, recognition, dignity and status (The Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 1990). The second definition of honour that is usually ascribed to men, defines it as status, precedence and reputation that is based on strength and power and the enforcement of will on others (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). As stated by Vandello and Cohen (2003),

‘Notions of honour are likely to be transmitted in cultures through shared norms and values, through behavioural scripts that tell you when you respond with violence and when you should prepare to defend yourself against another’s violence, and through ideas that run to the core of one’s identity of what it is to be a ‘man’ or to be ‘not much of a man’ (p.998).

Vandello and Cohen (2003) suggest that a cultural emphasis on honour may also foster traditional gender roles that may encourage and perpetuate male on female violence. Thus, a woman’s good behaviour is essential to maintain a man’s reputation. In cultures of honour men should be more likely to feel pressure to restore their honour after perceived infidelity or misbehaviour by their partners and one way that this can be done is through punishment through violence. ‘Women in cultures of honor should be expected to remain loyal in relationships even when the relationships become violent’ (Vandello & Cohen, p.998-999). In contrast, non-honour cultures view women that remain in abusive situations as passive and foolish.

According to Gilmore (1990), there appears to be a pervasive concern about being a man in almost all cultures and societies around the world. A recurring theme is that manhood is not a natural biological attainment but rather something that has to be artificially foisted upon young men before they are allowed to wear the mantle of being a “real” man. A growing body of research indicates that honour and prestige is still relevant in society today and conceptions of manhood still hinge on sexual performance, productiveness, aggression and esteem (Gilmore, 1990).

Anthropologists refer to a *culture-of-honour* as one in which even small disputes become contests for reputation and social status (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle & Schwarz, 1996) and men had to respond aggressively to insults or be humiliated and lose status before their family and peers. Vandello and Cohen (2003) argue that in honour cultures there is a tremendous concern with a male's reputation and status and this is an organizing principle for social life. The earlier definitions of honour among men emphasized competition among men in bravery, in their relations to women and in defending their masculinity. In a patriarchal society the defense of the male honour is of paramount importance (Gilmore, 1990). Now Gilmore (1990) has suggested that a contributing factor to this aggressive defense of male honour is an uncertainty among men in certain cultures and contexts about their masculine role. Gilmore concludes that there is a development as men age. Whereas the emphasis on young men is to prove themselves to gain honour, often implying antagonistic behaviour, what is expected of the mature man is honesty and responsibility. Examples like this show that a variety of ideals can be associated with the honourable man. It is important therefore not to assume that a single definition of honour can apply to every context.

In their work on the culture of honour, Cohen and Vandello (1998) suggest that various institutional forces may help to maintain this culture and its violent consequences. For example, southern and western American media present culture-of-honour type violence in a more favourable light than do northern newspapers. Southerners are also more likely to read violent magazines and watch violent television shows (Cohen & Vandello, 1998). The South has a culture-of-honour syndrome with a particular meaning system, which defines the self, honour and insults differently from non-honour cultures. It is thus not surprising that the South has defined specific 'rituals for conflict and tools that may be used when order is disrupted' (1998, p.567). Southerners are less ready to engage in confrontational behaviours and are in fact extremely polite, friendly and hospitable. Anthropologists claim that some of the most violent cultures in the world are also the most friendly and polite. These rituals are borne out of the shared understanding of affronts and the resultant hostility and violence that can be generated in response (Cohen & Vandello, 1998). Brown and Levinson (1978) show that all cultures everywhere dislike



infringement on the dignity of another person and politeness is a means of assuaging or mitigating such offences.

Historically, southern Americans have been regarded as more violent than their northern counterparts (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle & Schwarz, 1996).

‘Southerners who had been insulted in front of another person believed that this other person found them lacking in qualities such as courage, toughness, strength and manliness. To them, the unanswered insult marked them as a “wimp” whose honor and reputation would perhaps be tainted until they could redeem themselves. Their implicit understanding was that others who had witnessed the affront would think less of them. And with this understanding, it is easy to see how Southerners believe a response that restored their masculine standing would be called for’ (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.574).

American southern males irrespective of class, place great emphasis on manly honour that is seen as a volatile and defining feature of the southern character. A growing body of research from several disciplines has cited poverty, temperatures, and the institution of slavery as being variables that have played a role in the propensity to violence in the Southern states of America. According to research by Nisbett and colleagues (1993), southern ‘white’ violence has its roots in the history and economy of the region and cultural anthropologists have also noted that herding cultures over the world tend to condone certain types of violence (Gilmore, 1990; Nisbett & Cohen, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996). According to Nisbett (1993) young white male southerners are taught from an early age to think about their honour and actively defend their honour. ‘Honor in this society meant a pride of manhood in masculine courage, physical strength and warrior virtue’ (p. 442). Male children were trained to respond violently without a moment’s hesitation in defense of their honour. Nisbett and colleagues have shown that even today, southern society appears to have retained aspects of this culture of honour and that this

notion of honour has manifested in vastly different views about violence than are common in the rest of the country.

Historical as well as anecdotal evidence supports this strong emphasis on honour and protection in these societies concurrent with significantly higher levels of honour-related crimes. Recent work by Ghazal and Cohen (in Vandello & Cohen, 2003), postulate that in Saudi Arabia, concern with a woman's honour was most pronounced at the extreme ends of the social hierarchy. What this may suggest is that the emphasis on women's honour may be particularly acute in the strata of society where there is the most focus on traditional extended family arrangements and it may be lessened in the middle strata of a society where opportunities allow for status and social mobility to depend more on personal achievement, secular education and individual ambition. Further in this study, age was seen to be an important qualifying variable. The sample comprised young to middle-aged adults (21 years to 46 years) and it was the young adults who were most likely to express some sort of support toward codes of honour involving revenge or retribution. Age and generation are of course confounded in any cross-sectional sample however, it is plausible that all other things equal and absent of generational effects, it would be young adults who emphasize honour because they are actively competing for space in the status hierarchy. These results serve as an important qualification on theorizing about cultures of honour, suggesting sources of potential systematic within-culture variation and serve as a cautionary note about generalizing too widely about a given society (Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

The focus on young adults in my research also recognizes that this phase of life is often a turbulent one and that it is therefore important to work with this generation in order to contribute to healthier gender patterns in the future. According to statistics brought out by the Department for Community Safety and Liaison (2005), it is the 14- to 35-year olds, which constitute the major developmental population group in this country, making up over 40% of the population. Internationally as well, this is the group that for a number of reasons is most involved in crime as both victims and perpetrators. In fact, according to

the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Gillwald, 68% of the male prison population is under 35 years of age (Vetten, 1997).

## 1.2 Context and Aims

This study will attempt to explore characteristics of social masculinity that lead men toward violence as well as important historical and cultural influences that reinforce aggressive (e.g. dominant, forceful) masculinities. Underpinning this exploration is the notion of exaggerated ideas of masculine “honour” which when undermined, may result in humiliation and shame. This in turn may be played out through acts of aggression and violence (UNESCO, 1997). In particular, this study explores how honour cultures give rise to norms, scripts and expectations that can lead to male-on-male violence as well as male violence against women. Recent works in social anthropology are highlighted that have focused attention on the concepts of honour as key to social and cultural systems in society.

Within the context of this research, respondents were asked to reveal their understanding and construction of masculinity around notions of strong gender roles, strong familism, male pride, gaining respect for self and family, avoiding shame, man as provider and protector, status, virility and patterns of dominance and assertiveness. These qualities are regarded as constructs of honour and by endorsing these qualities may lead this research to determine whether South African men adopt a culture-of-honour position. The implications of a culture-of-honour pattern of gender relationships in a society assume that in cultures of honour there is a heightened tendency for male- on-male violence (Cohen et al., 1996). Honour norms require men to be hypersensitive to insults or threats to their reputation and the reputation for strength and precedence are highly prized (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). In a culture of honour, ‘allowing oneself to be pushed around, insulted or affronted without retaliation amounts to announcing that one is an easy mark’ (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, p. 552). Self-defense is used to preserve ‘one’s person, one’s family, one’s home or one’s honor’ (p.552). Honour in the reputational sense and

protection of the family were closely tied together. In fact, in the Old South, the term “son of a bitch” or similar insults was regarded as a damaging blow to male pride. ‘...to attack his wife, mother or sister was to assault the man himself’ (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, p.552). Honour it would seem extends not only to personal honour but to family honour as well. The question begs whether a culture- of- honour exists in South African society and whether participants in such a culture are prepared to protect with violence their reputation for strength and toughness?

According to Vandello and Cohen (2003), a cultural emphasis on male honour could foster traditional gender roles that may encourage and perpetuate violence against women. In post-apartheid South Africa, high unemployment and promotion of women’s rights can be a damaging factor for men who have been socialized to be providers. This may in turn exacerbate feelings of emasculation and a loss of male pride, which may be played out through aggressive control of women.

There is overwhelming evidence that men are the main agents of violence in the modern world and in most societies violence is culturally masculinized. New social research on masculinity is relevant to understanding this link (UNESCO, 1997). Similar views were espoused by Kaufman (1999) that the aetiology of masculine violence is not biological but is rooted in the imperatives of a patriarchal society. It can be seen at all levels of relations among men, between men and women, between adults and children, within economic structures and in relation to the natural environment. He continues by suggesting that personal insecurities in men are induced by a perceived failure to achieve or make the grade and this is most relevant when they are young. This perception of failure can propel men to anger, fear and aggression. This violence is unconsciously internalized by men in dominant definitions of masculinity, even by the majority of men who never act violently. Kimmel (1996) considers the origin of violence to lie in men’s dual experience of feelings of powerlessness and their sense of entitlement to power. He explores those cultures in which men’s violence is exceptionally low and what emerged from cross-cultural research is that violence is lowest under specific cultural

configurations of male-female relationships, high levels of women's autonomy with specific definitions of masculinity, which includes high levels of male participation in child care.

Safilios-Rothschild (UNESCO, 1997) suggests that men in the developing world often perceive changes in their roles as being negative since it makes them feel that they lose their long admired unique roles as breadwinners and protectors. Where once polygamy and having children with several wives and girlfriends was a benchmark for masculine status, the threat of disease and the shift towards postmodern masculinity has labeled this as irresponsible and potentially dangerous behaviour. The author argues that in the developing world men often face a troublesome identity crisis in which they are grappling with how to define themselves and how to validate their masculinity. Behaviours and roles that once afforded men admiration, esteem and honour are now being eroded and violence and war appear to be a last resort to re-establish dominance, pride and honour (UNESCO, 1997). Ptacek (1988) postulates that women's professional progress may be contrary to social definitions of men as breadwinners and protectors and that this may lend itself to perceived loss of respect and honour among men. Ptacek suggests that male batterers often hold very conservative views of women's roles in the family and that in many parts of the world, ideologies exist that justify male supremacy on grounds of religion, biology or cultural tradition (1988).

Contemporary research by authors such as Connell (2003), has shown gender inequalities to be embedded in a complex system of relationships which can be detected at every level of human experience – from individual emotional and interpersonal relationships to economic organization, culture and the state. 'A gender-equal society according to the Connell, often requires men and boys to think and act in new ways, to reconsider traditional images of manhood and to reshape relationships with women and girls' (2003, p.4). Psychological research by Davies (in Connell, 2003) indicates 'personal flexibility in the face of cultural images of masculinity and that by definition, men and boys can therefore negotiate or strategically use conventional definitions of masculinity rather than be controlled by them' (p.8).

There is now convincing evidence that masculinities can and do change historically. This gives hope that we may consciously change the social patterns that lead to violence. The UNESCO Culture of Peace Conference held in Oslo in 1997, explored the notion of establishing masculinity less prone to violence and drew on existing literature and theoretical knowledge to examine gender-related factors that hinder or sustain movements towards a culture of peace. The conference addressed the harmful consequences of rigid and stereotyped definitions of masculinity and femininity, roles of dominance and submission, the consequences of raising boy-children to be tough and dominating and the social, cultural and economic conditions producing violence among men. The conference reiterated the familiar fact that most of the world's soldiers are men and that men are responsible for most crimes of violence in private life. Highlighting issues about masculinity is easily misunderstood. On the one hand it can be perceived as unfairly blaming all men for violence, or that women are inherently better people. Alternatively, highlighting masculinity may be seen as a way of excusing violent men since their behaviour is attributed to a masculinity that many believe to be natural and unchangeable. In responding to these misunderstandings experts at the conference emphasized that the focus should be on the characteristics of social masculinity that lead men to violence and on the institutions and ideologies that reinforce aggressive masculinities. This neither excuses violent behaviour nor simplistically blames men, but allows a focus on the prevention of violence and the building of positive alternatives (UNESCO, 1997).

There is agreement in current research on masculinity that sex role theory does not explain these issues of violence and that biological differences are biological while social patterns of violence require social explanations and social solutions (UNESCO, 1997). How then are masculinities connected to violence? According to the conference, there are multiple causes of violence such as dispossession, poverty, greed, nationalism, racism, and the concept of "honor". When men feel entitled to power and status especially with respect to women, they are angered when these "entitlements" are thwarted. Reaction to this sense of perceived powerlessness may induce conduct that serves to restore feelings of control and esteem. And it is this behaviour which may

translate into violence against women. The psychological pressure to act the warrior or hunter can be intense in patriarchal societies and the maintenance of this hegemonic masculinity requires disrespect for other forms of masculinity and for women's empowerment.

Molyneux and Razavi (in Morrell, 2005) argue that there is a notion among some feminists that there is a natural tension between women's rights and cultural rights. It is argued that 'multiculturalism is bad for women because it subordinates women's individual rights to masculine privilege enshrined in group rights that are legitimized by culture tradition and religion' (p.85). It is suggested that a compromise is required that sustains and maintains a balance between gender rights, customary rights and traditions located in indigenous knowledge systems (Rankotha, 2004; Morrell, 2005). African feminists as reported by Morrell and Swart (in Morrell, 2005), describe an interdependent relationship between men and women and place emphasis on the creation of healthy bonds between men and women. According to Molyneux and Razavi, law in Mexico now recognizes the rights of indigenous people to their own norms and practices but in such a way that the 'dignity and integrity of women were honoured' (in Morrell, 2005, p.85).

### 1.3 Notes on the Literature Review

The literature review is divided into three chapters each focussing on specific aspects of masculinity, notions of honour and violence. The following three chapters review the major theoretical approaches to gender and masculinity, in particular relevant literature pertaining to historical and cultural perspectives of masculinity and a culture-of-honour and the last chapter explores South African masculinities, a culture-of-honour stance and its relation to violence in this country.

## CHAPTER 2            THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO GENDER AND MASCULINITY

### 2.1    Introduction to Gender Theory

Theories of gender may be divided into two broad camps: an essentialist perspective and a social-constructionist viewpoint. An essentialist approach asserts that male and female characteristics are innate essences and studies focus on biological or sex role differences between genders. Sociological approaches have explored the effects of socialization on gender-appropriate behaviour and anthropological approaches have explored masculine behaviours and attributes across cultures. We briefly reflect on the major theoretical perspectives on masculinity, which include an essentialist viewpoint, sex-role theory, and the social constructionist perspective.

### 2.2    Essentialist Approaches to Gender

The essentialist paradigm argues that there is a core personality and character that defines masculinity and that all men have this innate masculine core. Essentialist theory explores the biological nature of masculine behaviour focusing on genetic inheritance, the effect of sex hormones and brain structure. Fausto-Sterling (2000a) makes reference to a blueprint for masculinity. However, Hearn (1998) argues that biology ignores the role played by culture, history and power. Another focus of biological research has been sex differences in the structure and functions of the brain. Research suggests that male and female brains have observable differences that may account for physiological differences (Moir & Jessel, 1991). This research has been contested on the premise that too little is known about how the brain works specifically in relation to sex difference (Segal, 1990).



Another biological argument premises that testosterone is a significant contributor to masculine aggression and the development of manly qualities (Kemper, 1990). It is argued by its proponents that aggression is natural and innate in men and research does corroborate the claim that males are significantly more aggressive than females. This testosterone – based argument is disputed by Hearn (1998) as too simple an explanation for understanding male aggression and violence. Violence he suggests is produced and reproduced through a myriad of influences such as through modeling, socialization and learning and that to link brain structure, or chemistry alone to masculine behaviour is unrealistic.

Sociobiologists on the other hand argue that behaviour patterns of the sexes are genetically predisposed. Theorists such as Wilson (1978) offer a genetic underpinning for male domination and aggression and its opposite of passivity ascribed to the female sex. Sociobiological studies indicate that aggressive and sexual promiscuity in men has an evolutionary bias, which advantage men in accumulating resources. Critics view this approach as one that can be seen to justify violence and sexual coercion (Segal, 2000).

Gender theory as a body of research is complex and it would be more pertinent to consider biological aetiologies of masculine behaviour as one of the influences, which shape gender, and behaviour. Historical and ethnographic research demonstrates that there is no standard pattern of universal masculinity resulting from biology and that whilst cultures do distinguish between the sexes, behaviours associated with either sex varies considerably across cultures (Edley & Wetherell, 1995).

Connell (1995) argues that masculinity cannot just be a biological entity existing prior to and outside of society. Within the essentialist paradigm masculinity remains unchanged by social, cultural and historical processes and the differences between the sexes are seen as universal and enduring. Inherent in such an argument is the danger of its use to justify masculine behaviour and a failure to consider cultural variations in masculinity and how masculinities change over time (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Essentialist views of gender are still popular and constantly reinforced in the media, but are increasingly under challenge

as an unsatisfactory account of gender based on speculation and which is contradicted by social diversity in gender systems (Connell, 1995). Clearly both views have their place and biology will inevitably interact with culture.

### 2.3 Sex Role theory

In sex role theory masculinity and femininity are seen as internalized sex roles that are products of socialization, usually through identification with the same sex parent (Bandura, 1977). It assumes that there are consistent and universal expectations about men and women shared within any society but according to Segal (1990), it fails to account for the complexity and contradictory nature of gender. Connell (1995) criticizes sex role theory as too simplistic in its explanation of differences between men and women and further serves to exaggerate these differences and underplays other influences such as power, sexuality, race, class, status and family. Connell (1995) reiterates that the socialization model assumes passivity in learning that in light of contemporary research is no longer valid.

### 2.4 Social Construction Approach

The second school of thought considers gender to be learned or constructed socially rather than an innate essence. Constructions of gender are claimed to be influenced by intersecting historical, social and cultural factors at a particular moment in time. In his work, Morrell (2001) cites the theories and debates of the Australian sociologist, Robert Connell. Connell developed a theory of masculinity, which examined the psychological and social forces influencing masculine construction, blending both personal agency with social structure, and the 'diverse intellectual influences of materialism, feminism and critical theory' (Morrell, 2001, p.7). Connell suggests in his early literature that gender can be defined as a concept of power and he demonstrated the advantage men in general gained from the overall subordination of women (Morrell, 2001). Not all men shared this

power equally and these “other” men were representative of different masculinities. In his second book in 1995, *Masculinities*, Connell developed the concept of different masculinities, which states that ‘while men oppressed women, some men also dominated and subordinated other men’ (Morrell, 2001, p.7). Connell demonstrated the concept of a masculinity that was hegemonic – one that dominated other masculinities and which, ‘succeeded in creating prescriptions of masculinity which were binding and which created cultural images of what it meant to be a “real man”’ (p.7).

According to Gilmore (in Morrell, 2001), ‘there is a core set of activities or traits which are transculturally associated with men but masculinities are essentially fluid and socially and historically constructed in a process which involves contestation between rival understandings of what being a man should involve’ (p.7). Other theories however, argue that masculinity is culturally variable and context dependent and the only commonality is the physical possession of male genitalia (Morrell, 2001).

Masculinity also refers to a specific gender identity that belongs to a specific male person (Morrell, 2001) and although this gender identity is acquired in social contexts and circumstances it is also the domain of the individual. As Morrell (2001) suggests, ‘this identity bears the marks and characteristics of the history which formed it – frequently with salient childhood experiences imparting a particular set of prejudices and preferences, joys and terrors’ (p.8). Masculinities can thus be viewed as voluntaristic, that is, as something that can be deployed and that individuals can choose to respond to in a particular situation in a particular way. Whilst this concept has elicited criticism, it provides the space to examine individual masculinities at work. It is also understood that masculinity is constructed in the context of class, race and other factors that require critical interpretation. The stages by which boys attain ‘manhood’ are a rite of passage and often a source of anxiety and conflict. As we see in the following literature, there is no set or prescribed procedure to attain this “manhood”, but the determination and striving to become a man is a potent feature of masculinity (Morrell, 2001). Masculinity is neither automatically acquired nor are males entirely free to choose those constructions of masculinity which best fit them. As Morrell (2001) suggests, ‘their tastes and their

bodies are influenced by discourses of gender which they encounter from birth' (p.8).

Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson offer the following definition:

'Human agents cannot stand outside culture and wield power precisely as they wish. Power is always limited and shaped by systems of knowledge which also shape the subjects and objects of power' (in Morrell, 2001, p.8).

As Epstein (1998) reiterates,

'Men become particular kinds of men through their own histories and the histories of the societies they live in. Different masculinities become relevant, common or even possible at different historical times in different places and in different political situations' (p.49).

According to theorists such as Buchbinder (2001), Connell (1995) and Mac an Ghaill (1994), there are numerous forms and expressions of gender, of "being masculine" and "being feminine". Masculinity they claim is always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) reject any notion of a fixed masculinity and allude instead to masculinity's 'multiple and ambiguous meanings which alter according to context and over time' (p.12). Connell (2003) also reiterates the idea of the diversity of masculinities. He suggests that within a single society, there are different patterns of masculinity, shaped by social class, ethnic communities, different regions and sexuality and may even vary with generation. In contemporary Western society, the authoritative, aggressive, heterosexual, able-bodied and physically brave ideal of manhood is respected and reified and it is this hegemonic pattern that young boys are encouraged to emulate and aspire to (Morrell, 2005). Not all men embrace this ideal though, but the hierarchy around it is an important source of conflict and violence.

