

REAL BOYS:
CONCEPTS OF MASCULINITY AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Submitted as the dissertation component in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology) in the School of Psychology at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg,

July 2002

ABSTRACT

Internationally research on masculinity in schools has become an area of increasing interest. Little such research has been carried out in South Africa. This thesis investigates teachers' perceptions of masculinity in a broad range of schools in KwaZulu-Natal. It was investigated whether perceptions of masculinity might vary by type of school. In addition, within the historical context of schooling in South Africa, it was investigated whether differences in constructs of masculinity across sites might reflect a complex interplay of race, class and gender. A qualitative methodology was adopted for this investigation and semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen teachers at ten different schools. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Analysis of these transcripts revealed that interviewees speak with multiple voices, reflecting conflict and contradiction in their constructs of masculinity. Results do, however, reveal core commonalities in concepts of masculinity across sites as well as a number of important contrasts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Graham Lindegger, for his constant guidance, encouragement and unfailing support. Professor Kevin Durrheim gave generously of his time, providing both keen criticism and constructive comment, for which I am extremely grateful. Thank you too to Francois van Loggerenberg for helpful and stimulating discussion. I am grateful to Graham Lindegger, Kevin Durrheim and Francois van Loggerenberg for their assistance in data analysis and for regular and stimulating discussion relating to this process.

In addition, I am truly grateful to the headmasters and teachers who so generously agreed to be interviewed. Their interest, openness and enthusiasm are deeply appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge with gratitude the support of Susan Hart, Vernon Solomon and my sons, Simon and Toby Attwell. Finally, without the extraordinary generosity and unfailing support of Iris Tunstall, Jane Ingham, Moira Niehaus, Lesley Lewis and Ian MacDonald the completion of this research would not have been possible. To them I express my deepest gratitude.

DECLARATION

This thesis was undertaken at the School of Psychology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this thesis is a product of the author's own work

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July 2002

Table of Contents

Title page

Abstract..... ii

Acknowledgements..... iii

Declaration.....iv

Table of contents..... v

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Masculinity: definitions and theoretical perspectives.....1

1.2 The context and aims of this research.....3

1.3 Note on the literature review.....6

Chapter 2: Theoretical approaches to gender

2.1 Introduction..... 7

2.2 Essentialist approaches to gender.....7

2.3 Psychoanalytic approaches to gender.....12

2.4 Sex-role theory.....14

2.5 Social constructionist approaches to gender.....15

Chapter 3: Boys at school

3.1 Introduction.....21

3.2 Hegemony within the school.....22

3.3 Teachers and boys.....25

3.4 School culture.....26

3.5 Boys will be boys.....27

3.6	Sport.....	30
3.7	Heterosexuality and homophobia.....	31
3.8	HIV/AIDS.....	32

Chapter 4: The South African Context

4.1	Introduction.....	35
4.2	Black and White masculinities.....	35
4.3	Masculinities in school.....	37
4.4	Violence and sexual harassment.....	39

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1	Rationale for this research.....	41
5.2	Aims of this research.....	42
5.3	Research design.....	43
5.4	Qualitative research methodology.....	43
5.5	Data collection.....	45
5.6	Sample.....	45
5.7	Procedure.....	46
5.8	Data analysis.....	46
5.9	Ethical issues.....	48
5.10	Reflexivity.....	50

Chapter 6: Results

6.1	Key identifying source of quotations.....	51
6.2	Introduction.....	51
6.3	Commonalities and contrasts.....	53
6.3.1	Displaced boys.....	53
6.3.2	Real men.....	55
6.3.3	Definitions of masculinity.....	57
6.3.4	Male dominance.....	60
6.3.5	Boys will be boys.....	62

6.3.6	Sexuality.....	63
6.3.7	Taming and controlling.....	65
6.3.8	Masculinity in opposition to “other”.....	67
6.3.9	Boys in relation to girls.....	70
6.3.10	Sexual harassment.....	73
6.3.11	Perceptions of HIV/AIDS.....	74
6.3.12	Violence.....	78
6.3.13	Sport.....	79
6.3.14	Discipline.....	81

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1	Introduction.....	83
7.2	Summary of findings.....	84
7.3	Hegemonic masculinity.....	87
7.4	Black and White masculinities.....	89
7.5	Violence and sexual harassment.....	93
7.6	Masculinity in opposition to “other”.....	95
7.7	Masculinity as dominance.....	97
7.8	Heterosexuality and homophobia.....	98
7.9	HIV/AIDS.....	102

Chapter 8: Concluding Remarks

8.1	Revisiting the aims.....	105
8.2	Limitations of the research findings.....	107
8.3	Directions for further research.....	108
8.4	Implications of this study.....	119
8.5	Conclusion.....	110

References.....	112
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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview schedule

Appendix B: Letter to schools

Appendix C: Page by page summary: an example

Appendix D: Categories identified

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Masculinity: definitions and theoretical perspectives

“The danger of thinking you know it all is at no time greater than when it comes to grasping hold of definitions” (Elan, 1994, in Davis and Gergen, 1997, p. 5).

The terms “masculinity” and “masculinities” are constantly employed in literature relating to men. The attributes of men that are discussed in this literature are spoken of as aspects of “masculinity”. McMohan (1993), however, points out that the term “masculinity” is seldom defined. Connell (1993) argues that the concept of masculinity has been reified and treated in isolation from historical and cultural contexts. He goes on to point out that the concept of masculinity is bound up with individual notions of identity and self and that common sense definitions of masculinity focus on the notion that masculinity is a psychological essence or inner core (Connell, 1995). Grosz (1995, in Petersen, 1998) points out that this essentialism entails a belief that those characteristics defined as essentially masculine are shared by all men at all times. Brittan (1989, p. 3), however, argues that masculinity is not some shared essence but that it is instead “... those aspects of men’s behaviour that fluctuate over time”, adding that masculinity is “... the dominant form of male behaviour in any particular milieu”. Messner (1993) agrees, defining masculinity as a series of “... dynamic relational processes” which are not fixed (p. 724).

Rogoff and van Leer (1993) argue that the word masculinity is not neutral, but “one that is deeply complicit in a history of oppression” (p. 748). They emphasise that the use of the term “hegemonic masculinity” in fact obscures the fact that we do not have any definition of masculinity that is not already hegemonic. McMahon (1993) suggests that many descriptions of masculinity are in fact “descriptions of popular ideologies about the actual or ideal characteristics of men” (p. 691). He points out that notions of both masculinity and femininity are embedded in discourses which construct appropriate models of gendered practice. Petersen (1998) points out that “The tendency has been to use ‘masculinity’ or ‘masculinities’ as the basic analytic category in research and writing, rather than to view this category as a specific social and historical construction; as a product of power and knowledge” (p. 6).

Finally, Hearn (1996) goes so far as to question the usefulness of the terms “masculinity” and “masculinities”. He points out that these terms are used in the literature in inconsistent ways:

Masculinity and now masculinities are concepts that are used in a variety of ways, and with a variety of frameworks. These include psychological characteristics, gendered experiences, gender identity, sex-role socialization, gendered behaviours, psychoanalysis, power analysis and institutional practices (Hearn, 1996, p. 202-203).

It is clear that different theoretical perspectives give rise to different understandings of the term and a definition remains elusive. A detailed review of the literature pertaining to these theoretical perspectives will be undertaken in the following chapter of this thesis.

Within the context of this research, however, interviewees were asked to “define masculinity”. Implicit in this question is the assumption that interviewer and interviewee share some core, common sense notion of what “masculinity” means. Connell’s contention that the concept of masculinity has been reified and that common sense definitions of masculinity focus on the notion that masculinity is a psychological essence or inner core seems inescapable (Connell, 1993; 1995). Interviewee responses, however, support the notion that masculinity is “... a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other and with our world” (Kimmel, 1997, p. 224). This highlights the problem of definition. Masculinity appears indeed to be as slippery a term as suggested by Donaldson (1993).

In asking questions about masculinity and in seeking to understand others’ perceptions of masculinity, I adopt the stance outlined by Davis and Gergen (1997, p. 7): “One can ask questions about the world, but one cannot claim to have discovered the truth. The best one can expect is that a new interpretation, a different perspective, or an interesting slant can be created.”

1.2. The context and aims of this research

Manhood is neither static nor timeless. Manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence. It is socially constructed. Manhood does not bubble up to our consciousness from our biological constitution; it is created in our culture (Kimmel, 1996, p. 5).

“Different cultures and different periods in history construct masculinity differently. Manhood means different things at different times to different people. To acknowledge these differences among men we must speak of masculinities” (Kimmel, 1996, p. 5). In a multi-cultural society such as South Africa there are likely to be multiple definitions of masculinity, and even within one culture there are likely to be a number of constructs of masculinity (Morrell, 2001a). While it has been argued that men are constantly in a process of establishing a coherent sense of their masculinity, it is hypothesised that there is usually a dominant or hegemonic form of masculinity that prevails in a given society at a given time (Connell, 1987; 1995). In a transitional society such as present-day South Africa the issue of which discourse is hegemonic is a complex one. There is a wide range of responses amongst men to the experience of social and/or political transition and the area of gender change is a complex process which occurs within individuals, groups and institutions (Morrell, 2001a). In addition, this process is to an extent dependent on class, race and socio-economic status. Connell (1995) recognises a multiplicity of masculinities, which he groups into a number of typologies – hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities. He maintains that hegemonic masculinity is always contestable, while Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) note that the control of one form of masculinity is never comprehensive.

Kimmel (1987) argues that there are specific historical junctures where gender certainties are threatened and conventional gender relations are thrown into confusion. Social upheavals such as the rise of feminism, unemployment and the emergence of HIV/AIDS serve to unsettle the traditional models of dominant, heterosexual masculinities. Morrell (2001a) points out that, until recently, South Africa has been a “man’s country”, where power was both privately and publicly in the hands of men. He argues that in both Black and White families “men earned the money, made the decisions and held power” (p. 18). In 1994, with the election of the Government of National Unity, apartheid was overthrown and radical changes to the country’s constitution included legislation on gender equality as well as on the status of gay men (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1995). Conventional gender

certainities were destabilised and one consequence of this has been that conventional heterosexual masculinity has increasingly become the subject of research and enquiry in this country (Epstein, 1998; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Rabake and Shrieber, 1999; Luyt and Foster, 2001; Morrell, 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1999; 2001a; 2001b; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; 2001; Xaba, 2001). However as Morrell (2001b) and Shefer and Ruiters (1998) point out, there has to date been little work in South Africa with a specific focus on masculinity.

In present-day South Africa concerns regarding masculinity reflect both a general, global concern regarding issues of gender and masculinity and a more specific, local response to a society in transition. Wood and Jewkes (1998) point out that “Work on gender issues, both research and intervention oriented, has long been equated with work with women” (p. 45). Morrell (2001a) agrees, arguing that most work in the field of gender in the South African context has focused on women, including work in the area of gender and education. It has, however, been suggested that concepts of masculinity amongst boys and men may underlie a number of critical problems facing this country – namely the spread of HIV/AIDS, violence against both men and women, and the high incidence of rape (Campbell, 1992; Campbell, Maidume and Williams, 1998; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a). Lindegger and Durrheim (2001, page reference not yet available) suggest that “... these phenomena have arisen in the context of hegemonic masculinity which is entrenched in South Africa”, but add that the observed increase in these behaviours suggests that “... the expression of hegemonic masculinity is in crisis or disintegration”. Estimates suggest an average of 1.3 million rapes per year in South Africa (Foreman, 1999). Eight out of ten male students interviewed by Human Rights Watch researchers believe that women are responsible for sexual violence and 50% of those interviewed reported that a girl who says “no” to sex actually means “yes” (Human Rights Watch Report, 2000, in Naidoo, 2001). South Africa has one of the highest rates of AIDS infection in the world, and it has been argued that this phenomenon is directly linked to the way men in this country construct their sense of themselves as men (Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001). Foreman (1999) argues that the responsibility for transmitting HIV lies “... with widely accepted concepts of masculinity that underpin the behaviour of millions of men across the globe” (p. x). It is therefore of vital importance, I believe, that the socialisation of males in this country is explored and that work focusing on the development of concepts of masculinity in boys and young men is carried out.

According to Connell (1989), schools play a major role in the constructing of masculinities and a number of authors have focused on various aspects of masculinity in schools (Connell, 1989; 1995; 1996; 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). However, as Morrell (2001b) points out, masculinity in schools is under-researched in South Africa. He adds that “The limited work that has been done suggests that schools were critical in disseminating ideals of masculinity within White settler society and in this way were central in constructing a society-wide hegemonic masculinity” (p. 141). Morrell (2001a) has suggested that questions of masculinity in South Africa are bound up with the history of this country, while Epstein (1998) argues that race and class were, and continue to be, linked and gendered in South Africa.

It is the aim of this research to explore teachers’ perceptions of masculinity in different types of school and in so doing to shed some light on the ways in which masculinity is constructed and maintained in South African schools. The different schools participating in this research serve different population groups, both in terms of race and class, and a number of authors have observed that there exists a complex interplay of race and class with constructions of masculinity (Frosh et al, 2002; Connell, 1995). It is therefore to be anticipated that different forms of masculinity may arise at different types of school where learner populations differ along these lines.

The particular focus of this research is on perceptions and constructions of masculinity held by individual teachers in different schools. Through interviewing individual teachers, it was hoped to begin to understand how these teachers perceive masculinity and how they perceive their role in guiding young boys to manhood in contemporary South Africa. This particular research was prompted by my own personal interest in the field of masculinity, the paucity of research in this field in South Africa and a number of questions regarding masculinity in South African schools that deserve to be the focus of this and further research. These questions include the following: is there a dominant hegemonic masculinity affirmed in schools, does this vary by site of school and how is it constructed and maintained; how do teachers perceive the crisis of HIV/AIDS and how is HIV/AIDS education dealt with in schools; do teachers perceive any link between gendered behaviours and HIV/AIDS?

While it is beyond the scope of this particular research to provide answers to all these questions, it is my hope that the richness of the interview data collected will begin to cast some light on the area of masculinity in South African schools.

1.3. Note on the literature review

The literature review is divided into three chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of masculinity. Firstly, literature pertaining to the major academic theoretical perspectives on masculinity is reviewed in the following chapter.

Connell (1989) has emphasised the strategic role of schools in the making of masculinities, a view which has informed my own research. Following the review of literature pertaining to major theoretical approaches to masculinity, literature pertaining to masculinity and gender issues in schools will be reviewed in a chapter entitled “Boys at school”.

Finally, literature pertaining to the specific history and context of education and masculinity in South African will be reviewed in Chapter 4, entitled “The South African Context”.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO GENDER

2.1. Introduction

There has in recent years been a “minor explosion” of interest in men and masculinity (Edley and Wetherell, 1996, p. 97). Clatterbaugh (1990) points out that this interest in masculinity has arisen within a context of globalisation of capital, changing labour processes and changing family forms. It is only by travelling between disciplines and by drawing upon diverse theoretical traditions that we can begin to understand gender issues and the making of masculinities and it is perhaps important to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective on men and masculinity (Fausto-Sterling, 2000b; Segal, 2000). Biological approaches to gender have focused on the ways in which innate biological differences between males and females have programmed different behaviours, sociological approaches have explored the effects of socialisation on gender-appropriate behaviour, and anthropological approaches have explored similarities and variations in masculine behaviours and attributes across cultures (Kimmel and Messner, 1989). The major academic theoretical perspectives on masculinity include psychoanalytic, biological, sex-role and social constructionist approaches to gender and it is these perspectives which will be explored in this chapter.

2.2. Essentialist approaches to gender

To understand what boys are made of, we must consider what shapes them: the powerful forces of biology, the uniquely masculine psychological tasks and the moist dark mysterious call of the masculine soul (Elum and Elum, 1992, p. 17).

Fuss (1989, p. 2) defines essentialism as “... a belief in true essence – that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing”. Essentialist arguments thus posit that there is a core personality and character which defines masculinity and that all men actually or potentially share this. One form of essentialism looks to biology, arguing that masculine behaviour has natural, biological origins. These arguments focus on genetic inheritance, brain structure, the effects of testosterone and survival of the species. As Edley and Wetherell (1995) so beautifully state: “There has to be some kind of biological basis to masculinity. The gross physical facts of their penises, beards and biceps cannot be

entirely irrelevant to the study of men” (p. 36-37). Fausto-Sterling (2000a, p. 109) also points out:

In the current intellectual fashion, men are made, not born. We construct masculinity through social discourse, that array of happenings that covers everything from music videos, poetry and rap lyrics to sports, beer commercials and psychotherapy. But underlying all of this clever carpentry is the sneaking suspicion that one must start with a blueprint – or, to stretch the metaphor a bit more, that buildings must have foundations. Within the soul of even the most die-hard constructionist lurks a doubt. It is called the body.

However, Edley and Wetherell (1995) stress that “a man is much more than just flesh and blood, he is an object full of social significance; full of meaning” (p. 37). Hearn (1998) argues that biological explanations for masculinity ignore the role played by power, culture and historical relativity. He supports Kemper (1990), who emphasises the need to develop a “socio-endocrinology” which recognises reciprocal links between testosterone, aggression, dominance and social structure.

One focus of biological research has been sex differences in the structure and functions of the brain. Moir and Jessel (1991) claim that observable differences in brain structure account for particular behavioural sex differences and hence that aspects of masculinity can be attributed to these physiological differences. Segal (1990), however, argues that research into behavioural sex differences that are based on differences in brain structure reveals only how little is known either about how the brain works or about any reliable sex differences in its functioning. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) in their review of this body of work conclude that our understanding of brain function is at this stage much too elementary to allow for confident claims of its being a direct cause of personality and behaviour. They observe, however, that some of these scientifically unsubstantiated claims linking sex differences directly to brain differences have captured the public imagination and have often served to confirm gender dichotomies and the inequalities that go with them.

Another biological argument focuses on the role of testosterone in the making of masculinity, particularly in relation to masculine aggression (Dabbs, Frady, Carr and Besch, 1987; Elum and Elum, 1992; Kemper, 1990). Elum and Elum (1992) refer to testosterone as “... one of the most powerful manipulators of behaviour the world has ever known” (p. 17). They argue

that aggression is both natural and innate in men. While research findings do suggest that males are significantly more aggressive than females, a number of researchers conclude that there are in fact no simple genetic or hormonal factors to explain either variations in aggressive behaviour between men or the differences in aggressive behaviour between males and females (Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Turner, 1994). Clare (2000) acknowledges the popular assumptions regarding the importance of testosterone in male aggression, but points out that "... it is somewhat surprising to discover how few and how flimsy are the research findings in support of the theory that increased circulatory testosterone increases aggression and dominance in males" (p. 35).

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) suggest that biological explanations of violence overlook the fact that the provocations and expressions of violence are many and varied, and argue that there is simply no real evidence to suggest such strong links between testosterone and sexual differences in behaviour. Hearn (1998) too rejects a simple biological, testosterone-based argument for violent behaviour in men and argues that "Violence may be understood as produced and reproduced through learning, socialization, modeling, imitation and this in turn can be conceptualized as producing an environment of violence that operates over time" (p. 29). It is, according to this view, unfounded to accept that brain structure, genes or chemistry alone cause a "masculine" type.

An examination of the literature on sex differences leads Segal (2000) to conclude:

There are a few small differences in the average aptitudes and traits recorded in particular psychological measurements: these may or may not have some biological underpinning; they show far greater variability within than between biological sexes; and they change, or more precisely, appear to be decreasing over time (p. 153).

Sociobiology, defined by Wilson (1975) as the systematic study of the biological basis of all social behaviour, suggests that masculine behaviour stems from the biological nature of men and boys. Sociobiologists argue that male and female behaviour patterns are built into us as genetic predispositions and that sexual selection for competitive reproduction is advantaged. They offer a genetic underpinning for male domination and aggression, claiming that female passivity and domestication are also genetically grounded (Dawkins 1989; Wilson, 1975; Wright 1994). Wright (1994) argues that the male, genetically, has a natural impulse to

control female sexuality and that men have naturally greater tendencies towards promiscuity. Wilson (1978) states that in the interests of reproductive success “It pays males to be aggressive, hasty, fickle and indiscriminatory” (p. 552). According to Segal (2000), evolutionary theorists emphasise “... the reality of men’s predetermined sexual promiscuity...together with their greater predisposition for violence and risk-taking” (p. 89). Sociobiology suggests that these behaviours entail evolutionary advantages for men, helping them gain resources in competition with other males. However, Segal argues that those who argue that the bases of contrasting sexual conduct lie in culture would predict similar behaviours, as “... in male-dominated societies boys learn to see heterosexual activity as confirmation of masculinity” (p. 89). She emphasises that “... a behavioural trait can be seen to be genetic only if genes alone provide the best explanation for its origin and this is simply not the case for any complex human trait” (p. 154). Critics of sociobiological explanations for human sexual behaviour point out that this theory can be seen to justify male sexual coercion and male violence (Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Segal, 2000).

Clearly, the picture is a complex one, and it is perhaps more realistic to view biological sex as one of a number of possible factors influencing behaviour, along with developmental experience and social context. Edley and Wetherell (1995) in a comprehensive review of biologically based sex difference research conclude that it is difficult to produce clear empirical support for most stereotypes regarding psychological differences between men and women. Genuine biological bases for sex differences should, they point out, emerge in cross-cultural work as constant and universal sexually defined behaviour. However, historical and ethnographic research demonstrates that there is no standard pattern of universal masculinity that biology could have produced. While every known culture does distinguish between male and female, behaviours associated with either sex vary considerably across cultures (Edley and Wetherell, 1995). Connell (1995) explains that “Masculinity is not a biological entity that exists prior to society; rather, masculinities are ways that societies interpret and employ male bodies” (p. 211). He argues that “male” and “masculine” are in fact very different things and that “... masculinity is implanted in the male body, it does not grow out of it” (Connell, 1989, p. 195).

There are a number of other essentialist arguments – some looking to what might be described as psychic essentialism, for example Robert Bly (1990), whose work forms part of the mythopoetic men’s movement. Much of the mythopoetic men’s movement is informed by

concepts from Jungian psychology (Segal, 1990; Tacey, 1997). This movement seeks to "... regain some essential pre-social basis of masculinity rooted in unconscious hard-wired archetypal roots" (Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001, page reference not yet available). Bly (1990) suggests that the essence of masculinity lies in a sort of a cultural memory. His basic premise is that men must recapture the "warrior-self" in order to become in tune with their innermost nature. The mythopoetic argument suggests that men need to get back in touch with their essential masculinity. Clatterbaugh (1995) argues "... men have been shamed into losing touch with their masculine side, thus becoming soft and feminine and passive" (p. 50). The argument attempts to reassert male privilege and emphasises essentialist masculinity. Although some of the men's movement writers do argue for a biological basis to masculinity, most do not (Kaminer and Dixon, 1995). They are, however, essentialist in that they "... portray gender in terms of fundamental attributes that are conceived of as internal, persistent, and generally separate from the ongoing experience of interaction with daily sociopolitical contexts of one's life" (Bohan, 1993, p. 7, in Kaminer and Dixon, 1995). According to Tacey (1997), the mythopoetic movement is a conservative movement which privileges White heterosexual males. Tacey points out that the mythopoetic ideology seeks to restore a former "mythical" state of masculinity and that it is an inherently conservative and reactionary movement, with no vision of a new post-patriarchal masculinity. Both Segal (1990) and Tacey (1997) point out in their critiques of the mythopoetic men's movement that it has failed to address and challenge the public face of masculinity and the sociopolitical structures through which men maintain their hegemony in society.

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) point out that essentialism suggests that "... there is only one true way for men, and that to depart from it is to reject the only model of humanity that men can aspire to" (p. 35). Within the essentialist paradigm, masculinity is unchanged by social, cultural and historical processes and the differences between men and women are seen as universal and enduring (Kaminer and Dixon, 1995.) While these essentialist arguments are made attractive by their simplicity, inherent in essentialist arguments is the danger that these might justify rather than explain behaviour. In addition, if boys' nature and abilities are biologically given, then the possibilities for boys and their educators are constrained. The essentialist "boys will be boys" myth neglects the real diversity of boys – the fact that there are many masculinities and many ways of being a boy. Essentialist theories neglect the cultural variations in masculinities and how masculinities change over time (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998).

2.3. Psychoanalytic approaches to gender

Masculinity constructs itself on the basis of a separation from that which the infant knows – the mother and all her feminine power. Defined in this way as separation, as difference, masculine identity is perpetuated by a continuing process of shutting out the feminine (Frosh, 1994, p. 109).