Current research in social psychology recognizes that there are significant differences in gender roles between men and women and that much of this difference is due to the socialization process. According to Leung and Moore (2003, p 8), 'It follows that

different cultures, where children are socialized into adopting various value and behaviour patterns there might be cultural differences in gender roles. These cultural differences in gender roles may develop in at least two different ways: first the conception of masculine and feminine gender roles might be different for different cultures such as what is regarded as feminine in one culture may be regarded as masculine in another. Second, the conception of masculinity and femininity might be similar across cultures in general, but in some cultures one might expect greater differences between the sexes in the uptake of these roles'.

The work of Hofstede (in Leung & Moore, 2003) is relevant here as well. Hofstede introduces an interesting parallel between individuals and countries. He argues that a form of a masculinity/femininity dimension differentiates countries as well as individuals. He postulates that while an individual can have both masculine and feminine traits a country's culture is either masculine or feminine. 'Masculinity represents a society in which men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success and women incorporate traits such as modesty, tenderness and concern with the quality of life. On the opposite continuum, feminine societies incorporate modesty and tenderness across both sexes' (Leung & Moore, 2003, p.6). Hofstede also suggests the notion that sex differences in gender roles will be more pronounced in these masculine societies.

## CHAPTER 3            HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF MASCULINITY AND HONOUR

*Humiliation might not happen so easily if it were not for exaggerated ideas of masculine honour... (UNESCO, 1997)*

### 3.1    Introduction

Nisbett (1993) and researchers at the UNESCO conference (1997) have argued that there are multiple causes of violence. These include poverty, socio-political climate, dispossession, nationalism, racism and the concept of *honour*. The UNESCO conference on masculinities alludes to a fragility of masculinity and suggests that humiliation might not happen so easily if it were not for the oversensitivity of men to threats to their honour. Evidence of this honour-bound masculinity has been obtained through various ethnographic research, surveys and experimental investigations (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). This body of research together with the American scholar, Thomas Gilmore's (1990) cultural concepts of masculinity, provides a rich source of theory and information that will serve to inform this study.

### 3.2    A Psychological Approach to Culture

Bond (2004, p.62) states that, 'Culture is a broad and multifaceted concept in the social sciences... and can be regarded as a latticework of constraints and affordances that shape the behavioural development of its members into similar patterns'. Common definitions of culture include, 'A shared system of beliefs, values, expectations and behaviour meanings developed by groups over time in a particular geographical niche' (p.62). In his article, Bond (2004), drawing on recent terror management theory (Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1991; Berger, 1987), goes on to define culture as

‘fundamentally maintaining the psychological integrity of its members, a function that depends crucially on the sharedness of a culture’s psychological legacy’ (p.62).

Typically aggressive behaviour such as homicide and serious assault is linked to features of ambient national or cultural variation and studies by Wilkinson (in Bond, 2004) found that inequality in a nation’s income distribution predicted homicide rates even after controlling for that nation’s level of overall wealth. He speculated that feelings of shame were engendered in persons from societies in which some were less clearly successful than others. ‘The resulting shame leads to lower levels of reflected esteem for such persons, spurring violence’ (Bond, 2004, p.63). However plausible this explanation, it still elicits many questions such as how this speculation could possibly be verified? How could one access measures of reflected self-esteem from the perpetrators of homicide? One would have to take into consideration the self-presentational concerns about the responses that would be provided (Bond, 2004).

In his 1987 book, Gilmore (in Bond 2004, p.62) refers to culture rather than society, where culture is defined as ‘a moral or symbolic system that unites people into communities with shared values’. ‘Culture, as suggested by McArthur and Baron (in Bond, 2004), is in part an education of attention, socializing its members to categorize behavioral acts and to value or reject acts as falling into those categories’ (p. 65). Goffman’s (1967) work on interaction rituals in society lends credence to the work of Bond (2004). Goffman states in his work on interactional rituals that when people interact with others each assumes that the other has a “face” or public image of self which consists of approved social attributes and which must be continually maintained and protected. According to Goffman (1967, p.12), ‘the actions individuals perform or do not perform to make what they are doing consistent with face is “facework” which serves to counteract events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face’. Brown and Levinson (1978), building on Goffman’s concept of face, claim that “face” means the public self- image that a person wants to claim and uphold for himself or herself and which has to be constantly negotiated in interaction. “Face” can therefore be enhanced, maintained and also lost in such negotiation. They argue that some actions, which they

call face-threatening acts (FTA's), are intrinsically threatening to face. These actions which are intrinsically threatening, varies socially, culturally and situationally. There are two related aspects to this concept namely a "negative" face which is a person's claim to freedom of action, territory and personal preserves and positive face which is a person's claim to a positive consistent self-image which might be threatened by criticism or insults.

According to Tedeschi and Felson (in Bond, 2004), 'people and groups are motivated to obtain the rewards of security, material resources, knowledge, social power and respect mediated by other persons and groups, socializing its members to categorize behavioural acts and to value or reject acts falling into those categories' (p. 65). It is postulated that the social meanings attached to those categories may vary in response to meaningful cultural factors. Bond, Wan, Leung and Giacalone concur that 'a criticism delivered by a boss to an employee in a business meeting is less unacceptable in a hierarchical cultural system than an egalitarian one' (in Bond, 2004, p.65). 'Such public criticism may be construed in such cultural systems as scolding rather than as an 'insult' resulting in different social responses within those different social systems' (p.65). 'This cultural variation in construing behaviour becomes important for the study of 'honour' from a cross-cultural perspective, because it is not always obvious what behaviours are and are not to be considered honourable' (Bond, 2004, p.71).

### 3.3 Introduction to a Culture of Honour

Cultures of honour have been documented throughout the world (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996) and according to these studies, 'Men in such cultures are prepared to protect their reputation for strength and toughness with violence' (Shackelford, 2005, p.381). Nisbett and colleagues have recently also begun investigating the role of women in perpetuating culture-of-honour norms and should be an interesting focus of attention for further study by the present researcher. We need to consider whether South African women's participation in the construction of violent masculinities



is primarily as socializing agents if at all. Much research remains to be conducted in this area. It is important to note that honour norms in such cultures apply to females as well as males (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Whereas the code dictates precedence and toughness for males, norms for females stress modesty, shame and the avoidance of behaviours that might threaten the good name of the family. These gender roles imply an active role for men and a passive role for women.

However, females are neither passive nor powerless in cultures of honour. In fact, women carry great influence in determining the reputation of the family. It has been argued by Wikan (in Gill, 2004), that in such cultures the honour of the family goes through the female. Women's power in honour cultures exists within the context of a largely patriarchal and collectivistic social arrangement. As a consequence, female agency and strength are derived from the ability to control the emotional tenor of relationships and to withstand or overcome relationship difficulties. Honour may be used as a justification (either implicit or explicit) for violence. In the most extreme cases it is used as a justification for the murder of spouses in honour cultures. Formal customs and legal traditions have often been developed that sanction or excuse such violence. Therefore within this cultural framework male violence against women may be seen as necessary and proper to preserve the integrity of the man and the family. In fact, research by Al-Khayyat (in Gill, 2004), shows that not responding with violence after perceived female "misbehaviour" may be interpreted as a source of shame.

Ideals of feminine sacrifice and family loyalty tend to be strongest in cultures of honour. The importance of family cohesion coupled with the strength of traditional gender roles creates strong pressures for women to stay in relationships despite danger or actual harm. A woman thus bears the responsibility to sacrifice herself for the good of the family or relationships. Gupta (in Gill, 2004), defines violence as a tool of terror directly related to male assumptions about privileged access and ownership and at some deep level an acceptance of a man's right to control his wife.

Anthropologists such as Peristiany (1965) and Pitt-Rivers (1965), identified a 'culture-of-honour' syndrome whereby members of that culture are socialized to redress an insult to one's property, one's family or one's person by violence. This counterattack is regarded as legitimate and failure to respond to the affront is sanctioned by shaming and ostracism. Anthropologists agree that in all cultures social status is a significant construct but that in some cultures it takes on even greater significance where men hold to a culture-of-honour stance. 'This stance embraces the notion that a man's honour is tied up with physical prowess, toughness and courage' (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.568). The prototypical studies of these cultures of honour have occurred in Mediterranean villages (Gilmore, 1990) and is illustrated below:

'A central theme in cultures of honour around the world is the conception of the insult as something that drastically reduces one's social standing and a belief that violence can be used to restore that standing once it has been jeopardized' (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.569).

Ayers (in Cohen & Vandello, 1998) writes that white southern men of all classes perceived themselves as honourable men and acted appropriately on this belief. These men believed that a failure to respond to an insult branded them as less than real men, as cowards. According to Fischer (in Cohen & Vandello, 1998), 'honour in this society meant a pride of manhood in masculine courage, physical strength and warrior virtue. Failure to defend himself or his family would result in shaming and humiliation' (p. 569). Cohen and Vandello (1998) write that there were two conditions that generated this honour stance and these were predominantly an adaptive response to their environment. The South was a herding economy and anthropologists suggest that herdsmen all over the world tend to be hypervigilant to threats to their livelihood and developed a tough demeanor. The second condition suggests that this kind of stance develops in environments where people depend on themselves for their own protection and cannot rely on effective law enforcement (Cohen & Vandello, 1998). In such environments, people react not just to physical threats but to verbal affronts and insults as well. To

tolerate insults is tantamount 'to announcing that one is soft or can be walked over with impunity' (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.570).

This latter definition of honour is more narrowly emphasized in certain cultures and classic examples of cultures of honour include the Mediterranean countries of Greece, Italy and Spain; the Middle East and Arab countries; Latin and South American countries and the American south (Gilmore, 1990). In cultures as diverse as the Truk Islanders, the Greek Kalymnos, East African Masai and Samburu, the Ethiopian Amhara, New Guinea Highlanders, Moroccans, Bedouins of Egypt, honour plays an all-defining role in the concept of masculinity. Mediterranean societies espouse an image of manliness intimately connected to personal honour, reputation, aggression, potency and bravery. Spaniards and Italians call this concept, *honra*. In Andalusia, *hombria or bravery* encapsulates a sense of dignity and an ability to stand up for oneself. The Samburu have strong notions of *nkanyit*, which is related to the ability to meet expectations as members of a group. Sicilian masculinity is bound up with aggression, potency and honour and being a provider is a vital measure of manhood as well as an important component of honour. Moroccans define a true man as one who stands ready to defend the honour of his family and the Hindu Pirzada of Delhi, highlight 'the importance of honour as the central concern of a man's life' (Gilmore, 1990, p.176). Honour is regarded as a code of behaviour that is learned at childhood and the honourable Pirzada male must be courageous, generous and able to protect his family by taking risks. In the Muslim Pakistani Pakhtun tribe, the code of manly honour is a motivation and a justification for acts of aggression and revenge (p.177).

To be a real man is to take risks with one's life, drink excessively, endure bloody rites of passage, displays of aggression, stamina, sexual prowess, bravery, and being a successful provider. Terms such as "*never backing down*", "*earning the right to be called a man*", "*standing up to a challenge*", "*stand up for oneself*", "*one who faces others*", "*a man has to do what a man has to do*", are synonymous with a masculinity that is patriarchal, aggressive and honour-bound (Gilmore, 1990; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). If we look to Northern parallels of honour, we find that German culture had its "manly" traditions of

courage that were deeply ingrained in the Teutonic ideal. Wagner's depiction of the German hero, Tannhauser manifests this notion of the hero who engages in a violent internal struggle to succumb to the pleasures of Venus or return to the world of conflict and danger (Gilmore, 1990). Alfred Harbegger, literary critic, comments on gender ideas of American culture expressed in modern fiction and discovers a masculinity that is uncertain and ambiguous and that has to be acquired through painful initiation or lengthy and humiliating apprenticeship (Gilmore, 1990). The writing of Hemingway and other contemporary novelists seem to espouse this notion of masculinity with themes emphasizing the hardships of growing up and choosing the right path.

It would appear from these examples that men worldwide share the same or similar notions of masculinity (Gilmore, 1990). Honour themes in the Chinese and Japanese cultures predominate in their societies and the ideal man according to Gilmore (1990) must display courage, self-confidence and manly temperament that are related to moral bravery and initiative in the workplace. Women surveyed showed equal contempt for immature or dependent males who were not "real men". To "run to others" and to be dependent is incompatible with an image of masculinity in Chinese culture (Gilmore, 1990).

Initiation rites of boys into manhood are still implemented in British and South African public schools and research by Morrell (1998) shows that these institutions still exhibit strongly hierarchical structures, which serve to "toughen" boys. Loyalty and honour to the school, class and team were actively encouraged and evident in these schools was the role that violence occupied in the form of organized bullying and punishment that boys had to endure silently. This silence and ability to stand up to a beating were regarded as evidence of being a "real man" (Epstein, 1998). It must be noted that according to Lindholm (in Gilmore 1990, p.177),

'A beleaguered honor threatened by enemies and by inner weakness does not always relate to aggression but it always has to do with forceful actions that

counteract the inward insecurity – *honor* in the sense of ‘covering’ for potential sources of shame’.

Nisbett (1993) writes that homicide rates are significantly higher in the south than in the north of America but only for argument-related homicides. These homicides are the result of altercations, which centre on a man’s reputation, strength, toughness and honour. Cohen and Vandello (in Shackelford, 2005) suggest that, ‘female southerners more than their northern counterparts held attitudes consistent with a culture of honour such as endorsing parental and school punishment of children’ (p. 386). They also show in their findings that southern women play an important role in socializing their sons and not their daughters to be vigilant to insults. Cohen and Vandello (in Shackelford, 2005) further state that the psychological mechanisms underlying the culture of honour appears to be universal among men given the conditions of economic vulnerability and poor recourse to law enforcement. ‘The apparent universality of honour cultures lends support to the argument that the behavioural manifestations of cultures of honour may be underpinned by universal (albeit sex-specific) evolved psychological mechanisms. This requires further enquiry in future research’ (Shackelford, 2005, p.386).

As suggested in previous literature (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994) cultures vary in how they understand violence. Studies of southern and northern culture in the United States illustrate the different meanings cultures ascribe to violence and honour. Research by Cohen and Vandello (1998) and Cohen et al., (1996), argue that southerners understand the meaning of insults differently than northerners do, that they have behavioural rituals that make allowances for this understanding and they live within social structures and systems that perpetuate these culture-of-honour meanings and ideologies. Cohen and Vandello (1998) go on to suggest in their research that, ‘southern violence is a product of a coherent meaning system defining the self, honour, rituals for conflict and tools that may be used when order is disrupted’ (p.567).

Daly and Wilson write in their 1988 book *Homicide*, that,

‘A seemingly minor affront is not merely a stimulus to action, isolated in time and space. It must be understood within a larger context of reputations, face, relative social status and enduring relationships. Men are known by their fellows as ‘the sort who can be pushed around’ or ‘the sort, who won’t take any shit’ (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.570).

They go on to state that in most social milieus, a man’s reputation depends in part upon the maintenance of a credible threat of violence. Even though, the conditions that generated this culture-of-honour no longer exist, the southern sense of honour remains. When it comes to issues of self-protection and responding to insults, contemporary Southerners are more likely to approve of violence than Northerners are. For example, southerners are twice as likely as Northerners to say that it would be okay for a man to punch a drunk who bumped into the man and his wife on the street (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

‘In addition to interpersonal violence, Southerners also believe that violence for the purpose of macro level social control is more legitimate than Northerners do. Northerners and Southerners showed profoundly different reactions to being insulted. Northerners found it somewhat amusing whilst their counterparts indicated anger. Cognitions and emotions of the Southerners showed increased hostility and their subsequent behaviour became increasingly hostile and domineering’ (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.573).

Interestingly, Northerners and Southerners showed different physiological reactions when they were insulted. Testosterone (a hormone associated with aggression, competition and dominance) and cortisol (a hormone associated with stress and arousal) levels were measured before and after the incident. Southerners who were insulted showed the most dramatic rise in these hormones compared to non-insulted Southerners and insulted Northerners (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.574). Research also suggests that Southerners

who were insulted in public were even further incensed because they believed that other people who witnessed the incident would perceive them to be lacking in manliness, courage, toughness and strength. They felt that they would be thought less of and be seen as a “wimp”, whose reputation and honour would be tainted unless able to redeem themselves.

If we consider the empirical evidence of this research in greater detail we see that attitude surveys conducted by Nisbett (1993), Cohen and Nisbett (1994) and Cohen et al., (1996) have found that southern and western Americans do not condone violent responses to triggering events across the board. Rather they differ from northern Americans only when honour is at stake (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). Furthermore, regional differences in homicide rates are restricted to violations of personal honour (Nisbett, 1993). When insulted southern males respond with more anger than northern males and show stronger physiological signs of stress and aggression (Cohen et al., 1996).

In studies conducted by Cohen (1994), Southerners responded violently to insults and 49% of Southerners espoused physical punishment of children as a disciplinary measure, 36% sanctioned the right kill to defend his home as opposed to 18% of non - Southerners and 80% would kill to defend family as opposed to 67% of non - Southerners. Using homicide rates as a measure of violence, Nisbett’s research indicated that only certain types of homicides are more common in the South, specifically those related to a perceived affront to the individual that triggered a violent response. This according to Nisbett (1993) is consistent with his hypothesis that Southern violence has its origins in a culture- of- honour.

In systems where a culture of honour is perpetuated, allowing oneself to be pushed around and insulted without retaliation suggests that one is an easy mark. Self-defense becomes very broadly defined as preservation of one’s person, one’s family, one’s home or one’s honour (Campbell, in Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). Although frontier conditions in the South have disappeared, culture-of-honour norms still persist in this century and violence stemming from this is still part of Southern existence today (Cohen & Nisbett,

1994). This perpetuation of norms for violence that no longer have an adaptive role as in the past is according to Cohen and Vandello (1998), worthy of further investigation. According to Nisbett and colleagues (1996),

‘Culture-of-honor norms have perhaps become socially enforced and perpetuated because they have become embedded in social roles, expectations and shared definitions of manhood. Insult plays a central role in the culture-of-honour and produces aggression because the affronted person feels diminished and may use aggression or domineering behaviour to re-establish his masculinity. Man’s reputation depends to a great degree upon maintaining a credible threat of violence’ (Cohen et al., 1996, p. 14).

According to Cohen and Vandello (1998), institutions play a large role as perpetuating forces of this culture-of-honour and until the 1960s or 1970s, there were four states in America where it was legal for a man to kill his wife’s lover if he discovered them in bed together. Three of these states were in the South and one in Utah. This fact suggests that an understanding of the honour culture is held not only at the interpersonal level, but also at the level of collective representations, i.e., the law. In contemporary South and West, culture-of-honour ideologies still separate these regions from the North when it comes to law and social policy. ‘Consistent with the strong ethic of self-protection, southern and western states are likely to have more lenient gun control laws, and southern and western legislature is more likely to oppose gun control’ (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.579).

In addition to law and social policy, there are other institutions such as the media organizations that embody values about the appropriateness of violence. Baron and Strauss (in Cohen & Vandello, 1998) have shown that citizens in southern and western states are more likely to read violent magazines and watch violent television shows. Print media also tended to be more lenient in response to culture-of-honour-type violence than the northern newspapers.



The culture of honour extends into the very fabric of Southern society suggests Cohen and Vandello (1998). 'Western thought suggests that people are naturally aggressive and that we need mediating forces such as family, community and religion to counter this phenomenon' (p.581). Cohen and Vandello (1998) suggest that from a cultural psychological perspective, this view is too simplistic. Research conducted by Cohen, Vandello & Rantilla (in Cohen & Vandello, 1998), illustrate some interesting social concepts. It was found that the more cohesive and more stable the environment in the North, the less argument and brawl-related violence occurred, whereas in the South and West, stable communities tended to have more argument and brawl-related violence. This applied to family stability indicators where in the North, counties with more stable, traditional nuclear family structures tended to have less argument and brawl-related homicides. In the South and West, counties with more stable nuclear family arrangements tended to have more such violence. The results suggest that community and family stability may actually help reinforce culture-of-honour values and violence in the South. States in the north with higher levels of social organization consume less such violence. In the South and West, states with higher levels of social organization actually consume slightly more violence. Northerners who are in more traditional nuclear family arrangements and who were closer to their families tend to be relatively less endorsing of honour-related violence and relatively less likely to own guns. Southerners and Westerners in close-knit traditional families tend to be relatively more likely to endorse honour-related violence and relatively more likely to own guns. In conclusion it appears that Northerners and Southerners have different conceptions of self, honour and masculinity.

'They have different ideas about what affronts do to social identity and what insults mean...they have different views about what makes a violent act legitimate or perhaps even what violence itself is. They have institutions, collective representations and social systems that embody such understandings. And the tighter and more close-knit communities are the more such ideologies are perpetuated' (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.584).

### 3.4 Male Honour and Domestic Violence

The recent interest in domestic violence has fuelled a debate about the origins of this phenomenon. Numerous definitions have been offered which range from criminological, psychological and feminist perspectives (Gill, 2004; Groenewald, 2002; Vetten, 1997) to honour-bound cultures in which women are perceived as inferior and men wield power and authority (Nisbett, 1993; Cohen & Vandello, 2003). Abdulaziz (2005) makes reference to the patriarchal notions of honour as the cultural cause for violence against women in Northern Iraq. She describes the dynamics of honour in Northern Iraq where women are violently abused as a method of restoring damaged honour. She makes reference to men being made victims of this honourbound culture as well as women when communities at large continue to perpetuate this violence. The focus in Northern Iraq is to support the individual and collective empowerment of women to strengthen self-esteem and by so doing elevate their social standing and increase their participation in social processes. Educating women she points out is key to reducing gender-based violence in society. The concept of “honour” generated much heated debate at the conference with scholars differing in opinion regarding the significance of such a cultural construction. Honour concepts evoked unequal gender roles, leading to violence and served to perpetuate gender inequity (Baum, 2005).

The most popular approaches in attempting to understand male violence against women have generally looked at personal characteristics of the perpetrator or the victim (Koss et al., in Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Although these approaches are certainly valid they often ‘strip the abusive events from their larger sociocultural context and implicitly view violence as an individual pathology or deviant act ignoring the important ways that themes related to violence can be embedded in cultures’ (Vandello & Cohen, 2003, p.1008). Studies by Vandello and Cohen (2003) explored how domestic violence may be implicitly or explicitly sanctioned and reinforced in cultures where honour is a salient organizing theme. ‘Although male violence against women exists in all cultures there is also great cultural variation in patterns of domestic violence’ claim Vandello & Cohen

(2003, p. 997). In addition to this, the events that trigger episodes of violence may differ across cultures and the appropriate responses to these events may differ across groups as well. A cultural emphasis on male honour may certainly foster traditional gender roles that encourage and perpetuate male violence against women. Honour norms require men to be hypersensitive to insults (Gilmore, 1990). Because male honour often requires female deference and fidelity, relationships between men and women carry an underlying tension that can serve as a precursor or catalyst to domestic violence. Honour may be used as a justification (either implicit or explicit) for violence and in the most extreme cases it is used as a justification for homicides of spouses in honour cultures and formal customs and legal traditions have often developed that sanction or excuse such violence (Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

It is understood that economic considerations probably play a role in affecting violence in various subcultures as well as people's response to them. 'But as these studies seem to indicate, cultural scripts and rules can also implicitly perpetuate male on female aggression through expectations about proper male and female behaviour' (Vandello & Cohen, 2003, p.1000). Women in violent relationships often turn to friends or family for advice. This type of informal interpersonal counseling might serve as an important means of perpetuating and enforcing cultural norms about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Gilmore (in Vandello & Cohen, 2003), suggests that the difference between honour and nonhonour cultures lies largely in the salience and centrality of such themes in everyday social interactions. The current approach argues that domestic violence might be at least partially a by-product of culturally valued ideals, norms and expectations about honour and proper masculine and feminine behaviour (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Individual differences undoubtedly exist and some men will be violent regardless of the cultural context.

The focus of Vandello and Cohen's work has been to look at how a culture-of- honour syndrome makes it possible for otherwise well-adjusted men to become violent and for women to be accepting of this violence. Strikingly there were almost no gender differences in the data suggesting that men and women both share the same scripts and

expectations in their respective cultures – a conclusion that should not be so surprising given the huge role of women in socializing in cultures of honour (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). It could well be that both men and women perpetuate aggression through a tacit acceptance that men can sometimes use violence and women should sometimes tolerate it.

It must be noted, according to Vandello and Cohen (2003), that there is considerable within-culture variation as well. This is a point that must be stressed and serve as a springboard for future research into the function of honour norms in given contexts within a society. Depending on one's goals, opportunities and means of attaining status, honour may be a more or less central construct. Recent work in Saudi Arabia by Ghazal and Cohen (in Vandello & Cohen, 2003), illustrate this point as elucidated in the previous chapters. Of significance in that study was the emphasis on honour at the extremes of social class and among younger men in society. One reason that young men may react to honour more than older men is that older men have probably already obtained a place or status in society and are thus less likely to feel threatened by insults. These results serve as an important qualification on theorizing about cultures of honour, suggesting sources of potential systematic within-culture variation, and serve as a cautionary note about generalizing too widely about a given society.

The dynamics and specific mechanisms of the social enforcement of the culture-of-honour are important topics for further study. It would seem from previous studies that culture of honour norms are socially enforced and perpetuated because they have become embedded in social roles, expectations and shared definitions of manhood. These ideologies and patterns of behaviour that have been embedded in a culture for centuries will not necessarily die overnight.

Professor Orywal from the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology in Cologne, postulates that cultural disposition in people's heads is the decisive motivating factor for exercising violence (2005, p.1). Orywal, Khuzwayo and Abdulaziz, speakers at the 2005 French conference investigating civil conflict, confirmed that, 'honour in the sense of

preserving one's identity could not simply be abrogated but that the violent manner in which the disputes over honour were carried out needed to be changed' (2005, p.2). It is suggested by the conference that 'consideration be given to the social pressure exerted on men to exercise violence so as not to be stigmatized as cowards' (p.2). The conference goes on to reiterate the significance of 'interlacing individual psychological processes with social, historical and cultural factors as a means of successfully resolving conflict' (p.2).

Khuzwayo (2005) referring specifically to the Zulu culture in South Africa highlights the effects of colonization on Zulu men and how through the process of colonization, the proud male ideal of the warrior was demolished. She suggests that modernization and the shift away from traditional culture have had a negative influence on young men and promoted violent masculinities. Another significant factor to consider in the promotion of violent masculinities was economic - specifically the high rates of unemployment in this country which serves to further strip men of their dignity. The paradox facing our society she states is 'respecting traditional culture whilst at the same time, seeking to change culture (p.5). Orywal (2005) emphasizes the importance of 'analyzing the culture-specific mentality and behaviour prevalent in different societies' (p.6). Violence is according to Orywal (2005), a significant part of the social order in a society and the 'legitimization of violence could be explained by the norm systems of specific cultures' (p.7). Depending on whether the core moral values of a society either endorse or reject violence as an instrument of conflict, will determine its use in that society.

Orywal (2005) suggests that, 'in societies where violence is perceived as a positive means of resolving conflicts, the term honour and shame play a paramount role as a "leitmotif for the appropriateness of aggressive action" (p.7). The concepts of honour and shame also affect women in these societies. Cohen claims that 'to understand shame it is necessary to understand the concept of honor' (2003, p.2). In this sense, honor and shame are 'opposites in valence' (Cohen, 2003, p.2) and shame is denoted as a lack of bravery that is perceived as 'a dereliction of duty to oneself and to the family whose honor one is obliged to protect' (p2).

Common descriptives of honour-bound cultures include passivity among women and dominance in men. In its extreme these honour cultures require that men kill in order to restore lost pride. In Orywal's concluding remarks on consequences for social change, he advises against 'seeking to enforce intuitively western values as guiding notions on societies which view the term 'violence' in a positive sense' (2005, p.8). He further points out that to strip honour from men is to strip their self-esteem and a more viable alternative is to change the manner in which honour disputes are resolved.

*Social science affirms that a woman's place in society marks the level of civilization.*

*E.C. Stanton (1815-1902)*

#### 4.1 Introduction

The past few weeks of December 2005 saw South African society once again celebrate “sixteen days of activism against women and child abuse”. The question which remains is whether sixteen days a year will accomplish any significant changes when media, news and research continue to remind us of the frequency and breadth of this malaise in our country. Of great concern are incidences of gender-related violence which continue to tarnish this young democracy and as Loots states (2005, p.1), ‘...feminism remains only the rhetoric of politicians who speak against gender abuse and go home and silence the women in their own families’. Below are some of the descriptives of a nation in trouble, but these unflattering views of South African men are stereotypical suggests Morrell (2001) and do not reflect the diversity of masculinity in this country.

‘Violence against women has become pervasive in our society, permeating every social and economic strata. South Africa is still a patriarchal society where patriarchy is understood as ‘the rule of the father’ and according to Rakoczy (2004, p.29), denotes the legal, economic and social system that validates rule by men over women. It is systemic in every aspect of society where it is experienced as normal. In a patriarchal society, the male is superior and women are understood to be inferior in every way, thus all women are inherently inferior to every man’ (Rakoczy, 2004, p.13).

‘An article in The Sunday Tribune in March 2004 quoted Interpol figures as confirming South Africa as one of the most murderous non-warring countries in

the world. Murder, according to the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System, is the leading cause of death in South Africa. Figures quoted are in the region of 21 738 murders in 2002, 57 people on average murdered every day, with men four times more likely to die of unnatural causes than women' (Leggett, 2001; 2003).

'Research by the Medical Research Council and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation at the University of Cape Town, has found that South Africa has the highest incidence of intimate femicide in the world. Statistics indicate that one woman is killed by her partner every six hours' (Vetten, 1997).

'According to statistics described in the 2005 youth newsletter of the Department for Community Safety and Liaison, 14 to 35 year olds constitute the major developmental population group in this country, making up over 40% of the population. Internationally this is the group that for a number of reasons are most involved in crime as both victims and perpetrators. In fact, according to the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Gillwald, 68% of the male prison population is under 35 years of age' (The Mercury, 2004).

#### 4.2 Violent Masculinities

Leach (1994, p. 36-37) refers to the 'politics of masculinities' in which masculinity and femininity operate at different levels. Masculinity is a form of self-identity that includes personal attitudes and behaviours and it can be viewed as a form of ideology comprised of complex cultural ideals that **define** appropriate roles values and expectations for and of men. Socialization becomes a profound **tool** by which values, beliefs and norms are transferred from one generation to another. 'Through **this** process individuals in that society learn how to behave and respond as well as **what** is expected of them. Socialization is therefore 'a tool which can be used to **perpetuate** gender inequality' (1994, p.36-37).



International studies suggest that violence against women, expressed in its most diverse forms, has long been part of the social organization of gender relations in the world. The frequency and breadth of domestic violence within all economic, racial and ethnic groupings has led many researchers to conclude that domestic violence is fast becoming a major health issue for all women (Gill, 2004). Connell (1995) suggests that a country such as South Africa, which is undergoing radical change, forces its society to assess gender responses some of which are exceedingly violent. This violence is often perceived as part of a broader social attempt by men to deal with feelings of emasculation or the actual loss of status and power. Feminists have always equated rape and spousal abuse as methods of asserting dominance over women.

The view that South African men are chauvinistic, misogynistic and homophobic does not reflect the diversity of South African masculinities reiterates Morrell (1998, 2005). There are without question masculinities that support violent and exploitative gender relations and those, which do not. As reported by Morrell (2005, p.88), ‘...incidences of gender-related violence continue to tarnish this young democracy especially when society continues to give a man with a history of spousal violence the label of respect and honour’.

#### 4.3 Historical and Cultural Perspectives

According to Vandello and Cohen (2003), a cultural emphasis on male honour may foster traditional gender roles that may encourage and perpetuate violence against women. Men as Morrell (2001) suggests, as well as particular constructions of masculinity, have historically been implicated in inequalities and injustices. The historical and contemporary patterns of male violence in South Africa (femicide, murder, rape and domestic violence), attest to this but as Morrell (2005) reiterates that it is not all men who threaten peace, democracy and harmony, but rather, particular constructions of masculinity that legitimate the use of violence.

South Africa has always been a “man’s country”. In other words, men exercised power publicly, privately and politically. Black and white men made decisions; were the providers and held power in the family and in the broader social system. But the country’s racist history also produced brittle masculinities (Morrell, 2001). These masculinities seemed prone to defensiveness and to violence. The apartheid era was a critical period especially for black people in South Africa. Race and class were manipulated by the state and this affected gender identity and ethnic labels and ethnic identities were rigidly established (Morrell, 2001). White men assumed positions of power and status, but, as suggests Morrell (2001), these privileges carried with them hypersensitivity and hypervigilance to challenges by women, blacks and other men. Black men’s political emasculation and impoverishment imbued their masculinity with a dangerous edge. Honour and respect became a rare achievement and retaining it became a violent process. South African masculinities embody the country’s turbulent past and can be said to have been a cause of that turbulent past (Morrell, 2001). The Boers, British and African men reflected an aggressive masculinity and Morrell (2001) eloquently describes it as a “yoking” of masculinity and violence in South African history (p.12).

The prosperous and politically articulate African middle class disappeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be replaced by a focus on rural life and the mining industry. In these rural areas traditional forms of authority and justice held sway and men were chiefs and warriors. (Morrell, 2001). South Africa was becoming more and more racially divided. Black men subjected to a racial hierarchy, low wages and hazardous working conditions, developed ways of surviving which drew on their understanding of what it meant to be a man in the rural areas but also which adapted to their new conditions. A new form of masculinity was bred which included notions of work and ethnicity. Ethnic tribes became associated with a particular quality of masculinity like the BaSotho men who were infamous for their strength and penchant for the toughest mining jobs (Morrell, 2001, p.14). Famous chiefs, heroes and kings were invoked as definitive models of Zulu manhood. The ideal qualities of masculinity persisted - that of warrior, protector and provider. ‘Black’ masculinities, born and constructed out of apartheid, challenged the ruling class and were violently played out in places like the mines and black men resisted

and thus validated violence as a way of dealing with power inequalities (Morrell, 2001). 'In the newly created black townships, a violent masculinity began to take root, particularly among the youth and gangs and crime became rampant and violence became the norm' (p.16).

Across the world, the ensuing thirty years brought about significant changes and new constructions of masculinity was encouraged and promoted, with the exception of South Africa. As Morrell describes (2001), 'While much of the world grooved to rock and roll, to the sound of anti Vietnam war chants...South Africa showed that there was nothing automatic about the direction of change'. South Africa remained '...stuck in a McCarthy-like era... borrowing heavily on German iconography and some of the ideas of national socialism...the Afrikaner National Party froze South African society in the 1950s' (p.16).

The 1990s witnessed radical changes in the policies of the state but as Morrell (2001) suggests, the direction of the economy did not. Unemployment and poverty increased giving rise to the growth of violent masculinities. The loss of work by blue collar workers in the United States especially affected black males (and still does) and to some extent affected working class white males in South Africa – but especially black workers. This relates directly to the development of Unions in South Africa in the 1970-1990 period. Morrell (2001), reiterates that in times of transition, the state becomes involved in the issues of masculinity. Moeller (in Morrell, 2001) relates how post-war Germany dealt with the crisis of masculinity and anxieties about national and racial identities by remasculinising the war-ravaged country. It actively created a new image of the German man, which had no link with the disgraced Nazi past. South Africa differs in this regard states Morrell (2001), because the liberation struggle was necessary and violence was noble. In the new South Africa those very same masculinities were now being perceived as criminal and destructive. Morrell (2001) notes that, 'the history of masculinity is not made exclusively by men. Women opposed certain aspects of masculinity and supported others (p.16). It is noted that while women operated in oppressive gender contexts many supported their men. The racial struggle against apartheid to a large extent masked or hid the gender struggle as increasingly manual labour was replaced by administrative

educated labour (often female). This masking may also be responsible for the failure to address problems related to masculinity.

#### 4.4 Contemporary Masculinities

South African men have been deeply affected by the past decade of transformation, in positive and negative ways. Unemployment, poverty, the rise in status of women are all factors which have incurred aggression and stress in some and soul searching and a change in attitude in others. Men in this country have to deal with and face entrenched cultural stereotypes and beliefs about gender roles. What does it mean to be a man in South Africa today? For a man, affirmation and validation has often been generated at the expense of someone weaker, most often women. Lisa Vetten of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation states that a significant amount of gender violence is about men putting women “back in their place”. She questions the progress that has been achieved when the majority of women are still too afraid to stand up to their husbands or partners (Vetten, 1997).

Often it is young men who grapple with identity and self worth and achieving some modicum of respect among peers and women. The question begs, what has contributed towards the development of the kind of violent masculinity that is responsible for so many deaths and more importantly what can be done to provide young men with alternatives. Both genders need to work together to ensure active participation in the fight against masculine violence. Statistics quoted by Loots (2005) indicate that there is a 33% female representation in parliament, but most South African women are still afraid to walk home at night, have to be vigilant against sexual abuse, date rape and the spread of HIV/Aids perpetrated by their lovers, friends, brothers, sons, uncles and fathers.

Bennett (2000) indicates that the environments in which people sustain most vulnerability to gender-based violence are environments in which gender differentiation is rigidly applied. Heterosexual relations in which the distinction between men and women is

significant often become the sites of gender-based violence. Gender tends to determine who gets hurt, who perpetrates the abuse, what weapons are used and what kind of rationalization allows the abuses to continue. Within our country gender-based violence exists in every community, in every institution, within all public places. Women and children are experiencing unprecedented levels of violent assault. Theories about the masculinization of young men, especially poor men, suggest their violence against women is a response to increasing unemployment and loss of civil identity. There are currently three themes, which dominate the analysis of current South African society. The first considers the prevalence of poverty and the second is concerned with the country's familiarity with violence, its acceptance as a legitimate and immediate means of settling a dispute and finally an emerging democracy with its transitional impact on the society. The aim is to develop a new culture in which the perpetration of gender-based violence is unthinkable (Bennett, 2000).

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (NICRO) and the South African Police Services (SAPS) suggest that one rape occurs every 35 seconds in South Africa (Robertson, 1998). Various explanations for the high incidence of one of the most violent gender-based crimes in this country includes the fact that South Africa is traditionally a male-dominated and patriarchal society where women hold limited power and authority. Research suggests that rape is more prevalent in such societies. Rape is more common in societies, which accept and believe in rape myths, which range from the belief that men rape because they cannot control their sexual lust, that rapists are strangers and that women enjoy rape. The culture of violence, which has been the legacy of apartheid, has left many of our men with a sense of powerlessness and perceived emasculation. Studies reiterate that the majority of victims are women and children and the majority of perpetrators are male, which may suggest a displacement of aggression in which men of all races feel able to reassert their power and dominance against weaker members of society (Lorentzen, 1998). In this context rape becomes an expression and assertion of power and aggression in an attempt to reassert the individual's masculinity. Mokwena (in Vetten, 1997) refers to the forceful abduction of young women in 1987/88 that became known as 'jackrolling' after the name of the gang involved in this activity.

What Mokwena's research reveals is that these women were specifically identified for their class, status and apparent unattainability. Rape was then deliberately used as a means of putting these women in their place.

Anthropologist Peggy Reeves-Sanday (in Vetten, 1997) has attempted to identify some of the correlates associated with rape-prone and rape-free societies. According to her research, women hold limited power and authority in rape-prone societies. Males are predisposed to an ideology of toughness, an acceptance of interpersonal violence and contempt for women as decision-makers. By contrast in relatively rape-free societies women enjoy respect and wield influence in their communities. The attitude towards the environment is one of reverence, as opposed to dominance and exploitation, the relationship between the sexes tends to be equal and symmetrical and the basis of human interaction are features of childbearing and nurturance. In West Sumatra according to Reeves-Sanday (in Vetten, 1997), men who rape are ridiculed and demeaned. The contrasts between these two types of societies define rape as the outcome of several societal beliefs about the differences between genders and socio-cultural scripts based on the ideology of male dominance (Vetten, 1997, p.11).

South Africa with its high crime rate is often equated with a 'culture of violence'. According to Munnik and Naude (in Vetten, 1997), statistics in 1995, place 2,3% of prison inmates as females. This suggests that women's involvement in violent crime is generally low and also indicates that most crimes committed by women are financially motivated. According to the Central Statistical Service's 1994 Household survey, the majority of deaths due to accidents, poisoning and violence were male. Similar findings are corroborated by studies in Australian and America noted in previous chapters. It would seem that men's involvement in violence is integral to masculinity in this society. South Africa's response to sexual violence is inconsistent and as Vetten (1997, p.13) suggests, 'betraying rather a deep ambivalence on the subject. Responses to violence range from expressions of shock and condemnation to the belief that women provoke rape and violence through their dress and behaviour. Inadequacies in the criminal justice system also exacerbate the implementation of legal recourse (Robertson, 1998).

In South Africa the constitutional endorsement of gender equality, the human rights discourse and laws that regulate gender relations in the private sphere pose significant challenges to the legitimacy of men's authority. These challenges and the willingness of a growing number of women to assert their legal rights are forcing men to recognize women as persons in their own right. This is in direct contrast to dominant notions of heterosexual relationships which, are organized by gender hierarchies and which oblige women to recognize the authority of the patriarch and grant men power to make decisions unilaterally. 'Hence recognition of women as equal legal persons has exposed a crisis of recognition in the 'private sphere' of intimate relations' (Sideris, 2005, p. 101). Benjamin (in Sideris, 2005) puts it more strongly when she argues that, '...where male authority is stripped of the cover of responsibility, power and honour, the failure of recognition is exposed' (p.101). Challenge to the gender order is likely to evoke anxiety in men and instead of constructing women as dependent, they are constructed, as the threatening other who must be controlled. Connell also claims that norms and conditions which permit violent modes of controlling women, constitutes a high risk for violence (Connell, 1995).

Minsky and Benjamin (in Sideris, 2005) suggest that growing unemployment amongst men and women competing in the job market as well as their access to welfare, undermine men's roles as protectors and providers. The writers suggest that these conditions combined with women's sense of agency constitute the risk that men's vulnerability will be exposed. It would thus appear that although political change in South Africa challenges the legitimacy of men's privileged status over women, the ideology that constructs masculinity in terms of domination and power has not been displaced (Segal, 1990). Arguably then disputing men's positions as heads of households almost invalidates one of the core foundations on which their identities are based. All at once challenges to the legitimacy of male domination confront men with women as independent others and reveal the fragile foundation on which their own sense of difference, their sense of themselves as men, is based. 'Consequently, claims Minsky, 'for those men who continue to hold domination as an ideal but whose capacity to exercise absolute control is constrained, their fragility is being exposed' (2005, p.104).

This perception of fragility may be linked to the humiliation and shame that men experience when they cannot meet perceived expectations of what a “real” man is – a provider, protector, one who by virtue of strength can enforce his will on others.

A long tradition of feminist scholarship has identified a high correlation between violence against women and rigidly defined gender categories which contain definitions of masculinity associated with dominance, toughness and male authority in the home. Violence and its threat are employed in the maintenance of male domination and feminine submission. Within this body of knowledge there is a strong argument that conditions that constitute the highest risk for violence are those in which male dominance is threatened (Connell, 1995). Segal (in Sideris, 2005, p.105) claims that, ‘men’s fears of not being male enough, their fears of dependence, vulnerability and intimacy, are central to violence in intimate heterosexual relationships, again especially where norms and customs sanction violent behaviours’. Other factors, which must be considered in the development of a culture of violence, include poor development and socialization conditions in this country and the role of negative peer models.

Statistics quoted by Reuters Foundation (2005), indicate the presence of 3.7 million legally registered guns and an unknown number of illegal firearms in South Africa. According to the Medical Research Council (MRC), a woman is shot dead by her current or former partner every six hours and such cases rose by 78% between 1990 and 1999. The MRC claims that one in three female homicide victims was killed with a gun - of those, 50% were killed by their intimate partner and 71% were killed in their own homes. The study also found that 20% of murders were completed with legally owned guns (Reuters, 2005).