Psychoanalytic theories stress that masculinity and femininity are relational concepts deriving their meaning from their differences. Within this framework, masculinity is defined negatively as that which is not feminine (Segal, 2000). According to Segal (1990), masculinity in Freud's view is "... neither biologically determined nor a simple product of social stereotypes and expectations. It is a complex and difficult process of psychic construction, ineluctably marked by tension, anxiety and contradiction" (p. 72). According to psychoanalytic theory, all children, both male and female, are born with pleasure-seeking drives, and what brings characteristically masculine or feminine forms of identity into existence is the way in which these innate drives are dealt with by the child's parents. Within this particular theoretical framework, the oedipal stage is regarded as being the most important in terms of the development of masculinity. It is at this stage that the penis symbolises identity and selfhood for the developing male and a boy begins to identify with and internalise the values and standards set by his father. During this stage of development, castration anxiety and the incest taboo result in boys moving away from the mother and identifying with and idealising the father. As a result of this process of identification and introjection, psychoanalysts argued that men are the superior sex, more active, more assertive and more aggressive than females (Edley and Wetherell, 1995).

However, during the 1960s and 1970s classic psychoanalytic theory underwent a degree of revision and it was suggested that males constitute, in fact, the more insecure and fragile sex. It was argued that men are in fact constantly uncertain about their gender and need always to prove themselves as men (Chodorow, 1978). Cross-cultural anthropological work would appear to support this assertion. In his wide-ranging cross-cultural study of masculinity Gilmore (1990) concludes that "... the state of being a real man or true man is uncertain or precarious, a prize to be won or wrested through struggle" (p. 1). Chodorow argued that

acquiring a masculine identity involves a constant struggle against the feminine, and men are vulnerable in this struggle precisely because of their initial identification with the mother.

Chodorow (1978) argues that a sense of self emerges through early interactions with the primary caregiver, usually the mother or another female figure, stressing that mothers build different relationships with male and female children. She suggests that it is the way the mother relates to her son as a male that impacts most strongly on the formation of masculinity. The process of disidentification with the mother that the developing young boy must experience is initiated by the mother herself. "The boy may not yet know that he is male, but she does, and this knowledge structures the way she relates to him" (Edley and Wetherell, 1996, p. 99). Chodorow (1978) argued that in order to develop a sense of maleness, a boy must abandon identification with his mother and identify instead with his father. Segal (1990) agrees, stating that the young male must "... repress and deny the intimacy, tenderness and dependence of the early symbiotic bond with the mother if he is to assume a masculine identity" (p. 79). The male child breaks away from his early identification with his mother, perceiving her "otherness" and perceiving that she is to be admired but also to be struggled against. "He must show that he is nothing like her" (Edley and Wetherell, 1996, p. 99).

Chodorow (1978) suggests that this results in an adult masculinity typified by a reduced capacity for personal relationships and by stronger ego boundaries than are found in women. She goes on to stress that exclusive female "mothering" is a major factor in both the creation and perpetuation of male domination. "A boy represses those qualities he takes to be feminine inside himself, and rejects and devalues women and whatever he considers to be feminine in the social world" (Chodorow, p. 181).

In a critique of the psychoanalytic model, Segal (2000) points out that this theoretical approach presupposes a uniformity of child-rearing experience which does not exist in reality and she argues that it cannot fully account for the nature, power and privilege of masculinity. She stresses, however, that psychoanalytic insights are indispensable for the "... insight that sexual identity (and its normative ties with heterosexual desire) is only ever a precarious achievement" (Segal, p. 157).

2.4. Sex-role theory

In sex role theory masculinity and femininity are seen as internalised sex roles which are products of social learning or socialisation (Bandura, 1977; Pleck, 1981; 1987). Segal (1990) points out that “The assumption underlying role theory is that social expectations, rules or norms attached to a person’s position in society will usually force individuals to conform to them through processes of positive and negative reinforcement” (p. 65). Rooted in psychoanalysis, sex role theory was concerned with the establishment of a stable internal sense of male identity based on identification with the same-sex parent (Pleck, 1987). According to Connell (1987), sex role theory gained considerable popular support as a simple explanation of gender differences which appealed to common sense, but eventually lost credibility in academic circles as its explanatory power was perceived as being too limited. Segal (1990) argues that sex role theory assumes that there are consistent, uniform and universal expectations about men and women shared within any society. Variations in sex-role adherence, where some adhere rigidly to stereotypes and others resist them, can therefore not be accounted for in this theoretical model. According to Segal, sex role theory fails to account for the complexity and the contradictory nature of gender (Segal, 1990). In his comprehensive review of male sex-role literature, Pleck (1987) concluded that there is little empirical support for sex-role theory. In his critique of sex-role theory Connell (1995) points out that it exaggerates the differences between male and female and underplays social inequality, race, class, sexuality and power. As Kimmel and Messner (1989) state: “The unexamined assumption in earlier studies had been that one version of masculinity – White, middle age, middle class, heterosexual – was the sex role into which all men were struggling to fit in our society” (p. 9). It is in a sense ironic that the concept of hegemonic masculinity, emerging from a social constructionist perspective as propounded by Connell (1987; 1995), offers some support for this particular notion. The social constructionist approach to gender is explored in the following section of this chapter.

2.5. Social constructionist approaches to gender

“Masculinity is not a biological entity that exists prior to society; rather, masculinities are ways that societies interpret and employ male bodies” (Connell, 1996, p. 211).

One of the most important themes in the modern sociology of gender suggests that gender is not fixed, but is constructed in social interaction. In the 1980s Robert Connell began to engage with the theoretical problems of gender. Drawing on psychoanalysis, sociology and sexual politics, he rejected both essentialist understandings of masculinity and sex-role theory. According to Connell (1995), masculinity can be defined as “... simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices on bodily experience, personality and culture” (p. 71). Connell (1987; 1995; 2000) suggests that there are multiple masculinities and that these are socially constructed. This social constructionist approach to gender is, according to Connell, based on:

... the feminist analysis of gender as a structure of social relations, especially a structure of power relations, sociological concerns with subcultures and issues of marginalisation and resistance; and post-structuralist analyses of the making of identities in discourse and the interplay of gender with race, sexuality, class and nationality (Connell, 2000, p. 8).

He stresses that masculinities come into existence as people act. Masculinities are actively constructed and actively accomplished in everyday conduct. These masculinities are shaped within the contexts of the family, institutions, mass communications, and the media, each of which impacts on the construction of masculinities. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998, p. 46) support Connell, stating that “... being a man is a matter of constructing oneself in and being constructed by the available ways of being male in a particular society.” Most work within the social constructionist paradigm has focused on the construction of masculinity within a specific setting, with particular focus on documenting and explaining the particular patterns of masculinity arising in specific locations (Connell, 2000).

One of the major contributions of social constructionist approaches to gender is the concept of “hegemonic masculinity”, a concept introduced by Connell (1987) and based on

Gramsci's theory of "hegemony". This theory refers to the cultural dynamic by which a particular group claims and sustains a leading position in social life (Gramsci, 1971). Connell argues that at any given time, in a particular culture, one form of masculinity will be privileged over any other. While different masculinities are produced within the same culture or the same institutional setting, and relationships between these diverse masculinities are constructed through social practices, some masculinities appear to be constructed in opposition to others, and some to be privileged over others. This observation led to the concept of a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987). Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) suggest that the dominant image of what it is to be a man in a particular culture informs the discourse of hegemonic masculinity within that culture. They identify hegemonic masculinity as a form of masculinity "... exalted and practised across discourses and social contexts, which regulates thought and action" (Gilbert and Gilbert, p. 51). The concept of hegemonic masculinity provides a way of explaining that, although a number of masculinities co-exist, a particular version of masculinity prevails and bestows power and privilege on the men who espouse it and claim it as their own.

Connell (1995), however, argues that despite the existence of a hegemonic form of masculinity, masculinity is not in fact a unified discourse. He argues that social constructionist work in the field of masculinity suggests that no one pattern of masculinity is universally found, and that different cultures and different periods of history construct gender differently. Diversity exists not only between cultures and settings, but also within any given setting. Within one particular setting, for example a school, Connell (2000) claims there will be "... different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using the male body" (p. 10). However, he stresses that these masculinities exist in relation to each other and that some are dominant, others subordinate or marginalised. In most settings he claims that "...there is some hegemonic form of masculinity – the most honoured or desired" (p. 10). This may, however, not be the most common form of masculinity and many men within a particular setting or culture may live in a state of tension with or opposition to the hegemonic form. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) support this claim, arguing that "...masculinity is diverse, dynamic and changing, and we need to think of multiple masculinities rather than some singular discourse" (p. 49). They go on to suggest that most boys and men will take up a variety of these possible masculinities at different times and in different contexts, but that this diversity will be constructed within the discursive frames of the culture. Hollway (1984, p. 237) argues that

“...current at any one time are competing, potentially contradictory discourses...” and suggests that class, race and age intersect with gender to favour or disfavour the taking up of positions in one discourse or another. The available forms of masculinity are thus complex and contradictory. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) suggest that it is this very diversity and complexity which make the most conspicuous, hegemonic form attractive for the security it seems to offer.

Hegemonic masculinity is, then, not a description of a real man but is rather an ideal or a set of prescriptive social norms. Wetherell and Edley (1999) point out that very few men actually meet the normative definition of hegemonic masculinity outlined by Connell (1995). However, it is argued that men still have considerable investment in maintaining these hegemonic masculinities, which tend to maintain male privilege. For example, while working class, Black and gay men may be subordinated, they still live under the umbrella of hegemonic masculinity and its privileges (Connell, 1995). One of the most obvious of these privileges is the power over women that hegemonic masculinity symbolises (Connell, 1995; Segal, 1990; 2000). Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987), argue that “... most men benefit from the subordination of women and hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected with the institutionalization of men’s dominance over women” (p. 92). The idealised conception of what it is to be “a real man”, a conception informed by the discourse of hegemonic masculinity, pressurises young men to adopt strategies to reinforce male power and to protect themselves against perceived failure. These strategies include adopting the norms of the peer group and objectifying and dismissing women in order to differentiate themselves from gay men, women and failures (Holland, Ramazanoglu and Sharpe, 1993).

Drawing on Foucault’s theory of discourse, Wetherell and Edley (1999) offer a discursive psychology of masculinity. In his theory of discourse Foucault (1980) emphasises that masculinity and femininity refer neither to a collection of traits, nor to a set of stereotypical roles, but rather to the effects of discursive practices. Kenway, Willis, Blackmore and Rennie (1998) argue that gender identities are constructed by discourses in settings such as schools, families, friendships, work and leisure and these settings offer a range of ways of being masculine or feminine, but privilege some as being more desirable than others. Toerien and Durrheim (2000) point out that different discourses offer men competing ways of making sense of the world and of themselves. They agree with Edley and Wetherell (1997), who suggest that in contemporary Western culture masculinity is defined by discourses that

construct men both as sensitive and caring (the “new man”) and as tough, emotionally inarticulate and competitive (the “macho” man). Messner (1993) defines the “new man” as “... the emergent emotionally expressive New Man, who is heavily involved in parenting” and the traditional man as “... inexpressive, hypermasculine” (pp. 723-724). Toerien and Durrheim (2000) identify the emergence of a new discourse, which integrates elements of the “new man” and the “macho man” discourses. They call this the “real man” discourse (Toerien and Durrheim, 2000, p. 38). They observe that changes in gender power relations, in female expectations of men and in definitions of femininity have had profound implications for the production of male identity. They conclude that the need to be both essentially masculine and at the same time to ward off feminist critique may be a core dilemma for contemporary Western man.

Wetherell and Edley (1999) delineate three distinctive psycho-discursive practices through which men construct themselves as masculine. They develop the notion of “imaginary positions” to describe these practices and identify them as the “heroic”, the “normal, moderate or average” (p. 343) and a third position where certain men define themselves in terms of their unconventionality and distance themselves from conventional norms of masculinity. Of these three positions, the “heroic” most closely conforms to descriptions of hegemonic masculinity, where men align themselves most strongly with conventional notions of masculinity. However, Wetherell and Edley found that interviewees in their study least frequently took up this position. Most common was the second position, where interviewees identified much of the “hegemonic” as “stereotype”, and emphasised their average normality. This supports the claim that hegemonic masculinity is rarely, if ever, practised in its purest form (Connell 1995; Segal, 2000).

Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that what is valuable is Connell’s notion that “Men’s conduct is regulated by shared forms of sense making which are consensual although contested, which maintain male privilege, which are largely taken for granted and which are highly invested” (p. 351). The strengths of Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity includes the fact that it allows for diversity, emphasising multiple masculinities rather than a single masculinity, and the recognition that relations between men are as relevant as relations between men and women for the formation of gendered identities. Wetherell and Edley conclude that there is in fact not only one style of hegemonic masculinity privileged within a particular culture at a particular time. They suggest, rather, that there exist a multiplicity of

hegemonic masculinities. They suggest that men are in a constant process of sense making, and that this is a complex and contradictory process full of competing claims. “Organized forms of intelligibility which make up the hegemonic in any particular social site and period are multiple, varied and much more complex than current accounts of hegemonic masculinity suggest” (Wetherell and Edley, p. 352). Finally, Segal (2000), in her critique of social constructionist approaches to gender, concludes that there is a danger that constructivist accounts of gender identity may simply replace earlier biological reductionism with new forms of cultural reductionism.

The concept of masculinity ideology, as espoused by Pleck, Sonenstein and Ku (1993), is based on the social constructionist approach to gender. They define masculinity ideology as “... the extent to which men believe that it is important to adhere to culturally defined standards for masculine behaviour” (p. 12). In this view men behave as they do because they have internalised norms from their culture. “Masculinity ideology refers to beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male behaviour” (Pleck et al., 1993, p. 12). This approach views masculinity as a cultural construction rather than as being psychologically or biologically based. Masculinity is conceptualised not “...as a dimension of personality in the trait sense, but as an ideology, as a set of beliefs and expectations about what men are like and should do” (Pleck et al., p. 15).

While Connell (1995) argues that sex role theory is limited in that it fails to account for the complexity and contradictoriness of gender in society, Seidler (1997) suggests that Connell’s own theories do not in fact account for the “... contradictory nature of men’s lives and their complex relationships with diverse masculinities” (p. 4). Seidler acknowledges the importance of Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity in contextualizing masculinities, but points out that it is not really clear, within this theoretical framework, how men became the men they are. This criticism is echoed by Wetherell and Edley (1999), who argue that Connell’s concepts fail to inform us how men practise hegemonic masculinity in everyday life. They point out that the notion of hegemonic masculinity is not sufficient for understanding the practicalities of negotiating masculine identities. In their critical analysis of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, they echo Seidler (1997), stating that while the concept embodies important theoretical insights, it does not in fact explain how men position themselves as gendered beings. They ask what, indeed, conformity to the hegemonic ideal looks like in actual practice. This question perhaps loses its force if one accepts that the

concept of hegemonic masculinity is in a sense a symbolic one, where the hegemonic form of masculinity serves as a symbol of male power over women and subordinated masculinities, rather than as a form of masculinity practised in everyday life (Segal, 2000).

Kippax, Crawford and Waldby (1994) argue that men are born into male bodies, but not into the successful accomplishment of socially appropriate versions of masculinity. Becoming a man is, they stress, a complex process of learning and doing. Essentially, masculinity is perceived as a “performance” rather than some internal essence. “Masculinity is never something you can feel at ease with. It is always something that you have to be ready to defend and prove” (Seidler, 1996, p. 64). A number of authors stress that boys and men must constantly strive to achieve masculinity, that manhood must be achieved – and must be validated by other men (Connell, 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Gilmore 1990; Kimmel, 1995). Gilmore (1990), in his ethnographic study of masculinity across a number of cultures, broadly supports this notion, stating that over a number of cultures studied he observed that manhood is difficult to achieve, is marked by rites of entry and involves striving in a distinctly masculine realm. He observes that “The state of being a real man or true man is uncertain or precarious, a prize to be won or wrested through struggle” (Gilmore, 1990, p. 1). However, this does give rise to the question posed by Mac an Ghaill (1994, p. 172) – that is, how does masculine heterosexuality, described as “... a highly fragile construct marked by contradictions, ambivalences and contingencies” become fixed “... as an apparently stable, unitary category”?

CHAPTER 3: BOYS AT SCHOOL

3.1. Introduction

The issue of how boys come to understand what it means to be a man, within our society and within our schools, is fundamentally important to educators who want to support and foster boys' social, moral, and intellectual development. It is also critical if we want to foster healthy, respectful relationships between young men and women, and among young men (Scully, 2001, p. 37).

Connell (2000) argues that schools do not simply adapt to a natural masculinity in boys, but that they are in fact active in constructing particular forms of gender and in negotiating relations between different masculinities. However, as Connell (1995) has pointed out, there has been surprisingly little exploration of the role of education in either the formation or transformation of masculinity. This is particularly true of South Africa.

An adequate understanding of masculinity and how boys are confronted by and come to terms with it cannot ignore the contexts in which masculinities are constructed, sustained and challenged. School is one such context, where school management, teaching styles and ideologies as well as curriculum content actively impact on gender formation. A number of authors have argued that schools are highly gendered institutions where masculinities are actively made, negotiated and regulated (Connell, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Kenway et al., 1998; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Scully, 2001).

Connell (2000) argues that schools are gendered in multiple ways. He points out that male staff predominate in high schools, female in junior schools; that authority is masculinised; that parts of the curriculum are gender specific and that gender relations are a constant preoccupation of peer group life. He suggests that the patterning of these relationships within the institution may be called its "gender regime", and that gender regimes will differ between schools. He states that forms of discipline, dress code, rules and traditions can be considered as "masculinizing practices" which are governed by the gender regime of a school. In support of this argument he cites Morrell (1994), who identifies the "...production of a rugged masculinity" within the White boarding schools of Natal up to 1930 (p. 2). These schools emphasised toughness and physical hierarchy "...through masculinizing practices such as

initiation, fagging, physical punishment and spartan living conditions” (Connell, 1996, p. 215). Connell emphasises that gender regimes are not necessarily internally coherent and are subject to change.

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996) suggest that male power is often reproduced through the ideology and culture of a school, but not necessarily in a direct, overly deterministic way. Connell (2000) strongly supports this position, arguing that it is “... the inexplicit, indirect effects of the way schools work that stand out in the long perspective on masculinity formation” (p. 146). He emphasises that what he refers to as “the hidden curriculum” is far more powerful in forming gender relations than the explicit curriculum, suggesting that “Some masculinizing effects are intended by the school, some are unintended and some are not wanted at all – but still occur” (p. 164). With regard to the role of the school in constructing masculinities, Connell concludes that the school is probably not the major influence in the formation of masculinity for most men, citing childhood experience, adult workplace and sexual relationships as being more potent influences. However, he suggests that schooling is, after these, the next most powerful influence. The making of masculinities in schools is thus “... far from the simple learning of norms suggested by sex-role socialisation. It is a process with multiple pathways, shaped by class and ethnicity, producing diverse outcomes” (Connell, 2000, p. 164).

3.2. Hegemony within the school

In growing up boys have to negotiate what it means to be a man – the discourse of hegemonic masculinity. Patterns of hegemony are clearly revealed in school studies where some ways of being male are privileged and granted greater power within the school setting than others (Connell, 1995, 1996; Edley and Wetherell, 1997; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Holland et al., 1993; Kenway, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Frosh et al., (2002) argue that there is strong support for “... the existence of hegemonic masculinity as a powerful idea that regulates boys’ behaviour” (p. 76). In their struggle to achieve a satisfactory form of masculinity boys are observed to compete with and subordinate alternative forms of masculinity. Kenway (1995) points out that the forms of masculinity promoted within schools revolve around physical strength, public knowledge, rationality and competition. Hegemonic forms of masculinity amongst adolescent boys in schools also involve derogating the feminine, compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia and hostility to difference of any sort,

especially those males identified as subordinate (Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Kenway et al., 1998; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Scully, 2001). According to Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), this "... exaltation of dominant masculinity heightens the fear of failure and hostile rejection of alternatives, increasing misogynistic, homophobic and self-destructive behaviours" (p. 52). These patterns of hegemony have, however, been identified in British, American and Australian schools and they might therefore have little relevance to the South African context.

It is important to acknowledge the diversity of forms which masculinity can take as it is constructed from the discourses available in boys' everyday lives (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Frosh et al., (2002) argue that "Boys actions are constrained by the discursive positions available to them" (p. 51). These claims reflect the observation made by Hollway (1984) that "At a specific moment several coexisting and potentially contradictory discourses concerning sexuality make available different positions and different powers for men and women" (p. 230). While young men may have access to a variety of different discourses about manhood, the process of taking up a position is not simply a matter of individual choice. These discourses come with social histories and some positions contain more social reward than others, which may be negatively sanctioned (Moore, 1994).

Connell (2000) points out that while differing masculinities are being produced within a school, the masculinity a boy might "choose" is in fact strongly structured by relations of power within the institution. He argues that within the school, there is a contest between rival versions of masculinity for hegemony. Masculinity is organised around social power, whether in terms of academic success, sporting prowess, physical aggression or sexual conquest. Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, Dowsett and Dowsett (1982) identified a strong form of masculinity in elite boys' schools, identified by being "... motivated to compete, strong in the sense of one's own abilities, able to dominate others and to face down opponents in situations of conflict" (p. 73). Mac an Ghaill (1994) identified a number of groups within the British school he studied. One group of boys was identified as the "macho lads", a group who perceived school as a system of hostile authority and meaningless work demands. He observed that these boys experienced domination and alienation within the school system. In addition, he identified a group of "academic achievers" who, when younger, were harassed by other boys, but in later years became more confident and able to parody dominant gender ideology and challenge even the more macho teachers. Walker (1988, in Gilbert and Gilbert,

1998) made a similar observation in an Australian school, where boys ridiculed by the others for being effeminate challenged their attackers by responding with a camp exaggeration. However, it is clear that subordinate groups in fact developed practices in reaction to the dominant masculine culture – boys who reject a macho form of masculinity are still unable to escape it and define themselves in opposition to it!

It has been argued that dominant masculinity constrains boys as much as it advantages them. Dominant modes of masculinity, stressing aggression, emotional control, toughness and the ability to withstand pain, tend to limit boys' emotional horizons and result in damaging forms of competition and control. In addition, many of these images and practices of masculinity pose threats to the welfare and security of both boys and girls (Frosh et al., 2002; Kenway et al., 1998; Scully, 2001). Schools as institutions appear to endorse and sustain a masculinist culture which limits emotional expression in boys. It is implied, therefore, that boys may suffer certain disadvantages in life because of the way societies, including their educational institutions, encourage certain types of maleness. Much of the recent literature on masculinity suggests that boys are cut off from their emotional lives, suffer their problems silently and face a cruel and harsh peer culture. Restricted notions of heterosexual manliness often prevent boys from taking emotional and sexual responsibility for either themselves or others. It can therefore be said that traditional models of manliness are potentially damaging to the emotional lives and social relationships of young men and as a result boys may tend towards aggression, conflict and violence (Connell 1996; Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Kenway, 1995; Mills and Lingard, 1997; Paechter, 1998; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Scully, 2001).

A number of authors point out that class, race and ethnicity are constant factors in the interplay of different kinds of masculinity, a feature particularly pertinent to the study of masculinities in South African schools (Connell, 1996; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Wetherell and Edley (1995) point out that one of the most striking absences in the literature on masculinity in Britain is a detailed analysis of Black masculinity. A similar lack is reflected in the South African literature. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) claim that "In the English-speaking world, white majorities have stereotyped black masculinity around a number of themes" (p. 149), which they identify as violence, irresponsibility, sexuality and criminal behaviours. British, American and Australian research in schools suggests that teachers tend to construct Black boys as heterosexually more mature, physically large,

rebellious and threatening (Connolly, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002; Gillborn, 1990). The literature relevant to the South African context is reviewed in the following chapter entitled “The South African Context”.

3.3. Teachers and boys

There is a wealth of evidence suggesting that teachers treat boys and girls according to gendered assumptions of what is appropriate (Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Kenway et al., 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996). According to Gilbert and Gilbert (1998, p. 117), “The kinds of questions teachers ask, their response to children’s answers, their practices of rewards for behaviour, and teachers’ perceptions of student ability were influenced by assumptions about gender differences”. Mac an Ghaill (1994) points out that his research in a British school confirmed that many teachers valued a masculinity identified with rationalism and individualism. This was not the only form of masculinity within the school, but was the dominant form. He argues, too, that male teachers’ involvement in sexist discourse served to “... confirm and celebrate a normative macho mode of masculinity that many male teachers identified with, highly valued and amplified” (p. 49). If the masculinity of male teachers is performed and constructed along with that of boys, it is essential to look at teachers as well as schoolboys if we are to understand the gender regime of a school. Mac an Ghaill suggests that many male teachers see their primary task as making “real men” out of their students and that patriarchal values are frequently espoused by teachers who widely believe that a “real” man is one who is able to assert control. This masculinist discourse engenders a “compete and succeed” atmosphere at schools. Within this discourse, it is essential that boys practice hiding emotions and avoid displays of sensitivity if they are to avoid being perceived as weak. Relationships in school are unavoidably and pervasively gendered and if teaching practices are not critically scrutinised, they will tend to confirm dominant power relations (Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

Connell points out that discipline in schools is liable to be gendered in a number of ways. Corporal punishment, where legal, is more likely to be used on boys than girls. Teachers may use gender as a means of shaming boys, calling them girls or wimps (or “moffies” within the South African tradition!). Within the prefect system, boys learn to wield disciplinary power themselves as part of their learning of masculine hierarchy. In addition, the contest with adult

authority within the school hierarchy “... can become a focus of excitement, labelling, and the formation of masculine identities” (Connell, 1996, p. 217).