Reuters (2005) quotes Lisa Vetten as confirming an increase in intimate femicide-suicide and that the proliferation of guns was probably a contributing factor. Vetten and Shelver go on to dispute the commonly held notion that the prevalence of gun violence and intimate femicide in South Africa is a legacy of apartheid. ‘Violence against women is global phenomenon’ states Shelver (in Reuters, 2005, p. 4), ‘and lower levels of such



violence exist in countries with better laws to protect women'. Moloko (in Reuters, 2005) claims that the justification by men for shooting their partners was mundane but the underlying motives was the desire to assert power or control over women. This finding lends itself more to male socialization rather than a violent history. Where men experience a perceived loss of esteem and masculinity, they might use gun ownership and violence against women as a means of regaining power. Men as Partners (MAP) programme facilitator, Li Buthelezi, describes his concept of a violent masculinity as follows:

'I grew up in an environment where beating ladies was the order of the day, and it just made you think it was normal. If I was pissed [drunk] I would just lift my hand and 'klap' [slap] her couple of times – it was just me showing my manhood (Reuters, 2005, p.5). He goes on to say that a program such as MAP makes men question their definitions of masculinity and that men begin to see women as equals.

### 5.1 Rationale and Aims

The study attempted to examine the context of violence in South African society and explored conceptions of masculinity around notions of honour among men. Because not much if any research has been conducted among non-criminal populations in the area of violence and a culture-of-honour theory in the South African context, the aim of the study was to explore whether violence may be implicitly or explicitly sanctioned in a culture and if “honour” was the salient organizing theme. The overarching objective of the research was to make a tentative connection between origins of male violence and perhaps a skewed or misguided notion of “honour among men”. It was of interest to explore whether broad commonalities in concepts of honour in masculinity emerged in South African men or whether honour concepts were defined more specifically by cultures in this society.

A social constructionist paradigm, which argues that gender is constructed in social interaction, forms the premise of this kind of study. A social constructionist paradigm explores the interplay of gender with culture, race and historical context in the construction of a man. By interviewing these young adults it was hoped to begin to understand how they perceive and construct their masculinity, whether honour is a salient organizing theme in the construction of “manhood” and whether a perceived sense of humiliation or blow to pride and honour may lead to violent behaviours.

Previous local studies have focused on the construction of masculinity within a specific setting such as schools (Morrell, 2001). A review of the literature suggests that although the historical perspectives of South African masculinities have been researched, a focus on a culture-of-honour in shaping masculinities has not been researched locally (Morrell, 2001). Research in the USA, Middle East, Africa and Mediterranean countries suggest that a culture of honour does exist in certain regions in the world and that this honour-

bound masculinity is susceptible to humiliation with quick recourse to aggressive and often violent response (Nisbett, 1993; Nisbett & Cohen, 1994; Cohen, 2003; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). It is acknowledged that gender, class, race and status have structured South African society and it is therefore anticipated that different masculinities have emerged in different contexts in this society. Research identifying a common culture-of-honour among men has not been undertaken locally nor can it just be assumed that this honour-bound construction of masculinity is peculiar to a specific population in South Africa.

Masculinity studies both locally and internationally suggests quite vociferously the connection between traditional masculinities and violence (Morrell, 2001; Connell, 1995; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Vandello & Cohen, 2003) and those traditional models of maleness are potentially toxic to society and to men themselves (Morrell, 2001; Connell, 2003; Hearn, 1998). It has been made clear by many experienced local researchers (Morrell, 2001; Epstein, 1998) that the way in which boys and men construct their sense of themselves as men impacts on critical issues confronting our society, including frighteningly high statistics of femicide, rape and domestic violence and violence in general. It is an imperative that we begin to focus on how males are socialized and how scripts are perpetuated and transmitted or fostered in this society. The broad or global rationale behind this research is thus to understand how young men feel about being men in South Africa today and so increase the accountability of youth towards building a culture of peaceful masculinity.

## 5.2 Research Design

This research was conducted within a qualitative methodological framework. This is an exploratory study on how men experience masculinity around notions of *honour*, and so I considered a pragmatic, social phenomenological methodology to be the most appropriate approach to achieve the richness and depth of data without preoccupation with narrow and confining methodological conventions (Kvale, 1996). The relevance of social

phenomenology in studying social interactions and how ordinary individuals consciously develop meaning out of these interactions is well articulated by Swingewood (in Creswell, 1998). This approach is also referred to as ethnomethodology. Kvale (1996) points out that the recent interest in interview research,

‘...reflects a broader historical and cultural questioning and construction of social reality. The implicit conceptions of the knowledge produced by interviews and the explicit analysis of knowledge construction by postmodern philosophers thus converge on the conversational, narrative, linguistic, contextual and interrelational features of knowledge’ (p.42-45).

Conducting a qualitative study requires that the researcher has an extensive knowledge of the theme under investigation so that she may be ‘sensitive to nuances of meaning expressed and the different contexts into which meaning may enter’ (Kvale, 1996, p.48). Kvale (1996) suggests that the interpretation of the text is not presuppositionless and the researcher cannot forego the tradition of understanding that she exists in and so it is recommended that the researcher attempts to explicate these presuppositions, to become conscious of how the way a question is posed tends to determine which forms of answers are possible. ‘Such a consciousness of presuppositions is necessary when using the interview as a research method because the researcher and respondent will unavoidably co-determine the results. What matters here is being as aware as possible about one’s own presuppositions and modes of influence and to attempt to take them into account in the interpretation’ (p.49).

Creswell (1998) points out that the success of good qualitative research lies in its ability to contribute to our understanding of important educational questions. Most importantly is that the research question drives the data collection and analysis rather than the other way around and that the collection of data and its subsequent analysis is competently applied. Creswell (1998) also notes that of importance is that the researcher’s assumptions be made explicit, that the study utilizes respected theoretical explanations and that the study has value both in informing and improving practice. Lincoln (in

Creswell, 1998) points out that, 'within diverse traditions of research, inquiry communities have developed their own traditions of rigor, communication and ways of reaching consensus' (p.195). These standards include that the study must provide space for multiple voices to be heard in the texts of the respondents, that the text should display authenticity about its stance and the position of the author and that research addresses and serves the purpose of the community in which it is carried out. Critical subjectivity is an essential aspect of the researcher who through this kind of research attempts to create personal and social transformation.

Multiple perspectives exist regarding the importance of verification in qualitative research and Lincoln and Guba (in Creswell, 1998), use alternative terms to those in qualitative research, contending that they adhere more to naturalistic axioms. These issues of validity and reliability have often come under intense scrutiny in qualitative research and a large body of research has sought to counteract this critique by establishing the trustworthiness of a study through concepts such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, citing these as equivalent to internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Creswell, 1998). It is proposed by Kvale (1996) that qualitative research does not subscribe to standard rules or common methodological conventions, or even common procedures for interviewing. Whilst the area of reliability, validity and objectivity are subject to critical scrutiny in qualitative designs, Kvale (1996) further suggests, that these notions need to be reconceptualised into forms relevant to interview research. Kvale points out that in the postmodern world '...knowledge is not a mirror of reality but a social construction of reality' (p.239).

For the purpose of this study the sample was small so as to generate depth of information as opposed to breadth. Kvale (1996) suggests that transferability can still be ensured provided that detailed description of the context, methodology and data analysis accompanies this qualitative approach. The clear explication of the context, methodology and data analysis provides the reader with sufficient evidence from which reasoned judgment can be used to generalize findings to another situation or context (Kvale 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Creswell (1998) identifies eight verification procedures to establish validity and reliability in qualitative research of which a minimum of two procedures should be used in any given study. One of the methods of ensuring the credibility of this study is respondent validity or member checks, whereby the researcher solicits the participants' validation of the findings and interpretations. Peer review was implemented which provides an external check of the research process (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research methodology equates this form of external check as similar to interrater reliability in quantitative research and describes this individual as a devil's advocate who controls for biased subjectivity in the analysis of the material (Kvale, 1996; Creswell, 1998).

This researcher engaged in at least three of the verification processes as described by Creswell (1998, p. 201-203) to confer reliability and validity – these being the peer review which provides an external check of the research process, a member check where respondents' views of the credibility of the interpretations were solicited and an external audit in the form of a supervisor's input, with the aim of examining whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data.

### 5.3 Sample

A non-random sampling procedure was implemented in this study. An advertisement was placed at a local tertiary college from which one of the respondents was drawn. The seven other respondents were selected through a snowballing process. The respondents were requested to complete a basic demographic questionnaire to verify the required criteria as outlined below. The method of quota sampling allowed for the selection of identifiable subgroups, namely, a representative cross-cultural selection of male adults between the ages of 18 – 35 years of comparable educational levels and socio-economic status. The above age group was chosen, as it is statistically significant in terms of crime, risky behaviour and violence in the population (Morrell, 2005). It is a period in a young man's life where the onus to prove his manhood is most apparent and as Vandello and

Cohen (2003) suggest, ‘... it may be young people who might be most concerned with honor because they are actively competing for space in the status hierarchy’ (p.1008).

The attributes of interest included the following:

- The eight respondents ranged in age from 19 years to 33 years.
- All respondents resided in the greater Durban area.
- All the men had a minimum of a grade 12 qualification and some were currently at tertiary institutions.
- All came from predominantly middle class families.
- Two respondents each were drawn from historically racial categories i.e. Black, Coloured, Indian and White South Africans.

Quota sampling has its disadvantages as it may introduce researcher bias, however, these types of samples are used when in-depth qualitative research is planned which allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of the sample (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This technique allows for the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study and allows for the identification of important common patterns and contrasts that emerge across variations (Patton, 1990).

#### 5.4 Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured and structured interviews. The interview questions were based on interview guidelines identifying the broad areas that the researcher wished to examine as well as specific questions and scenarios to elicit more specific information (Creswell, 1998). These questions were developed from the literature as well as input from my supervisor. Questions were formulated in such a manner that constructs relating to honour remained implicit in order to retain authenticity of responses and to safeguard against bias. The interview process comprised open-ended questions to encourage spontaneity of discussion as well as specific questions, which

helped to focus the interview around issues related to the core concerns of this study such as issues of masculinity around notions of honour and violence. An added advantage of this approach is that it allows containment of the interview and directs the participant toward relevant issues whilst still retaining some degree of flexibility in the process. This also served to maximize standardization of the interview process as well as eliminate potential biasing effects of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). Short scenarios representing situations dealing with concepts of self-protection, protection of family, the proper response to insults, bravery, sexual prowess, issues of status, socialization of children to violence and female infidelity were some of the questions put to respondents (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). Participants were called on to respond to these scenarios to provide the researcher with information pertaining to reactions to real life situations in which honour plays a role. Refer to Appendix C for the Interview Schedule.

Interviews were piloted with two volunteers and in this manner, the relevance and comprehension of the questions could be revised. The interview schedule included exploratory questions for the purpose of enhancing relevancy and pertinence. In the pilot interviews respondents were requested to question the relevancy of questions and were encouraged to suggest alternative ways of eliciting responses and gathering vital information on the topic. The interviewer consistently sought clarification of data throughout the process by reflecting on the participants' responses and descriptions. In addition, participants were invited to raise any issues or concerns that they considered relevant to the interview or questions asked. With the informed consent of the respondents, interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. Each interview lasted approximately two hours. The resultant text formed the basis of data analysis and these texts were analyzed and coded. A summary example of the transcripts may be seen in Appendix E.



## 5.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is based on a qualitative examination of eight narratives of masculinity and focuses on themes relating to a concept of being 'an honourable man' such as pride, bravery, protector, provider, and sexual prowess. The narratives of these young men add voice and depth to the issues they face in disclosing expectations of being a "real man" in South Africa today and the conflicting faces of masculinity and vulnerability, modernization and culture, being a man amongst men of just being a man that can be loved. Although this data sample is too small to be analyzed quantitatively, it provides a broad picture of the masculine dilemma confronting our society.

In qualitative research, interviews have been depicted as the description and interpretation of themes in the participants' lived world. Several methods can be used to organize the interview texts for ease of analysis (Kvale, 1996). Essentially the techniques of analysis are tools designed to interpret information. During analysis of qualitative interviews, Kvale (1996) points out that,

'The process begins with reading the interview through to gain an overall overview of the meaning. One then retraces certain themes and expressions in an attempt to develop their meaning. Once meanings are clarified, the researcher reviews the global meanings of the interview once again in light of the deeper meaning of the parts and in this way, the meanings of the various themes elicit patterns and coherence' (p.48).

This study utilized a five-step analysis as described by Kvale (1996):

Step 1 Participants describe their lived world during the interview - what they experience, feel and understand and do in relation to the topic.

Step 2 Participants themselves discover new relationships during the interview, see new meanings in what they experience and do.

Step 3 The interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the participant describes and relates the meaning back to the participant.

Step 4 The transcribed interview is interpreted by the transcriber and researcher. This entailed structuring the large and complex interview material followed by clarification of the material, making it amenable to analysis and finally, the analysis proper, which involves development of meanings of the interview. At this stage, the analysis involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the participants' own understanding into light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on the phenomena.

According to Kvale (1996), there are five main approaches to the analysis of meaning and these include condensation, categorization, narrative structuring, interpretation and ad hoc methods. The qualitative research interview presents the researcher with a unique potential for obtaining access to the lived world and describing this lived everyday world (Kvale, 1996). For the purpose of this study an ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques for meaning generation was used. The researcher read through the interviews to get an overall impression of the interview. The researcher then reread the transcripts to identify recurrent themes, ideas and contradictions and overall tone within the transcribed text. Rereading certain passages identifying different attitudes to the topic followed this, making deeper interpretations of specific statements, working out metaphors to capture the material and identifying themes specific to the literature.

Step 5 Member checks and re-interviewing was implemented whereby data, analysis, interpretations and conclusions were taken back to the participants to judge the accuracy and credibility of the account (Creswell, 1998; Kvale, 1996). Respondents were requested to either confirm or disconfirm initial interpretations of their transcripts. Information that was considered ambiguous was taken back by the researcher to respondents for clarification. Finally, the use of a peer reviewer was implemented to control for haphazard or biased subjectivity in analysis. The peer reviewer read the theoretical underpinnings of the study and was then requested to review the transcripts. The reviewer

was able to objectively report on her understanding and interpretation of the transcripts and to compare her findings with that of the researcher in order to reduce the subjective interpretation and analysis of data by the researcher.

## 5.6 Ethical Issues

Before embarking on this study, several ethical considerations were reviewed. Firstly, by the very nature of the study and its context, politically sensitive issues around outdated racial classification often pose a serious dilemma for the researcher. It must therefore be noted that the researcher has not willingly perpetuated these apartheid designations and it has been incorporated purely within the context of research examining the social context of masculinities in South Africa. .

The following criteria were put in place to ensure ethical professional practice:

- Participant interest in this project was established and potential participants were informed of the overall purpose of the study.
- Participants were assured of the strictest confidentiality and anonymity.
- Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Informed consent was voluntary and required that participants were fully aware of and understood their involvement in the study. This ensured that they made an informed decision to participate.
- The results of the research will be used only for the purpose of research and to increase and augment the knowledge base and its application in social research.
- In planning the research, the researcher only confined herself to procedures that she has become competent to conduct.

Any publication of research material should adhere to ethics of protection of participants and their identity. Above all, the guiding principle should be the avoidance of harm to participants in the research (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

### 5.7 Reflexivity

Research can never be completely unbiased and is always carried out from a particular perspective and the position of the researcher needs to be factored into the process of research. It is incumbent on the researcher to reflect on her role as interviewer, her philosophy and experience in conducting research, her biases and ultimately her goal in undertaking a particular research topic. Of concern always is how the researcher's own philosophies and values may bias the analysis and interpretation of the data. I had to carefully reflect on my agenda as a feminist in undertaking a research into masculinity and specifically the sensitive issue of violence against women in this country. Of immense importance to me as a researcher and psychologist is to attempt to understand the perspective of another –in this instance the other gender- in order to establish methods of developing a culture of peace in this country where women can walk the streets without fearing for their safety and where men do not carry the mark of rapist and abuser with such impunity. Input from my supervisor as well as the inclusion of an independent data analyst served to maintain awareness of these difficulties and to highlight possible prejudices enabling me to remain unbiased.

## CHAPTER 6 RESULTS

### 6.1 Key identifying sources of quotations

Verbatim quotations from transcribed interviews are used in this chapter. Quotations are identified according to categories of respondent and race as follows:

Black male	Black male1; Black male 2	[B1; B2]
Coloured male	Coloured male1; Coloured male 2	[C1; C2]
Indian male	Indian male1; Indian male 2	[I1; I2]
White male	White male1; White male 2	[W1; W2]

### 6.2 Introduction

An outstanding feature generated by the interviews of male adults in this study is a sense of transition and fluidity in relation to being a man in contemporary South African society. Economic, social, ideological and political change has impacted profoundly on personal notions of masculinity and femininity. Respondents across all racial categories are grappling with changes in gender relations and their perceptions of what it is to be a man. Traditional concepts of masculinity are shifting and contested among men irrespective of race and culture.

A pervasive thread dominating the interviews is the multiplicity of voices regarding masculinity and male roles. According to Toerien and Durrheim (2001), these multiple voices perhaps reflect the multi-layered nature of masculinity that arises from the multiple and conflicting discourses of masculinity in place and time. All the respondents appear to be caught between traditional and contemporary notions of masculinity, between discourses of a “real man” and the “new man” or between cultural and liberal western notions of what a “real” man is. The interview texts consistently reveal that

respondents are conflicted in their understanding of what it means to be a 'real man' and are grappling with their role in relation to women in society. Of interest was the respondents' inclination to imbue alternative masculinities with the more feminine qualities of sensitivity, empathy, emotions and the freedom to express greater individuality as men.

Examination of the eight cases revealed certain patterns in relation to notions of honour. A common perception among these respondents was the notion of an inherent aggression in masculine make-up and that to be a man implies displaying a credible threat of violence and aggression. It was also evident that young men are acutely aware of the need to shift from violent and abusive masculinities and are choosing alternative and multiple ways of being a man. Illustrated throughout the texts were constructs of an honour stance such as, *"to be a man you have to step up"*; *"you can't lose face"*, *"to be the type of man others' don't mess with"*; *"a loser is someone who can be pushed around"*. One respondent states, *'I do believe in revenge...you don't let people hurt you and get away with it...you need to hurt back' – I1*

### 6.3 Concepts of Masculinity

#### 6.3.1 Male socialization

Respondents describe masculinity as both inherent as well as socially determined and that nothing is completely instinctual in man. This is the common discourse evident in the interviews. Male behaviour is the result of upbringing and adherence to the roles designated by one's environment but it is also biological they say. *'Masculinity is a chromosome thing... a biological thing' - W2*

*'There is a sex role difference between genders... you are born with chemicals, which influence your masculinity. How masculinity is constructed over and above this is mainly due to socialization' – W1*

All respondents endorse the strong influence of parents and especially fathers in providing a template of masculinity for their sons. Respondents suggest that there are specific masculine and feminine qualities, which shape their personality which are transmitted by parents.

*'Masculinity is constructed from parents... it is a learned response' – W2*

*'One shapes one's masculinity through learning from other men' – C2*

*'The father figure is the role model...he is in charge... you learn from him how to be a man' - I2*

*'My mother cannot teach me to be a man. My father must teach me' – B1*

What is evident in the interviews is that all respondents struggle to personally define what a “real” man ought to be. Views range on a continuum of espousing traditional qualities and roles of masculinity such as status, forcefulness, provider, protector, head of the home to contemporary masculine qualities, which include wisdom, responsibility, maturity, sensitivity, intelligence, skill and confidence.

*'Men are socialized to assume the role of the leader in the family... we are in charge...it's a world phenomena. This is how people perceive that you be as a man' - I2*

*'Manly qualities are strength, power, status...' – B2*

*'I struggle with the concept of a “real” man. I am not expected to be this real man...I am expected to be a good person...to carry myself in the proper manner' – C1*

*'The definition of a respected man is one who has the ability to do things well...incompetency equals looking weak as a man' – W2*

*'A successful man is financially and socially adequate' – B2*

It seems that there is a perceptible shift towards acknowledging different masculinities from the traditional masculinity albeit in a manner fraught with ambivalence and inner conflict. There is an emergence of the post-modern man with greater freedom to construct a masculinity that is different. These men indicate a greater level of commitment to exploring alternative masculinities but are still wary of being perceived as lesser men in the eyes of society. Opposing patriarchal opinions reflect the multiplicity of masculine constructs within a multicultural society like South Africa.

*'There are different men that I experience...there is a movement towards acknowledging different masculinities than the traditional masculinity...there is more freedom to be an individual as a male. More freedom to be more the man you want to be... now we can adopt sensitivity, show interest in clothes, arts and movies...you are now celebrated for your new masculinity. The traditional masculinity is portrayed by my parents where my father works and my mother was a housewife. They adopted a patriarchal template for their relationship which worked for them... but as I'm growing older and becoming more and more my own human being... I'm starting shift completely in my own mind, through my own experience and expectations of what it means to be in any given situation, as a man, as a husband or partner or father' - W1*

### 6.3.2 Patriarchal Masculinities

Respondents accommodate the social expectations that define maleness and embrace those aspects of being a man such as rugby, camaraderie, drinking, sport, competitiveness, strength and sexual prowess. *'Men take the lead, make decisions...masculinity is being forceful' – W2*



*'To be a man you need to be respected and feared...you can achieve this through brute strength, power, force or you can achieve respect by respecting others' – B2*

*'I still embrace the traditional aspects of being a man such as rugby, drinking beer and talking sex with the guys' – W1*

However, the interviews suggest that young men are making more informed choices as to what aspects of the patriarchal male to retain and which to discard. Old taboos such as “men don't cry” and notions of dominance and aggression are male qualities that contemporary men appear to wear with unease. *'I disregard the taboos that men don't cry ...and having to keep it cool in the face of overwhelming emotion' – W1*

*'There are certain things in the world that are inherently masculine such as racism and prejudice - these qualities are inherently male. Also narrow-mindedness, anger and hatred encompass masculinity in its traditional state' - W1*

*'I do not think of myself as a typical male... not old school where to show emotion is a weakness and being sensitive is construed as a weakness. I do not have that natural aggression ...it is about the self as a person, as a man, a search for identity and making choices about the man you want to be. I have an atypical masculinity... an intellectual like my father' – C1*

*'Traditionally Indian men were always seen as the breadwinner of the family...but things have changed now...' – I2*

*'You are supposed to be the head of the home...now your wife is your equal...your word is not the final word...your word is the negotiated word...' – B1*

### 6.3.3 Masculine Virility

Young men experience the male peer group as a competitive space in which they are expected to prove themselves (Mac an Ghail, 1994). In the interviews respondents reflect on the influence of peers, and suggest that depending on the ethos of the social group it would lend itself to violent masculinities in the form of excessive drinking and brawling and other high risk behaviour. The emphases on sexual prowess as was evident in the interviews as respondents endorsed sexual virility as benchmark for being a man. *'The more women you have the better a man you are...this used to be the way I thought in my younger years'* – C2. A general endorsement across all interviews is that sexual prowess remains an integral aspect of the makeup of a man. *'It is embarrassing not to score with a girl and men will resort to lying and embellishment among one another to boost their manhood about their sexual conquest'* - I1.

*'Being able to perform in bed is an essential part of one's masculinity'* – B2

*'If I am not in a committed relationship I will have as many women as I can...a blow to my masculinity is to be unable to perform in bed'* - B1.

The male sex drive whilst lauded by most respondents was acknowledged by one respondent as being a dangerous masculine construct that men used as a justification for damaging behaviour. He goes onto voice his concern for the abuse of a so-called male sex drive:

*'Men can be disgusting in their maleness... I refuse to acknowledge myself as a man at any given point... I always refer to myself as a boy because I think there are certain things that boyhood has that are so beautiful...which we lose as we hit manhood...the male libido is innately male and animalistic. I have seen many a beautiful thing get destroyed because of this'* – W1

The emphasis of manliness shifts to confidence, achievement, skill in the workplace, being a leader and maintaining a committed relationship. *'Patriarchy is still present – I grapple with it and choose to be different...'* – W1

*'There are opportunities for different masculinities...what is required today is a well-rounded guy – someone who is not too aggressive but can stand up and not too sensitive, but with feelings'* – C2

#### 6.3.4 Violent Masculinities

*'Fantasies of violence is probably human instinct rather than a learned response in combination with environmental influence...'* – W2

*'Violence is not instinctual in man... instinct would be more appropriate to animals... man is in full control of his mind and his action'* - I 2

All respondents appeared to endorse the view that masculinity encompasses an innate aggression. Common across categories is that violence is sometimes necessary depending on the context but that there is a choice to seek out alternative ways of conflict resolution. *'There is a time and a place for violence...to show that you are capable of taking care of yourself...that you are not a "soft target"'* – C2. To resort to violence as a natural instinct, as the only way real men sort out problems, is to perpetuate a socially constructed fallacy they say. It would seem that respondents grapple with the concept of a violent masculinity. There is ambivalence in the manner in which these young men understand, contest, and accept aggression as a part of their inherent makeup. Conflicting statements from respondents attest to this ambivalence.

*'There is a natural inclination to aggression in men...I do get violent but it's not in my nature to act it out'* - W2.

*'As much as I don't like violence I am drawn to it... I like watching boxing...he is the hero, the person that can defend himself... I choose not to let it dominate me as a man...there's a point people reach... I don't choose to be violent' – C1*

There is a dis-avowment of ownership of this aggression, almost a sense of fear of an aggression that supposedly lurks within a man's psyche and that must be contained, suppressed but which continues to rear its ugly head.

*'I do aspire to masculine things like a good action movie. That kind of manliness appeals to me in that sense, when I am receiving it in an entertainment form, but I don't really understand it on a social level...that kind of masculinity I don't really know how to deal with it' – W1*, is the response of one interviewee. He opposes

his endorsement immediately after,

*'I wish that one could be a werewolf once a month... I could let loose, go savage and just tear things and just kill...get it out of the system because its definitely there. It has to be because I play violent TV games...but my brain and my heart have gotten to a point...of maturity, a level of hierarchical scale of my life that it's not an issue on the surface. Sometimes it does...I have a bad day and I just want to hit someone which is very strange for me to say out loud' - W1*

#### 6.3.5 Masculinity and Social influence

Respondents' note that "doing masculinity" is heavily influenced by social circumstance and the company one keeps. It either lends itself to violent masculinities or retracts from it. Violence is a learned response and influenced by the environment and community that one lives in. Respondents agree that drinking alcohol is often the precursor to violent and aggressive behaviours. One respondent describes the ethos of a community in which he grew up:

*'Attending a 'white' school shaped me differently from those boys in my community who did not leave the community ...where there was no exposure to other ways of being a man. They have gangsters as role models...these are young men eager to engage in aggressive behaviours... there is still a culture of violence in the area...proving yourself to be a man is to be able to drink excessively, fight and sleep around... yes, peers have a strong influence on your behaviour as a man' – C1*

*'Men are insulted and humiliated by fellow men if they do not meet the criteria of what it is to be a man' – H*

*'I don't enjoy being around people who are prone to that behaviour (Violence)...it depends who your social group is' – W2*

#### 6.3.6 Honourable Men

All respondents agree that aggression is a necessity in the face of attack on self, family or friends. It would seem that violence is justifiable in the form of defense against perceived threat.

*'If someone attacked me or my family or my friends or anyone else who did not deserve it, with immediate violence, and if it was left to me to prevent that...then I would use as much force as necessary...if it required taking the other party to the ground and kicking their head until such time as they lay unconscious in a pool of their own blood...so be it' - W2.*

*'Admirable men are men who can stand their ground...' – C2*

*'As a man you still have to step up and fight to defend yourself or your friends'*  
*- W1*

In response to a verbal insult one respondent replied, *'I would face him...make him understand what he is doing wrong...when you are attacked (physically or verbally), you have to defend yourself and defend all that you care about – B1*

Respondents across all categories have common and strongly held perceptions of what is to be “not much of a man”. Whilst generally not aspiring to traditional masculinities in their totality, respondents are fully cognisant that to be a man in public is to fulfil certain expectations of social masculinity. Common discourses among the respondents in relation to “manliness” include the following themes: To be not much of a man is a man who can't “*step up when he needs to*”, “*who can't take responsibility for his actions*”, “*he can be pushed around*”, “*he does not face what's coming to him*”, “*a wimp*”, “*a loser*”. This definition of a coward extends to its more contemporary analogy of men who are failures in life, who can't achieve, incompetent, weak, who can't support themselves. Socially there is a need to fit in, to be perceived as a man and not less of a man.

*'I do not respect “soft” men. A soft man is a guy who can't make a plan...he is a pansy, like a woman' – B1.*

*'A coward is a pretender, a loser...someone who can't achieve' – C1*

There is evidence that what constitutes male pride differs across interviews and corresponds with respondents' definitions of masculinity in its first instance.

*'A coward is someone who is unable to stand up for himself in the face of a reasonable and counterable challenge. And by that I do not mean one who turns away when challenged to a street-race or a fistfight – accepting that challenge implies needing to prove oneself, which in turn implies a lack of selfworth. Accepting said challenge is cowardice and declining is courage' –W2*

There is a common perception among respondents that men have to live up to certain social expectations or suffer humiliation in the eyes of society. Loss of pride and honour is having to accept defeat in its myriad forms. *'It's about falling short and not wanting to admit it...losing competitively is a blow to one's manhood' – I1*

Male pride and potential humiliation take on subtle differences as illustrated by the following discourses outlined below:

*'Failure in any area of life is accompanied by a loss of pride' - C2*

*'To stand up is to stand your ground in a dispute. You don't run away from issues... a loss of pride is to accept defeat, accepting money from a woman. It's about falling short' – I1*

*'A wimp or loser is a guy we would term 'petticoat government'. He is ruled by his woman. He can't stand his ground. He is incapable of making choices and decisions. He can't handle himself and always complains' – I1*

*'Males do not like to be humiliated by women...they don't like to be shown up by women' – C2*

Comments made by respondents confirm that pride is an integral aspect of masculinity and that to lose one's pride or to lose "face" is to be humiliated. To be emasculated and lose face implies that some mechanism must be put in place to regain lost pride.

*'There is always the possibility of a violent reaction if a man's pride is insulted'*  
– B2

*'...It's easier to forgive somebody after you get even...' – I1*

*'...Step up and retaliate...you have to have some degree of toughness otherwise people will walk right over you...' – C2*

There is a strong emphasis among the respondents that pride and respect is generated through achievement- winning is important and failure is internalised and erodes self-confidence. Being financially stable, successful, a leader and confident ranks high on the list of proud achievements among these young men. So a search for status is emphasised, much like ethnologists suggest. Other perceptions of a proud masculinity embrace the more traditional criteria of what a real man should be as illustrated below:

*'Being financially stable and able to support self and family is the ultimate gauge of a real man... man is the provider you know, the head of the home...loss of pride and honour is accepting defeat, accepting money from a woman. It is very hard for a guy to accept being defeated in any context...it's about falling short and not wanting to admit it' - I1*

*'A man has to be able to make the most of a situation, to make a plan. If he is unemployed not to let go and become a loser and drink... he must have the capacity to explore other options of becoming a useful member of society. You have to figure something out. Give your children wisdom if you can't give them money, be supportive if your wife if she is the breadwinner and cook and clean and take care of the kids. I am not sure where these constructs and opinions come from...it's the ability to be self-reliant. It's about being able to be a provider for yourself as well as for your family...you are not much of a man if you can't do that and just sit back' - B1*

Respondents don't necessarily endorse violence to gain respect. There is a consensus that there are more mature and sophisticated ways of garnering respect. *'One must have the ability to step back and reflect on feelings of humiliation and not just react' - W1*

*'If I resort to violence, my pride is insulted more... you need to be strong enough, intelligent enough...there is always the possibility of a violent reaction if a man's pride is humiliated' – B2.*



One particular respondent was most vociferous in his discourse on masculine pride in South African society:

*'Being a man in South Africa is not earned, society has developed a perception that to be a man in this society is nothing, it doesn't mean that you have to provide any more. It has stripped men of who they could be. Now being a man means nothing. There is no pride in being a man here. Equality has left men without an identity. We don't know how to raise children, if you emulate your father you are called sexist. So whom do you emulate? We are lost between the old and the new. Your new identity as a man revolves around flashy cars, women, having children all over, images of rapists and criminals as the men to aspire to. Men are generally disrespected in our society now. I hate to think that society is producing a generation of bisexuals!' - B1.*

The intensity of a male identity crisis is apparent in this interview. It may be revealing of the difficulty inherent in a black man discarding his strong cultural identity to replace it with a more contemporary image of maleness. This tentative interpretation is played out in a later interview with the second Black respondent. He goes on to say that being a black man in South Africa has its own unique difficulties.

*'It's about bridging the cultural gap to become a post-modern man – to integrate into society. One has to integrate history, custom and culture and adapt it to modern concepts of masculinity in order to shape and define yourself as a South African man. It is also a matter of pride to be engaging with aspects of one's own culture such as Lobolla as well as being modern enough to fit into the new concept of masculinity' - B2.*

Respondents all agreed that verbal and physical abuse by another male would generate a similar response from the respondent. Respondents refuted the notion that the response would automatically be aggressive and violent retaliation.

*'I will retaliate appropriately to verbal abuse and will respond to physical abuse if it is worth the fight... it is dependent on many things. One tries to avoid pain as far as possible... a very practical approach to retaliation... run away if you have to' - W2.*

What was evident across all interviews is that men have a strong male bond between themselves and can be called on to protect this bond without hesitation. Men will stand up for each other- an implicit honour among men. *'We are very protective of each other... we stand up for each other' - I1.*

*'There are times you have to step up especially when you are called on to protect a friend...you take up the superhero role' – W1*

#### 6.3.7 Honour-bound Women

The subject of women and their relation to men remained a contentious and controversial theme across all categories. Views espoused range from the more patriarchal paradigm that the man still essentially remains head of the home to a more egalitarian outlook where women are partners in all decision making. It seemed that whatever the individual philosophy of gender equality was, women were bestowed with tremendous power in defining men's maleness. In fact all respondents admit that women played a pivotal role in the perception of male pride. This may directly or indirectly relate to the severity of the humiliation that men experience when they lose face in the presence of a woman. These contentious discourses are outlined below:

*'Women give you the power that you need to boost your manliness. Women define you as a successful man...as a powerful man...money and women is the ultimate depiction of a real man' - B1*

*'To be a man you must strive to be better than a woman...even in the work environment it is humiliating for a woman to be in a superior position than a*

*man... can be a blow to his pride. Being beaten or shown up by women is humiliating for a man. There is a notion of superiority over women... competitiveness, a power struggle...as a man you must be better than a woman at everything like being a better driver, better at sport, handle things better' – I1.*

*'A man is more humiliated if he's pride is insulted in front of a woman. It is important that a woman sees you as manly. You must save face in front of a woman. As a man I care more about what a woman thinks of me than a man. We want women to look up to us as heroes' – B2.*

The respondents' conversations suggest that rejection by a woman impacted most significantly on their male pride and being humiliated in the presence of a woman was much more damaging to their pride and sense of "maleness". *'A let down is to be humiliated by your spouse in public...this would be perceived by others that she has the upper hand... this cannot be tolerated'- I2.* This statement corroborates honour theory which suggests that insults damage appearance of strength and toughness, especially in public (Shackelford, 2005).

#### 6.3.8 Gender Equality

Respondents differed in their opinions regarding equality in the financial arena. Views ranged from financial equality to more patriarchal ideologies in regard to the rules of relationships and money. Personal philosophies differed across all categories and suggest that old conservative constructs are difficult to unpack and re-evaluate and bring with it much ambivalence and a lack of clarity about changing gender roles in contemporary society. As one respondent states,

*'Traditionally Indian men are always seen as the breadwinner of the family, but things have changed now, however there is still the perception that as the man you are in charge and you should be making the decisions and providing for the family. This is my role, being the provider and making decisions but in*

*consultation with my spouse, but at the end of the day you want to be the one in charge...you would as a man try to combine these qualities with the reality of the day so that it will be a good fit for your relationship' – I2.*

*'Being a provider and a protector is still important...if you can't live up to it, it doesn't make you less of a man but just less appealing to women I guess' – C2*

*'In a relationship there should be equality... I don't have a problem with women contributing financially but I personally believe that, I have been raised that, a guy pays' - I1*

*'I have reservations about being supported by a woman. It's atypical of our culture but also it's about being a burden and I do not want to be a burden to anyone I don't want to be dependent on a woman. It's humiliating...it does not necessarily strip you of your manhood, but it affects the mind, it makes a difference to one's self-concept, that she earns more than you. As long as you don't have to resort to asking her for money, that is a blow to my pride as a man. She too must have her own money and not beg me for money, which is also degrading to ask someone for money' - B1*

This response illustrates the embeddedness of perceptions of male superiority that to be dependent on a woman is considered unthinkable! An alternative response depicts an opposing viewpoint that encompasses a more egalitarian approach to gender roles: *'I would like my wife to go and work and I choose to be a stay at home father to my children' - W1*

*'Equality is important in a relationship... I would want my wife to stand up to me...she can earn more money than me...I would allow her freedom... I would allow her to be herself' - C1*

The above statement is very revealing of the complex underpinnings that exist in narrative and discourse steeped in patriarchal notions of male superiority, of masculine authority and power. The respondent displayed genuine surprise when requested to think about the semantics of his statement and how revealing it was of a deeply ingrained sense of male superiority despite his inclination to gender equality. This grudging acceptance of female equality is further illustrated by the comments of the following respondent:

*'You must be a provider for your family, which in modern society you can't always do. You have to share the financial burden with your spouse. You are supposed to be the head of the home, the father, the king in the home. You can't however implement these qualities of masculinity because now your wife is your equal in the house and your word is not the final word. Your word is the negotiated word' - B1*

*'Relationships must be built on mutual consensus and respect. She consults me before she has to do something and yes I do consult her but I do end up making the decision anyway and she respects me for that. She won't admit it but she does. The relationship works on the basis that both partners have an implicit understanding of their roles. A postmodern woman will not fit with me in a relationship. Patriarchy ultimately still works for me and my wife' - I2*

There is consensus that men across all categories struggle with intimate relationships. There is a sense of role confusion and how to act in an intimate relationship. What are the rules and how are these rules and scripts constructed and perpetuated by both genders in a patriarchal society? The respondents acknowledge that little self-reflection occurs generally as a man in relationships and so they remain unaware of the impact of their actions until it's too late - when the relationship has irretrievably broken down. Common narratives among all respondents relate to an almost rigid perception of what women's expectations of men are in intimate relationships. Whether these are valid assumptions requires further exploration with women. These men appear to base their behaviour in

relation to the opposite gender on precepts that portray women as either having certain traditional expectations of men or being indecisive about what they want from men.

*'There is an expectation that you will support them financially, you must be financially stable, have a 'good' car and be their protector. You have to be a pillar of strength for women when they become emotional...you as a man has to always be emotionally stable' - I1*

*'They go from macho type to soft and sensitive. Girls don't know what they want. They don't define my masculinity. If I do not have the qualities she wants that's too bad' - C1*

*'Women often don't know what they want us as men to be in a relationship. They want to be protected but they also want to be independent. As a man you must incorporate sensitivity into your makeup, show your vulnerability...you need to establish when she wants you the warrior and you the sensitive guy. As a man you have to consider the feelings of the woman – if you don't protect her honour she will get upset and if you do she might look at you as being aggressive...it's confusing. You have to know when to do the noble thing' - B2*

*'You can treat a woman well and she wont be satisfied but treat her poorly and she keeps coming back for more – much like battered women syndrome, on a small scale... but people are complex – you may bash a guy to protect your woman's honour and she will be aghast, do nothing and she will be sad that you did not defend her honour. One needs to deal with this through honest communication' - W1*

Perhaps cognisance should be taken of the last line in the above interview and channels of communication should be opened between men and women to establish new relationship rules based on individual considerations and old assumptions should be discarded.

## 6.4 Scenarios

An essential part of this research was to gain an understanding of men's own perceptions of the high levels of gender-based violence and crime in this society. Responses to the scenarios illustrated a general pragmatism to situations construed as potentially dangerous. This may well be related to wanting to appear socially acceptable in the interview.

6.4.1 Scenario 1: A policeman is giving a ticket to a man for reckless driving. The man begins to swear and the policeman retaliates by punching the man in the nose and knocks him down. How likely is it that you or your friends could do that?

All respondents stated that they would not react in a similar way and that they would utilise their authority as a policeman to handle the situation. All respondents however acknowledged that this scenario was not uncommon and that male friends would react the way the policeman did.

6.4.2 Scenario 2: You and your girlfriend are walking down the street. A drunken man stumbles into your girlfriend in the street. What would your response be?

The scenario did not elicit an automatic aggressive response as endorsed by the literature review. However, there is a sense of wariness and hypervigilance that is elicited in this kind of situation. The respondents allude to being polite in this kind of situation, but on their guard, sussing out the situation before resorting to any action. What was significant was that these men seemed to weigh up the intent behind the actions described in the scenarios before reacting to it. This is well illustrated in the few examples below of the drunken man scenario:

*'I think I would do the apologising to diffuse any conflict. I would attend to her first if he messed his drink on her. My mind doesn't go to that dangerous place automatically...to violent action' - W1*

6.4.3 Scenario 3: A man starts chatting up your girlfriend in a club. How would you react?

The scenario of a partner being chatted up by another man elicited a range of responses, from nonchalance to intense anger. *'There would be feelings of rage – part of me will want to step up and not even confront him, just pick up a chair and hit him in his face with it. There's definitely a part of me that wants to do that' - W1.*

*'It is an insult to my pride...another man hitting on my woman...I will be offended' - B2*

*'I'd leave her to deal with it' - B1*

6.4.4 Scenario 4: You discover your wife is having an affair. What would your reaction be?

Female infidelity generated intense emotional responses from the interviewees. Universal human emotions of rage, jealousy and humiliation were very evident in narratives across all categories. Similarly though, restraint in behaviour was advocated by all respondents. Their responses disputed a natural tendency to retaliate aggressively toward the female and lover. The rage that was provoked would be dispensed through appropriate outlets they reiterate such as walking away to calm down and punching a wall. Whether this portrays a need to respond in a socially desirable way needs to be considered. But natural feelings of intense hurt predominate, *'...I would probably leave... I would want to get primal male and beat someone but I would probably leave' - W2.* All respondents agree that female infidelity would impact on male pride and one's masculinity would come into question *'...it means you weren't enough for her...you weren't good enough for her, that's when you feel you lose face' - I1*

*'If my woman cheated on me I would break down and cry. I experienced something similar and when I heard that she had slept with another man, I*



*vomited, the pain was that intense...it makes you question your masculinity...was he better than me, better looking. My masculinity will be threatened. But I would not resort to violence’ - W1*

Respondents across all categories denounced quite emphatically any justification for the violent abuse of women and children. In all interviews respondents conveyed fairly consistent opinions regarding abuse in this country with only one respondent admitting to violent retaliation in the face of spousal infidelity.