3.4. School culture

Important contributions to understanding masculinity within schools have come from ethnographic and interview studies into boys’ school cultures (Connell et al., 1982; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). In their review of work focusing on masculinities in schools, Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) observe that the styles and practices of boys’ developing masculinity varies from boy to boy and each form of masculinity establishes a different relationship with the school. School settings offer a range of ways of being male or female, but privilege some as superior and more desirable. Young men therefore have access to a variety of discourses about manhood and these multiple discourses inform their practices of masculinity (Wood and Jewkes, 1998). Masculinity is not homogenous - masculine identities are complex and contradictory and shift across history and different cultures and indeed across different contexts within the same individual (Connell 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). “Within each man and boy there is a conflict going on between the fiction of a fixed ‘real me’, masculine self and more fluid, alternative selves” (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998, p. 7). In his interview study with British schoolboys, Mac an Ghaill (1994) found very clear evidence of tensions between the public performance of a confident, independent masculinity and private insecurities and the desire for intimacy. Frosh et al., (2002) report similar findings.

Peer culture has been defined as one of the most important features of a school and the male peer group is perceived as a competitive space in which young boys are expected to prove themselves (Connell, 2000; Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Scully, 2001). According to Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (1996, p. 54), “Male peer groups are one of the most oppressive arenas for the production and regulation of masculinities”. A boy’s understanding of what it means to be a man may then to a large extent depend upon his peer group affiliation and will certainly be affected by the way masculinity is constructed within these peer groups. Connell (2000) emphasises that peer groups clearly illustrate the collective dimension of masculinity. Peer groups rather than individuals become the bearers of gender definitions.

The question arises as to whether school culture might vary according to type of school. Connell (2000) suggests that research in single-sex schools for boys clearly shows the potential of the school as a masculinizing agent. He argues that while this masculinising agenda has perhaps been "... muted by co-education", he questions whether co-education has in fact eliminated this tendency and argues that the gender regimes within co-educational schools continue to sustain what he refers to as "... particular definitions of masculinity" (p. 156). He points out that within co-educational schools there exists a heterosexual construction of masculine and feminine as opposites and that co-educational schools operate within an informal but powerful ideology of gender difference and pressure is put on boys to conform to this. However, little research appears to have focused on the relationship between masculinity, school culture and type of school.

Connell (1989) has argued that "... the strongest effects of schooling in the construction of masculinity are the indirect effects of streaming and failure, authority patterns, the academic curriculum and definitions of knowledge" (p. 58). Connell (2000) points out that the defining of certain areas of the curriculum as masculine and others a feminine – what he refers to as "... the gendering of knowledge" – is a particularly important symbolic structure in education (p. 154). The assumption that certain subjects are more closely related to masculine interests and activities than others has been observed in schools, with science, mathematics and technology tending to be seen as natural choices for boys and English by contrast being perceived as feminine (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

3.5. Boys will be boys

It has been widely observed that those with essentialist views on masculinity – and this includes a number of teachers – perceive behaviours such as bullying, harassment, risk-taking and disruptiveness in class as falling into the realm of "boys will be boys". These behaviours are then explained as a natural tendency within boys (Connell, 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Kenway, 1995; Segal, 1990). Salisbury and Jackson (1996) observe that these essentialist assumptions result in an acceptance of certain behaviours recognised as undesirable. Epstein, Elwood, Hey and Maw (1998) suggest that this "boys will be boys" discourse has achieved a "... globalized common-sense status" which perceives an "... unchanging and unchangeable boyness which involves aggression, fighting and delayed maturity" (p. 9). If genes or chromosomes predetermine boys' behaviour, then we must

assume that the possibilities for change are limited. If, however, traditional, stereotypical ideas of what it is to be a man are social constructions created out of culture, history and ideology, then the situation is one where there is potential for change

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) argue that there is overwhelming evidence that boys represent the majority of behavioural problem students in schools. Behaviours such as harassment, bullying and violence in schools are overwhelmingly performed by boys (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Lingard, 1999; Paechter, 1998). Lingard (1999) emphasises that boys dominate statistics for antisocial and destructive behaviours, as well as for suicide and road deaths. Pleck et al. (1993), basing their research on the observation that problem behaviours such as violence, risk behaviours and disruption in schools were performed more frequently by adolescent boys than girls, explored the idea that male problem behaviours were in some way connected with constructions of masculinity. Their findings support the notion that adolescent males who hold more traditional beliefs about what males are supposed to be like and how they should act are more likely to display problem behaviours including school problems, substance abuse, delinquency and sexual activity. They noted a strong connection between an acceptance of hegemonic masculinity, which they refer to as “masculinity ideology”, and arrogance in heterosexual relationships. These authors suggest that engaging in certain behaviours officially disapproved of by adult society is in fact validating of masculinity and that indeed it is perhaps the very social disapproval of these behaviours that makes them so validating.

Connell (2000) concurs, stating that for many boys rule-breaking is central to the making of masculinity, especially where boys lack other resources for proving manhood, for example, those with poor academic skills or poor employment prospects. He argues that groups of boys engage in violence and sexual harassment in order to acquire or defend prestige. Kimmel (1995) adds the notion that boys are willing to indulge in high-risk behaviour in order to distance themselves from the feminine. In his work with preadolescent boys, Fine (1987, in Pleck et al., 1993) found that these boys based their definitions of masculinity on peer culture and older adolescent boys. These definitions run counter to and appear to have a greater formative effect than adults’ values in the socialisation of younger boys. Pleck et al. (1993) suggest that, in fact, male culture positively sanctions these high-risk, “macho” behaviours. This is an important consideration as it suggests a conflict between the “adult” concepts of

masculinity overtly encouraged by teachers and a subtext within which high-risk, macho behaviours are in fact validated by male culture.

Connell (1996) argues that groups of boys engage in violence and sexual harassment "... not because they are driven to it by raging hormones, but in order to acquire or defend prestige, to mark difference, and to gain pleasure" (p. 220). Although bullying has been the subject of considerable research, most of it has lacked any focus on the relationship between constructs of masculinity and bullying (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Bullying has seldom been viewed in relation to a system of gendered power relations. Gilbert and Gilbert stress, however, that the construction of masculinity is in fact a powerful component of harassment and bullying in schools. Conflicting and contradictory views are evident in the literature on this issue.

Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) argue that male violence "...points to the vulnerable underbelly of all masculinities, to the driving force of such emotions as confusion, uncertainty, fear, impotence, shame and rage", emphasising male vulnerability and insecurity as the root cause of this type of violence (p. 119). Braithwaite and Daly (1995, in Gilbert and Gilbert 1998), on the other hand, stress that this violence arises from a masculine sense of power, stating that "For men, status competition through physical force, domination-humiliation of the less powerful, and knowing no shame have substantial cultural support" (p. 222). Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) observe that if schools are to address bullying and harassment, they need to focus on this cultural context; they also emphasise the urgent need for further work in this area.

According to Gilder (1973, in Clatterbaugh, 1990), male behaviour is naturally antisocial: "Unless male nature is constantly controlled, it quickly degenerates into antisocial behaviours (p. 263); "Left alone, male nature produces violent and destructive behaviour and it is seen as the role of society to civilize male nature" (Gilder, p. 97). This view exemplifies the essentialist concept of masculinity, where intrinsically different natures are attributed to men and women. Men are perceived as naturally violent, competitive and destructive, and it is for this reason that problem behaviours are performed more frequently by males.

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), however, argue that these behaviours are connected with masculine practices and values, with the way men construct themselves as masculine. They suggest that it is only through understanding the complex motivations and situational factors which motivate these "problem" behaviours, and the relationship of these behaviours with

constructions of masculinity, that we can understand why boys are so disproportionately involved in these behaviours. Conventional “manliness” is not fixed, natural or eternal and the way is open for further work, which they suggest should follow the lead of feminist work in gender and education. Masculine characteristics like competition, domination and control are not inherited or socialised behaviours, but should instead be perceived as ways of conducting oneself in the world which we confront and take up in various ways in the discourses and social practices of everyday life (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998).

3.6 Sport

“The sports world is an important cultural process that serves partly to socialize boys and young men to hierarchical, competitive and aggressive values ” (Messner, 1997, p. 209). Compulsory participation in sport plays an important role in many boys’ education. In the South African context participation in sport has been strongly emphasised in the historically White boys’ schools (Morrell, 1996). Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) point out that “in many respects, men’s sport is the archetype of institutionalized masculinity” (p. 60). In their research in Australian schools, they found boys almost unanimously confirmed that sport played a key role in their lives at school. These authors identify sport as a key site for the development of masculinity and suggest that the image of manhood created in sport is defined as one of being “... tough, competitive and dominant” (p. 64). In the local context Nauright and Chandler (1996) claim that in South Africa rugby has emerged as a “... central element in the shaping of a middle-class male-dominated hegemony” (p. 9). Morrell (1996) too points out that rugby has historically been promoted in the historically White secondary schools of South Africa, where the love of and ability to excel at rugby became synonymous with manhood. Enthusiasts believed that “... rugby was the sport which uniquely combined team discipline and the opportunity to experience one’s masculinity” and at many boys’ schools was “... held to be a powerful binding force in the school” (p. 105). Similarly, Connell suggests that in American schools American football may not only define “... a pattern of aggressive and dominating performance as the most admired form of masculinity” but also serves, indirectly, to marginalise other forms of masculinity (p. 217). Connell (2000) points out that, while girls do participate in school sport, it is the high-profile boys’ sports which are more important within the cultural life of the school. He observes too that the coaches of boys’ teams, particularly in the high profile sports, may be important figures within the school hierarchy.

3.7. Heterosexuality and homophobia

“Boys will not only be boys, it seems, they will be heterosexual boys” (Epstein et al., 1998, p. 9). Research into masculinities in schools has revealed a clear presumption of heterosexuality, along with a resultant homophobia, that becomes normalised within school practice (Epstein, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002). Mac an Ghail (1994) stresses that male heterosexual identity is a highly fragile phenomenon, constantly negotiated and constantly challenged. Most boys interviewed in Scully’s 2001 study spoke of having to prove their masculinity and she concludes that it is not enough to be born male - masculinity must be demonstrated and proven. This supports the notion that, while boys are at school, they are constantly negotiating competing definitions of masculinity. The existence of powerful pressures to conform has been observed in boys’ school cultures and as a result boys struggle to live up to dominant notions of masculinity within their peer groups and the costs of nonconformity are often very great for them (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Scully, 2001). Holland et al., (1993) argue that boys need to create an image of themselves as “real men” in order to survive within the peer group and need to be seen as macho, experienced and knowing. There is constant pressure on boys in groups to prove themselves, to prove their manhood and to avoid being labelled “wankers” or “wimps”.

Male sexuality is actively constructed – young men are expected to want to have sex, to enjoy it and to initiate it. This particular aspect of masculine identity could seriously impact on the HIV/AIDS crisis both in South Africa and internationally. As a result of the constant competition to demonstrate masculinity and prove themselves real men within the peer group, sexuality has become equated with male power. Holland et al., (1993) point out that their study revealed that young men perceived power over women as part of being a normal man. Sexual relationships with girls were perceived as conquests – and there was a separation from any emotional involvement with the girls. Connell (1996) found that “Heterosexual success is a formidable source of peer group prestige” (p. 219). This aspect of male sexuality is confirmed in a number of studies among adolescents in South Africa, most notably those of Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001). In their work on the sexual behaviour of youths in an Eastern Cape township, Wood and Jewkes confirm the importance of sexual relationships and male dominance for adolescent boys and young men. Holland et al. (1993) conclude that life can be very difficult for those young men who do not conform to this peer model of sexuality.

In the discourse of hegemonic masculinity homosexuality is equated with effeminacy, with the result that misogyny and homophobia are thus very closely linked in their relations to dominant masculinity. Homophobia seems to be a constant feature of dominant masculinity's attempts to distance itself from the threat that homosexuality appears to pose and schoolboys in particular appear to believe that in order to achieve successful heterosexuality they must stigmatise and oppress homosexuality (Connell 1995; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Segal 1990). It has been argued that homophobia is not motivated simply by contempt for homosexuality, but in fact plays a key role in policing and constructing heterosexual masculinities within schools (Epstein, 1997; Frosh et al., 2002). Scully (2001) found that boys accepted homophobia and harassment as a natural and inevitable part of life at school. Homophobic name-calling and insults served to ensure that boys did not transgress the boundaries of accepted gender roles. Harassment and homophobia therefore emerge as social processes which serve to define and limit the expression of masculinities in schools. In addition, Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) argue that underlying competing forms of masculinity is the presumption of difference from and superiority over girls. Scully (2001) observed in her study that male to female harassment was very common and served the important function of allowing boys to publicly express and affirm their heterosexual masculine identity.

3.8. HIV/AIDS

Rambo figures, driven by testosterone, who penetrate the unknown, take risks, conquer opponents, all the while guided by reason. This masculinity is at the heart of the problem of HIV/AIDS when deployed in the realms of pleasure and sex (Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001, page reference not yet available).

It is widely claimed that sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS can be directly related to ideologies of masculinity that emphasise male sexual pleasure, value the display of sexual prowess and encourage men to have multiple partners (Baylies and Bujra, 2000; Campbell et al., 1998; Caravano, 1995; Foreman, 1999; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Macheke and Campbell, 1998; Rivers and Aggleton, 1998; 1999; Salisbury and Jackson, 1996).

Foreman (1999) points out that boys grow up believing that their masculine identity is defined by their sexual prowess and he suggests that their attitudes and behaviour are

contingent upon constructions of masculinity operating within their culture. He argues that the HIV/AIDS epidemic needs to be understood and addressed in relation to these concepts of masculinity. This notion is strongly supported by Lindegger and Durrheim (2001), who suggest that despite cultural variation in the construction of masculinity, certain aspects of masculine construction appear to be widespread, appearing across different cultural groups. These they identify as "... the male sex drive, the notion of conquest, masculinity as penetration and males as risk takers" (page reference not yet available). They claim that these discourses of masculinity have major implications for HIV risk behaviours. If men construct their masculinity in terms of these discourses, then educational programmes which emphasise abstinence, restriction to one sexual partner or condom use "... effectively invite men to defy some of the essential behaviours which are used in maintaining a sense of masculinity" (Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001, page reference not yet available).

The effect of "sex-drive discourse" on normative concepts of masculine sexual behaviour has frequently been explored (Foreman, 1999; Hollway, 1984; Kippax et al., 1994; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001). Young men are often expected to prove their sexual prowess and the belief that a man's need for sex is beyond his control is widespread. Sex-drive discourse also endorses the notion that male sexual pleasure is paramount in a sexual encounter (Kippax et al., 1994). The notion that norms of masculinity predispose men to high-risk sexual behaviour has also received widespread support (Kaminer and Dixon, 1995; Macheke and Campbell, 1998; Nauright and Chandler, 1996).

If one accepts Foreman's (1999) claim that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is driven by men, then HIV/AIDS education programmes need to address the widely accepted concepts of masculinity that inform the sexual behaviour of men. Lindegger and Durrheim (2001) stress that "There is a need for a radical reconstruction of masculinity and a dismantling of hegemonic masculinity in seeking to change high-risk sexual behaviours in men" (page reference not yet available). It is therefore perhaps not surprising that information-based education programmes, focusing on the provision of knowledge in the belief that it will impact on people's sexual behaviours, have failed to achieve their goal (Crisp, 1996, in Campbell, 1997). These programmes succeed in increasing knowledge about HIV/AIDS, but ignore the broader contexts of masculine and feminine identities (Campbell, 1997). Redman (1996, p. 170) points out: "Crucially, practitioners of health promotion, sex education, youth

work and other allied fields have largely ignored the implications of heterosexual power relations when addressing HIV-related issues”.

Kippax et al. (1994) note that even among those who are well informed, few males have modified their sexual behaviour and that heterosexual men do not perceive themselves to be at risk. Ku, Sonenstein and Pleck (1993) found that condom use appears to be closely associated with perceptions of masculinity. In their study boys who accepted more traditional constructions of masculinity tended to use condoms less frequently and viewed them more negatively in terms of male sexual pleasure. The chief barriers to condom use include the notions that condoms are unnatural, spoil spontaneity and compromise male sexual pleasure. In addition, they observed that as the level of teenage boys' sexual activity increased, their condom use decreased. Campbell (1997) emphasises that teaching “safe sex” in a context where virility is perceived to be compromised by condom use will have little effect.

Winslow, Franzini and Hwang (1992) have emphasised the importance of perceived peer norms in adolescent boys' sexual behaviour and stress that if HIV/AIDS education is to be effective, there is a need to penetrate peer culture and ensure that safe sex is perceived as the norm. According to Stockdale (1995, in Macheke and Campbell, 1998), “Sexual behaviour is inextricably linked with the norms characteristic of the social groups with which we identify” (p. 46). Research in Zimbabwe indicates that, amongst young men, sexual activity with multiple partners is seen as symbolising adulthood and as enhancing status (Runganga and Aggleton, 1998, in Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Wood and Jewkes (1998) found that the group of township boys they interviewed constructed masculinity almost entirely through sexual relationships and that “... multiple sexual partners ... virtually universal among boys, seemed to be an important defining feature of ‘being a man’ ” (p. 22). Hadden (1997, in Rivers and Aggleton, 1999) concludes that more work is needed to challenge social norms that support multiple sexual partnerships for men.

To conclude, Foreman (1999) stresses that the role of men in the HIV/AIDS epidemic requires urgent attention: “In short, men determine the path of the disease. Only prevention programmes that directly address men's sexual and drug-taking behaviour can significantly reduce the rate at which the global HIV/AIDS epidemic spreads” (p. vii).

CHAPTER 4: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

4.1. Introduction

While the importance of addressing issues of masculinity has become internationally acknowledged, relatively little work with a specific focus on masculinity has been published in South Africa (Morrell, 2001a; Shefer and Ruiters, 1998). Morrell (2001a) points out that in South Africa the focus of interest and concern “remains fixed on the inferior and subordinate position of women relative to men” (p. 3). Morrell himself has, however, begun to redress this, with a number of publications focusing on men and masculinity (Morrell, 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1999; 2001a; 2001b; 2002). Relevant work on HIV/AIDS with a focus on sexual practices which expose traditional power inequalities between men and women has been published (Baylies and Bujra, 2000; Cambell, 1997; 1998; Crisp, 1996; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Varga and Makubalo, 1996). In addition, Lindegger and Durrheim, (2001) have explored the relationship between constructions of masculinity and HIV/AIDS. Studies which highlight male coercive and abusive behaviours in sexual relationships with girls/women have also emerged (Jewkes et al., 1999; Varga and Makabalo, 1996; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; 2001). Luyt and Foster (2001) conducted an investigation into the relationship between diverse forms of masculine expression and gang activity in the Cape. Toerien and Durrheim (2001) have explored the discourses of masculinity available to men, based on discourse analysis of a number of issues of a South African magazine aimed predominantly at White, middle-class, heterosexual men.

4.2. Black and White masculinities

Morrell (2001b) points out that questions of masculinity in South Africa “...are powerfully bound up with the history of the country” (p. 140). According to Epstein (1998), masculinities in South Africa have been constituted through their colonial history as well as through the racist power relations formalised through apartheid. She claims that in South Africa “... the gender order was solidified in ways that were not only violent, but were structured through racism, misogyny, homosociality and homophobia, while race and class were, and continue to be, linked and gendered” (p. 55). She emphasises that “South Africa has long been and continues to be a strongly racialized society” (p. 51). It has frequently been argued that different notions of masculinity emerge along lines of race, class and sexuality

(Connell, 1995; 2000; Frosh et al., 2002; Hearn and Collinson, 1994; Hollway, 1984; Luyt and Foster, 2001). As South African society has been structured by race, gender and class, it is to be anticipated that different forms of masculinity will have emerged within the differing contexts of race and class. Morrell (1998b) posits the emergence of different hegemonic masculinities for Black and White men. However, he identifies a number of commonalities, including dominance over women, the use of violence to resist and the endorsement of heterosexism. He stresses that "...South African masculinities, Black and White, include[s] heavy stress on toughness, physicality, and endurance" (Morrell, 2001b, p. 154). While Morrell (2001a) asserts that there is no such thing as a typical South African man, he discerns a set of discourses within which contemporary South African men position themselves. He identifies these discourses as "...men as victims of the advancement of women, men as naturally violent and competitive, and men as victims (equally with women) of policies such as structural adjustment" (p. 25).

It has been observed that South African society, both Black and White, is overwhelmingly patriarchal in nature (Jewkes et al., 1999). Until recently men in both Black and White families "... made the decisions, earned the money and held the power" and these "... presumptions of male power and authority" were supported by the law (Morrell, 2001a, p. 18). Referring to Black masculinities, Morrell (2001b) points out that historically traditional African patriarchy dominated in the rural areas of South Africa and was "... located within the unquestioned dominance of men over women" (p. 141). Traditional social practices such as circumcision lodges and stick fighting continue in parts of South Africa and these practices are perceived to ritualise and formalise the superior status of the male adult. Morrell identifies the emergence in the townships of a "... tougher, more violent masculinity" which incorporated some aspects of traditional, rural masculinity (p. 142). Referring to White masculinities, Lemon (1995) points out that "White middle-class, heterosexual men have enjoyed the privileges of unquestioned power and domination in this country for decades – not only over women of all races, but over men of other races and classes as well" (p. 65). Epstein (1998) suggests that the hegemonic ideal of masculinity in South Africa may thus be "... the white, middle class, heterosexual, family man, living with his wife and children" (p. 53). However, the transition from authoritarian rule has left in its wake a profound social anxiety as familiar social identities and traditional values and practices have been disrupted (Cock, 2001). Epstein (1998) argues that "Different masculinities become relevant, common or even possible, in different times, in different places and in different political situations" (p.

49) and adds that it is during periods of change that "... those discourses which are usually marginalized may gain leverage" (p. 51).

4.3. Masculinities in school

Morrell (2001b) observes that masculinities in South African schools are under-researched. South African schools, historically Black and historically White, have been renowned for their authoritarianism (Holdstock, 1990). In his work on White, private, single-sex boarding schools for boys in KwaZulu-Natal, Morrell (1994) traces the production of South African English-speaking upper-class masculinities. Morrell (1994) stresses the highly comparable nature of British public schools and KwaZulu-Natal's private schools. He notes particularly the emphasis on hierarchies that are maintained by age, the prefect system, and academic and sporting success. Sports, especially rugby, were valued in these schools, as were strong hierarchical structures which were believed to "toughen up" boys. Nauright and Chandler (1996) claim that in South Africa rugby has emerged as a "... central element in the shaping of a middle-class male-dominated hegemony" (p. 9). Epstein (1998) argues that these schools provide an environment that is both strongly competitive and strongly homophobic and emphasises that the ethos of these schools is steeped in violence. According to Morrell (2001b), the limited work that has been done in schools in this country suggests that "Schools were critical in disseminating ideals of masculinity within white settler society and in this way were central in constructing a society-wide hegemonic masculinity" (p. 141).

While Morrell (1999) has observed that the system of "Bantu" education and Christian National education practised during the apartheid years in this country resulted in a masculinist system of education, where senior positions were dominated by men, little research appears to have focused specifically on the relationship between constructions of masculinity and the "Bantu" education system. Similarly, little research focusing on masculinity appears to have been carried out in Black schools. Some research, focusing on the use of corporal punishment, has been carried out in a sample of Black and White schools (Deacon, Morrell and Prinsloo, 1999; Morrell, 2001b). While Morrell (2001b) found that "Boys of all races accepted that discipline is best maintained by the use of physical force by somebody in authority on a subordinate" (p. 152), he adds that in many respects he observed "... sharp differences in response by race" (p. 153). Corporal punishment continues to be used, particularly in Black schools, despite legislation banning this particular form of

discipline. In addition, Morrell reports that learners in his study perceived male teachers as strict, less tolerant and less reasonable than female teachers. These findings have led Morrell to conclude that “The model of masculinity presented by male teachers to students seems unlikely on this reading to generate alternative, more democratic and gentler masculine identities” (p. 150).

Homophobic practices are, according to Morrell, widespread and many African men brand homosexuality as “un-African”, blaming colonialism for its introduction to the continent (Morrell, 2001a). Morrell (1994) identifies homophobia as a powerful force operating within the historically White single-sex schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Internationally, the challenge to compulsory heterosexuality has been extended to schools (Mac an Ghaill, 1994). However, homophobia and discrimination against gays remain features of both historically Black and historically White schooling in South Africa (Deacon et al., 1999). In particular, the heavy emphasis on competitive sport in elite, formerly white schools is frequently associated with homophobia (Morrell, 2001b). Deacon et al. (1999) argue that corporal punishment and homophobia in schools are largely consistent with patriarchal social practice.