*‘It happens often in the area I live in, the man displays his superiority by hitting his wife... if the dinner is not ready she gets slapped...women remain in this set up because perhaps they define themselves by their men...atleast they have someone...’ - C1*

*‘There is never a justification for hitting a woman. But as I said, if you find your wife cheating, I mean it is wrong. We are taught that real men do not abuse their wives but it’s only natural if you see your wife cheating to punish her, by hitting her. You can slap her. It is a means of saving face. To prove you are the man. To stop feeling incapable. It is a natural tendency if you are wronged to retaliate physically. I wouldn’t say beaten to the ground and bleeding, more maybe a slap just to express his anger. It’s okay for a girl to retaliate the same way if her husband cheats. We say alcohol is bad for us, drugs are bad for us, we know this but we still do it, the same with hitting women we know its wrong but we still do it. It is easier to forgive if you first get even so by slapping her you pick up your manhood. Getting even by violent response is a way of regaining lost pride, saving face. You regain your dominance, pride, masculinity; re-establish yourself as the man in the relationship based on a show of strength... you have sorted out your woman and now it’s all okay’ - I1*

*‘I would never endorse violence against women even though my father abused my mother...I choose not to be the same...in our culture if you attack a woman in*

*public you are regarded as a bad man (There is the implication that one is allowed to abuse her in private perhaps?) ...it's my own sense of what is right and wrong...I would not feel proud of myself if I hit a woman-B2.*

*'I do not agree with violence against women...I don't like men showing off their strength' – B1*

In response to the question of shocking statistics of infant rape and femicide, a respondent provided this controversial narrative:

*'I saw a play about baby Tsepang- these men who are rapists and criminals – these men live in an existence of complete nothingness-there's no future, no past, no present, there's just nothing, there's just you and your empty soul. There are no morals, there's nothing... and so I understand the concept of somebody who lives in complete nothingness... somebody like that gets to a point where they would rape a baby. Humans by nature will do mixed up things. Where men have been stripped of their pride... having nothing to live for women become a soft target by which to regain some power, some sense of manliness. To regain control of some aspect of himself and the wife and children is that part of himself that he can control. He has to have some influence in his universe, otherwise what is he...not a man, nothing'- B1*

## 6.5 Personal and Family Honour

An exploration of the salience of family honour in relation to masculinity generated commonalities and differences across categories. All respondents referred to a loyalty among men and that this loyalty would be protected through violence if necessary. *'There is a natural bond and camaraderie between men where they will fight to protect each other...they stand up for each other' – C1*

*'There are times you have to step up especially when you are called to protect a friend...then you will fight back...take on the superhero role' – W1*

On personal defence of honour, respondents were pragmatic in their approach to insults. Reactions to male on male verbal and physical abuse would generate a similar response against the perpetrator they state. *'Insults humiliate me...I will retaliate appropriately by insulting them back' – C2*

*'If someone insulted me, I would insult them back' – I1*

*'With physical abuse you would weigh up the pros and cons, depending on the situation ...whether my chances are slim, I will step down, walk away' – I1*

*'I will defend myself...even if I don't fight back I will stand and face it. To walk away is to acknowledge you were wrong...you have to stand up for what you believe in – it negates your manhood if you don't' – B1*

*'I will seek revenge if I am wronged but it would be more psychological than physical' ... one tries to avoid pain as far as possible...a very practical approach to retaliation...run away if you have to' – W2*

*'With verbal abuse, I will first step back, walk away and feel bummed. If the abuse is directed at a friend, I get edgy, vigilant, alert and ready for danger' -W1*

*'When you are wronged, there should be redress but not violently' – B2*

What was significant was the intense reaction displayed by these young men regarding the protection of their mothers' honour. Disrespect of a mother generated strong emotions in men. The respondents described their relationships with their mothers as significant and worthy of protection. A significant number of respondents endorsed physical

retaliation in protecting their families. *'I have pride in my family and I will defend them especially my mother. I will fight to protect her honour'* - C1

*'Dishonouring my mother...it brings out a deep anger, which for some reason cannot be controlled and it leads to real trouble'* - I1

*'My family has no honour to protect...we are not prone to shame. It's a big concept. You have to have pride in yourself first then that carries over to family pride'* - B1

*'A man will defend his mother's honour by physical force if necessary...it generates rage'* - C2

## 6.6 Violence and the Social Order

Respondents across all cultures appear not to endorse violence as a means of maintaining social order. All respondents agreed that though violence could be used to restore order in certain contexts, but through legitimate structures such as law enforcement and the judicial system. It was felt that the circumstances causing disorder must also be addressed rather than fighting violence with a violent response.

*'Violence is sometimes necessary to quell violence'* – I1

*'Violence can be a tool to restore order...'* – B1

*'Violence cannot suppress disorder for any length of time...'* – W2

### 6.6.1 Corporal Punishment

Respondents' comments regarding corporal punishment suggest some commonalities depending on their exposure to physical discipline as children. One respondent, who did not experience any violence in the home per se, states that he does not have a natural aggression and would not condone corporal punishment. It was agreed in the majority that appropriate corporal punishment of a child has its merits as a form of discipline.

*'I often think a good spank will do them and everyone else a world of good' - W2*

*'A smack to discipline a child is okay' – I1*

The majority of respondents endorsed a socially acceptable way of dealing with school bullying. This perhaps suggests a shift from traditional practices associated with traditional school violence and bullying promoting violent retaliation in schools. Two of the respondents encapsulate some of the conflict inherent in straddling old and new conceptions of maleness. *'I would follow legitimate channels to have my son's bully dealt with...the most difficult part of the problem would be to convince my son not to engage in a fight' - W2*

*'I would teach my son to never take a beating lying down... to face up to the bully but in a way that he can be proud and can accept the consequences' - B1*

### 6.6.2 Men and Guns

All respondents endorsed the necessity for guns in society as a means of defense.

*'Guns have their place' - B1*

*'Owning a gun is sometimes a necessity for protection...to safeguard one's life'*  
– I2

*'I believe that guns are very dangerous things, and I personally wouldn't want one in my home... I feel that guns should be strictly controlled and that licensing should be a very strict, controlled procedure' – W2*

## 6.7 Culture and Honour

The interviews suggest that men acknowledge the significant manner in which culture impacts on the construction of masculinity in South Africa. Culture in this instance incorporates patriarchy, racism, apartheid and traditional cultures and religion. However, the salience of cultural influences varies strongly across categories. There is an overall consensus that South Africa has a masculine culture, a deeply embedded patriarchy and that the old traditional cultures and the legacy of separate development have shaped the masculine energy of this society.

*'Apartheid played a significant role in the way we as men have had to construct our masculinity. I don't see myself as that different from other men in this country, there are more commonalities than there are differences' - C2*

*'If you consider the Zulu culture with its conservative ideas about women and their place in society. There is still an element of superiority of the male species... women must know their place. There is a sense that they have to prove themselves even more because they are black, especially the township guys who have strong attitudes of male superiority...other races can be conservative but not to that extent that for example women shouldn't work'- C2*

*'There is an entrenched patriarchy, which still exists which includes gross inhumanities, which become part of what it is to be a man, such as the mistreatment of women. These old cultures, Zulus and Afrikaners, played an influential role in shaping manhood and identity...these cultures impact on masculinity in South Africa. English speaking whites have no real culture per*

*say...there is a certain amount of freedom afforded me to define my own masculinity undefined by patriarchal culture...freedom to choose what to incorporate and what to discard...no strong cultural ties, no strong traditions to uphold... I can create my own identity' - W1*

*'I see no difference between myself and other men of different cultures. It is frustrating to be perceived as rapists and criminals just because you are male in this country. There is a great generalisation of the negative aspects of being a man here...you're stamped with that mark even if you try to be better' - I1*

South African men raised in traditional cultures acknowledge a history of polygamy and how it served to increase a man's status in society. There is a perception among men in these cultures that some women are accepting of these practices.

*'It is a matter of pride and honour to be a black man engaging with aspects of one's own culture... as well as being modern enough to fit into the new concept of masculinity. Even though I know to some men in my culture it enhances their status to have many women, I do not personally endorse this view...' - B2*

The statement by this respondent illustrates quite succinctly the complexities of masculinities, which straddle culture and tradition.

*'Culture is important as a means of defining me as a man. You can't be race-less, with no history to define who you are. I am Zulu before I am a South African male. Culture shapes you, it is your history, your tradition, it's the legacy of your people, its what you understand about your people, why we do certain things, why we talk in such a way, why we believe the things we believe. It is what defines you as a person as a man. There are cultural differences between me as a Zulu and another man in this country. There is a culture of doing things as a Zulu man. Rules that you live by. I don't necessarily live by all of them, in our society you cannot implement all those e cultural elements... you have to adapt to living in a*

*modern society. You can't be dogmatic and put your foot down and say I won't allow this' - B1*

## 6.8 New Men

From the commentary in the interviews it would seem that there is a shift in men's perceptions of themselves as "new" men - men who are struggling to discard masculinities based on power and male superiority. Whilst there is a respect and acknowledgement of how culture and history shape their masculinity there is also an understanding of the need to evaluate the applicability of tradition and culture in a changing society where women have moved beyond the prescribed notions of inferiority. As one respondent so eloquently states:

*'I grew up believing that as men the Zulu's were proud of their violent heritage and that we were better than other men were. Being a black man has its own set of difficulties in South Africa. It's about bridging the cultural gap to become a postmodern man – to integrate into this society...one has to integrate history, custom and culture and adapt it to modern concepts of masculinity in order to shape and define yourself as a South African male...there is a sense of pride in one's heritage and culture but today the Zulu culture is an anomaly in society – it does not fit. It is now regarded as uncivilised...men using their history to instil fear and perpetuate outdated traditions' - B2*

It was accepted across all interviews that there are more commonalities than differences among men. *'We all want to be successful, to marry and have a family... to be more acceptable to women and to society' - B2*. Respondents endorsed the extent to which traditional family and cultural beliefs dictate the scripts for men and women in society but the interviews indicate that shifts are occurring in men's conceptions of masculinity and changing gender-roles. Conflicting and ambivalent paradigms of masculinity



predominate in the interviews with the 'old' and the 'new' often sharing the same headspace.

Some respondents believe that traditional culture no longer assumes such significance in contemporary society and that there are more similarities among South African men than there are differences. It is clearly evident from interviews that men are struggling to shed the traditional, patriarchal skin and adopt other ways of being a man worthy of respect. There is an acknowledgement of opportunities for different masculinities. *'Patriarchy is still present – I grapple with it and choose to be different' - C2*

*'What is required today is a well-rounded guy – someone who is not too aggressive but can stand up and not too sensitive but with feelings. The strong thickheaded types of men nor weak shy guys won't do' - C1*

*'Maleness conjures up qualities of stubbornness, stomp the problem down and fix it...there are always other options to dealing with conflict but it is not easy to implement among men because they are so conditioned to respond aggressively. There are other options but whether or not it is possible to get the current generation of men to acknowledge it...I think it's too late, which I think is tragic' – W1*

*'Education is vital in informing your masculinity – opening up other ways of being a man, opening up other ways of doing masculinity...education provides you with the tools to define yourself and negotiate it on your own terms...' – I2*

## 6.9 Conclusion

In the course of gender development, young men encounter many conflicts and contradictory demands but over time most successfully resolve the conflicts and develop a direction in life as a gendered person with a specific identity. Men are beginning to

acknowledge the difficulties inherent in aspiring to rigid gender roles as provider and protector as this begins to erode their own wellbeing and sense of self and family.

My understanding of the interviews is that young men today are shifting away from racial and traditional definitions of masculinity and searching for more relevant and meaningful models of manliness. There is a sense in the interviews that young men are actively exploring alternative masculinities, of searching for contemporary role models as templates for manhood. However, the legacy of a violent, honour-bound masculinity still resonates in the psyche of individuals and much like dysfunctional patterns of behaviour, difficult to completely eradicate. Men still grapple with social expectations of masculinity such as man as aggressor, as protector; provider and as someone who will “step up” to defend personal and family honour. These honour notions of masculinity are still perceived as the benchmark for masculinity, and if not aspired to, may risk men being perceived as “not much of a man”, as cowards, wimps and losers.

Men appear to reflect a culture-of-honour stance in the interpersonal realm and continue to identify with honour norms of having to “save face” and defend masculine pride. In cultures of honour men experience more pressure to restore their honour after perceived shaming such as infidelity or insults (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). However, a tentative interpretation of the interviews suggest that men do not automatically resort to aggressive action in defence of masculine honour but rather tend to display an initial politeness in the face of annoyances (drunken man scenario or where a girlfriend is chatted up by another man), followed by cautious analysis of the situation before possibly resorting to retaliation. This resonates with Cohen and Vandello’s findings which suggest that southerners exposed to annoyances display a distinct pattern of first playing it cool, remaining polite until some critical point is reached and they respond aggressively (1998, p:575).

All respondents endorse the presence of an essential masculine aggression or masculine “energy” as one respondent described it. It is this energy that is tapped into when men are humiliated, or when friends or family are insulted or threatened. It is this energy that may

lend itself to violent behaviour when men are humiliated by other men or women and feel that they need to reclaim 'face'. As stated earlier in the literature, to save face is to reclaim one's positive self-image (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

The interviews reflect the notion that masculinity is defined by male pride and that women play a pivotal role in the perception of male pride. The results suggest that men imbue women with tremendous power and that to be seen to "lose face" in front of a woman is far more egregious than to do so in front of their own gender. This may directly or indirectly relate to the severity of the humiliation that men experience when they lose face in the presence of a woman. This corroborates the culture-of-honour theory that describes women as important role players in honour cultures (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Of interest are men's conflicting discourses on femininity as "other", as weak and needing protection, as emotional, indecisive and then as powerful women who define male pride, that have to be impressed and whose "honour" warrants physical defence if necessary.

Results can be tentatively interpreted as consistent with a modified version of a culture of honour. The men interviewed displayed a tendency to endorse a strong ethic of self-protection and retribution in defense of their honour. This culture-of-honour stance aligns itself with the belief that inevitably, a man's reputation depends upon the display of a "credible threat of violence" (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.571).

### 7.1 Introduction

Local research into cultures of honour among non-criminal populations in South Africa has not been undertaken before. The aim of the present study was to explore the existence of an honour culture and whether violence may be implicitly or explicitly sanctioned in this culture. A qualitative analysis was undertaken to explore issues of masculinity and its relation to a culture-of-honour stance in society. It was of interest to explore whether broad commonalities in concepts of honour in masculinity emerged in South African men or whether honour concepts were defined more specifically by cultures in this society. By interviewing a cross-cultural sample of men, it was hoped to gain some insight into how men perceive and construct their masculinity and whether a concept of honour was a salient organizing theme in manhood and whether insults and humiliation to male pride leads to violent behaviour.

Cultures around the world differ in the importance attached to the construct of honour (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). The concept of honour historically has two definitions. The common definition of honour relates to good moral character, virtuous behaviour, integrity and altruism. However, in some cultures the definition of honour assumes greater social significance especially with regard to the heightened tendency in these cultures for male violence against other males. Honour cultures emphasize male reputation and status, which becomes the organizing principle for social life. Honour in these cultures relates to pride of manhood in masculine strength, courage, warrior virtue and defense of masculinity (Nisbett, 1993). In a culture of honour, an insult is considered shameful and reduces one's social standing. Failure to redress an insult to one's reputation branded one as less than a real man, as a coward. The culture of honour stance extends to personal honour and family honour as well as to institutions of law, media and violent entertainment (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Cohen & Vandello, 1998; Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

A motivating factor for this research is the escalating rates of violence and male dominance, which remain deeply entrenched in this society. There are clearly links between masculinity and violence (Morrell, 2001) and the study considers honour as a construct which shapes mentality and behaviour patterns in society. The focus on young men in the study recognizes this phase of life as one in which men strive for status and recognition. It is also the age group that worldwide, is most represented in prisons (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Theorists such as Kaufmann (1999) also allude to personal insecurities in men, which are induced by a perceived failure to achieve status when they are young. This failure can propel men to anger, fear and aggression.

## 7.2 Summary of Findings

### 7.2.1 Definitions of Masculinity

Different cultures and different periods of history construct masculinity differently and multicultural societies will more than likely have multiple definitions of masculinity (Connell, 2000). South African society has been structured by race, gender, class and status and although the present study was structured around a cross-cultural representation of men in South African society, (Black, Indian, Coloured and White), the reader must be cognizant that the different masculinities emerging in this research are not necessarily racially defined but are rather the product of historical circumstances. Morrell warns that it is imperative ‘...not to reify race and attach to this category a set of attributes that may tempt essentialist interpretations’ (2001, p.145).

Epstein (1998) also reiterates the dangers of race distinction and points out that the word race suggests, ‘an essentialist biological basis and goes on to argue that there is no one monolithic version of white or black masculinity. Masculinities are constructed in ways which are marked by a combination of class and ethnicity’ (p.52). The attribution of apparent differences in expressed masculinity to racial differences is thus called into question, bearing in mind that it is not simply “race” which impacts on men’s perceptions

of themselves as men, but rather the interplay of a wide range of historical, social and economic factors with race.

In the present study, traditional patriarchal culture and the legacy of apartheid were acknowledged across all interviews as profoundly shaping constructions of masculinity and how to be a man in a relationship. However, the study also suggests that young men have started to cross previous apartheid defined boundaries of race and class that would affect perceptions of race, culture and also constructions of masculinity. We see that new masculinities are developing as well as the significance or insignificance of violence as a construct of new and different masculinities. It emerged strongly in the interviews that these young men speak with multiple voices, reflecting the conflicts and contradictions inherent in a society which straddles the old with the contemporary and the traditional with the liberal western notions of gender.

In their 1999 studies, Wetherell and Edley argue that men can position themselves in multiple ways, depending on the context and this was clearly evident in the interviews. Individual respondents expressed contradictory and conflicting views on topics ranging from intimate relations, gender roles, sexuality, physical violence and the concept of pride and honour among men. Displays of contradictory desires and conduct is not however uncommon in these kinds of close focus studies of masculinity (Connell, 2000). The interviews clearly reflect the capacity to hold two sets of opposing views that espouse both “new man” discourse and traditional “macho” views (Hearn, 1998; Toerien & Durrheim, 2001). Respondents acknowledge the difficulties inherent in being a man in today’s society. Faced with the challenges of an embedded patriarchy and the motivation to adopt new and more appealing masculinities, weighs heavily on their shoulders.

### 7.2.2 A Culture of Honour

Vandello and Cohen (2003) suggest that notions of honour are transmitted in cultures through shared norms and values and through behavioural scripts that tell you how and when to respond with violence and what it is to be a man as opposed to a coward. Within

the context of this research, respondents were asked to reveal their understanding and construction of masculinity around notions of male pride, respect, status, provider and protector. This culture of honour extends not only to personal honour and status but also to the idea of family honour and the role of women in such cultures.

In such cultures, there appears to be a heightened tendency for male-on-male violence and a cultural emphasis on male honour may also foster traditional gender roles that may encourage and perpetuate male-on-female violence (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). A female's fidelity or good behaviour is also seen as essential to maintaining a man's reputation (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Men are thought to perceive changes in their roles negatively especially when they lose their admired roles as breadwinner and protector (UNESCO, 1997). Behaviours that once afforded men admiration, esteem and honour (e.g. as protector, provider, aggressive, polygamists) are frowned upon and men are now having to redefine themselves as men and discover alternative ways of validating their masculinity.

### 7.2.3 Personal Honour

'In most social milieus a man's reputation depends in part upon the maintenance of a credible threat of violence...this must be understood within the larger context of reputation, saving face, social status and relationships' (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.571).

According to Vandello and Cohen (1998), Southerners who were insulted in public were further incensed because they believed that other people who witnessed the incident would perceive them as lacking in manliness, assertiveness and strength. This was apparent in the current research especially among the Indian respondents who indicated the humiliation evoked should their wife or partner insult or humiliate them in public. This statement corroborates honour theory which suggests that insults damage appearance of strength and toughness, especially in public (Shackelford, 2005).

The salience of notions of honour in men's construction of masculinity and how it is intimately bound up with being perceived as a "real man" became quite evident in the present study. In cultures-of-honour, allowing oneself to be pushed around and insulted without retaliation suggests that one is an easy mark (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994). Insult plays a central role in the culture of honour and produces aggression because the affronted person feels diminished and may use aggression or domineering behaviour to re-establish his masculinity (Nisbett et al., 1996). It appears to be the degree of expression of this honour stance that differed across interviews.

A tentative interpretation of the study would suggest that males from the traditionally Indian culture were most resistant to accepting change both in patriarchal constructs of masculinity (head of the house and provider) as well as the changing status of women (as independent, autonomous). Black males indicated conflict in terms of traditional cultural practice as it pertains to social and interpersonal manifestations (sexual identity, cultural identity, and male authority) and postmodern masculinity. Males identified as white and coloured displayed the most liberal masculinities aligning themselves with a more postmodern construction of masculinity embracing equality in relationship and emphasizing sensitive and creative ideals of masculinity. All respondents displayed tendencies that could be regarded as a modified version of a culture-of-honour stance. These are of course generalizations and serve only to relate the perceptions and thoughts of the respondents themselves.

While distancing themselves from traditional masculine stereotypes respondents frequently responded in ways which suggested a strong identification with an honour stance. Men in such cultures are prepared to protect their reputation for strength and toughness with violence (Shackelford, 2005). Honour concepts dominated masculine discourses in the interviews. These statements include "not backing down in a fight", "to lose face", "to step up and be a man", "the sort that you don't mess with", "a loser", "a wimp" and "a man who can't stand his ground". These phrases were generated in response to situations and scenarios in which their person, family and friends were insulted or under threat. Respondents across all categories have common and strongly



held perceptions of what is to be “not much of a man”. Whilst generally not aspiring to traditional masculinities in their totality, respondents are fully cognisant that to be a man in public is to fulfil certain expectations of social masculinity. This definition of “not much of a man” and a coward, extends to its more contemporary analogy of men who are failures in life, who can’t achieve, who are incompetent, weak and who can’t support themselves. Socially there is a need to fit in to be perceived as a man and not less of a man. *“I do not respect “soft” men. A soft man is a guy who can’t make a plan...he is a pansy, like a woman’ – B1.*

There is evidence that what constitutes male pride differs across interviews and corresponds with respondents’ definitions of masculinity in its first instance. Comments made by respondents confirm that pride is an integral aspect of masculinity and that to lose one’s pride or to lose “face” is to be humiliated. To be emasculated and lose “face” implies that some mechanism must be put in place to regain lost pride. There is a common perception among respondents that men have to live up to certain social expectations or suffer humiliation in the eyes of society. Loss of pride and honour is having to accept defeat in its myriad forms.

#### 7.2.4 Family Honour

An exploration of the salience of family honour in relation to masculinity generated commonalities and differences across interviews. Respondents displayed loyalty towards friends indicating that they would “step up” and take on the superhero role in protection of their male friends. What was also significant was the intense reaction displayed by these young men regarding the protection of their mothers’ honour. Disrespect of a mother generated strong emotions in men. The respondents described their relationships with their mothers as significant and worthy of protection. A significant number of respondents endorsed physical retaliation in protecting their families. This is characteristic of honour cultures men where men are socialised to redress an insult to self and family through violence (Gilmore, 1990; Nisbett et al., 1996). According to Vandello and Cohen (2003), honour cultures value familial sacrifice, loyalty and duty and often

women in collectivist societies carry the burden of maintaining the emotional tenor of the family. Women in such honour cultures often remain in abusive situations to prevent shaming of the family's honour (Bond, 2004). If we consider collectivist societies then it would be the more traditional cultures in our society that emphasise family honour. The salience of family honour was apparent across all interviews with Indian men and Zulu men displaying the greatest focus on the role of women as passive and honourbound.

#### 7.2.5 Honour-bound Women

Females are not powerless in cultures of honour although from the outside one equates the role of honourbound women as passive. This is not the case, in fact women carry great influence in determining the reputation of the family (Daphne1998; Gill, 2004). Women in such cultures bear the responsibility of sacrificing self for the family which may extend to remaining in unhealthy marriages and at some deep level, accepting that men have a right to control women (Gill, 2004). Both men and women can perpetuate aggression through a tacit acceptance that men can sometimes use violence and women should sometimes tolerate it.

It is interesting to note that honour themes in the Chinese and Japanese cultures predominate in their societies and the ideal man according to Gilmore (1990) must display courage, self-confidence and manly temperament that are related to moral bravery and initiative in the workplace. Women in these cultures showed equal contempt for immature or dependent males who were not 'real men'. To 'run to others' and to be dependent is incompatible with an image of masculinity in Chinese culture (Gilmore, 1990). This points to the active role that women may be playing in honour cultures and requires further exploration.

Masculinity defined in opposition to femininity was evident in all interviews and new masculinities were imbued with traditionally female qualities of sensitivity, emotionality and empathy. Paradoxically, all respondents acknowledged criticism from a woman as a significant blow to male pride while simultaneously alluding to a natural superiority over

women. Views espoused range from the more patriarchal paradigm that the man still essentially remains head of the home to a more egalitarian outlook where women are partners in all decision making. It seemed that whatever the individual philosophy of gender equality was, women were bestowed with tremendous power in defining men's maleness. In fact all respondents admit that women played a pivotal role in the perception of male pride. This may directly or indirectly relate to the severity of the humiliation that men experience when they lose face in the presence of a woman. *'Women give you the power that you need to boost your manliness' - B1*

*'A man is more humiliated if he's pride is insulted in front of a woman. It is important that a woman sees you as manly. You must save face in front of a woman...' B2*

*'To be a man you must strive to be better than a woman' – II*

Some scholars regard men as primary victims as well as perpetrators of violent acts however, it is acknowledged that there is a gendered component in domestic and family violence that cannot be overlooked. Domestic violence has always been considered a problem of male power and control but as stated in the literature review it is often about men's dual feelings of powerlessness and perceived entitlement to power. (Kimmell, 1996; Sideris, 2005). In terms of developmental tasks, young males see themselves as having to achieve some kind of success in order to have status. The difficulty comes when they have to compete against women for the very success they need, to win women.

#### 7.2.6 Honour and Female Infidelity

Respondents across all categories denounced quite emphatically any justification for the violent abuse of women and children. In all interviews respondents conveyed fairly consistent opinions regarding abuse in this country with only one respondent admitting to violent retaliation in the face of spousal infidelity. Female infidelity generated intense emotional responses from the interviewees such as rage, jealousy and humiliation.

Similarly though, restraint in behaviour was advocated by all respondents. Their responses disputed a natural tendency to retaliate aggressively toward the female and lover. The rage that was provoked would be dispensed through appropriate outlets they reiterated such as walking away to calm down or punching a wall. Only one respondent endorsed a strong honour stance in response to perceived spousal infidelity and is worthy of mention in that it so clearly elucidates the very notion of a culture-of-honour stance in a society.

*'...We are taught that real men do not abuse their wives but it's only natural if you see your wife cheating to punish her, by hitting her. You can slap her. It is a means of saving face. To prove you are the man. To stop feeling incapable. It is a natural tendency if you are wronged to retaliate physically...getting even by violent response is a way of regaining lost pride, saving face. You regain your dominance, pride, masculinity; re-establish yourself as the man in the relationship based on a show of strength... you have sorted out your woman and now it's all okay'- II*

Honour may be used as a justification (either implicit or explicit) for violence. In fact research by Al-Khayyat (in Gill, 2004) shows that not responding with violence after perceived female 'misbehaviour' may be interpreted as a source of shame. Gupta (in Gill, 2004) defines violence as a tool of terror directly related to male assumptions about privileged access and ownership and at some deep level an acceptance of a man's right to control his wife.

Events that trigger violence may differ across cultures and the appropriate responses to these events may differ across groups as well. A cultural emphasis on male honour may certainly foster traditional gender roles that encourage and perpetuate male violence against other men and women. Honour norms may require men to be hypersensitive to insults and threats to their reputation and a key component of the masculine reputation is the good name of a man's female partner (Gilmore, 1990). Because male honour often requires female deference and fidelity, relationships between men and women carry an

underlying tension that can serve as a precursor or catalyst to domestic violence. Accordingly, Connell (1995) argues that in the face of the anxiety evoked by challenges to the gender order, instead of constructing women as dependent, men may construct them as the threatening other who must be controlled.

Respondents displayed much role confusion and uncertainty of their roles in relationships with women. In the present study, men indicated a struggle with intimate relationships. They perceive women to be undecided about what they want in a man and describe women as vacillating between extreme versions of man as the strong protector and provider to man as the soft and sensitive poet. Many of the respondents interviewed appear to be confused by the whole issue of gender power and display considerable ambivalence in this regard. In fact men feel powerless in significant areas of their lives- one of which is in intimate relationships with women. A shift in mindset is required of both genders in order to accommodate new and equal gender roles (Morrel & Richter, 2004). Women still remain ambiguous about changing masculinities and this was evident in the respondents' discourse on what women want in men.

#### 7.2.7 Honour and male-on-male Violence

Cultures vary in how they understand violence (Cohen & Vandello, 1998). Some cultures regard violence as a coherent meaning system which defines the self, honour and provides the tools to be used when that honour is diminished. Human society is ordered around a series of these 'cultural myths'. These myths are similar to personal life scripts or patterns of thinking and relating. These patterns incorporate conventions, beliefs, dispositions and attitudes shared by members of society that are taken for granted.

Gilmore (1990) states that honour is still relevant in modern society and conceptions of manhood still hinge on aggression, status, sexual prowess and dominance. In a patriarchal society the defense of the male honour takes precedence and some researchers such as Gilmore (1990) suggest that a contributing factor to this aggressive defense of male honour is an uncertainty among men in certain cultures and contexts about their

masculine role. In cultures of honour small disputes become contests for reputation and social status and men have to respond aggressively to insults or be humiliated and lose status before family and peers. (Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

A significant finding by Cohen and Vandello (1998) is that 'people in the world's most violent cultures are also incredibly polite, friendly and hospitable in everyday interaction' (p.574). Because southerners are very aware of the danger inherent in displaying anger they are according to studies much slower and less ready to engage in confrontational behaviour. The present research appears to corroborate this finding. Respondents were at first polite in the face of perceived insult to self, family or friends. This was followed by hypervigilance and wariness in potentially explosive situations but they remained cautious about responding prematurely and thoughtlessly with aggression. However, judging from the interviews, they would resort to violence if provoked.

The interviews suggest that men acknowledge the significant manner in which culture impacts on the construction of masculinity in South Africa (Jobson, 2005). Culture in this instance incorporates patriarchy, racism, apartheid and traditional cultures and religion. However, the salience of cultural influences varies strongly across interviews. There is an overall consensus that South Africa has a masculine culture, a deeply embedded patriarchy and that the old traditional cultures and the legacy of separate development have shaped the masculine energy of this society. Respondents endorsed the extent to which traditional family and cultural beliefs dictate the scripts for men and women in society but the interviews indicate that shifts are occurring in men's conceptions of masculinity and changing gender-roles. Conflicting and ambivalent paradigms of masculinity predominated in the interviews with the 'old' and the 'new' often sharing the same headspace. However, the thread of aggressive and violent 'maleness' still runs beneath the surface and serves to generate ambivalence and conflict in the manner in which men relate to women and society at large.

From the commentary in the interviews it would seem that there is a shift in men's perceptions of themselves as "new" men - men who are struggling to discard

masculinities based on power and male superiority. Whilst there is a respect and acknowledgement of how culture and history shape their masculinity there is also an understanding of the need to evaluate the applicability of tradition and culture in a changing society.

#### 7.2.8 Masculine Virility

There was consensus from respondents that sexual prowess is an important aspect of establishing one's masculinity. The interviews suggest that being sexually adequate is an important aspect of proving one's manhood and together with brawling and drinking assumes significance during the early teenage years where peer approval and respect however misguided, was very prominent. They agree though that it is a stage in development that one outgrows and other aspects of manliness take precedence. The emphases on sexual prowess were evident in the interviews as respondents endorsed sexual virility as benchmark for being a man. The male sex drive whilst lauded by most respondents was acknowledged by one respondent as being a dangerous masculine construct that men used as a justification for damaging behaviour.

#### 7.2.9 Violence and the Social Order

Honour cultures appear to extend beyond just the interpersonal level, but are reflected at the level of collective representations. Such as greater leniency toward gun control, more tolerance towards honour-related crimes in the judiciary and grater acceptance of violence in the media and magazines (Vandello & Cohen, 1998). Respondents across all cultures appear not to endorse violence as a means of maintaining social order. All respondents agreed however, that violence could be used to restore order in certain contexts, but through legitimate structures such as law enforcement and the judicial systems. It was felt that the circumstances causing disorder must be addressed rather than fighting violence with a violent response. All respondents endorsed the use of guns in society as a form of protection albeit acknowledging the dangers inherent in this. A culture-of-honour ideology does not endorse violence unilaterally rather, as suggested by

Cohen and Nisbett (1994), it endorses violence for self-protection. Perhaps the violence in South Africa may arise from dishonourable men - men with no loyalties, few friends and no conscience?

Respondents' comments regarding corporal punishment suggest some commonalities depending on their exposure to physical discipline as children. One respondent, who did not experience any violence in the home per se, states that he does not have a natural aggression and would not condone corporal punishment. It was agreed in the majority that appropriate corporal punishment of a child has its merits as a form of discipline. The majority of respondents endorsed a socially acceptable way of dealing with school bullying which suggests a shift from traditional practices associated with school violence and bullying.

According to Cohen and Vandello (1998), institutions serve as perpetuating forces in honour cultures and show leniency in the face of honour related crimes and disputes. In Northern Iraq for example, Saddam Hussein introduced the Personal Status Law in 1990, legalizing violence against women that extends as far as murder provided that it restored the family's honour (Abdulaziz, 2005, p.9). Laws in these cultures also display leniency when it comes to self defense and gun laws. The present research indicated leniency towards gun control citing it as a necessity and a means of protection. Much like their southern counterparts the South African men in the study indicated a propensity for violent television shows and games and a general sensitization to violence in the news and paper media.

#### 7.2.10 New Men

What is evident in the interviews is that all respondents struggle to personally define what a 'real' man should be. Views range on a continuum of espousing traditional qualities and roles of masculinity such as forcefulness, provider, protector, head of the home to contemporary masculine qualities, which include wisdom, responsibility, maturity, sensitivity, intelligence, skill and confidence. It seems that there is a perceptible shift



towards acknowledging different masculinities from the traditional masculinity albeit it in a manner fraught with ambivalence and inner conflict. There is an emergence of the post-modern man with greater freedom to construct a masculinity that is different. These men indicate a greater level of commitment to exploring alternative masculinities but are still wary of being perceived as a lesser man in the eyes of society. Opposing patriarchal opinions reflect the multiplicity of masculine constructs within a multicultural society like South Africa.

Respondents accommodate the social expectations that define maleness and embrace those aspects of being a man such as rugby, camaraderie, drinking, sport and sexual prowess. However, the interviews suggest that young men are making more informed choices as to what aspects of the patriarchal male to retain and which to discard. Old taboos such as “men don’t cry” and masculine traits of dominance, aggression, provider and protector are male qualities that contemporary men appear to wear with unease. All respondents appeared to endorse the view that masculinity encompasses an innate aggression and common across interviews is the view that violence is sometimes necessary depending on the context but that there is a choice to seek out alternative ways of conflict resolution. Violence in response to threat was evident in interviews. There is a need to “step up” in the face of a threat, to portray a credible threat of violence towards other men and to be respected as a man by other men and women. It would seem though that respondents grapple with the concept of a violent masculinity. There is ambivalence in the manner in which these young men understand, contest, and accept aggression as a part of their physical makeup.

### 7.3 Conclusion

The view that South African men are chauvinistic, misogynistic and homophobic does not reflect the diversity of masculinities suggests Morrell (1998, 2005). There are masculinities that support violent and exploitative gender relations and those, which do not. South Africa has always been a man’s country and the country’s unique history has

given rise to what Morrell (2001) refers to as brittle masculinities that are prone to defensiveness and violence. Honour and respect became a rare achievement and retaining it became a violent process.

Men's roles as protectors and providers are being undermined in a shifting society such as ours. Growing unemployment and competition with women in the job market can serve to further undermine men's sense of honour and status. Men's fears of not being male enough, fears of dependency, of vulnerability, intimacy and loss of respect and pride serve to increase the risk of male violence against other males and between men and women.

Honour cultures appear to extend beyond just the interpersonal realm but are reflected at the level of collective representations (Vandello & Cohen, 1998). This is apparent in the greater leniency toward gun control, greater tolerance towards honour-related crimes, greater acceptance of violence at an institutional level as well as at a social level in the form of entertainment and media. Vetten (1997, p.13) claims that, 'South Africa's response to all forms of personal and institutional violence is inconsistent and betrays a deep ambivalence on the subject'. Reflected in the present study was a tolerance of violence as a form of social control and as entertainment albeit that respondents disclaimed the use of violence at multiple levels. Vandello and Cohen (2003) indicate that there is considerable within-culture variation in any society and that depending on one's goals and opportunities and means of attaining status, honour may be more or less a central construct.

Apparent in the present study was that men who come from the more collectivist and traditional cultures define masculinity more rigidly and have a greater propensity towards honour norms which view insults and "loss of face" as more damaging to male pride. Social influences and role models described by the one coloured respondent appears to emphasize honour norms related to a man's strength and propensity to enforce his will on others. In environments where strength, superiority and the enforcement of will on others

is the norm, the use of violence as a means of re-asserting male pride is endorsed and male-on-male violence as well as domestic violence appears to be prevalent.

It has been argued that violence might be at least partially a by-product of culturally valued ideals, norms and expectations about honour and proper masculine and feminine behaviour (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Individual differences undoubtedly exist and some men will be violent regardless of the cultural context. The dynamics and specific mechanisms of the social enforcement of the culture-of-honour are important topics for further research. It would seem from previous studies that culture of honour norms are socially enforced and perpetuated because they have become embedded in social roles, expectations and shared definitions of manhood. These ideologies and patterns of behaviour that have been embedded in a culture for centuries will not necessarily die overnight. However, there is always personal flexibility in the face of cultural images of masculinity. Men are thus able to negotiate or strategically use definitions of masculinity rather than be controlled by them (Connell, 2003).

### 8.1 Revisiting the Aims

To return to the starting point will involve some repetition as we revisit some of the key points elucidated in this dissertation. The aim of this dissertation was to bring attention to cultural and gender dimensions, which impact on the construction of violent masculinities. As stated in the previous chapter, it is imperative to explore the extent to which cultural values effect the emergence of violent conflict. The study was thus aimed at uncovering any implicit or explicit links to a culture-of honour stance and the sanctioning of male-on- male and male-on-female violence. Honour cultures are those cultures which endorse violence when it is linked to issues of protection and honour (Cohen, 1994).

As mentioned in the early chapters of this study, honour plays an all-defining role in the concept of masculinity in many cultures. Mediterranean societies espouse an image of manliness intimately connected to personal honour, reputation aggression, potency and bravery. Other descriptives of “honourable” men include a sense of dignity and an ability to stand up for one’s self and in these societies being a provider for the family is a benchmark for masculinity. (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen & Vandello, 1998). Skill, initiative in the workplace, confidence, material success and status are the more modern versions of honourbound masculinity in today’s society. In cultures of honour when a man allows himself to be insulted or disrespected, he gives the impression that he lacks the strength to protect what is his. Honour which is threatened either by external forces or by one’s internal conflicts does not always necessarily relate to violent behaviour. It does however relate to some kind of forceful action that counteracts inward insecurity and the notion of honour as covering for potential sources of shame (Shackelford, 2005).

It is well researched and acknowledged that South African society has been structured by gender, class, race and status and it is therefore anticipated that different masculinities

have emerged in different contexts in this society. Research exploring a common culture-of-honour among men has not been undertaken locally nor can it just be assumed that this honour-bound construction of masculinity is peculiar to a specific population in South Africa. It was of interest to explore whether broad commonalities in notions of honour emerged in 'South African' men or whether honour concepts were defined more specifically by demographic factors in this society. By interviewing these young men it was hoped to gain some insight into how they perceive and construct their masculinity around notions of honour and whether honour is a salient organizing theme and whether humiliation and shame may lead to violent behavior.

It is important that studies, which focus on how males are socialized and how scripts are perpetuated and transmitted or fostered in this society, gain attention. What emerged from the interviews of young male adults is a sense of transition and fluidity in relation to being a man in contemporary South African society. Economic, social, ideological and political change has impacted profoundly on personal notions of masculinity and femininity. All the respondents irrespective of race or ethnicity are grappling with changes in gender power relations and their perceptions of what it is to be a man. Traditional concepts of masculinity are shifting and contested among men irrespective of race and culture. There is still however, the perception that to be a man requires the display of a credible threat of violence and that there are notions of pride and honour that must be upheld in order to preserve the right to be called a man. Thus the present study suggests that men are still reacting in accordance with traditional masculine dictates specifically when threatened or dared or insulted. These dictates require that they act out aggressively rather than risk the shame attached to admitting fear or vulnerability and being labelled an "easy mark" and a coward.

## 8.2 Limitations of the Research findings

The study was developed as an initial exploration into whether notions of honour exist in the construction of South African men's masculinity. In-depth interviews were conducted

with a cross-cultural sample of eight adult men. A more detailed cross-cultural comparison was beyond the scope of this study but is an area for future work.

In qualitative research the resultant data is a reflection of the views, beliefs and values of the respondents. The sample is limiting in its size and generalizations must be made cautiously for this reason. Quota sampling has its limitations as being completely representative of men in this country. Interview transcripts are the source of data and subjectivity of the researcher has to be considered as an important factor in the biasing of results. Inherent in face-to-face interviews of respondents is the risk of respondents wanting to appear socially acceptable in their responses.

The fact that the researcher is female needs to be acknowledged as age, class, ethnicity and gender of the researcher does affect the interview process and outcomes (Hearn, 1998). Data is also vulnerable to interpretation and the researcher makes decisions about how to interpret data and which quotes to present as evidence.

### 8.3 Directions for Future Research

A growing body of research indicates that honour and prestige is still relevant in this society today and conceptions of manhood still hinge on sexual performance, productiveness, aggression and esteem (Gilmore, 1990). A contributing factor to this aggressive defense of male honour is an uncertainty among men in certain cultures and contexts about their masculine role (Vandello & Cohen, 2003).

Shackelford (2005), documents the universality of the psychological mechanisms underlying a culture-of-honour stance and this would lend support to the argument that the 'behavioural manifestations of cultures of honour may be underpinned by universal (albeit sex-specific) evolved psychological mechanisms (p.387). Shackelford (2005) makes reference to the recent work by Cohen and Nisbett that has begun to deconstruct this culture. The focus is to begin to identify the social mechanisms that might account

for the persistence of an honour culture as well as the patterns of interpersonal interactions that lead to violence. Of interest would be to explore the extent to which collective representations condone violence such as laws, media representations and institutional non-stigmatisation of violence (Cohen & Vandello, 1998). Nisbett and colleagues also allude to 'pluralistic ignorance as a speculation for the persistence of an honour culture in the USA. Pluralistic ignorance is where 'everybody believes that if they do not respond to an insult with violence, then their reputation for toughness and honour will suffer' (Shackelford, 2005, p, 389).

The men in South Africa have been deeply affected by the past decade of transformation in positive and negative ways. Unemployment, the rise in status of women, poverty are all factors which have incurred aggression and stress in some and soul searching and a change in attitude in others. All men in this country have to deal with and face entrenched cultural stereotypes and beliefs about gender roles. Many men experience a sense of emasculation as they find their perceptions of self as "real" men under threat.

Results from the present study can be tentatively interpreted as consistent with a modified version of a culture of honour. The men interviewed displayed a tendency to endorse a strong ethic of self-protection and retribution in defense of their honour. This culture-of-honour stance aligns itself with the belief that inevitably, a man's reputation depends upon the display of a "credible threat of violence" (Cohen & Vandello, 1998, p.571).

But history of masculinity is not made exclusively by men and in the past, women also opposed certain aspects of masculinity and supported others (Morrell, 2001). It is important to note that honour norms in such cultures apply to females as well as males (Shackelford, 2005; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Men as well as women need to re-evaluate gender roles and a shift in mindset is necessary for women as well. South African women are considered to display ambiguity in their support of the 'new men'. Women may be uncomfortable with men adopting traditionally female duties and must perhaps acknowledge that the way men behave is a product of how women behave (Morrell & Richter, 2004).

Nisbett and colleagues have recently also begun investigating the role of women in perpetuating culture-of-honour norms and should be an interesting focus of attention for further study by the present researcher (Shackelford, 2005). We need to consider whether South African women's participation in the construction of violent masculinities is primarily as socializing agents if at all. Much research remains to be conducted in this area. This topic requires further examination and there is a need to consider qualitative research on how femininity is constructed in cultures of honour.

Recent work by Ghazal and Cohen (in Cohen & Vandello, 2003) claim that young adults emphasize honour because they are actively competing for space in the status hierarchy. These results serve as an important qualification on theorizing about cultures of honour, suggesting sources of potential within-culture variation and serve as a precautionary note about generalizing too widely about a given society. What emerges from the present study is the need for continued work in the area of masculinity and the cultural and social variables, which impact on the formation of masculinities in society. One of the ways of doing this is to explore with men, new ways of being men (Potgieter, 2005). We need to consider varying the methodology and use quantitative analysis in follow up studies. This will incorporate a broader sample base and qualify some of the attitudes and notions of honour and its relationship to aggressive and violent masculinities that were elicited in the present study.