Kenway et al. (1998) explored the effects of state-generated gender reform policies in schools in Australia. This research is perhaps pertinent to the situation in South Africa, where there has been a rapid transition in educational policy since the election in 1994 of the Government of National Unity, which instituted a new, egalitarian constitution and a bill of rights. Conscious attempts were made to transform South African education and changes, including the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex or sexual orientation, became law in the South African Schools Act, passed in 1996. In addition, the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act (1997) prohibited corporal punishment. On the basis of their research into educational reform in South Africa, however, Deacon et al. (1999) claim that old styles of school governance and pedagogy remain intact. They conclude that “The laws of the land, it appears, are far in advance of the people in whose name they were passed” (p. 165).

4.4. Violence and sexual harassment

Campbell (1992) claims on the basis of her research that "... there is a crisis of African masculinity" (p. 614). She points out that apartheid and capitalism contrived to limit the power of working-class men and argues that men who were oppressed both in terms of race and class were often able to exercise dominance only in their socially sanctioned power over women and children. She suggests that there is strong evidence of a link between the current levels of violence observed in the townships of South Africa and a more general crisis of masculinity that has developed among working-class township men. She argues that violence emerges as a compensatory mechanism whereby men reassert their masculinity in the face of this crisis. "The ability of men to control women, or keep them in line, and the use of violence to ensure this control, is one area where the power of working-class men has not been threatened by a racial capitalist society" (p. 625).

Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001) have observed and researched the emergence of an antisocial and violent culture of machismo among adolescent youths in Black townships. The Gender Equity Task Team identified violence as a major problem in South African schools and emphasised that schools are particularly dangerous places for girls (Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997). Griggs (1997) points out that this violence is particularly prevalent in Black township schools. Morrell (2001a, p.12) argues that "Masculinity and violence have been yoked together in South African history". He points out that the historical background of colonial and apartheid South Africa, where Black men resisted White domination and control, led to the validation of violence as a way of dealing with power inequalities. In addition, he suggests that "... school masculinities are implicated in this violence" Morrell (2001b, p. 154).

Freund (1996) argues that the context of apartheid education, the breakdown of family structures within a patriarchal society and the politics of the liberation struggle together created a "... specifically macho gender identity among urbanized African youth which stressed violence as a mark of being a man and accepted violence as a way of resolving problems" (p. 193). This violence is compounded by frustration with schooling and disillusionment regarding hopes for employment and a better life. Campbell (1992) points out that many young Black men "... are struggling to cope with the frustrating slowness of political change" (pp. 622-623).

Wood and Jewkes (1998) explored connections between violence and notions of masculinity predominating among Black youth. They found that “successful masculinity” was defined in dominant peer culture in terms of the number of a young man’s sexual partners and his “... ability to control his girlfriends” (p. 3). In addition, having multiple sexual partners was said to be “... a defining feature of being a man” (p. 5). Wood and Jewkes (1998) argue that lack of employment prospects and realisable aspirations among young Black males contributes to the observed abuse of women, through displacement of frustrations onto vulnerable partners.

On the basis of their research in the Eastern Cape, Wood and Jewkes (1998) observe that sexual relationships between male teachers and female learners are disturbingly common. Girls in their research sample claimed that they were victimised if they rejected teachers’ proposals of sexual relationships. Wood and Jewkes conclude that “... it seemed that school principals and staff generally turn a blind eye to such events, and thus act to protect the male teachers (p. 37).

Jewkes et al. (1999) point out that their findings support the notion that cultural views endorse the subservience of women to husbands, the idea of male ownership of women and notions of male entitlement. While it seems clear that there exist specific local and historical circumstances that impact upon this link between violence and masculinity in South Africa, Gilbert and Gilbert (1999) point out that throughout the Western world “... increasingly, constructions of masculinity are seen to be significant in understanding links between violence and crime” (p. 16).

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1. Rationale for this research

Various theoretical approaches to masculinity were explored in the literature review. The social constructionist approach to masculinity, which argues that gender is constructed in social interaction, emerges perhaps as currently the most important approach in the literature. This approach draws on psychoanalysis, sociology and a feminist analysis of gender as a set of power relations. The social constructionist paradigm explores the interplay of gender with race, sexuality and class, as well as acknowledging the historical context of gender identities.

Work within the social constructionist paradigm has focused on exploring the construction of masculinity within a specific setting. Emphasis has been placed on documenting and explaining the particular patterns of masculinity arising in specific locations (Connell, 2000). One such location is the school and Connell (1995) has observed that the school is an important site for the production of masculinities. Morrell (2001a) points out that in South Africa masculinities in schools are particularly under-researched. A review of the relevant literature supports this view

Research in Britain, Australia and the United States suggests that patterns of hegemony have been observed to arise in schools and that hegemonic masculinity within these schools revolves around physical strength, compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia and derogating the feminine (Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Kenway et al., 1998). A review of the literature suggests that no comparable work has been carried out in this country and little is known about patterns of hegemony which may arise in local schools.

It has been suggested that different masculinities emerge in different times, places and political situations. South Africa is a society in transition, and socio-political change has been observed to impact on men's sense of themselves as men. In addition, a complex interplay of race and class with constructions of masculinity has been observed. South African society has been structured by race, gender and class, and it is therefore to be anticipated that different forms of masculinity may arise at different types of school where learner populations differ along these lines. The review of relevant literature reveals little local work which explores

these possibilities. Research exploring the notion that different perceptions and constructions of masculinity may arise in different types of schools has not been undertaken in this country.

Much of the recent literature on masculinity suggests that traditional models of manliness are potentially damaging to the emotional lives and social relationships of young men. It has also been suggested that the ways that boys and men construct their sense of themselves as men impacts on a number of critical problems facing this country, including violence against women, sexual harassment and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Research that focuses on the socialisation of males and the development of constructs of masculinity in young boys and men in this country is thus urgently needed.

5.2. Aims of this research

Connell (1995) emphasises that there has been "... surprisingly little discussion of the role of education in the transformation of masculinity" (p. 238). Education in South Africa is undergoing rapid and large-scale transformation, including constitutional efforts to transform South African education in the light of human rights, equality, gender equality and democracy (South African Schools Act, 1996). However, there has to date been little research focusing on the actual concepts and experiences of teachers and learners within a gender framework. The broader aims of this research include an investigation into how masculinity is constructed and maintained in South African schools, and whether constructions of masculinity vary by type of school. It was of interest to explore whether broad commonalities in constructions of masculinity emerged across different types of school or whether concepts of masculinity were defined more specifically by site, according to defining features of the site – e.g. race or class.

As has been stated in the introduction to this thesis, the particular focus of this research is on perceptions and constructions of masculinity held by individual teachers in different schools. Through interviewing individual teachers, it was hoped to begin to understand how these teachers perceive masculinity and how they perceive their role in guiding young boys to manhood in contemporary South Africa. This research focuses on individual teachers' perceptions and constructions of masculinity, their perceptions of a school's role in fostering certain types of masculinity and their perceptions of their own role in guiding young boys to

manhood in contemporary South Africa. The broad rationale for this research is to understand the perceptions and constructions of masculinity within South African schools (Morrell, 2001b).

Teachers at a broad range of schools were interviewed. Interviews focused on the individual teacher's concepts of masculinity. Of particular interest was the teacher's perception of masculinity and of the school's role in fostering a particular form of masculinity, and whether these perceptions varied by site and context.

5.3. Research design

I chose a qualitative methodology for this study, believing it would be most appropriate to retain and explore the richness of information obtained in the interviews. Blumer (1969, in Patton, 1990) claims that qualitative enquiry is the only real way of understanding how people perceive, understand and interpret the world. Patton (1990) notes that it is in the "... information-richness of the cases selected" in a qualitative inquiry that validity, meaningfulness and insights are generated (p. 185).

5.4. Qualitative research methodology

The validity of conducting research within a qualitative methodological framework is well established (Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). However, as Kvale (1996) points out, there are neither standard rules nor common methodological conventions in qualitative research, nor are there common procedures for interview. This both challenges and terrifies the novice researcher, who eagerly seeks clear methodological guidelines. While Giorgi (1975) argues that the key criterion for assessing the validity and reliability of qualitative research is whether the reader "can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agrees with it" (p. 96), Silverman (2000) notes that it is important to acknowledge the contested nature of qualitative research. The areas of reliability, validity and objectivity in particular are subject to critical scrutiny. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the conventional criteria applied to quantitative research in relation to validity, reliability and objectivity of research design are inappropriate for qualitative research, while Kvale (1996) suggests that these notions need to be reconceptualised into forms relevant to interview

research. He points out that in the postmodern world "... objective reality has dissolved. Knowledge is not a mirror of reality but a social construction of reality" (p. 239). Validity is, he suggests, a process of checking, theorising and questioning.

What is emphasised by a number of authors (Bannister et al., 1994; Kvale, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2000) is the importance of clear explication of the procedures used in the qualitative research, allowing the reader to scrutinise and assess methodology and data analysis. Detailed description of the context, methodology and data analysis pertaining to a particular study ensures transferability; Kvale (1996) argues that reasoned judgement might be used to guide future researchers on the extent to which findings from one study are generalisable to another situation. Detailed description of methods and procedures as well as explicit exploration of the researcher's own personal assumptions, values and biases give an indication of the degree of objectivity (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Kvale (1996) has stressed that methodology must be described in sufficient detail for the reader to ascertain the relevance of the design for the topic and purpose of investigation. The reader is then able to evaluate the trustworthiness of the results. Informed by these arguments, I have focused on clear and detailed explication of methods and procedures as well as maintaining a critical focus on the values and ideals I bring with me into this research. These methods and procedures are therefore described in detail in this chapter.

While Kvale (1996) points out that "... the very strength of the research interview is its privileged access to the common understanding of subjects", it is equally true that the reality of interviews is "... ambiguous, relative and unknowable" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 64). One of the difficulties of qualitative analysis of interviews is that while we interpret the respondent's words, we recognise that these words could be interpreted in a multitude of ways. It is important to bear in mind throughout this type of research that "... all research contains biases and values, and that knowledge and understanding are contextually and historically grounded" (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, p. 122). Patton (1990) points out that one way of strengthening a qualitative study design is through triangulation, which he defines as "... the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs" (p. 187). He identifies four different types of triangulation, including "analyst triangulation", which has been used in this study. "Analyst triangulation" involves the use of several different analysts who independently analyse the same qualitative data set and then compare their findings (p. 468). This method of triangulation reduces the bias that comes from single-observer studies

(Denzin, 1970). In this research project three independent analysts reviewed the data at various stages of analysis, beginning with the identification of themes and categories arising from the data. This independent analysis confirmed my own thematic analysis and served to reduce bias.

5.5. Data collection

Open-ended semi-structured interviews informed by Patton's "... general interview guide approach" were conducted with individual teachers at ten KwaZulu-Natal schools (Patton, 1990). (Appendix A). The interview questions were formulated from issues arising in the literature pertaining to masculinity in schools. Interviewees were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and gave their informed consent prior to interview.

An open-ended semi-structured interview approach was chosen. One of the advantages of this particular type of interview is that it allows for the outlining of a set of issues to be explored with each respondent in a flexible manner. Each of these issues was raised with each respondent, but the actual wording was not predetermined and questions were not presented in any particular order. This ensures that all issues are raised and simultaneously encourages spontaneity in respondents, an approach which allows for the interview to develop most naturally into a meaningful "... conversation with a purpose" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 268). In addition, participants were invited to raise any issues or concerns which they considered relevant. As I gained experience and confidence in interviewing, discussions became increasingly open and unstructured. The original outline was, however, followed in each interview.

5.6. Sample

Headmasters of a number of schools in KwaZulu-Natal were initially contacted by telephone and this was followed up with a written communication stating the purpose and intention of this study (Appendix B). Schools were chosen purposively to allow for systematic comparisons between schools that are similar or different. Sampling was therefore purposeful and focused on selecting a wide range of schools, a sampling technique identified by Patton (1990) as "... maximum variation sampling" (p. 182). 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). The attributes of interest in selection of participant schools included the following:

Single-sex boys
day
boarding
co-educational
historically White
historically Black
historically Indian

This sample formed part of a broader study looking at a full spectrum of schools occurring in KwaZulu-Natal. For the purpose of this thesis, a subsample of these schools was used and sixteen teachers at ten schools selected to represent a number of different types of schools in KwaZulu-Natal were interviewed. These schools included the following:

Three single-sex independent boys' schools, historically White
One single-sex state boys' school, historically White
Three co-educational state schools, township, historically Black
Three co-educational state schools, urban, historically White

5.7. Procedure

After the initial contact the headmasters arranged for interviews to take place on school premises. Interviewees tended to be mostly male staff, reflecting to a certain extent the fact that school management in a boys' or mixed-sex school tends to be predominantly if not entirely male, even where the staff might be mostly female. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. With the informed consent of interviewees, interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. The resultant texts formed the basis of data analysis and these texts were analysed and coded.

5.8. Data analysis

“Data analysis is our most vulnerable spot. It is the area of our research where we are most open to criticism” (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, p. 123).

Analysis of data involved organising the data in different ways – audiotapes, verbatim transcripts, summaries, thematic analyses and a visual data display. The basis of data analysis was the audiotaped interview. Each of these audiotaped interviews was transcribed and these verbatim transcripts were read a number of times. Following these readings, page-by-page summaries of each verbatim transcript were made. These page-by-page summaries formed the basis of a thematic analysis.

I began by carrying out a number of readings of the verbatim transcripts based on the methodology described by Mauthner and Doucet (1998). This process involved the following steps:

1. reading for overall sense of the interview and for my own response;
2. reading for recurrent themes, ideas, images, contradictions, and overall tone within the transcribed text;
3. reading for themes identified from the literature.

On each reading, words identifying categories and themes were listed in the margins of the text. Page-by-page summaries were then written for each interview (for an example, see Appendix C). This immersion in the data led to the discovery of themes and interrelationships between interviews. Themes arising appear in Appendix D. This information was then organized into paragraphs focusing on particular themes, and a comprehensive summary for each interview was written. Once case summaries were written, they were grouped according to site of origin, following the “clustering” procedure outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 249). They describe “clustering” as a tactic that can be applied at many levels to qualitative data; in this case sites were “clustered” according to observable commonalities such as race, boarding vs day schools, single-sex vs co-educational schools. Clustering is used in order to group objects or sites that have similar patterns or characteristics in order to form categories. Thus, summaries from Black township schools were grouped, summaries from single-sex boys’ boarding schools and so on. However, it is important that the clustering “... be held lightly in the analyst’s mind”, warding off premature closure (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 250).

A data display in the form of a “... conceptually clustered matrix” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 127) was then constructed. The identified themes were displayed against individual interviews and thematic content for each interview summarised in a short paragraph. This format allowed for a visual display of all the relevant responses of informants on one sheet

and made possible a visual analysis of similarities and differences in responses across interviews. Again informed by Miles and Huberman, I wrote an “analytic text” based on this visual display in order to identify commonalities and contrasts between sites (1994, p. 101). Writing an “analytic text” involves “...the act of writing text as you ruminate over the meaning of a display” (p. 101); Miles and Huberman identify this process as a “...focusing and forcing device that propels further analysis” (p. 101). Miles and Huberman argue that this process of writing an analytic text based on the data display helps the researcher to “...see themes, patterns, and clusters” (p. 101). This process was a valuable one which confirmed that the process of clustering schools on observable characteristics meaningfully reflected similarities and differences in themes arising.

Due to the overwhelming number of themes identified in the data, I decided for the purposes of this research to focus on and explore themes which emerged either as common across sites and interviews or highlighted strong contrasts between schools. This allowed the identification of perceptions of masculinity that seemed peculiar to a particular context or grouping and those that appeared to emerge across sites or groupings.

Triangulation, a method devised to reduce the potential bias arising in single-observer studies, was used throughout the data analysis (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 1990). At each stage of data analysis three independent analysts reviewed the data, beginning with the identification of themes and categories arising from the data. This cross-analysis was used to check, compare and confirm my own identification of categories and themes emerging from the data and served to reduce bias. In addition, regular discussion with supervisors and colleagues served to maintain constant awareness of possible biases.

5.9. Ethical issues

Participants in this study were informed of the overall purpose of the investigation and of the main features of the research design. Participants consented both to participating in and being audiotaped during interview. Where the interviewee was a member of staff rather than head of school, a “... hierarchy of consent” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 291) could be said to occur, with the headmaster consenting to a member of his staff participating in the study. However, no individual interviewee expressed reluctance or reservation regarding being interviewed. Respondents were assured that data identifying individuals or particular

institutions would not be reported and anonymity was an important issue for a number of participants, who indicated that their participation in the research was dependent on this assurance. However, in a research project such as this a guarantee of absolute anonymity is perhaps questionable, as schools are identified by type (for example, historically White single-sex boys' school) and are thus arguably identifiable. However, if qualitative data need to be transferable, sufficient contextual information must be provided to allow for this and one needs to balance carefully the requirements of providing sufficient information and retaining anonymity. The identities of individual participants and individual schools have, I believe, been sufficiently protected in this study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasise that the researcher must carefully assess both the benefits and costs of a research project and that the guiding principle must be the avoidance of harm. This study explores teachers' concepts of masculinity and their perceptions of the role of the school in educating and socialising young men. It has been pointed out that the issue of how boys come to understand what it means to be a man is fundamentally important to educators (Scully, 2001). In addition, the possibility that concepts of masculinity in men may play a role in a number of critical problems facing this country is beginning to be explored (Campbell, 1992; Campbell et al., 1998; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a). If this is indeed the case, a study such as this one brings with it potential benefits to educationalists who are concerned with their role in the socialisation of young men.

Finally, while racial classification remains a contentious and politically sensitive issue, the history of apartheid in South Africa has meant that terms designating race have an ongoing descriptive power. Epstein (1998) points out that South African society has been structured by race, gender and class. The differences between the groups described within the apartheid systems as 'races' (European or White, Coloured, Indian, Bantu or Black) were "... reified by law and by custom and practice which are more difficult to change than the apartheid laws" Epstein (1998, p. 51). I have in this study adopted a terminology of race outlined by Morrell (2001a, p. ix), using the terms White, Black and Indian to describe the different groups participating in this study.

5.10. Reflexivity

Research is always carried out from a particular standpoint and the position of the researcher needs to be considered. It is incumbent on the researcher to reflect on the role of his/her own viewpoint, experience and role in conducting research (Bannister et al., 1994). My own experience as a teacher for many years in an independent day school for boys has highlighted for me the concerns around issues of masculinity that prevail within a single-sex institution and has served as an impetus in focusing my research on issues of masculinity within schools. Throughout this study, therefore, I had to consider carefully both my familiarity with this type of school, my own beliefs and values as an educationalist and the ways in which these values might bias my analysis and interpretation of these data. Regular discussion with supervisors and colleagues, as well as the inclusion of independent data analysts, served to maintain constant awareness of these issues and to highlight my own beliefs and possible prejudices.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

6.1. Key identifying source of quotations

Verbatim quotations from transcribed interviews are used in this chapter. Quotations are identified as to the type of school from which they come as follows:

Historically White single-sex school for boys..... SS

Historically White co-educational school..... CW

Historically Black co-educational school..... CB

Individual schools and interviewees are identified by numbers following these letters.

6.2. Introduction

The sense of change – political, economic, social and ideological, both local and international – is pervasive throughout these interviews. This change has impacted on society, on gender relations, on schools and on personal notions of masculinity and femininity. Interviewees in every type of school observe that changes in gender power relations and changes in the status of women have profoundly impacted on boys’ perceptions of themselves as men. Traditional concepts of masculinity, among both Black and White men, are therefore shifting and contested. Uncertainty and confusion regarding the nature of masculinity and the status of men as males emerge across all interview sites.

Secondly, a close reading of interview texts consistently reveals that interviewees speak with multiple voices. These multiple voices perhaps reflect the multi-layered nature of masculinity arising from the multiple and conflicting discourses of masculinity available at any particular time within a particular culture (Toerien and Durrheim, 2001). Interviewees in the historically White schools appear to find themselves caught between traditional and newer notions of masculinity, between discourses that could be identified as the “macho man” and the “new man” discourses (Toerien and Durrheim, 2001). Interviewees in the Black township schools find themselves caught in a position between traditional cultural concepts of what it is to be a man and more liberal, Western notions enshrined in the constitution of the country. In addition, these multiple voices reflect personal and cultural beliefs, efforts to respond to discussion in a politically correct, socially desirable manner, attempts to conform to

perceived societal expectations of masculinity and taken for granted assumptions that certain concepts – for example, what “a real man” is – are in fact commonsensical and universally understood.

Evidence of multiple voices reflecting varied and conflicting masculine subjectivities within individual interviewees emerged across all interview sites. Interviewees spoke with multiple voices, revealing ambivalence and confusion as to the essential nature of masculinity or what it is to “be a man”. For example, one interviewee described how his own views on masculinity have changed over the years: “I would have looked at it very much from a male perspective, physical achievement, being in charge, making decisions”(CW1-i). However, he describes being beaten by a woman in the Comrades Marathon as a turning point in his life, changing his concept of masculinity: “I would now define masculinity as being in charge of who you are and being able to accept that there are other folk who are as good if not better than you” (CW1-i). His definition of masculinity in fact remains essentially unchanged as he simply incorporates humility into his original definition and this is effected by adapting to the changing situation of women. He adds that a “real man” is someone who is compassionate, has empathy, and is able to cry: “you know that thing about cowboys don’t cry, that’s rubbish because cowboys are wimps, they’ve got guns and they’ve got lassoes and a true male doesn’t need that ” (CW1-i). What emerges strongly is an avowed rejection of a stereotypical macho masculinity and an acceptance of women as equals, yet use of the terms “wimps” and “true male” suggests that on another level he assumes a shared, universal understanding of what a man is, and a “true man” is not a “wimp”! Another interviewee argues that boys must learn to respect women as equals. However, later in the interview, commenting on violence in the township, he points out that the boys take out their frustrations on “the weaklings of the township, that is the girls, the women and so on”(CB1-ii). This suggests that while he supports the notion of sexual equality, he at the same time makes the assumption that women are the weaker sex.

Common themes emerge across sites and many concepts of masculinity appear to transcend racial, cultural and class boundaries. However, the findings of this study strongly support the notion that Black and White masculinities are also separate and distinct masculinities. A reified notion of masculinity as an ideal which real men might aspire to but do not necessarily live up to emerges across sites and across cultures and, while interviewees at both historically Black and historically White schools define this masculinity in similar terms, fundamental

differences between Black and White masculinities do in fact emerge. Although definitions of masculinity offered by interviewees suggest similarities, further discussion reveals that these very definitions take on different meanings in different contexts.

6.3. Commonalities and contrasts

6.3.1. Displaced boys

Interviewees at both the historically White single-sex boys' schools and the Black township schools described their concerns regarding the current status of their learners within a changing South African society in almost identical language, referring to the perception that their boys (in the first case White, privileged, and elite, in the second Black and disadvantaged) are being displaced and face an uncertain future in the new South Africa.

Interviewees at historically White single-sex boys' schools, historically White co-educational schools and Black township schools expressed almost identical concerns regarding the future of their boys in contemporary South Africa, using similar language to describe these concerns: "What's happening with young men who are saying to themselves, Well, who am I? What am I?" (SS2-iii); "the boys seem to be lost somehow"(CB1-i).

Interviewees point out that socio-economic and political change has impacted on the lives of boys, their concepts of themselves as men and their perceptions of their place in the future. The space traditionally occupied by White middle-class males is perceived by interviewees at historically White schools, both single-sex and co-educational, to be under threat. In these schools White boys, during the apartheid years, assumed a privileged position in South African society. Constitutional changes have cleared the way, in principle at least, for formerly marginalised race and gender groups to share this privileged position. White males are perceived to have lost their previously privileged position in relation to Blacks and women, and interviewees report that it is increasingly difficult to engender motivation in the boys in their schools in the face of this change of status. Societal pressures such as unemployment, crime, violence and affirmative action are also perceived to impact on boys' perceptions of their position in society. This suggests that despite assertions of male dominance and control, boys are feeling displaced and uncertain as to their role and place in a changing society:

You as a White boy are last in the queue, so they say, Well, why bother to work, we're at the end of the line you know, what is the motivation because I won't get into my university course because I'll be picked last and having got a good university degree, the girls and the Blacks will get a job before me (SS2-i).

We have got this kind of swing now where a lot of girls are becoming dominant ones and telling boys what to do and I think a lot of boys kind of feel they are useless and they are giving up and sort of feeling I don't know if I should go and study, the girls are taking a lot of that lead whereas in the past the boys were (CW2-ii).

Interviewees at the Black township schools expressed almost identical concerns regarding their boys. The changing status of women, poverty and the economic climate are reported to have had profound effects on the situation of Black men and boys who emerge as feeling displaced and uncertain as to their role and status. These phenomena are reported to have impacted particularly on the boys (i.e. rather than the girls) in these schools. However, Black interviewees do not appear to share the perceptions of White interviewees that the privileged place historically occupied by White men in this country is under threat from Black men and women:

They don't do well at the moment I mean especially my kids they don't do well and when you tell them that they should study, they ask questions such as what's the use of going on and studying when at the end of the day you don't have somewhere or anywhere to go, so its very hard to motivate them even to come to school (CB1-i).

The emphasis in this set of interviews is on poverty and a pervasive hopelessness with regard to the future. Boys are perceived to be displaced, lost and facing a future which offers them few options: "It's really hard because even if you motivate you know what are you motivating for at the end if you as a teacher you have lost hope?" (CB1-i); "... the boys seem to be lost somehow" (CB1-i); "... what's the use of going on and studying when at the end of the day you don't have somewhere or anywhere to go"(CB1-ii). While it may be argued that this sense of hopelessness regarding the future pertains to girls as much as it does to boys, interviewees in these schools emphasised that boys seemed to experience vulnerability in the face of an uncertain future and possible unemployment more keenly than the girls. As

Campbell (1992, p. 623) observes, “Young women still have the socially acceptable roles of mother, housekeeper and child minder on which to fall back when their expectations crumble”.

While interviewees at both historically Black and historically White single-sex schools cite the current economic climate, the changing status of women and high crime rates as the basis for the feelings of displacement and demotivation they observe in the boys at their schools, it clearly emerges that boys attending these different schools live in very different worlds, where these phenomena take on very different meanings.

This feeling of displacement common to boys at all sites is described as having very different outcomes in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools and the historically Black township schools. Interviewees in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools observe the emergence of a “playboy” mentality, described as a possible response both to feelings of displacement and perceptions of high levels of crime, violence and unemployment in this country:

I think there’s concern about the crime and the violence and a youngster saying maybe very subconsciously... Well, I might as well enjoy life because it looks like it’s a random thing - I could be dead by the time I’m thirty (SS2- i);

“The thing all of them seem to want to do is play. There’s a mentality that pleasure seeking and fun and recreation and relaxation...those are the things which we should all be working towards” (SS2-ii).

In contrast, interviewees in the Black township schools, describing a similar context of the changing status of women, high rates of crime, violence, and unemployment, suggest that hopelessness regarding their future provokes the boys themselves to turn to crime, violence and sexual harassment of girls.

6.3.2. Real men

While the invitation to define a “real man” evoked a wide range of responses, some common themes emerged across all interviews and sites. A “real man” was identified as one who is

independent, able to provide for a family, successful in all spheres of his life, particularly in his chosen career, responsible and a leader:

Somebody who could fulfil a meaningful role in society or various roles that he would be expected to play in society as an adult, as an employer, as an employee, as a father, as a husband - all those are different roles and obviously if you looked at the idealistic definition one would hope that the person was able to fulfil the best in all those sorts of areas (SS4-i).

Descriptions of a “real man” at every site implied a similar presumption of heterosexuality. Even the interviewee who identified himself as gay, while confessing “I still find it very difficult to actually define what a man is because it’s so blurred for me”, suggests that “Society thinks a man should be a provider for his family and be tough ... and have a wife and kids ” (CW2-i).

Racial and cultural differences in concepts of a real man do, however, emerge. Interviewees in the historically White schools incorporated notions of sensitivity and sexual equality into their definitions of a “real man”, adding that a real man is sensitive to and able to relate to women, able to admit his mistakes and acknowledges “... it is not only a man’s world” (SS1-i); “... someone who accepts his responsibilities, I suppose, and works hard and is honest and reliable and somebody who doesn’t think himself superior to women at all” (CW2-ii).

Responses in this area clearly reflected the multiple voices with which individual men speak. It was suggested by interviewees in the historically White schools that society defines manhood in terms of a traditional stereotype, described as “... the macho man, the boy who doesn’t find it difficult to have a girlfriend, to go out and find a job and have a wife and kids” (CW2- i). Interviewees do not necessarily place themselves within this stereotype. However, it was observed that societal expectations are very powerful and that these seem to be expressed in terms of stereotypical gender roles. Men and women in these schools are expected to fulfil very specific gendered functions and it is suggested that there is little recognition of individual capacities or differences. In school, one is expected to fulfil traditional sex roles.

Interviewees at the Black township schools describe a “real man” as a breadwinner, leader and protector of his family, “... in the traditional sense the man is a provider, a bread winner, a leader, a head of an institution, a head of the family who must provide and look after ladies” (CB3-i). However, notions of strength and sexual assertiveness are incorporated and emphasised. It was assumed that men play the active and controlling role in sexual relationships within what one interviewee termed “... the entrenched culture of men dominating” (CB3-i). It was asserted that “... when it comes to such things, women are passive”(CB3-i). In addition, the cultural norm of men dominating women was asserted: “Men wouldn’t like to engage themselves in safe sex because they don’t want to seem to be submissive...traditionally I’ll say that you know I’m a man, if I want it I want it” (CB1-ii). In addition, risk taking is valued by these interviewees: “... to be a real man is to be a person who is not afraid to take risks” (CB1-ii).

While interviewees at historically White schools emphasise that a real man feels free to cry and express emotions, this does not emerge as an issue of concern with interviewees at the Black township schools, where it is rather asserted “ A man must be strong and brave, must not cry and must protect people” (CB3-i).

What emerges appears to be a core common notion of a real man as heterosexual, independent, a provider, responsible and a leader. However, as has been observed, individual interviewees speak with multiple voices and even these core notions emerge as unfixed and uncertain. It needs to be observed, too, that these core notions are those that are “socially desirable” and might, therefore, reflect the “socially desirable” voice of interviewees. Thus the notion of what makes a “real man” is a multi-layered one and eludes a core definition.

6.3.3. Definitions of masculinity

Masculinity defined in terms of responsibility emerged across all sites in this study. In addition, qualities such as assertiveness, the ability to take control, independence, determination, self-respect and respect for others, gentleness and protectiveness were stressed by interviewees at all types of school.

Masculinity defined in terms of dominance and superiority over women emerged as a recurring theme in interviews. However, this assumption of superiority appears to be threatened by female power or success and males are perceived to be extremely vulnerable to

humiliation by females. This strongly reinforces the notion that boys are feeling displaced in a changing society, where their assumptions of dominance and superiority are challenged by the changing status of women.

We have got this kind of swing now where a lot of girls are becoming dominant ones and telling boys what to do and I think a lot of boys kind of feel they are useless and they are giving up and sort of feeling I don't know if I should go and study, the girls are taking a lot of that lead whereas in the past the boys were (CW2-ii).

Two apparently different masculinities – the responsible adult man and the reckless, risk-taking adolescent male – emerge in interviews across sites. Interviewees perceive the school as playing a major role in controlling socially unacceptable aspects of adolescent masculinity and fostering a responsible adult masculinity. However, conflict and ambivalence emerge here as several adult interviewees mention risk-taking as evidence of masculinity. It could be argued that the those aspects of adolescent masculinity identified by interviewees as socially unacceptable and requiring containing and controlling in fact reflect essentialist notions of what masculinity is actually about.

An adolescent belief in male superiority and dominance was emphasised in all interviews, while adult masculinities were described primarily in terms of responsibility. However, while interviewees stated that adolescent beliefs in male dominance should be challenged, interviewees in every site themselves define masculinity in terms of “taking charge”. This implies an unquestioned and perhaps unconscious assumption of dominance and superiority in interviewees themselves, illustrating the multiple voices with which participants in this study speak.

Adolescent notions of masculinity were described by interviewees at all sites as centring on notions of risk taking, heterosexual success, rule-breaking, physical strength and “macho” behaviours: “... you're not man enough if you're not smoking, you're not man enough if you don't drink, you're not man enough if you're not having five women” (CB3-i). Racial differences in responses do, however, emerge. Risk taking in the historically White schools appears to centre on alcohol abuse, fast driving, heterosexual success and rule breaking. In the Black township schools risk taking appears to be expressed in similar behaviours, but heterosexual success, criminal activity and violence were particularly stressed. Interviewees

at these schools emphasised the role played by violence and aggression in adolescent masculinities in their schools.

Masculinity perceived as power and control is also evident in all interviews. In the Black township school a constant struggle for power is described in the interviews. This struggle is seen to take place between boys, between boys and girls, and between boys and teachers. For example, teachers report that they are targeted by gangs in the community, who particularly target the stricter teachers:

They had a tendency of targeting some teachers, certain teachers, especially the teachers who are kind of strict the teachers who are very straightforward and things like that because you know they were like interfering with their freedom they were interfering with their way of manoeuvring in the school because they want to own the school and actually make sure that you know the teachers are reduced to nothing (CB1-ii).

Masculinity defined in terms of success emerges at all sites, but again racial differences in the notion of success are evident. Interviewees define masculinity in terms of the ability to improve and advance through modelling themselves on successful others. Interviewees at the Black township schools in particular emphasised that young boys are advised to turn to older, successful men in order to learn about manliness, and advised to adopt these people as role models and mentors. However, it was observed that it is the lawless, the gangsters and the warlords in the townships who are looked up to and admired by the young men: "... and this thing of looking up, of idolising criminals, you know, idolising warlords you know, people who kill people, who have guns. People who are courageous in terms of killing people" (CB1-ii). Interviewees felt that they faced a difficult, if not hopeless task, in encouraging a responsible adult masculinity when the obviously successful men who are role models in these particular communities are those involved in crime and violence.

There is thus a hierarchical quality to masculinity – becoming a man involves identifying with prominent males and being guided by those perceived to be in authority. This notion of hierarchy is also evident in the historically White single-sex boys' schools, where hierarchies emerge as age linked, with prefects and members of the first rugby team perceived to be at the top and the form one chess player at the bottom: "I mean if you're in the first team rugby

then you're like worshipped" (SS4-iii). At some of these schools hierarchies are perceived as occurring naturally in male society and therefore as a phenomenon to be nurtured and exploited, while at others the emphasis was on discouraging hierarchical behaviour, which was seen as inherent to masculinity but potentially dangerous and outdated. In essence, therefore, interviewees across sites express essentialist views regarding hierarchical behaviour in boys.

The notion of masculinity defined in terms of heterosexual success emerged across sites. In the Black township school interviews in particular, masculinity defined in terms of sexuality is emphasised. Interviewees at historically White co-educational schools who identified Black learners as sexually promiscuous support this notion: "... our Zulu children in particular – they are pretty promiscuous" (CW1-i). While care must be taken to consider the possibility that White interviewees are expressing stereotypical notions regarding Black sexuality, it is evident from the interviews that Black interviewees themselves concur with this assessment.

Evident in interviews in the historically White schools is an avowed rejection of what is perceived as "stereotypical masculinity". The "stereotype" is seen as "... beer-guzzling sport-watching I'm the boss male type ... I'll be in charge of the manly situation, I will be the breadwinner, I will be publicly insensitive"(SS1-ii). Interviewees support the notion that the traditional macho stereotype is restricting and damaging, seen in expressions such as "Boys want to be able to be emotional, they want to be able to show a gentler side"(SS1-ii); "We try and work on a more personal basis and a more sort of in touch with emotions type of thing"(SS1-i). This suggests that boys and men in these institutions are attempting to redefine themselves in response to the "new man" discourse with its emphasis on sensitivity and caring. However, once again there is evidence of the multiple voices with which interviewees speak and the "macho man " discourse remains evident, expressed in comments such as "This is still very much a school where toughness and masculinity play a role" (SS1-i).

6.3.4. Male dominance

Interviewees at every site suggest that boys naturally assume that they are dominant and superior and that "It is a man's world" (SS1- i). It is noteworthy that interviewees spoke of male dominance without explicitly identifying the object/s of this dominance, which emerge as both women and other men. A definition of the White stereotype male as "I'm the boss

male type. I'll be in charge of the manly situation. I will be the breadwinner. I will be publicly insensitive" (SS1-ii) highlights the notion of dominance as a core element of traditional masculinity. Interviewees at the historically White single-sex boys' schools added that boys need to be encouraged to express emotion and show compassion and empathy and "... all those kinds of things rather than just dominating" (B1-i) This implies that "just dominating" is a natural state in boys. Interviewees thus express essentialist views regarding male dominance.

While interviewees at every site stressed that masculinity was not just about "dominance" and emphasised that this assumption needs to be challenged, this emerges as an area beset with contradiction and confusion. Interviewees at the Black township schools suggest that a belief in male dominance is traditional and acceptable in Zulu culture and that this results in conflict with constitutional guarantees of sexual equality: "We as Zulus have got some degree of arrogance, we like to show people that we are men" (CB1-ii). While these interviewees describe conflict between traditional, Zulu beliefs regarding masculinity and more Western notions of sexual equality, more traditional beliefs emerge as dominant. Interviewees appear to be struggling to incorporate notions of masculinity and the status of women foreign to deeply held traditional beliefs:

In as much as I am quite well dressed, I'm conversant with the Western kind of approaches and all the liberal approaches in terms of the constitution and so on, but there are things that I am sure I'll never divorce myself from ,you know, regarding traditions and so on (CB1-ii).

I'm a man, this is how I live, this is what men do, you know; at the same time there is the constitution which says, you know, everybody has rights, the woman has rights, maybe for instance if a woman, my wife, is not in the mood of having sex during that day, I must respect that right because if I do not, they may put me in jail, you know, rape and things like that while, you know, traditionally I'll say that, you know, I'm a man, if I want it I want it (CB1-ii).

I will have to be a kind of flexible traditional Zulu man, a modern-day Zulu man, you know, who still has those cultural things we can have and of course accommodating what our constitution says (CB1-ii).

Interviewees themselves implied assumptions of male dominance and superiority over women: “My wife respects me as the head of the family and she actually enjoys that” (CB2-i); “... they vent their anger against the weaklings of the township, that is the girls, the women” (CB1-ii). At the same time, interviewees stressed that true masculinity involves taking cognisance of femininity, recognising that women too have a place in the world, and learning to respect women. This set of interviews is characterised by conflict between what is seen as essentially masculine and the socio-political demands of a society in transition.

The assumption that boys do not naturally respect women and need to be taught this was expressed in interviews across sites. Interviewees appear to stress the notion of gender equality and respect for women in response both to the rise of feminism and to legislation which guarantees gender equality in this country. Men are struggling to adapt to the changing status of women and to redefine themselves in ways that maintain their sense of themselves as men while taking cognisance of women’s rights. As one interviewee observed: “How these roles have been perceived in the past has actually become much less distinctive...it implies a changing perception of one’s masculinity or femininity” (SS2-ii).

Interviewees in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools stress that boys are naturally hierarchical, that a natural pecking order, “... what I call a natural hierarchy” (SS2-i) based on power and control, is established. This suggests that the object of male dominance is not only women, but also other men: “Boys very quickly say I’m the big guy you better respect me and that’s not what life’s about”(SS2-i). It emerges that interviewees believe these hierarchies have to be carefully monitored in order to preclude the “... potential for abuse” (SS2-i), suggesting the inherently dangerous nature of masculinity. A “... natural pecking order” (SS2-i) is accepted as positive and inevitable in all but one of these schools, where the interviewee asserted that this type of hierarchical structure “... has no relevance to the outside world”(SS3-i).

6.3.5. Boys will be boys

“Somebody tried to pull somebody else out of their chair because that’s his chair - this kind of nonsense - but I think that’s quite natural” (SS2-iii). Generally, the belief that “boys will be boys” was revealed in interviews, and boys are expected to cause more trouble than girls. Essentialist notions of masculinity, strongly communicated in these interviews, include a

belief that boys are naturally hierarchical and aggressive, are unable at a certain point to control their sex drive – “... they’re hot flesh” (CB1-ii) – are less responsible and more energetic than girls and naturally assume that “It’s a man’s world”. It is repeatedly suggested that qualities like being gentle and gentlemanly do not come naturally to boys and that these qualities need to be taught.

Again, contradictions emerge. Interviewees at all sites define masculinity in terms of responsibility, but at the same time observe that boys are naturally less responsible than girls:

Girls are academically and personally more disciplined. Boys in adolescence don’t work as hard as girls do, because girls give more attention to detail and are more reliable, so boys are actually overshadowed, so they need the space to mess things up together (SS3-i).

Adult masculinity, defined in terms of responsibility, is therefore something that can be attained only through a process of taming and control, one of the roles the school is perceived to play.

However, ambivalences and contradictions emerge. In the historically White single-sex boys’ schools the observation is made that boys are changing and “softening up”. Boys are reportedly coming into school “... with less discipline ... they expect to be pampered and looked after” (SS2-iii). Not all interviewees approve of this and the suggestion emerges that this softening is in fact a deterioration of the real standards of masculinity, where boys should be tough, disciplined, hardworking and unpampered. One interviewee refers nostalgically to earlier times when boys could be more toughly disciplined and pulled into line: “Twenty-five years ago he would’ve been hit with an Afrikaans dictionary and knocked out” (SS2-iii). Observations such as these, suggesting that boys are becoming gentler and more feminised were made in the historically White co-educational schools, but here the change was perceived as a positive one, allowing boys greater freedom to explore alternative, less restricted ways of being male. Observations of this nature were not made in the historically Black township schools.

6.3.6. Sexuality

Masculinity is defined in terms of sexuality across sites, but in the historically White schools this aspect of masculinity is perceived as potentially dangerous and attempts are made to control it. In the Black township schools masculinity defined in terms of sexuality and heterosexual success appears to be accepted as the norm. Attempts are made to control expression of this only where it comes into conflict with the constitution and the law, for example, in sexual harassment of girls.

Interviewees from all sites acknowledged that heterosexual success is perceived as an important aspect of masculinity by young men in their schools: “For boys sex is still a huge conquest thing” (CW3-i). In addition, interviewees at all sites assumed that sexual activity was heterosexual and that male sexuality is inherently uncontrollable (sex-drive discourse):

For a young man, when together with a woman, you see they get into situations where they lose their rational sense and now it’s about emotions and once like that even if some one can throw stones, it won’t stop them (CB3 -i).

You know, if you look at a grade eight he starts having hormones running around, he says Wow! We do it right, sees a bloody condom, you know, he’s going to jump into bed (CW1-i).

It appears that the belief that boys are sexually driven transcends racial and cultural boundaries. However, attitudes towards this assumption contrast strongly between sites. Interviewees in the historically White schools appear to regard this aspect of male sexuality as potentially dangerous and focus on controlling and curtailing it, while those in the Black township schools appear to accept this sex drive as inherently masculine behaviour and evidence of masculine strength and success.

At the historically White single-sex boys’ schools interviewees tended to assume that their boys were not particularly sexually active, and that “other “ population groups were possibly a lot more sexually active: “There were only twelve boys in a hundred standard nines who have actually had sexual intercourse. Now that’s probably quite a low percentage in comparison to some population groups” (SS2-i). It is interesting and important to note that

interviewees at this group of schools consistently assumed throughout interviews that all the boys in their schools are White, despite the fact that the learner population of these schools is made up of different racial groups.

In strong contrast, interviewees at the Black township schools expressed acceptance of heterosexual activity amongst their learners: “Most of them are involved...get involved with each other sexually” (CB1-ii); “... you need to understand that you’re dealing with teenagers, they’ve reached a point where they really feel that they should go for sex and its very big – you see they’re hot flesh” (CB3- i); “... they supply them with condoms, so we’ve got condoms here in the school” (CB2-i).

Interviewees at all the historically White schools emphasised the role of the school in promoting sexual abstinence in their learners: “The development of...you know...sexuality...I think it’s quite base and I think you’ve got to educate against it” (SS3-i). This did not emerge as a concern in the Black township schools, where sexuality was perceived rather as an important aspect of masculinity across all age groups. Concern at these schools focused on the reported sexual harassment of girls rather than on sexual activity per se: “Many times we find that they force girls to have sex with them”(CB3-i).

Ironically, despite attempts at controlling sexual activity, interviewees at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools described initiation rites of a highly sexualised nature: “He had horror stories about the boarding establishment because the culture there was, when you first arrived, part of your initiation was to masturbate into a cup collectively” (SS3-i). Observations such as these raised the issue of homosexuality: “I think sexuality has got to be very strongly defined and that’s the head’s approach; that is why he has got a very strong vision of what a man is and it’s not homosexual” (SS3-i). What emerges here is that the sexuality of boys in the historically White single-sex schools and those in the Black township schools is perhaps expressed in different forms, rather than any one group emerging as more sexually active than any other.

6.3.7. Taming and controlling.

One of the roles the school is perceived to play is in fostering a responsible adult masculinity and notions of the “real man” described above. The school is perceived as performing the task of management and control of aspects of masculinity that are seen as occurring naturally

but perceived as socially undesirable, caught in a contest between the inherent nature of boys and the imposed ideals of society. Traits that are perceived to be inherent and the focus of adult concern include aggression, uncontrollable sex drive, abuse of positions of power in hierarchies, bullying and assumptions of superiority over women: “If you don’t manage your boarding establishment, you will get you know the strong sort of very destructive culture developing very quickly, so we work very hard at that (SS3-i).

Interviewees at historically White single-sex boys’ schools point out: “When you put a lot of boys together, you get funny things happening” (SS1 –i). They stress that initiation rites and bullying are not tolerated and need to be firmly controlled: “ You’ve got to manage your boarding establishment very very very carefully because you know little rituals come in” (SS3-i). Referring to bullying, it is observed that “We’ve got to do our best to squash it out”, using the language of battle, of control (SS1-ii).

The role of girls and/or women in taming and controlling boys was emphasised at all the historically White schools. At the historically White co-educational schools, girls are perceived to perform part of the socialising, controlling role: “Girls just kind of taught them automatically, they (the boys) don’t swear, they are more polite and it is not so much what they (the boys) are taught, its more of what they have learned from mixing, which is very interesting” (CW2-ii). Interviewees at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools observe that boys in these schools “... lack some of the finer social skills” (SS1-ii), a phenomenon accounted for by the absence of girls in the environment. Even in terms of staff, the role of socialising and imparting social skills is handed to women: “We have a lady in here to talk to boys specifically about the ... role of young male adults vis-à-vis, you know, female...it focuses on relationship issues and so on, and appropriate conduct in a whole range of settings ... at formal dinners, at a ball...” (SS4-i). This perceived socialising effect of girls on boys was not observed in the interviews in historically Black township schools, where a perception emerged that boys were struggling to accommodate constitutional changes regarding the status of women and the impact of these changes on their sense of masculine entitlement.

In the historically White single-sex boys’ schools sport is perceived to play a role in the taming and controlling of undesirable and potentially dangerous aspects of naturally occurring masculinity:

You know boys definitely have more energy than girls physically and therefore they must be kept busy, they must be tired at the end of the day, that's not only because we want to try and reduce our disciplinary issues - boys get up to nonsense when they sit around (SS3-i).

The issue of taming and controlling boys did not emerge in the interviews in historically Black township schools. Rather, with the banning of corporal punishment, interviewees expressed a sense of disempowerment with regard to the disciplining of boys in their schools and communicated a sense of boys in their schools being out of their control. Confronted with phenomena such as boys' sexual harassment of the girls, interviewees acknowledged that they used threats to the effect that such behaviour contradicted the new constitution and was essentially illegal as a means of controlling behaviour which they perceived to be naturally masculine.

6.3.8. Masculinity in opposition to "other".

Masculinity in all sites is defined in relation to and in opposition to femininity. For example, it was pointed out that femininity is identified with desirable qualities like gentleness and is "... most unlike a man is perceived to be" (SS2-ii). It was asserted:

In an all-boys' school it's very hard to define your masculinity if you want to call it that, if you don't have women with whom to interrelate because in many ways your masculinity is probably determined by the feminine entity... (SS2-ii).

In addition, masculinity defined in opposition to homosexuality emerges in the historically White schools, particularly in the historically White single-sex boys' schools. Despite the absence of any question on the interview schedule focusing on homosexuality, homosexuality and homophobia emerged as issues of concern specifically in the historically White single-sex boys' schools. Homosexuality is defined as "other", as something outside the ambit of masculinity and as something offensive to masculinity: "... if you're like that, you certainly aren't a man" (SS2-i). A number of interviewees appeared to have difficulty even using the word "homosexual": "I would think this is a highly intolerant place of that kind of ... I would call it ... difference" (SS2-i); "... all sorts of statistics about how many people are supposed to be...you know...I suppose the word is homosexual" (SS2-i);

Yes, you know we must have “them” in the school, but if anybody in this school were to stand up while here and become a self-professed gay, I think the masculinity in everybody else would arise very quickly and he would be killed overnight, wouldn’t he? There’s absolutely no tolerance for that (SS2-i).

It was pointed out that staff attitudes might serve to fuel this homophobia:

In a classroom situation, for example, the moment anything bordering on homosexual attitudes gets mentioned, you get a huge reaction, but I think that is fuelled by some of the staff, so you know a boy will be doing something and a staff member will say “don’t be a moffie” or whatever” (SS2-ii).