#### 8.4 Towards an Honourable Culture

We are still a culture in transition as every culture is constantly in transition. The transition is evident in the struggle over culturally defining issues such as democracy vs. authoritarian control, gender equality vs. male dominance, honour vs. shame and individual identity vs. collective identity. Much of the social pathology or malaise in our society is the result of social shaming – an inability to achieve perceived expectations, to be perceived as a 'let down'. Paradoxically with the breakdown in patriarchal and hierarchical social structures we witness and increase in honour-related violence. What



we are perhaps witnessing is an increase in patterns of 'acting out' behaviours leading to increased incidences of aggression and violence.

It is the essence of my thesis that a "skewed" conception of honour and honourable norms, behaviours and scripts has developed in society that lends itself to the proliferation of violent masculinities. Perhaps we should refer to male dominance, and the enforcement of will on others to command deferential treatment as dishonourable behaviour. Through this study, perhaps the reader will have a clearer perspective that could allow us to frame this psycho-social 'honour' pathology in a broad historical and cultural context. Peer pressure, socialisation and belief systems such as a culture-of-honour stance, continue to influence adherence to gender specific stereotypes, which essentially limits progress in achieving gender equality. This serves to perpetuate inequalities and aggressive masculinities that are harmful to both genders.

A society which is based on gender equity requires of men a shift to thinking and acting in new ways, it encourages men to reconsider traditional images of manhood and to reshape relationships with women and girls. Psychological research indicate 'personal flexibility in the face of cultural images of masculinity and that by definition, men and boys can therefore negotiate or strategically use conventional definitions of masculinity rather than be controlled by it (Connell, 2003, p.8). However, the legacy of a violent, honour-bound masculinity still resonates in the psyche of individuals and much like dysfunctional patterns of behaviour is difficult to completely eradicate.

#### 8.4.1 The Challenge for Feminism

Gender equality has been and still is to a greater degree equated with feminism – a pursuit invented by and for women and implemented by women. Through studies that engage men we are slowly beginning to eradicate this notion and show that the fight for gender equity has to include both genders. By engaging in the present study it is hoped that we have a clearer understanding of a culture-of-honour stance which may translate

into aggressive masculinities and impact on the high rate of domestic violence and other violence in this country. We have now a perspective that allows us to frame this culture-of-honour syndrome among men, in a broad historical and cultural context. The challenge now is to translate this understanding into action

Studies suggest that the toxicity of traditional masculinities is reason enough for men to move towards equality (Morrell, 2001; Connell, 1995; Tomsen, 1997; Nisbett & Cohen, 1994; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Males are overrepresented in prison, in death road tolls, substance abuse and victims of homicide (Hearn, 1998). The impact of the 'breadwinner' model of masculinity has had detrimental effects on the health and the lives of men as they struggle more and more to meet these expectations. Failure to meet these expectations results in feelings of humiliation and this impacts negatively on their confidence and self-worth and impacts the family dynamic in turn. This is a recipe for violence as men attempt to resurrect feelings of manly pride and honour.

A shift in men's perceptions of masculinity was evident in this study and there are many reasons why men would like to move towards equality as well. One of the reasons is the impact on men's life and health of the 'breadwinner' model. Men are experiencing more difficulties meeting these expectations. This is especially true in countries in transition where social values have dramatically changed. More women are seeking equality in family and intimate relationships with growing expectations of shared childrearing and domestic work. Studies in Norway reiterate that men lead many different types of lives and have many different interests, and that one of the areas in which male gender roles have changed most dramatically involves men's roles as fathers. Fatherhood leads men to make the most explicit break with traditional forms of masculinity (UNESCO, 1997). These studies have begun to be corroborated by studies in South Africa (e.g. Morrell & Richter, 2004; Morrell, 2005), who have begun to emphasize the role of fathers as healthy role models for children of both genders.

It has been made clear by many experienced local researchers (Morrell, 2001; Epstein, 1998), that the way in which boys and men construct their sense of themselves as men

impacts on critical issues confronting our society, including frighteningly high statistics of femicide, rape and domestic violence. The socialization process starts with attitudes towards boys and girls and cognizance should be taken of the role of women and mothers in perpetuating outdated gender scripts (Marinova, 2003; Memela, 2005). These stereotypes are being introduced by none other than women – mothers who have been contaminated with stereotypical honour notions that call on boys to defend their honour in the face of threat or insult (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). In the Beijing Declaration adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, governments expressed a determination to encourage and promote gender equality and emphasized that equal sharing of responsibilities and a harmonious partnership between men and women were critical to their well being and that of their families.

#### 8.4.2 The Implications for the practice of Psychology

The present study illustrated the ways in which male pride and honour can operate as a focal point for aggressive and retributive behaviours. We live in a society where a cultural emphasis on male honour may also foster certain traditional gender roles that encourage and perpetuate male violence and domestic violence. The unmasking of honour constructs, which lead to aggressive and domineering masculinities, can be seen to be a necessary condition for unlearning pathogenic responses and perhaps the healing of the social damage. This healing is necessary for both genders. High levels of violence in this country impact both genders and women play a pivotal role in the perception of male pride and perhaps as socialising agents in honour cultures. Exploring issues of culture change such as exploring the changing patterns of male-female relations and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity remain imperative. Channels of communication need to be opened between men and women to establish new relationship rules based on individual considerations and old assumptions should be discarded. Orywal (2005) suggests that to strip honour from men is to strip their self-esteem and a more viable alternative is to change the manner in which honour disputes are resolved. We should take cognisance of this.

How can we as psychologists intervene to bring about change? I think it will require a multidimensional approach to shift social change praxis against a long-term background of culture change. Men need to be encouraged to contribute to gender equality at a personal as well as at a broader social level. This can be achieved through personal growth work where men are encouraged to utilise health services such as psychologists. Relationship counselling, family counselling and mentoring between people of all ages is needed. Mentoring programs linking mature adult males to teenage boys with difficulties at home, school or with the law, rites of passage work for these and other men and their fathers and mentors to help map the pathway from boyhood to manhood are all entry points for social change. We need to include the role of institutions, the formal justice system, and the school system in this intervention in order to reap maximum benefits. Together these may contribute to a comprehensive approach to improving the health and wellbeing of men and by so doing improve the quality of women and families and communities.

#### 8.5 Conclusion

The narratives of the men in this study add voice and depth to the issues they face in disclosing expectations of being a “real” man and the conflicting faces of masculinity and vulnerability, of modernization and culture and being an honourable man or a dishonourable man. Although this sample is too small to generalize without caution, it does paint a picture of the dilemma that men face as they embark on a process of establishing a new masculinity, one that retains their manliness but that which discards the old yolk of oppressiveness and violence.

The cultural variation in construing behaviour becomes important for the study of honour from a cross-cultural perspective because it is not always obvious what behaviours are and are not considered honourable (Bond, 2004). Vandello & Cohen (2003) reiterate the considerable within culture variation in their research on cultures of honour. This serves as a precautionary note about generalizing too widely about any given society and future

research must remain cognizant of this. Nisbett and colleagues have recently begun investigating the role of women in perpetuating culture-of-honour norms and should be an interesting focus of attention for further study (Shackelford, 2005). There is a need to investigate how femininity is constructed in cultures of honour, the role that women play in the construction of honour-bound masculinities and a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between a culture-of-honour and domestic violence is required in future research in this country.

As a society we are witness to escalating gender-based violence and violence in general. Men still resort to aggressive modes of interaction and women and children often pay the price. In my professional capacity, I see many cases of spousal abuse that impacts severely on relationships and family dynamics. However, there are many points where change may begin in a society. The results of this study suggest that there is hope that men are moving towards a more “honourable” culture – a culture where the thought of violence against women becomes unthinkable and a matter of “dis-honour”.

## REAL MEN

Take your mind back  
I don't know when  
Sometime when it always seemed  
To be just us and them  
Girls that wore pink  
And boys that wore blue  
Boys that always grew up better men than me and you  
What's a man now? What's a man mean?  
Is he rough or is he rugged?  
Is he cultural and clean?  
Now it's all changed, it's got to change more  
We think it's getting better  
But nobody's really sure  
And so it goes - go round again  
But now and then we wonder who the real men are.

See the nice boys - dancing in pairs  
Golden earring, golden tan  
Blow-wave in the hair  
Sure they're all straight - straight as a line  
All the guys are macho  
Can't you see their leather shine  
You don't want to sound dumb, don't want to offend  
So don't call me a faggot  
Not unless you are a friend  
Then if you're tall, handsome and strong  
You can wear the uniform and I could play along  
And so it goes - go round again  
But now and then we wonder who the real men are.  
Time to get scared, time to change plan  
Don't know how to treat a lady  
Don't know how to be a man

Time to admit - what you call defeat  
'Cause there's women running past you now  
And you just drag your feet  
Man makes a gun - man goes to war  
Man can kill and man can drink  
And man can take a whore  
Kill all the blacks, kill all the reds  
And if there's war between the sexes  
Then there'll be no people left  
And so it goes - go round again  
But now and then we wonder who the real men are.

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**APPENDIX A:      DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

**NAME:**

**CONTACT NUMBER:**

**AGE**

**GENDER:**

**STATUS:**

**RESIDENTIAL AREA:**

**NATIONALITY:**

**ETHNICITY:    BLACK                  COLOURED                  WHITE                  INDIAN**

**Circle the relevant category (for statistical purposes only)**

**RELIGION:**

**HOME LANGUAGE:**

**HIGHEST STANDARD PASSED:**



APPENDIX B: ADVERTISEMENT

CALLING ALL YOUNG SOUTH AFRICAN MEN

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A  
STUDY ON GENDER ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICAN  
SOCIETY?**

**VOLUNTEERS HAVE TO FIT THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**



**VOLUNTEERS WILL HAVE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS BETWEEN  
MAY and AUGUST 2005**

**INTERESTED MALES MAY COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM AND  
DEPOSIT IT INTO THE BOX PROVIDED.**

**ALL INFORMATION WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**THANK YOU**

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### 1. EXPLORATORY PHASE: (open-ended questions)

Broad themes to explore with the two pilot interviewees.

#### Explore the concept of masculinity and 'manliness

1. What would you regard as 'manly' qualities?
2. How do you think a male person should prove himself 'to be a man among his friends'?
3. What behavioural characteristics are likely to be a 'let down' in asserting one's manhood?
4. Among your male friends or acquaintances give examples of things you most admire about them:
  - Their general behaviour,
  - Their personality,
  - The way they handle difficult or threatening situations
5. What sorts of things would you like to improve in your own life to consider yourself:
  - A bigger and better man in your own eyes
  - A man more easily respected by your friends
6. Give some examples of when you would feel proud.
7. Give some examples of situations where you would feel humiliated.
8. What kind of man do you admire? Why? Give some examples.
9. What kind of man do you despise? Why? Give some examples.
10. How would you 'fix' a relationship with a male friend if you had a quarrel?
  - And a female friend?
11. What would you see as significant threats and/or insults to:
  - Your own self-respect (pride, status)
  - Your immediate family honour
  - And how would you handle these?

12. How do or would you tend to react (immediately) to the following directed at you:

- Verbal abuse
- A physical attack
- Calling you bad names
- Making you 'look small'

13. How would your reactions depend on the type of person indulging in these?

- Man
- Woman
- Child
- Friend
- Stranger,
- Physically strong
- Weak person

#### SCENARIOS

1. A policeman is giving a ticket to a man for reckless driving. The driver takes it and begins to swear and calls the policeman a pig. The policeman retaliates by punching the driver in the nose and knocks him down
  - How likely is it that anyone amongst your friends could react the way the policeman did in a similar situation?
  - How likely is it that you could feel like that in a similar situation?
2. A drunken man stumbles against your girlfriend/wife in the street. What could be your response to this?
3. If you saw another man chatting up your girlfriend what would you do? Why?
4. Under what circumstances would you think it okay to chat up someone else's girlfriend?
5. What would you consider a bad insult? Why? What would you do if insulted that way?

#### STRUCTURED PHASE:

Begin with open-ended questions followed by structured questions. Use themes elicited from the EXPLORATORY PHASE

Structure questions so that they are positively toned and socially desirable

HOW DO THE RESPONDENTS ENDORSE THE FOLLOWING?

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is a good rule for living

Violence deserves violence

When a person harms you should turn the other cheek

It is often necessary to use violence in order to prevent violence

Violence is acceptable in self-defense

Risk taking vs. risk avoiding

What is being a coward?

To be not much of a man

Leader vs follower

What can destroy your reputation?

What can enhance your reputation as a man?

What are your expressions of manliness?

What does it mean to you to be a man?

What does it mean to you to be a real man in the eyes of your peers?

What do you see as being the essential features of manliness?

What would you see as being the essential features of a sissy or wimp?

If someone insults you would you retaliate and how

What would constitute an insult to you?

What is the effect of an insult on one's masculinity?

What would make others proud of you as a man?

What would make you proud of yourself?

What do consider the characteristics of a brave man?

What does it mean to:

Stand up for yourself

How do you express standing up for yourself?

Not backing down

A man has to do what a man has to do

Allowing oneself to be pushed around

Being an easy mark

The sort that can be pushed around

The sort that won't take any crap

Guys whose girlfriends you can chat up with impunity

Guys you don't want to mess with

Losing face

Defending your reputation – what does that mean and how do you defend your reputation should the need arise

How do you understand gaining the right to be called a man?

Do you just become a man or are there more to it

What is male pride?

What are the rules of a masculine culture?

What are the rules of the culture in which you live?

What do you think of cultures other than your own?

How do you relate to men different from yourself?

VIOLENCE

Do you feel that many people only learn through violence?

When someone does something wrong do you think they should pay for it. How?

Can violence be used as a tool to protect and restore order when that order appears to be violated?

APPENDIX D: THEMES IDENTIFIED

Masculinity

Femininity

Dominance

Peer influence

Sexual prowess

Sex drive

Virility

Violence

Aggression

Masculinity as strength

Masculinity as provider

Masculinity as protector

Masculinity as successful

Masculinity as power

Masculinity as competent

Competitiveness

Standing your ground

Not backing down

Take on the superhero role

Loser/Wimp

Honour culture

Race

Ethnicity

Zulu culture

Cultural beliefs

Winning

Success

Decisive

Role of father

Role of mother  
Real man  
New man  
Macho man  
Zulu man  
Women as autonomous, independent  
Women as socializing agents  
Corporal punishment  
Social violence  
Personal violence  
Bullying  
Guns  
Law  
Fluid masculinity  
Rigid masculinity  
Pride  
Culture-of-honour  
Culture-of-honour stance  
Proving manhood  
Leadership  
Confidence  
Sensitive masculinities  
Hard masculinities  
Face  
Lose face  
Save face

## APPENDIX E: EXAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPT SUMMARIES

- *There are many different kinds of men that I experience. Acknowledgement of different masculinities in this country.*
- Dis-acknowledgement of aggressive masculinities on a social level, in reality. *I do aspire to masculine things like a good action movie, that kind of manliness appeals to me when I am receiving it in an entertainment form. There is an innate inclination to violence and aggression.*
- This country is patriarchal – ruled by traditional concepts of masculinity such as rugby and braaing. There is a movement towards acknowledging different masculinities from the traditional masculinity. There is an emergence of the post modern man. There is greater freedom to construct a masculinity that is different. *There is more freedom to be an individual as a male. More freedom to be more the man you want to be... now we can adopt sensitivity, show interest in clothes, arts and movies that is, you are now celebrated for your new masculinity.*
- There is individuality to define you as a man but still within the limits of what it is to be a man.
- There is a sex role difference between the genders... *you are born male with chemicals which influence your masculinity.* How masculinity is constructed over and above the sex role differences is mainly due to socialisation. You are taught how to be a boy and how to be a girl and the appropriate behaviour for each of the sexes. *There are social expectations which define your maleness.*
- *My personal experience is that it is less about whether I am a male or female and more about which social circles I move in and what I do for fun, what I study or work at.*



- *There are different masculinities and you have a choice which to adopt... within boundaries.*
- *The traditional masculinity is portrayed by my parents where my father works and my mother was a housewife. They adopted a patriarchal template for their relationship which worked for them. But as I grew up I began to question this status quo and so began my development and understanding of what being a man is in society.*
- Through man's own experiences and expectations he learns what it is to be a man. Adopting qualities and models from all around him – a masculinity which is accommodated in different roles and contexts.
- No gender specific roles in a relationship – *I want my wife to go and work and I choose to be a stay at home father to my children.*
- Education is vital in informing you masculinity – opening up other ways of being a man, opening up other ways of doing masculinity. *Education provides you with the tools to define yourself and negotiate it on your own terms.* Patriarchy is still present – *I grapple with it and choose to be different.*
- Masculinity encompasses a cool factor – it's about confidence and being a leader
- As a man you have to still be able to step up and fight to defend yourself. *Take on the superhero role when it is necessary.*
- *To improve myself as a man is to learn to negotiate relationships.*
- It is humiliating to feel intimidated by other men in social situations where other men are perceived to be smarter, funnier and gets the girl.

- One must have the ability to step back and reflect on feelings of humiliation and not just react. *Men have certain energies which can be aggressive and intimidating to other men.* You have to step up a notch and ...*move with it.* It's about proving your manhood.
- Admirable qualities in men include incredible confidence – these men can do things and they know they can do things.
- Qualities that are repulsive in men include men who fear sensitivity – portray this unfeeling, mach attitude. *Like with my father's generation – men don't cry, they are strong, forceful and decisiveness. There are certain things in the world that are inherently masculine such as racism and prejudice - these qualities are inherently male. Also narrow-mindedness, anger and hatred encompass masculinity in its traditional state.*
- *Men can be disgusting in their maleness.... I refuse to acknowledge myself as a man at any given point... I always refer to myself as a boy because I think there are certain things that boyhood has which are so beautiful which so many men seem to lose as they hit manhood.* Being a boy embraces qualities that you lose as a man. There is no intent in a boy's actions. The male libido – sexual prowess is innately male and animalistic.
- This male drive – one needs to differentiate between love and sex. *The libido clouds the mind and can destroy something beautiful – it can be dangerous - a very masculine drive.*
- *I acknowledge the traditional masculinity of rugby, camaraderie and initiation.* But the social sphere dictates what kind of masculinity predominates. *The males I socialise with are still men – we drink, play TV games, we bond and stand up for each other. We don't do the bullying thing and the initiation thing which*

*encompasses emotional and physical bullying – a direct product of that 'pack' mentality that is such a dangerous male thing.*

- The mentality of males differs influenced by social circles as well.
  
- Men struggle with intimate relationships – take longer to be aware of the consequences of their actions and its impact on the healthy state of their relationships. Little self reflection occurs generally – so remain unaware of the impact of their actions. Men make many mistakes in relationships and come to this realisation often when the relationship has irretrievably broken down. *Men feel they need to keep feelings in check – we don't break down and cry. Keep in control of emotions.*
  
- Say sorry to fix a relationship with a man. Always try to be non confrontational sometimes one has to choose to step back and avoid violence as opposed to always stepping up to confront violence. There are times you have to step up especially when you are called to protect a friend. Then you will fight back. *Take the superhero role.* When you have to be confrontational in the traditional masculine way.
  
- With females you have to approach a problem differently, be more sensitive. Justify your actions.
  
- With verbal abuse I will first step back first, walk away and feel bummed. If the abuse is directed at a friend I get edgy, vigilant, alert and ready for danger – an instinct to danger.... There is a need to protect friends, to step when you have to.
  
- There is an innate recourse to aggression. *Wish that one could be a werewolf then once a month I could let loose, go savage and just tear things and just kill and do whatever and get it out of the system because its definitely there. It has to be because I play violent TV games. So it's definitely there. But my brain and my heart have gotten to a point, the maturity, the level of my hierarchical scale of my*

*life that its not an issue on the surface, sometimes it does, sometimes I have a bad day and I just want to hit someone which is very strange for me to say out loud, its definitely there, and when I hear other people say it I think ..Come on!*

- A knock to male pride is rejection by a woman. If my woman cheated on me I would break down and cry. Emotional response. Makes one question one's masculinity – was he better than me, better looking. My masculinity will be threatened. But I would not resort to violence.
- The policeman scenario was not endorsed self *but friends would react that way. It would take a lot for me to initiate a violent response.*
- Maleness conjures up qualities of stubbornness, stomp the problem down and fix it. There are always other options to dealing with conflict but it is not easy to implement among men because they are so conditioned to respond aggressively. *There are definitely other options but whether or not it is possible to get the current generation of men to acknowledge it – I think its too late, which I think is tragic.*
- Drunken man scenario – *I think I would do the apologising to diffuse any conflict. I would attend to her first if he messed on her. My mind doesn't go to that dangerous place automatically...to violent recourse.*
- Chatting up a girlfriend would illicit jealousy and anger. *Feelings of rage – part of me will want to step up and not even confront him, just pick up a chair and hit him in his face with it. There's definitely a part of me that wants to do that.*
- What women want in relationships – what kind of men do they want? What they say they want and what they do want is different. *You can treat a woman well and she wont be satisfied but treat her poorly and she keeps coming back for more –*

*much like battered women syndrome, on a small scale... but people are complex – you may bash a guy to protect your woman's honour and she will be aghast, do nothing and she will be sad that you did not defend her honour. One needs to deal with this through honest communication. Masculinity is also about game playing.*

- Culture and being a South African male hangs over one's head as a male. We have two old traditional cultures which shape men in this country. The Zulu and the Afrikaner. *English speaking whites have no real culture per say. These cultures impact on masculinity in South Africa.* There is because of this an entrenched patriarchy which still exists – includes gross inhumanities which become part of what it is to be a man, such as the mistreatment of women. These old cultures play an influential role in shaping manhood and identity.
- *There is a certain amount of freedom afforded me to define my own masculinity undefined by patriarchal culture. Freedom to choose what to incorporate and what to discard.* No strong cultural ties, no strong traditions to uphold. I can create my own identity.
- *I still embrace some of the traditional aspects of being a man such as rugby, drinking beer, talking sex with the guys. I disregard the taboos that men don't cry, a logical stubborn mind and having to keep it cool all the time even in the face of overwhelming emotion...*
- A coward is a man who allows himself to be pushed around.