It was also suggested that homophobia was based on fear: “It’s an explosive issue, but there’s more a fear...I think it’s a fear that actually prompts it” (SS2-ii).

However, attitudes towards homosexuality at one particular school in the historically White single-sex group emerge as both more complex and contradictory. At this school, a group of senior boys is reported to openly flaunt “... gayness and/or effeminate behaviour” (SS3- i):

What has happened this year is that a number of boys have been effeminate if I can put that word in and/or gay... you get a very clear message about men and masculinity and gays and what men should be and then you’ll get despite that, possibly because of that, you get boys exhibiting gay but being quite open about their gayness (SS3- i).

This is observed to have occurred in spite of the prevailing ethos at the school being described as “... quite homophobic” (SS3-i). However this interviewee also observes that the boys themselves do not always buy into the macho rugby school image favoured by some senior staff members at the school: “We’ve got very little homophobia amongst the boys... you’ll have an apparent message of homophobia and rugby is important coming through, but the boys don’t always buy into it” (SS3- i).

This situation raises a number of interesting issues. Firstly, there is an assumption that homosexuality is by its very nature associated with effeminacy – an assumption based on

stereotypical notions with no basis in reality. Secondly, it is possible that these senior boys are positioning themselves in protest against the concept of masculinity espoused by the headmaster - "... a very strong vision of what a man is and it's not a homosexual" (SS3- i). This supports the notion that protest masculinity is formulated and defined against hegemonic masculinity and in a sense serves to confirm the pervasive power of the hegemonic notion of masculinity operating within a particular setting or culture. Thirdly, it is not clear why boys at this particular historically White single-sex boys' school should demonstrate attitudes towards homosexuality so different from boys in other similar schools.

Having examined the conflicts around homosexuality and homophobia, this interviewee finally emphasises that "... it's a robust boys' school" (SS3- I), suggesting both his own ambivalence around the issue of homosexuality and a need to affirm the notion of a tough, heterosexual masculinity. These statements both reflect the multiple voices with which individual interviewees speak and highlight the dominance of one hegemonic voice.

Initiation rites of a sexualised nature are described in the historically White single-sex boys' schools and there is a suggestion that these need to be controlled for a number of reasons, including the fear that these rites evoke or express homosexual impulses. Descriptions of these rites (for example, masturbating collectively into a cup, group masturbation using a sporting mascot) highlight the fact that these rites and rituals are indeed explicitly homosexual, and that these rituals persist despite strong preventative messages.

Interviews at all historically White schools identified the arts and cultural activities as feminine and they are perceived to encourage a desired "softening" of macho masculinity: "We now have speech and drama, for example – it's a compulsory course for every standard six boy...they can explore their feelings and emotions" (SS4-i). However, there is simultaneously a perception that over-identification with the arts could in some way endanger masculinity, with the result that interviewees express ambivalence in this area. On the one hand, they suggest that boys should learn to be softer, to express their emotions, to be more caring, qualities identified in the interviews as feminine. However, these qualities are also perceived to be a danger to tough, heterosexual masculinity and carry with them the underlying threat of homosexuality. Boys in these schools, it seems, face the task of maintaining a tough, macho masculinity, unquestionably heterosexual, while simultaneously incorporating some of the gentler qualities traditionally associated with women. This

highlights the position of both boys and male teachers in these schools being caught between “macho” and “new man” discourses of masculinity.

While homosexuality did not emerge as a major theme in interviews in historically White co-educational schools, there was some reference to it. It is suggested that attitudes towards homosexuality are changing and becoming more tolerant at these schools. However, there remains an assumption that certain activities are gendered, and that it is noteworthy that boys may now take up traditionally “female” activities with less risk of being labelled. For example, it was pointed out that boys can now safely do catering or work in the library without being labelled “Oh, he’s doing catering, he’s a moffie” (CW2-ii).

An interviewee who identified himself as gay reflects on his own experience: “I taught at a high school about four years ago and it was really unpleasant at times but I think it has changed so much and there are so many more openly gay staff members” (CW2-i). He adds, “I have a couple of classes where there are thugs, you know, really rough boys, and yet they have never ever made a comment” (CW2-i). This interviewee emphasises that attitudes towards homosexuality are entrenched by school management, and that his present school has “... a very tolerant management team, which goes right down to the bottom, even those thugs are not a problem” (CW2-i).

In somewhat striking contrast, interviewees in the Black township schools did not refer to homosexuality at all, a finding which will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

6.3.9. Boys in relation to girls

Masculinity appears to be defined in opposition and contrast to “other”, where “other” may be identified as either feminine or homosexual. While interviewees in the co-educational schools, Black and White, stressed the effects girls are perceived to have on boys, both positive and negative, the responses of interviewees at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools suggested that boys in these schools are isolated and that “... females become foreign beings” (SS1-ii), consistent with the overall theme of “otherness”.

All interviewees described differences between boys and girls in terms that suggest these differences are inherent rather than socially determined: “The way a boy works is different to

the way a girl works” (B3-i). Teachers agreed that boys are “... more playful” and “... always want attention”, that they are naturally less conscientious and more energetic than girls: “Boys definitely have more energy than girls physically” (SS3-i). Girls are perceived as inherently more docile, more polite, more passive, more co-operative, and academically more successful. It is of interest that interviewees in every setting consistently referred to the effects girls have on boys, positive and negative, real and potential, with scant reference to the reverse effects. Girls in various contexts are described as civilising, educating, enlightening, challenging embarrassing or humiliating boys. The effect that these boys may have on girls is, however, not mentioned.

Interviewees at the historically White schools, both single-sex and co-educational, stressed the civilising and socialising influence that girls are perceived to exercise on boys. It was pointed out that boys “... tend to lack some of the finer social skills” (SS1-ii) and these skills were associated with girls. At the historically White co-educational schools it was observed that girls naturally assume the role of socialising the boys: “... girls just kind of taught them automatically...they don’t swear, they are more polite and it is not so much what they are taught, its more of what they have learned from mixing, which is very interesting” (CW2- ii). Another interviewee suggests that the “... masculine approach to life” displayed by some boys is changing and this he ascribes to “... a co-ed change where the girls have influenced them” (CW1-i).

Common to all interviewees was the view that boys naturally assume dominance and superiority over women: “They have this White male attitude, that we are superior” (CW2-ii); “It is difficult for the boys to look at girls as equals” (CB3- i). It was suggested by interviewees at all sites that single-sex schools encourage this attitude. Interviewees at historically White co-educational schools stressed that co-education militates against these assumptions of superiority: “That is why I like co-education so much, because it definitely does make the boys come to realise that the girls are good in class, they’re good on the hockey field, they’re good in choir” (CW1-i). However, it was also suggested that in co-educational schools boys might “... feel restricted by the presence of girls” and that “... boys in their own company are more confident to express themselves” (SS1-ii). This leads to the observation, made across sites, that boys are very sensitive to humiliation by girls and that assumptions of superiority depended on girls maintaining their own position of subservience: “For the boys it’s a humbling experience to accept that women are good” (CW1-i).

This aspect was particularly emphasised in the Black township schools where humiliation by or in the presence of women is mentioned by interviewees as something very difficult for boys to deal with: “How can you, being a man, allow yourself to be humiliated by a girl, what kind of man are you?” (CB3-i). It was observed that some boys in the Black township schools are reluctant to participate in class for fear of being laughed at and humiliated by the girls. Despite their claims of natural superiority, boys emerge in fact as extremely vulnerable to humiliation by the girls. This suggests that assumptions of male superiority are in fact exceedingly precarious and are dependent on reciprocal co-operation by girls.

Interviewees at all types of school reflected on the changing status of women and the effect this has had on boys in their schools:

We have got this kind of swing now where a lot of girls are becoming the dominant ones and telling boys what to do and I think a lot of boys kind of feel they are useless and they are giving up and sort of feeling I don't know if I should go and study, the girls are taking a lot of that lead whereas in the past the boys were (CW2-ii).

Boys' assumptions of dominance or superiority appear to be contingent on behaviour displayed by girls. Interviewees at both the historically White co-educational schools and the Black township schools observed that girls are becoming more assertive and that boys are being forced to change their own behaviour in response. The failure of girls to play their reciprocal role and accommodate boys' assumptions of superiority and dominance would seem to heighten the boys' sense of displacement and confusion regarding their own role and status as men. Failure by the girls to assume a subservient role may lead to intensified efforts by the boys to reclaim their privileged status: “I think sometimes when there is chauvinism it often stems from a feeling of being threatened. I think our boys do feel quite threatened - certainly the privilege they could have relied on doesn't really exist anymore” (SS2 -iii). While there was an acknowledgement that this made life difficult for the boys “It really has been quite threatening for a lot of boys, it takes quite a man's man to accept that” (CW2-ii), it was also suggested that the girls were beginning to contest chauvinistic behaviour: “... if any boys tend to be rather chauvinistic, the girls are the ones that will slap them into place” (CW2- ii).

Boys at the Black township schools are reportedly surprised and discomforted when girls stand up for themselves: “They do stand up for themselves as well to the surprise of the boys at some stage” (CB1-ii). At times women’s more assertive behaviour is seen to provoke aggression in the boys in these schools, “... so you would find that they try and throw stones at them and intimidate them”(CB3- i). It is, however, of interest that despite these observations of girls’ increasingly assertive behaviour, sexual harassment of girls remains a constant problem at these schools. Masculinity defined in terms of sexuality emerges as a strong feature at these schools and it is perhaps in this area that boys are still able to assert their dominance and control over women.

6.3.10. Sexual harassment

Interviewees at the Black township schools report sexual harassment of the girls, both verbal and physical: “Boys harass girls physically and verbally, just touch them anyhow” (CB1-iii); “They just look down upon the girls, they keep pushing them around” (CB1-i).

Where these behaviours are reported at the historically White co-educational schools, it is in relation to the Black and Indian learners. As previously emphasised, care needs to be taken in assessing the meaning of these observations made by White interviewees. However, interviewees at the Black township schools reported that sexual harassment was common and attributed this to young men proving themselves in front of their peers. These interviewees emphasised their attempts to control this type of behaviour, and these attempts appeared to focus on drawing the attention of groups of boys to the new constitution and the fact that sexual harassment is a crime. Boys were threatened that such behaviour could result in serious trouble, even imprisonment:

Even if their culture looks like the girls are inferior to the boys, we tell them no, the situation has changed, we have a constitution of the country ... and if you keep pushing the girls around and the girls happen to report you to the authorities you end up in trouble because sexual harassment is a very serious issue, you could even go to jail for that (CB1- i).

Interviewees at these schools did not, however, describe violence towards girls as inherently unacceptable behaviour, but rather as behaviour that might lead to negative consequences. It

was reported that girls at these schools believed that staff did little to support them against male harassment. It is possible that boys in these sites perceive these behaviours as a natural assertion of masculine dominance rather than as “harassment” of girls.

6.3.11. Perceptions of HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS education.

Interviewees across all sites acknowledge that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a serious problem facing this country and support the notion that HIV/AIDS education should be incorporated into the school curriculum. All observe that more could and should be done within their schools in terms of HIV/AIDS education.

However, despite this common starting point, attitudes towards HIV/AIDS vary strongly across sites. Interviewees in all the historically White schools express the belief that their learners regard HIV/AIDS as something that does not affect them: “I think the problem is that they think it will happen to someone else” (CW2-ii). There appears to be a perception amongst White teachers and pupils that AIDS is a Black disease:

I think it’s easy for us to sit here in a predominantly White educated society and say we’re quite good ... I think you need to go where ... in Black society ... because you hear the story about Black males refusing to wear condoms” (SS1-ii).

HIV/AIDS is thus perceived in the historically White schools as a disease of the “other” and thus not something that directly affects learners at these schools. This attitude is particularly apparent at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools, where it is assumed by learners that “... the statistics don’t apply to an institution like this ... they believe they are safe in the circles they mix in” (B2-i).

In contrast, interviewees at the Black township schools spoke of HIV/AIDS with an air of resignation and fatality. There appeared to be an acceptance that HIV/AIDS directly affected their community and their learners, but the overriding impression was a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness in the face of the epidemic. There was reportedly no time to include HIV/AIDS education in the curriculum and there was a perception that pupils had become tired of learning about the disease anyway. They also reported much denial in the community around HIV/AIDS, with interviewees suggesting that people suffering from

AIDS believed they had been bewitched. Interviewees reported that superstitions abound in the community, where many apparently believe that "... if you sleep with a virgin you get cured, if you sleep with an old lady you get cured" (CB3-i).

Interviewees at all sites observed that HIV/AIDS education at their schools focused on inviting outside experts into the school for this purpose. Interviewees at the historically White co-educational schools described more active efforts to incorporate HIV/AIDS education into the school curriculum than those at either the historically White single sex boys' or Black township schools. Interviewees at the Black township schools indicated that there were some efforts within the community, at church and youth groups, to educate girls and women on safe sexual practices, but pointed out that no similar facility was provided for boys and men. This would appear to reflect a general trend in HIV/AIDS education programmes, which appear to focus on women (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). Perhaps this reflects the notion that women are not subject to the uncontrollable sex drive attributed to men and are therefore assumed to be capable of assuming responsibility for safe sex. Ironically, within a socio-political context of male dominance, many women are unable to negotiate safe sexual practices with their partners (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). It was observed that boys in these schools become aggressive if there is an attempt to address them on HIV/AIDS issues: "they don't want to listen, they are rude, they become aggressive" (CB3-i). Learners are reportedly resistant to AIDS awareness campaigns and lectures: "... the children are beginning to say you have spoken too much about AIDS, don't tell us about that any more"(CB2-i).

Interviewees at all sites suggest that despite attempts at HIV/AIDS education, learners are in fact fairly ignorant:

It concerns me greatly because ... especially amongst Black children, Black boys especially ... their concern is almost non-existent, they're so ignorant about it, even today, one would be shocked to see it. I think the girls are much more informed, but the boys, because I think they're just brought up this way that women are there for them ... the boys are still so ignorant about AIDS and they believe it's their right, you know, to have sex without a condom (CW2-i).

Rather than simply highlighting ignorance regarding HIV/AIDS, this observation seems to support the notion that male sexual behaviour remains largely an uncontestable domain and is

contingent on a masculine sense of entitlement. In addition, this comment highlights the fact that girls have knowledge that in some situations and sites they are powerless to use.

Comments made by interviewees at historically White single-sex schools confirm that this ignorance transcends class and racial boundaries: “I think there is a presumption that boys from, you know, upper- and middle-class families will know about AIDS, but they don’t and they also don’t know as much as they pretend to know” (SS3-i).

What emerges strongly in all the historically White schools is an ambivalence regarding teaching safe sex. This ambivalence is rooted in fears of parental disapproval as well as fears that teaching safe sexual practices will release uncontrollable sexual activity among learners. There is thus an emphasis on abstinence even where there is awareness that learners are sexually active:

Abstain, abstain, abstain ... just don’t do it ... if you look at a grade eight he starts having hormones running around, he says WOW we do it right, sees a bloody condom, you know, he’s going to jump into bed (CW1).

This need to constrain was not observed in the Black township schools, some of which reported providing free condoms to their learners. In strong contrast to interviewees at the historically White schools, interviewees at these schools openly acknowledged the fact that learners were sexually active and focused on attempts to encourage safe sexual practices.

A belief in male sex-drive discourse was reflected in interviews across all sites, with interviewees expressing the belief that young men are unable, at a certain stage, to control sexual feelings. Failure to practice safe sex is frequently explained in terms of this uncontrollable sex drive:

That’s associated with desperation in terms of the sex drive ... didn’t have time to stop and take out a condom ... I don’t think that’s related to masculinity I think it’s related to sex drive (SS1-ii).

For young men, you see, they get into situations where they lose their rational senses and now it's about emotions and once like that, even if someone can throw stones, it won't stop them and that's what you are dealing with (CB3- i).

In addition, failure to indulge in safe sexual practices is attributed at the Black township schools to the belief that a “real man” does not use a condom and to the fact that boys are reluctant to have their sexual pleasure dampened. Statements such as the following were reportedly made by boys in class discussions: “... if you use a condom you do not enjoy sex as much”; “... if you use a condom then you are not a brave man”; “... you want me to eat a sweet that is covered?”; “... I don't want to eat an orange without being peeled”; “... you should be strong if you are a man”. Resistance to condom use is thus expressed in terms of male sexual pleasure and a perception that real men do not go for safe sex. It was also stressed that boys express a belief that safe sex is tied up with trust, and that if a girl suggests use of a condom, she is implying that she does not trust the boy. Interviewees report that adolescent perceptions of successful masculinity include being seen to be sexually successful with a number of partners. The notion that safe sexual practice includes fidelity to one partner was not mentioned by these interviewees.

Interviewees in both the Black township schools and the historically White co-educational schools pointed out that girls appear to be more informed and more responsible regarding HIV/AIDS issues. However, one interviewee at a Black township school suggested that women themselves reject safe sexual practices. This view was expressed in terms of women themselves wanting a “real man”, i.e. one who refuses to use a condom:

They also want man as man and possibly inside their minds don't want a man to condomise...she also wants a man without a condom. But now she cannot openly say that, so she'll rather say there was nothing I could do (CB3 -i).

While interviewees at the Black township schools stressed that they warn boys to “be cautious”, they themselves express the belief that men are reluctant and even unable to change sexual behaviour. This reluctance is explained in terms of cultural norms and the power relations between men and women, “... the entrenched culture of men dominating, playing an active role and women playing a passive role and the tendency that when it comes

to such things, women are passive” (CB3-i). Statements such as the following highlight the belief that, in terms of cultural norms, men have ownership and dominate sexually:

“If a girl would suggest the use of a condom and so on, the man would flatly refuse because, you know, should he agree it would be like, you know, he’s a softy-softy” (CB1-ii); “Men wouldn’t like to engage themselves in safe sex because they don’t want to seem to be submissive”(CB3-i); “Traditionally I’ll say that, you know, I’m a man, if I want it I want it” (CB3-i).

White interviewees at historically White schools expressed a similar sense of male entitlement: “I want to sleep with you, I am going to sleep with you. If you don’t sleep with me, I’m going to rape you. You know, it’s this whole power thing”(CW1-i). There was, however, a greater emphasis on countering these views, which are believed to emerge naturally as part of male adolescent sexuality. The role of teachers in schools is perceived to include attempts to counter and control such beliefs.

What emerges strongly from these interviews is that interviewees at the Black township schools acknowledge and accept HIV/AIDS as a problem which directly affects them, but a problem which they feel powerless to deal with. Interviewees at the historically White schools, on the other hand, appear to perceive HIV/AIDS as something “other” – a problem that does not directly affect them. There appears to be, in the historically White schools, an air of ambivalence and denial regarding the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the historically Black schools the emphasis is on teaching safe sexual practices, but there does not appear to be much conviction that this approach will in any way affect adolescent sexual practice. In the historically White schools the emphasis is on abstinence and on control of adolescent sexuality.

6.3.12. Violence

The notion that boys are essentially and inherently aggressive emerges in interviews across sites. It is simply the expression and degree of this aggression that differs from site to site.

“Growing up, being born in the township, violence becomes part and parcel of your life you live with that” (CB1-ii). The communities served by the Black township schools have a history of political violence during and after the apartheid era. Violence appears to have become accepted as an inevitable part of life. One male teacher, having described a fairly

harrowing situation at his school where a pupil was apprehended with a gun, stated that he was familiar with violence and “able to handle myself in that kind of situation” (CB1-i), a comment in itself perhaps indicative of a masculine pride in keeping one’s head in a threatening situation. It was stressed in this group of interviews that violent behaviour and the carrying of weapons is perceived as a way of gaining status within the peer group:

Some boys would come with guns, knives, they would threaten one another within the school premises, they would stab one another within the school premises and they become very abusive to the lady teachers within the premises (CB1-ii).

To be perceived as a man within this community one has to show oneself as powerful and aggressive – both by carrying weapons and by exerting control over the girls.

Interviewees ascribed the ongoing violence within the schools to the high rate of unemployment and hopelessness regarding the future. It was pointed out that gangsterism has replaced the politically inspired violence of the past and it is anger and frustration that leads young men into violence. They reportedly take out their frustration on “... the weaklings of the township, that is the girls, the women and so on” (CB1-ii). Within these schools violence is described as a uniquely male behaviour: “There has never been a girl involved in such violence,” (CB1-i) stated one interviewee, a claim supported by other interviewees.

Violence did not emerge as an area of concern in the historically White schools, where the only reference to violence was in relation to sport, particularly rugby. “Rugby obviously is the one that lends itself most to this type of situation, it’s very very severely dealt with because of its propensity to violence” (SS3-i). Within these historically White schools rugby was perceived as providing a safe outlet for what was described as “... a good friendly sort of controlled aggression” (CW3-i). What emerges strongly is the notion that interviewees across sites assume that boys are inherently aggressive.

6.3.13. Sport

Sport was spontaneously emphasised in both the historically White single-sex boys’ schools and the historically White co-educational schools as being of crucial importance in the education of boys: “What’s important for boys is the fact that you play sport competently and therefore you’ve got to have certain physical ability and a certain physical size” (SS3-i).

While sport may be an equally crucial element of Black masculinity, the history of schooling in this country has meant that the historically Black schools were disadvantaged in terms of sporting facilities and this remains a feature of the Black township schools in this study. At none of the Black township schools participating in this study was sport, or indeed any other extra-curricular activity, offered.

Frosh et al. (2002, p. 7) point out that “particular sports are conceptualised as key sites for the construction of masculinities” and these results reveal that in the historically White schools rugby may be identified as this sport. Interviewees in the historically White schools of all types spontaneously referred to rugby as the sport most associated with masculinity: “There are some male teachers who consider that having boys in the rugby team turns them into a man” (CW2-i). In addition, the status of the first team player in the school hierarchy is assured: “I mean if you’re in the first team rugby, then you’re like worshipped” (SS4-iii).

Frequent reference was made to “... the first team player singing in the choir” as evidence of the move away from a macho, sport-orientated position in the school. There appears to be an assumption that boys are “softened” by exposure to culture:

So we try and tell the young men that it’s not just the girls who have this sort of soft approach, men as well, they have a part to play, so we have a choir, about two hundred, and we have rugby guys singing in the choir (CW1-i).

These observations highlight the ambivalence experienced by many interviewees in the historically White schools. Sport, especially rugby, is masculine. Culture, the arts, drama and music are feminine. There appear to be attempts to expose the masculine to the feminine, in a carefully controlled manner, but the feminine emerges always as “other”, as something outside the day-to-day business of being a boy in school. While there is agreement that boys need to be encouraged to explore alternative masculinities, consistently measured against the traditional “macho” stereotype, which is found wanting, there is a simultaneous concern that this “softening” should not go too far. Interviewees stress their rejection of “macho rugger-bugger” masculinity, but they stress equally that a man must not be a “wimp” or a “wishy-washy sort of guy”.

It was suggested that “old school male teachers”, who have themselves experienced what was described as a “very traditional White South African education”, are intent on producing boys who are “... traditional, sort of rugby playing and so on”(CW3). However, there was some ambivalence in this area. For example, one interviewee stressed that “Sports here is fanatical”, a position he supports, but he argues that he does not support “... the machismo that goes with sport” (SS3-i). This comment in itself suggests that the “machismo” is alive and well at this site!

The role of sport in controlling and managing adolescent boys was stressed. It was suggested that involvement in sport prevents the tendency for unoccupied boys “... to sit around and get up to nonsense” (SS3-i). This suggests that there are in boys inherently dangerous qualities which require constant monitoring and control. Sentiments such as these were expressed almost exclusively in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools, suggesting perhaps that boys who are isolated from what are believed to be the naturally restraining, civilising effects of girls require firmer adult control.

Racial tension was identified in the area of sport in one historically White co-educational school, where White boys reportedly favour rugby and the Black boys prefer soccer. Rugby coaches at this school tend to be men who are given status within the school hierarchy, whereas soccer coaching is left to women or to lower-status men: “The teachers who actually facilitate soccer are women or people like myself in the English department and sort of co-opted into it because they weren’t that interested in rugby” (CW3-i). A number of White boys within this school reportedly claim, “This is a rugby school”, defined by the interviewee as a school where “... your school tie and whether you played in the first team is more important than academic success” (CW3-i). Sport at historically White single-sex boys’ schools seems to provide a standard against which other historically White schools measure themselves: “Our sport is good – but we’re not as good as other big boys’ schools, we don’t have as many boys and the emphasis isn’t just on rugby” (CW1-i).

6.3.14. Discipline

Interviewees across sites appeared resigned to the notion that “boys will be boys”, meaning that boys are involved in more problem behaviours than girls. In addition, interviewees at all sites emphasised that boys require simple, clear limits, “a boy needs to know he can go this far and no further...” (CB3- i). However, it was only at the historically Black township

schools that interviewees favoured corporal punishment. They stressed that this form of discipline is culturally acceptable and favoured by parents and teachers alike. “We would like corporal punishment to be part of it, especially in the hostels. Spare the rod and spoil the child, especially with the boys”(CB3- i).

These learners are used to corporal punishment at home, you know, and they know that for me as a child to see a person that is strict, to see a person that cares for me, that is, you know, responsible for me, giving direction and so on - from time to time that person should hit me, you know, because my father does that, my mother does that (CB1-ii).

It was repeatedly stated that without recourse to corporal punishment teachers feel disempowered. One interviewee confessed that at her school the security guard enforced discipline “... because he is also aggressive, he hits them hard, at present he’s a tower of strength” (CB2-i). Interviewees in the Black township schools describe a world where they are regularly exposed to violence, where the capacity to deal with or perform violence emerges as a defining feature of masculinity. Within this context corporal punishment is viewed as legitimate and effective. Without recourse to corporal punishment teachers feel disempowered.

Interviewees at the historically White co-educational schools emphasised a democratic, egalitarian ethos within their schools and reported that corporal punishment was no longer used. The role of girls in naturally taming and controlling boys’ behaviour was emphasised. Similarly, interviewees at the historically White single-sex schools emphasised the abolition of corporal punishment in their schools. Discipline in these schools appeared to revolve around the hierarchical structure of the school, where prefects played an important role in maintaining discipline. Interviewees at the historically White schools stressed, however, that boys need firm, clear, simple boundaries and that discipline needs to be similarly firm and clear cut.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1. Introduction

There has in recent years been an increasing focus on the exploration and understanding of masculinity and/or masculinities (Anderson and Accomado, in press). Little of this work has, however, been carried out in South Africa, where research in the area of gender studies has focused on the role and status of women in our society (Morrell, 2001a; Wood and Jewkes, 1998). There is a need to explore and attempt to understand the role and status of men and boys in this country, as well as the concepts and constructs of masculinity that inform men's behaviours. This is particularly so in the light of claims that concepts of masculinity amongst boys and men in South Africa may underlie some of the critical problems facing this country, which include the HIV/AIDS epidemic, violence against women and children as well as between men, and the high rate of rape (Campbell, 1992; Campbell et al., 1998; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; 2001; Xaba, 2001).

Kimmel (1987) has argued that it is during times of social and political change and upheaval that gender certainties are threatened and traditional modes of dominant heterosexual masculinities are called into question. Political and social transition in South Africa has resulted in traditional concepts of masculinity being questioned and challenged. Boys and men are thus faced with increasing uncertainty as to their role and status (Morrell, 2001a). Connell (1995) argues that, while the role of the school as an institution is central to the production of masculine subjectivities, there has been "...surprisingly little discussion of the role of education in the transformation of masculinity" (p. 238). Education in South Africa has, since the election of the Government of National Unity in 1994, undergone a rapid and large-scale transformation, including constitutional efforts to transform South African education in the light of human rights, gender equality and democracy (South African Schools Act, 1996). However, there has to date been little research focusing on either teachers or learners within a gender framework.

This study aimed to explore teachers' notions and constructions of masculinity as well as their perceptions of their role in guiding boys to manhood in contemporary South Africa. A number of questions informed this research: Is there a dominant hegemonic masculinity

affirmed in schools and how is it constructed and maintained? Are conventional, stereotypical views of masculinity confirmed or challenged by teachers of boys in present-day South Africa? How do teachers' view HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS education and is HIV/AIDS perceived as linked to gendered behaviours? This research has focused on constructions of masculinity held by teachers in different types of schools at different sites. In addition, the notion that different ways of being male may be privileged in different types of school was explored.

7.2. Summary of findings

Analysis of data focused on the identification and exploration of commonalities and contrasts in perceptions and constructs of masculinity emerging from the different types of schools participating in the study. Primary amongst the commonalities was the notion that political, social and ideological change has impacted strongly on boys' and men's perceptions of themselves as men. Interviewees across sites reported that the impact of political transition in this country has been enormous and has given rise to conflict and uncertainty regarding the role and status of boys and men in South African society.

Secondly, it emerged strongly that interviewees speak with multiple voices, reflecting conflicts and contradictions arising, in part, from the multiple and conflicting discourses of masculinity available to them: "Within each man and boy there is a conflict going on between the fiction of a fixed 'real me', masculine self and more fluid, alternative selves" (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998, p. 7). White interviewees at the historically White schools appear to be caught between a "new man" discourse, identified by Messner (1993) as a cultural image "... based almost entirely on the lives of White, middle and upper class heterosexual men" (p. 728), and more traditional, "macho" notions of masculinity. Black interviewees at the historically Black township schools appear to find themselves similarly caught between conflicting notions of masculinity, between traditional patriarchal concepts of what it is to be a man and more liberal Western notions enshrined in the South African constitution.

Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that men can position themselves in multiple ways, depending on the context, and this was clearly illustrated in this set of interviews. Individual interviewees at times expressed ambivalent, contradictory and conflicting views on topics ranging from homosexuality to the importance of sport. Connell (2000, p. 13) points out that

“... close focus research in masculinities commonly identifies contradictory desires and conduct”. Hearn (1998) argues that this capacity of individuals to juggle two sets of opposing views can legitimate and perpetuate gender power, where individuals can, for example, express views consistent with a ‘new man discourse’ in one context and express stereotypical ‘macho’ views in another. These interviews clearly reflect this capacity to hold two sets of opposing views and it could be argued that this does indeed serve the perpetuation of an imbalance in gender power. This supports Toerien and Durrheim (2001), who identify what they refer to as a “real man” discourse which they suggest allows men to simultaneously maintain an essential masculinity and distance themselves from criticisms of men as “traditionally macho” (p. 35).

Thirdly, this research suggests that while there are certain concepts of masculinity that transcend race and culture (for example, masculinity defined in terms of responsibility, of taking control, of dominance over women), there appears to be a clear distinction between Black and White masculinities. Frosh et al. (2002) argue that masculinities are constructed out of “... a complex network of identity factors, including ‘race’, ethnicity, social class and sexuality” (p. 258) and Morrell (2001a) claims that race and class are important in understanding how men come to understand and live their masculinity. While this research suggests that Black and White masculinities in contemporary South Africa are distinct and different masculinities, care should be taken in interpreting these differences as specifically racial differences. Research with working-class youths in Australia and Britain reveals many similarities with the concepts of masculinity that emerge in the Black township interviews, suggesting that class differences may differentiate masculinities as strongly as racial ones (Connell, 1995; Frosh et al., 2002). This issue will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

Masculinity at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools appears to be defined primarily in opposition to “other”. Included in the category “other”, in the context of this research, are females, homosexuals, Blacks and people with HIV/AIDS. Interviewees at these schools consistently referred to their learners in terms which left no doubt that these learners were assumed to be White. Despite the fact that learner populations at these schools represent all population groups, these schools emerge as White institutions and even Black boys at these schools seem to be regarded as “White” boys with Black skins. This finding suggests that different concepts of masculinity emerging from different sites are not necessarily based simply on “race”. In addition, despite assertions that boys were being encouraged to question

notions of male dominance and to accept girls as their equals, interviewees in these historically White single-sex boys' schools conveyed the sense that the primacy of masculinity and the world as masculine is in fact still firmly in place.

At the historically Black township schools masculinity appears to be defined predominantly in terms of sexuality and power. Interviewees appeared to identify with a patriarchal discourse, assuming that it is in the nature of men to be powerful and in control of women and to be driven by sex. Assumptions of male sexual entitlement and female sexual passivity were evident.

At the historically White co-educational schools interviewees expressed concerns about preparing learners for life in a multiracial, multicultural and gender-equal society. The emphasis in these interviews was on a breakdown of traditional notions of masculinity and on developing a more tolerant, "new man" type of masculinity. While these interviewees observe that race and culture impact on learners' perceptions of masculinity, suggesting that some boys claim superiority over girls on the basis of culture or religion, they emphasise that there are attempts within their schools to reinforce gender equality and to change these attitudes. Since 1994 the learner populations at this group of schools, selected from the previously White, previously advantaged group of co-educational schools, have become more representative of the South African population, including diverse racial and cultural groups. It is perhaps in consequence of these radical changes in learner populations that teachers in this group of schools have been forced to confront the multicultural/multiracial dimension of South African society.

The perception that boys are feeling displaced and uncertain as to their role and status within a changing society emerged strongly as a common concern across sites. In addition, it appears that boys at all sites are uncertain as to their future. Boys at the historically White schools apparently perceive themselves to be vulnerable to the changing status of women and Blacks in the face of the loss of their previously privileged position. This finding accords with Morrell's view that the historically uneven distribution of power in this country gave White men privileges, "... but also made them defensive about challenges (by women, Blacks and/or other men) to that privilege" (Morrell, 2001a, p. 18). Boys in the historically Black township schools, faced with poor employment prospects and little hope of a financially secure future, reportedly feel similarly displaced and uncertain. In addition, it appears that the

Black boys in particular find constitutional changes relating to the status of women difficult to reconcile with traditional, cultural concepts of what it is to be a man. This is particularly pertinent in the face of Campbell's observation that "The ability of men to control women, or keep them in line, and the use of violence to ensure this control, is one area where the power of working class men has not been threatened by a racial capitalist society" (Campbell, 1992, p. 625).

Masculinity was defined across sites in terms of "responsibility" (i.e. assuming the role of breadwinner, head of family, role model in family, being answerable for one's actions), but this again emerged as an area beset with contradictions, as interviewees pointed out that boys are also naturally less responsible than girls. In addition, while responsibility was stressed as an aspect of adult masculinity, interviewees also pointed out that masculinity is synonymous with risk-taking. The notion of masculinity defined in terms of risk-taking appears to impact particularly on male sexual behaviour, resulting in failure to adopt responsible and safe sexual practices.

Issues of violence and sexual harassment arose almost exclusively in the Black township school interviews, while sport and homosexuality emerged as issues of concern exclusively in the historically White schools.

7.3. Hegemonic masculinity

Literature on masculinity generally finds that there is a 'dominant' form of masculinity that influences boys' and men's understandings of how they have to act in order to be 'acceptably' male, and that this dominant mode is associated with heterosexuality, toughness, power and authority, competitiveness and subordination of gay men (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 75).

While the literature asserts and this research supports the notion that most boys and men cannot hope to fit this masculine ideal, it was frequently observed that interviewees did in fact place themselves in relation to a notion of hegemonic masculinity, even if only to critique or subvert it.

This research supports the notion that men frequently separate themselves from certain conventional or ideal notions of the masculine, which are rejected as “macho” stereotypes (Speer, 2001; Wetherell and Edley, 1999). White interviewees in the historically White schools in particular distanced themselves from what they described as a stereotypical concept of macho masculinity. This might seem to suggest that hegemonic masculinity as defined by Connell (1987) might not in fact fulfil the normative role it is assumed by many authors to play (Connell, 1987; Frosh et al., 2002; Segal, 1990; Seidler, 1997). However, Wetherell and Edley (1999) argue that this distancing from the hegemonic notions of masculinity may in fact be one of the most effective ways of being a man and that “perhaps what is most hegemonic is to be non-hegemonic”. By constructing themselves as different from the stereotypes, “men are asserting their superiority, autonomy and maturity” (Wetherell and Edley, 1999, p. 351). However, it has been emphasised that teachers participating in this research speak with multiple voices. While on one level distancing themselves from “macho” stereotypes, interviewees frequently responded in ways which suggested a strong identification with normative, hegemonic masculinity.

It has been claimed that different hegemonic masculinities operate within Black and White ‘ethnic’ groups (Morrell, 1998b). Interviewees in the historically Black and historically White schools in this study appeared to position themselves in relation to differing concepts of hegemonic masculinity – for Black interviewees a traditional, patriarchal, cultural notion and for White interviewees a stereotypical macho notion of masculinity. However, Morrell’s assertion that commonalities between Black and White men do exist is also supported. He identifies these as “... dominance over women, the use of violence and the endorsement of heterosexism” (Morrell, 1998c, p. 8). Certainly the notion of heterosexuality emerged as a defining feature of masculinity across racial and cultural divides. Hearn (1998) suggests that “Those contexts that are not explicitly referred to – gender, sexuality, age, race, family life and so on – do not disappear; they remain within the text, but as subtexts, scarcely spoken” (p. 46). Heterosexuality emerges as a subtext widely taken for granted by interviewees across sites in this study. In addition, the concept of male dominance over women emerges across sites. In some sites, notably at the historically White co-educational schools, there are apparently efforts to challenge these notions of male dominance, but it is assumed across sites that boys inherently believe they are dominant over and superior to women.

Frosh et al. (2002) assert that a review of relevant work supports "... the existence of hegemonic masculinity as a powerful ideal that regulates boys' behaviour" (p. 76). It has been claimed that young men experience the male peer group as a competitive space in which they are expected to prove themselves (Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). In this study interviewees across sites identified the male peer group as a powerful normative influence on boys' concepts of themselves as masculine. Notions of masculinity emanating from this peer group appear in the historically White schools to accord with Gilbert and Gilbert's description of a hegemonic masculinity that revolves around misogynistic and homophobic behaviours as well as potentially self-destructive behaviours such as high risk behaviour (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). In the historically Black township schools the peer group notions of masculinity include both the capacity for violence and notions of dominance and control over girls and other boys. The absence of any overtly expressed homophobia in the Black schools stands in striking contrast to the views expressed by White interviewees at historically White schools and will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

What emerges very strongly in this research is conflict and confusion around notions of masculinity. In the historically White schools notions of the "new man" (Messner 1993; Toerien and Durrheim, 2001; Anderson and Accomado, in press) are constantly referred to. However, within the subtext as defined by Hearn (1998) there emerges a sense that a "real man" is in fact measured against the traditional macho stereotype. While interviewees acknowledge that traditional concepts of masculinity should be challenged and that boys should be exposed to alternative, gentler forms of masculinity, these alternative forms of masculinity are, however, themselves measured against a more macho masculinity. In the Black township schools the conflict appears to revolve around traditional cultural notions of masculinity, where men are perceived as dominant over women and as the head of the household, in control and sexually entitled to their women, versus a more liberal, Western notion of masculinity as outlined in the constitution of the country. Interviewees in these Black township schools repeatedly returned to this conflict, identifying naturally accepted and unquestioned concepts of patriarchal masculinity which were consistently undermined by the need to adapt to constitutional change.

7.4. Black and White masculinities

Black boys in the Black township schools were perceived to define their masculinity primarily in terms of sexual success, control over girls and capacity for violence. White boys

in the historically White single-sex schools were perceived to be uncertain as to their role and status in a changing South Africa. These White boys, as perceived by interviewees, define their masculinity in terms of macho risk behaviours and financial, sporting and heterosexual success. Boys at all sites were described as feeling displaced and uncertain as to their future. However, feelings of displacement and uncertainty appeared to result in very different behaviours, depending on the site. Interviewees at historically White single-sex boys' schools referred to the emergence of a "playboy" mentality, where boys were increasingly observed to focus on sport and leisure activities. This phenomenon was attributed to boys' perceptions of an insecure future and a resulting "live for the moment" mentality. This is an option unavailable to boys at the Black township schools, which offer very little in the way of sport or leisure activities, and where the very notion of "leisure" appears to have little meaning. The notion of leisure thus emerges as an elite one which appears currently to have little relevance to boys at Black township schools.

Campbell (1992) observed that chronic levels of unemployment for youth in township communities led them to feel "... alienated and displaced" (p. 62). Interviewees at the Black township schools in this study tended to attribute criminal and violent behaviours in their boys to a sense of displacement and lack of available options. Although interviewees in this study made no overt connection between boys' sense of displacement and heterosexual relationships, it has been suggested that feelings of disempowerment and displacement lead Black township youth to focus on sexual relationships as a source of empowerment and control (Campbell, 1992; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; 2001). This observation would seem pertinent to this research.

What emerges strongly is the notion that boys establish a sense of power within a particular site, and that the expression of this power is informed by the options available at that site. This supports Connell's notion that masculinity is organised around social power, whether in terms of academic success, sporting prowess, physical aggression or sexual conquest (Connell, 2000). Thus the notion of masculinity as "taking power" is common to boys at both historically Black and historically White single-sex schools, but this takes different forms according to site.

Wood and Jewkes (1998) describe masculinity in township boys as "... defined in terms of control over women" (p. 22) and state that "... multiple sexual partners, by all accounts

virtually universal among boys, seem to be an important defining feature of ‘being a man’ ” (p. 20). Interviewees in the Black township schools in this study emphasised the role played by heterosexual success in achieving status within the peer group as well as the prevalence of sexual harassment of girls. Wood and Jewkes (2001, p. 318) suggest that young men without the means to further education have fewer options and tend to drop out of school. They cite crime, poverty, boredom and lack of opportunity and prospects as possible reasons for investment in areas where success can be achieved, for example, in sexual relationships. Xaba (2001, p. 120) concurs, adding that the likelihood exists that Black township youth who continue to have limited opportunity for upward social mobility will develop oppositional forms of masculinity. Conditions in the townships where this research was carried out are highly comparable with those described by Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001) and Xaba (2001).

Research in Britain and Australia may be relevant here. Working-class boys in these countries have been found to define their masculinity in terms of strength, attracting girls and looking “cool” (Connell, 1995; Frosh et al., 2002). Connell (1995) identifies the lack of clear life opportunities as a powerful factor in the ways in which young unemployed White men conduct themselves.

Social power in terms of access to higher education, entry to professions, command of communication, is being delivered to boys who are academic successes. The reaction of the ‘failed’ is likely to be a claim to other sources of power, even other definitions of masculinity. Sporting prowess, physical aggression, sexual conquest may do (Connell, 1989, p. 295).

What appear at first, in the context of this research, to be racialised differences in expressed and performed masculinities may instead reflect “class” or differentiated possibilities available to boys at different sites. In their research with working-class White boys in England, Prendergast and Forrest (1997, p.192, in Frosh et al., 2002) refer to “... the fatalistic ways they spoke about their future lives” and “... the meaninglessness of school where they saw boredom, unemployment and poverty ahead of them”. These statements reflect observations made by interviewees at the Black township schools in this research. This highlights the impact of a sense of the future on concepts and constructions of masculinity, rather than the effect of race per se. Stuart Hall (1992, in Wood, 1998) argues that the

question of identity is centrally about the future in terms of the self, and this notion would seem to be an important one in defining a “masculine” self.

Rogoff and van Leer (1993) point out that the literature on masculinity focuses predominantly on White, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities. What research has been done on Black masculinities has been carried out in the USA, Britain and Australia, where Black masculinity is a minority masculinity. This literature has, therefore, limited applicability to the South African situation (Morrell, 2001a). The issue of race is a politically and ethically sensitive one and care needs to be taken in interpreting research findings in terms of racial differences. While these research findings suggest that there are, at present, distinct Black and White masculinities in South African schools, Epstein (1998, p. 51) points out that South African society has been structured by race, gender and class. The different masculinities emerging in this research are then not necessarily racially defined, but are rather the product of historical circumstances. Morrell (2001a) argues that the apartheid era promoted ethnic identities and that differential state spending created a hierarchy of races. “Race and class were thus manipulated by the state and this affected gender identity” (Morrell, 2001a, p.17). He warns that it is important “... not to reify race and attach to this category a set of attributes that may tempt essentialist interpretations” (p. 145). Epstein (1998, p. 51) points out that the word “race” suggests an “... essentialist biological basis”. She argues that there is not “... one monolithic version of white masculinity and another, different, but still monolithic version of black masculinity. In both cases 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. “There is not some global essence of ‘whiteness’ or ‘blackness’ giving rise to particular forms of masculinity: rather, racialized differences are taken up in many different ways to inform and generate a highly variegated structure of identity” (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 147).

Australian and American research suggests that teachers tend to construct Black boys as heterosexually more mature and also as physically large, rebellious and threatening (Connolly, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002). White interviewees at the historically White co-educational schools in this study tended to describe Black learners in similar terms. These

interviewees identified the Black and Indian pupils as those who were most resistant to accepting change in the status of women and described these boys as being promiscuous and involved in sexually harassing behaviours. Mac an Ghaill (1994) found that White interviewees in his school research made similar attributions. Staples (1989) argues that the belief in the Black male's overabundant sexuality is a myth and that the sexuality of Black and White men merely tends to take different forms. However, this particular set of interviews would tend to support the notion that Black interviewees at historically Black schools did tend to value sexuality and heterosexual success as a more vital aspect of masculinity than did interviewees at historically White schools.

7.5. Violence and sexual harassment

Violence and sexual harassment emerged as issues of concern particularly in the Black township interviews. Violence has consistently emerged as a common feature of young Black sexual relationships (Jewkes et al., 1999; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; Varga and Makhabalo, 1996). Epstein (1998, p. 55) points out that in South Africa, violence "... is an everyday occurrence, much of it between men, but even more, from men to women." Jewkes et al. (1999) argue that the origins of the high levels of violence against women observed in South Africa are complex, concluding that these origins would appear to lie in the patriarchal roots of our society. Their findings suggest that cultural norms endorse subservience of women to husband, male ownership of female and notions of male sexual entitlement. These findings are reflected in this study, where interviewees at the historically Black township schools expressed views strongly allied with these cultural norms. In addition, in their responses interviewees reflected a similar powerlessness with regard to violence and sexual harassment within their schools and communities to that observed by Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001).

Connell (2000) points out that where boys lack other resources for proving their manhood (for example, poor employment prospects), rule breaking and problem behaviours may become central to the making of masculinity. He argues that groups of boys engage in violence and sexual harassment in order to acquire or defend prestige. However, Kenway et al. (1998, p. 110) point out that their research has revealed that "... sex-based harassment is understood by many teachers as resulting from some natural characteristic of masculinity which at times exhibits itself in extreme and unacceptable forms". This view is consistent with notions expressed by interviewees in this research. These included notions that "boys

will be boys”, notions of sex-drive discourse and notions that boys naturally assume a sense of sexual entitlement.

According to Morrell (2001a) a high level of poverty allied with rising expectations fosters the growth of violent masculinities. These conditions pertain to Black township youths, especially post-1994, where expectations of an empowered and better future were fostered after the end of the apartheid government. Campbell (1992) emphasises that within the South African context the crisis of masculinity “... cannot be ignored in attempting to understand the upsurge of violence in working class black communities” (p. 623). Clare (2000, p. 55) states:

Enmeshed with violence are such issues as status, power, control and emotional expression. We know that violence is more likely to occur in areas where life is short, where inequalities are large and visible, where employment prospects are bleak and where families have disintegrated.

However, Hearn (1998) poses the essential question: if we explain violence and aggression as a response to psychological frustration, individual stress, social stress or economic/political deprivation, why does this stress cause men and not women to become violent? It has been suggested that it is because the very construction of masculinity in boys and young men is intimately connected with violence (Jackson, 1990; Miedzian, 1992; Morrell, 2001b; Pleck et al., 1993).

In the historically White schools violence is referred to only in relation to sport, specifically rugby. Burstyn (1999) argues that masculinity, violence and sport are closely related and Gilligan (1996, in Burstyn, 1999, p. 44) suggests that in competitive sport men “... are expected to be violent” and are “... dishonoured for being unwilling to be violent”. This leads to the proposition that competitive sport in the historically White schools, where sports such as rugby are emphasised, allows for positively sanctioned expressions of masculine violence and provides a socially sanctioned outlet for this violence.

7.6. Masculinity in opposition to “other”.

Masculinity is often defined in relation to and in contrast to women. As boys and men we are dependent upon, threatened by, vulnerable to and envious of women – in far more conscious and unconscious ways than we can ordinarily bear (Fogel, 1986, in Segal, 1993, p. 628).

“For men, the classic ‘other’ is, of course, women” (Kimmel, 2000, p. 10). Men construct their ideas of what it means to be a man in constant reference to the definition of femininity. What it means to be a man is to be unlike a woman. Boys define themselves by what they are not, “... they are not everything that they perceive girls to be: soft, talkative, emotional, co-operative, caring, affectionate” Biddulph (1995, p. 167).

Masculinity defined in opposition to femininity was evident in all sites in this study. However, masculinity defined in terms of opposition to “other” emerged particularly strongly in the historically White single-sex boys’ school interviews. Paradoxically, however, there is at the same time some attempt, or at least recognition that one should attempt, to incorporate this “other” into the definition of masculinity at all sites. Interviewees at all sites acknowledged that boys need to be encouraged to be gentle, to explore their emotional, more “feminine” sides, to question “macho” notions of masculinity. This is evident in the assertion, for example, that members of the first rugby team are encouraged to sing in the choir.

Rutherford (1990, p. 22) points out that

The centre expels its anxieties, contradictions and irrationalities onto the subordinate term, filling it with the antithesis of its own identity: the Other, in its very alienness, simply mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre, but projected outside of itself. It is in these processes and representations of marginality that the violence, antagonisms and aversions that are at the core of dominant discourses and identities become manifest – racism, homophobia, misogyny and class contempt are the products of this frontier.

It is in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools in this study that these projections would appear to be most evident. What emerged as “other” in these sites could be identified as women, Blacks, homosexuals and those with HIV/AIDS. The strong emergence of the

invisible “other” at these particular sites could be explained in two possible ways. Firstly, the historically White single-sex boys’ schools in Natal are described by Morrell (1994) as historically responsible for the production of what he describes as a rugged masculinity, a masculinity defined in opposition to femininity. Secondly, the schools serve a wealthy, privileged population in a country where being White and male historically conferred status and power. Tacey (1997) persuasively points out that “If the group to which one belongs is elevated and revered, then other groups will automatically be deemed ‘other’, outside the magic circle, or not self” (p. 19). Paechter (1998, p. 94) argues that “Those not in the dominant group are, in order to preserve that dominance, defined as ‘other’ as not real men”. The power and privilege previously conferred on middle-class White heterosexual men is now perceived to be under threat, and while there is on a conscious level an acknowledgement that change is both desirable and inevitable, this “othering” of “alien” forces could be seen as an attempt to maintain that privilege and power. What is of added interest here is the apparent incorporation of Black learners at these schools into “Whiteness”. Epstein (1998, p. 57) refers to the history of the White single-sex schools in KwaZulu-Natal, where during the apartheid years only White males would have been admitted as learners. She refers to the role played by the “... the absent presence of the Other in the form of the Black man” in the formation of White, elite heterosexual masculinities. The relatively recent inclusion of Black learners in these schools appears at present to pose no threat to the notion of Black as “other” – Black learners at these institutions are perceived as White!

Nayak (1999, in Frosh et al., 2002) referred to the hegemony of whiteness in institutions where whiteness is taken for granted. Anderson and Accomado (in press) point out that there is a tendency in the literature to essentialise gender in a way that universalises boys, “... rendering them unraced (i.e. White), unclassed (i.e. middle and upper class with mothers who do not work outside the home), and heterosexual”. They point out that poor, Black and gay young men are in a sense made invisible; this invisibility of Black learners was strongly communicated in interviews in the historically White single-sex boys’ schools. These interviewees consistently referred to their learners in terms which left no doubt that these learners were assumed to be White: “Our boys are last in the queue, behind the Blacks and women” (SS1-i). Learner populations in these schools (i.e. “our boys”) are in fact mixed and represent, though perhaps not proportionally, all population groups. In these schools even the Black boys are perceived as White or are invisible, highlighting the powerful hegemony of White heterosexual masculinity at these sites.

7.7. Masculinity as dominance

Male dominance and assumptions of male superiority emerge in all sites. Relying on essentialist notions interviewees at every site claimed that boys “naturally” assume that men are dominant and superior over women. However, this was an area beset with conflict and contradiction, and one where individual interviewees spoke with multiple voices – on the one hand, voicing the belief that such assumptions, presumed to arise naturally in boys, should be challenged and, on the other, making just such assumptions themselves. Masculinity was also defined across sites in terms of the ability to “take control”, a finding in accord with that of Mac an Ghaill (1994). On the basis of his own research in a school in England, he suggests that many male teachers see a “real” man as one who is able to assert control.

Interviewees in the historically White schools expressed a belief that notions of male dominance should be questioned and discouraged, and that boys need to be schooled into the notion that women are their equals. However, there was some ambivalence here, with interviewees themselves at times clearly making assumptions of male dominance.

Interviewees in the historically Black township schools acknowledged that boys in their schools “naturally” assumed dominance, and they themselves expressed confusion and ambivalence regarding notions of male dominance. Whilst acknowledging the equality of women, interviewees simultaneously suggested that men are naturally dominant.

However, interviewees in every site acknowledged that boys are extremely vulnerable to criticism from girls. Boys’ assumptions of dominance therefore rest on the expectation that girls will play the reciprocal submissive role. If masculinity is partially constructed through men’s ability to control others, this in fact weakens their position as it makes them dependent on women following the rules (Wood and Jewkes, 1998). Balswick (1988, in McMahon, 1993, p. 678) highlights these apparent contradictions, arguing that while men appear to show contempt for women based upon arrogance and a sense of superiority, this contempt is in fact based on fear, “... a fear so great he can only live with it by disempowering her, by convincing himself that she’s a weak and puny creature” in fact what one interviewee in this research referred to as “... the weaklings of the township” (CB-ii).

Interviewees in every site observe that boys are feeling uncertain of their role and place and it appears that this is partially due to the changing status of women. When girls refuse to “follow the rules” which allow boys to dominate, it would seem that boys are left feeling vulnerable, displaced, angry and confused. Kenway et al. (1998) identify a similar anger and bitterness in Australian boys faced with increasing confidence and independence of girls in that country. Frosh et al. (2002) make the point that while political, ideological and social change results in the potential for boys to take up a wider range of masculinities, this change at the same time threatens “...taken for granted privileges of power” (p. 51). Interviewees at the historically White co-educational schools suggest that boys at their schools are indeed becoming more free to take up a wider range of masculinities without the fear of labelling or stigma. However, it was only at these particular sites that these possibilities were observed. Possible explanations for this will be explored in the next chapter.

7.8. Heterosexuality and homophobia

“Heterosexual sex is essential in the realization of maleness, in the social mobility of the male from boy to man, to father, to head of household, to decision maker, to man.” (McFadden 1992, p. 183). The over-riding assumption throughout these interviews was that men and boys are “heterosexual”. This was taken for granted and masculinity was frequently defined in terms of heterosexual success. Connell (1996) has argued that heterosexual success is a source of prestige amongst the peer group and this has been supported by Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001), whose work clearly illustrates the importance of heterosexual relationships and male dominance amongst adolescent boys. While heterosexual success emerges as a defining feature of masculinity amongst adolescent boys and young men in all sites in this research, different attitudes towards sexuality and homosexuality emerged in different sites.

Interviewees at every site in this research could be said to ascribe to “sex-drive discourse” (Hollway, 1984). However, interviewees in the historically White schools emphasised efforts to suppress and contain this drive, while interviewees at the Black township schools appeared to endorse (male) adolescent sexual activity. According to Wood and Jewkes (2001), their research with Black township youths suggests that sexuality is a very salient feature of these young men’s sense of their own masculinity. They observe that patriarchal ideals regarding male entitlement to women and the importance of men asserting hierarchy in sexual relationships results in a tolerance for young men’s sexual behaviours in the community.

Such a tolerance was observed in this set of interviews. Sewell (1997, in Frosh et al., 2002, p. 55) found in his research that Black boys locate themselves in what he referred to as “a phallocentric frameworld”, where expressions of sexuality are valued as evidence of successful masculinity. Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001) suggest that this emphasis on sexual success is an offshoot of powerlessness in other spheres.

Interviewees across sites in historically White schools appeared to regard emerging sexuality in young men as something inherently dangerous and requiring firm control. Burstyn (1999) points out that historically, Victorian authorities claimed that “... it was the male’s exercise of control over his own sexuality that formed the crucial key to personal and social health” (p. 80). She claims, too, that in the nineteenth century sport began to be “... promulgated as a way to divert the sexual energy of males from deviant ends” (p. 78). She goes on to elaborate the role played by sport in Victorian Britain and America, claiming that it served not only to harness and contain rampant male sexuality, but also to allow expression of aggressive and even erotic impulses. While it is beyond the scope of this research to further explore this notion, it is worth noting that interviewees in the historically White schools emphasised the role of sport in taming and controlling the sexuality and aggression perceived to be inherently dangerous impulses occurring in boys.

Interviewees in the historically Black township schools place little emphasis on the importance of sexual abstinence, in striking contrast to interviewees at the historically White schools. What emerges in the Black township school interviews is an acknowledgement that heterosexual success is a feature of successful masculinity and that boys should therefore be encouraged to involve themselves in safe sexual practices. Condoms were freely available to learners in one Black township school participating in this study. This is in stark contrast to attitudes at historically White schools, where interviewees feared that promoting condom use would encourage promiscuity and instead abstinence was emphasised. Friedman (1993, in Rivers and Aggleton, 1999) points out that young people are frequently believed to be sexually promiscuous by nature and as it is feared that giving information about sex will encourage sexual activity, schools tend to promote abstinence. Ironically, research findings provide strong evidence that sex education which includes a focus on safer sex as well as abstinence may in fact delay the onset of sexual activity and reduce the number of sexual partners (Grunseit, 1997).

In the historically White single-sex boys' schools this emerging sexuality was frequently perceived as dangerously allied with the threat of homosexual behaviour, and adolescent rituals and rites of passage in these schools were perceived as both sexualised and homosexual in nature. What then is the role played by initiation rites that have a distinctly homosexual flavour? And why are these rites particularly observed in sites such as the historically White single-sex boys' schools where homophobia emerges most strongly? Herdt (1981) provides evidence that the construction of adult heterosexual masculinity in many cultures evolves through homosexual rites and relationships, an interesting observation that might have some relevance here. Anthropologist Williams (1985, in Burstyn, 1999, p. 100) notes that in Melanesian societies, "... ritualized homosexuality creates a strong common bond ... that cements the men together into a close warriorhood". These initiation practices are ritualised and led by adult men - clearly the sexualised rituals described by interviewees in this study are distanced from these practices. However, it is of interest that boys should spontaneously choose rites so homosexual in nature.

According to Frosh et al. (2002, p. 175) "... for boys homophobia is seen as a set of activities through which they publicly and repetitively assert their 'normal' masculinity through heterosexuality". The notion that homophobia plays a role in the "policing" or structuring of heterosexual masculinity has attained widespread acceptance (Epstein, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002; Holland et al., 1993; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Scully, 2001). Research has revealed what Frosh refers to as the "ubiquity of homophobia" amongst boys and young men and it has been concluded that "... masculine identities are produced through homophobic performances" (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 175). While the interview schedule used in this research included no reference to homosexuality, interviewees at every historically White school spontaneously mentioned homosexuality in some or other context. The topic received most attention in the historically White single-sex boys' school interviews, where interviewees expressed conflicting and ambivalent views. The absence of any reference to homosexuality at the historically Black township schools is therefore striking.

There are a number of possible explanations for this. A number of authors have identified and explored the culture of silence surrounding homosexuality in Black African societies (Bujra, 2000; Dunton and Palmberg, 1996; Reddy, 1998). Bujra (2000) points out that governments in Africa "... insist that homosexuality is an alien and non-African perversion" and that "...

the existence of homosexuality has often been denied in Africa, despite it having been documented in many places” (p. 11). Dunton and Palmberg (1996, p. 26) question whether this implies that homosexual behaviour is virtually absent amongst Black Africans. They suggest that the silence surrounding homosexuality raises questions “... about identity and about discourse – that is, about the way different communities talk about certain things and the way they may or may not give specific names to particular kinds of behaviour”? The absence of any comment on homosexuality or homophobia by interviewees at the historically Black township schools may then reflect this culture of silence and denial rather than an absence of homophobia or concerns regarding homosexuality in these sites.

In his school study Mac an Ghaill (1994) identified groups who parody or challenge dominant gender ideology, particularly by adopting an “effeminate” role. He hypothesised that this practice developed in reaction to dominant culture and that this rejection of hegemonic norms in fact merely re-establishes them as behavioural norms. Wetherell and Edley (1999, p. 347) identify a discourse which they label the “rebellious position”, where men reject macho ideals, taking pride in their nonconformity and defining themselves “... in terms of their unconventionality”. A similar practice of “effeminate” behaviour, occurring in opposition to what was described as a “strong message” against homosexuality was observed by an interviewee at one of the historically White single-sex boys’ schools in this study. This is noteworthy as the homophobic climate described by interviewees at other historically White single-sex boys’ schools would apparently not have allowed for such an overt display of effeminate behaviour.

This research supports the observation that subordinate masculinities are stigmatised as feminine and that, as Paechter (1998, p. 107) observes, “... It would seem, then, that for boys in their early teens, conformity to masculine stereotypes is more salient than actual sexual orientation.” Boys label those who are perceived to be quiet, gentle or effeminate, qualities usually associated with girls, as “gay” – but apparently without actual knowledge of the actual sexual orientation of the person. Epstein (1998) suggests that homophobia is directed towards non-macho boys and it is their similarity to girls that identifies them as targets of homophobia – an observation supported by this research. Boys are labelled as “moffies” on the strength of being seen to engage in activities traditionally identified as feminine (for example, catering) rather than on the strength of actual knowledge of their sexual orientation. According to Kimmel (1997), “Masculine identity is born in the renunciation of the

feminine, not in the direct affirmation of the masculine, which leaves masculine gender identity tenuous and fragile” (p. 230). This notion is strongly supported in this research, as evidenced both in homophobia and in the vulnerability to female ridicule or challenge reported by interviewees across sites.

7.9. HIV/AIDS

Patterns of sexual practice among the youth, including assault, poor interpersonal communication, multiple partners and high levels of risk taking are of particular concern in a country which has one of the fastest spreading HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world (Wood and Jewkes, 2001, p. 318-319).

According to Sinclair (2000), South Africa has the highest rate of HIV infection among 15- to 20-year-olds in the world. While interviewees at every site acknowledged the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a serious problem facing this country, attitudes to HIV/AIDS varied by site. Interviewees at the historically White schools seemed to view the problem as one that did not immediately affect them or their learners. Kippax et al. (1994, p. S321) argue that amongst heterosexual men, HIV/AIDS is perceived and presented as a problem of the other, a disease of “Otherness”. This attitude was particularly evident at the historically White single-sex boys’ schools, where HIV/AIDS was deemed a problem of “other”, specifically Black, population groups.

At the historically Black township schools, interviewees appeared to feel fatalistic and disempowered by the extent of the problem. There was a communicated sense that interviewees in these schools “owned” the problem and acknowledging its effects on their communities. However, they reported feelings of hopelessness and helplessness in the face of the enormity of the problem. This sense of fatalistic acceptance has been observed by Leclerc-Madlala (1997), who states that for township youth “HIV infection has come to be accepted as a new and inevitable part of growing up (p. 363).

While a number of authors agree that HIV/AIDS is a gendered syndrome, driven by men, it is acknowledged that economic and social factors also play a role (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Foreman, 1999). Rivers and Aggleton (1999) point out that epidemiological studies across the developing world suggest that young people are not equally affected by HIV/AIDS and that it

is those who are more socially and economically disadvantaged who are at highest risk. This assumption, whilst possibly true, tends to divert attention from the gendered nature of HIV/AIDS. It has already been emphasised that masculinity in the historically privileged White, single-sex boys' schools appears to be defined largely in opposition to "other" – and this "other" includes those who suffer from the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Interviewees point out that learners in these schools perceive HIV/AIDS to be largely a Black disease. These perceptions preclude any acknowledgement of the gendered nature of HIV/AIDS within in these schools.

In the historically Black township schools interviewees described a culture of male sexual entitlement, where men are perceived to be sexually active and dominant and women are perceived to be passive. Men are assumed to have a number of sexual partners and to be reluctant to change sexual behaviours. Interviewees' reports of boys' comments regarding the use of condoms appear to accord with the literature suggesting that dominant ideologies of masculinity emphasise male sexual prowess and pleasure (Rivers and Aggleton, 1999; Foreman, 1999). Thus, while the problem of HIV/AIDS is acknowledged in this set of interviews, and while attempts have reportedly been made within these schools to encourage safe sexual practices amongst the learners, what emerges is a resistance to safe sexual practices driven apparently by a masculinity ideology.

While interviewees at every site defined masculinity in terms of responsibility, there was at the same time evidence that interviewees subscribe to "sex-drive discourse" (Hollway, 1984). Central to this discourse is the notion that men need sex and are always ready to have it, that sex is a biological urge out of their control. Masculinity is also defined in terms of dominance and control, and this emerges strongly in terms of dominance and control over others – whether women or other men. Masculinity defined in terms of dominance and control, in terms of risk behaviours and heterosexual success, within a subtext of sex-drive discourse, conflicts with masculinity defined in terms of responsibility. Wilton (1997, in Rivers and Aggleton, 1999) suggests that if male sexuality, according to sex-drive discourse, is perceived as uncontrollable and condom use is seen as demonstrating a degree of control, conflict arises and masculinity is perceived as threatened by condom use.

Sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS have frequently been attributed to masculine risk-taking behaviours (Caravano, 1995; Foreman, 1999; Macheke and Campbell, 1998;

Rivers and Aggleton, 1999, Salsibury and Jackson, 1996). Analysis of results emerging from this research would suggest that while risk-taking behaviours are implicated, these behaviours form part of a complex construct of masculinity which includes notions of sex-drive discourse, male dominance over women, male sexual entitlement and masculinity defined in terms of risk taking behaviours. Such a construct of masculinity would perhaps account for the observed failure of education programmes which focus on safe sexual practices, but fail to take into account the concepts of masculinity which inform HIV/AIDS risk behaviours. As Campbell (1997, p. 274) argues, "... teaching 'safe sex' in a context where men see virility as compromised by condom use will have little effect". HIV/AIDS education needs to focus on ways of rethinking notions of masculinity "... so that strength becomes associated with maturity and self-control, questioning the view that men's sexuality is beyond their control or that conquest is a necessary and valued attribute of manliness" (Baylies, 2001, p. 22).

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUDING REMARKS

8.1. Revisiting the aims

Returning to the original aims of this research, namely to explore school teachers' concepts and perceptions of masculinity and further to explore whether these concepts and constructions varied by site and type of school, different concepts of masculinity do emerge in different types of school. In the historically White single-sex boys' schools, masculinity is primarily defined in opposition to "other", where the "other" is identified as those who are Black or female or persons with HIV/AIDS. The hegemonic ideal in these schools emerges as "the white, middle-class, heterosexual, family man, living with his wife and children" (Epstein, 1998, p. 53). These findings support Connell's claim that hegemonic definitions of masculinity are most firmly located within private boys' schools (Connell, 1987). These schools serve a privileged population and they emerge as male institutions focused on boys and men.

In the current climate of transition in South Africa, assumptions of privilege based on being male, middle class and White are being challenged. Interviewees in the historically White single-sex schools describe a sense of displacement amongst boys in their schools. Boys are reportedly experiencing uncertainty as to their role and status in a changing social order. This suggests that traditional, hegemonic definitions of masculinity are under threat at these schools. However, just as interviewees speak with multiple voices, so do responses to this threat emerge on multiple levels. While there is an acknowledgement that traditional notions of masculinity need to be questioned and that alternative forms of masculinity should be encouraged and explored in these institutions, there emerges simultaneously a strong sense that traditional hegemonic notions must be defended against the "other" which threatens to impinge on them. Shefer and Ruiters (1998, p. 44) point out that men in South Africa are "... admitting, with some hesitation, that there is an imperative for change, but it is a small, marginal, moderate voice". Indeed, it may be said that boys and men in these institutions are experiencing "... a crisis of legitimacy for the continued domination of white heterosexual men" rather than a crisis of masculinity per se (Lemon, 1995, p. 68).

In the historically Black township schools, masculinity appears to be defined primarily in terms of male dominance, male sexuality and a sense of masculine sexual entitlement. Also

evident was a strong conflict between traditional patriarchal notions of masculinity and more liberal, Western notions. Traditional patriarchal notions of masculinity are under threat, confronted by a constitution which guarantees sexual equality and the rights of women and outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation. The historically Black schools participating in this study are situated in townships with histories of violent conflict, both during and after the apartheid years. Interviewees report high rates of unemployment and crime, and a sense of hopelessness regarding the future. Boys are growing up in a culture where there is little chance of formal employment, and where an academic education seems to hold little value. This sense of limited available options appears to impact on constructions of masculinity, and interviewees described young men whose sense of their own masculinity is tied up with expressions of dominance over women, heterosexual success and the capacity for violence. These appear to be areas where masculinity as defined in terms of dominance and control can be most successfully played out. The changing status of women and girls' growing appreciation of their own power have impacted on boys' perceptions of themselves as men and has left them uncertain to their role and place in a changing society.

Interviewees at the historically White co-educational schools participating in this research appeared to be more actively exploring ways of incorporating non-macho, "new man" concepts of masculinity, both for themselves and in their dealings with their learners. Interviewees across sites emphasised the impact of political and social change on boys' concepts of their role as men in society. It was at the historically White co-educational schools, however, that interviewees expressed active efforts within the school to adapt to and incorporate such changes. As has been previously stated, the learner populations at this group of schools, selected from the previously White, previously advantaged group of co-educational schools, have since 1994 become more representative of the South African population. Learner numbers have increased in these schools and learners are drawn from all population groups. It is perhaps in response to these radical changes that teachers in this group of schools have been forced to confront the multicultural/multiracial dimension of South African society as well as the effects of constitutional change on the status of women.

8.2. Limitations of these research findings

In this study, I interviewed individual teachers at a wide variety of schools. The resultant data are a reflection of the views, beliefs and concerns of these individual teachers and cannot be assumed to reflect the “gender milieu” of the institution in question. In addition, interviewees cannot be assumed to be representative of teachers either in that particular school or of teachers in general. However, at schools where more than one teacher was interviewed, remarkably similar concerns and beliefs were expressed, reflecting to some extent the ethos of the particular school at which they were placed. Secondly, teachers from different schools of a similar type frequently expressed similar beliefs and assumptions regarding masculinity.

This research focuses on teachers’ concepts of masculinity and the way they perceive their learners as boys and young men. There is no guarantee that these views are fully reflective of boys’ views and experience of masculinity. A follow-up study focusing on the views and experiences of the boys themselves is thus indicated.

The particular schools participating in this study were chosen to represent some of the different types of school available in South Africa, as elucidated in the methodology chapter of this thesis. Just as the views of individual teachers cannot be assumed to represent the cultural milieu of the school as a whole, the school itself cannot be assumed to represent all schools of a similar type.

Interview transcripts are the source of data in this study, rather than observational data during interviews. Non-linguistic cues such as facial and body expressions are omitted, resulting in a loss of the richness of the interpersonal experience that an interview can be. Perhaps more critically, answering questions about masculinity may give very different perceptions of masculinity to actually engaging in masculine activity. It needs to be considered whether interview responses give direct access to experience, or are instead actively constructed narratives.

It is important too to be aware of the ideological context of responses concerning concepts of masculinity, to be aware that respondents may be speaking in terms of the cultural norms and values of society and giving socially desirable responses. It has been observed that

interviewees tend to speak with many voices, and it is evident at times that interviewees appear to echo socially and politically correct views of masculinity.

The fact that the interviewer in this research is a White female needs to be noted. Hearn (1998) has observed that age, class, race and sex of interviewer affect interview process and outcome. However, Lee (1993, p. 101) claims that "... interviewer effects due to social characteristics of the interviewer are less marked than has sometimes been thought."

Finally, the effect of the researcher "... who has already made choices about how to interpret them (data) and which quotes and interpretations to present as evidence" needs to be borne in mind (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, p. 140). In conducting these interviews, I was actively listening to respondents, asking questions, leading respondents down some avenues and not others and was obviously guided throughout by my initial research agenda and questions. The interview is therefore unavoidably shaped and directed, despite the unstructured nature of the questionnaire. In addition, the interview participant may respond with what he/she believes he ought to say and changing the race, class or sex of the interviewer would arguably change what is said. It is inevitable that "... the final interpretation of the interview reaction is overloaded with the researcher's interpretive baggage" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 74).

8.3. Directions for further research.

It has been argued that the ways in which boys and men construct their sense of themselves as men impacts on critical problems facing this country – namely the high instance of rape, the spread of HIV/AIDS and violence against both men and women (Foreman, 1999; Lerclerc-Madlala, 1997; 2000; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Rivers and Aggleton, 1999). It is therefore of vital importance that further research focusing on the socialisation of males and the development of concepts of masculinity in boys and young men be carried out.

The immediate need is for research to be carried out among boys and young men themselves. Little has been done in this area, notable exceptions being the work of Luyt and Foster (2001) and Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001). My own research calls for a follow-up study focusing on boys at the particular schools participating in this study.

A number of authors have pointed out that few studies focusing on Black masculinities have been undertaken (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Morrell, 2001a; Wetherell and Edley, 1995). An interesting possibility highlighted by findings in this research would be a comparative study focusing on Black masculinities in different types of schools. This research suggests that the hegemony of Whiteness within the historically White single-sex schools renders Black boys invisible. In addition, the White masculinities described in this research refer to English-speaking White masculinities. Minimal research has been carried out on White Afrikaner masculinities in South Africa (du Pisani, 2001). Future research could include a focus on White Afrikaner masculinities emerging in South African schools.

Finally, there is a need for research which does not rely on interview or self-report material. Varying the methodology in order to avoid social desirability or self-consciousness in participants would add a valuable perspective. One possibility could focus on the study of direct discourses and practices within a school setting.

8.4. Implications of this study

If boys are to be shown how dominant masculinity constrains as much as it advantages them, they need to see how these images and practices are sustained, and at what cost to their opportunities to live lives which are open to diverse experiences and positive relationships with others (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998, p. 222).

Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) identify “the understanding of gender as a central need in school learning for boys and girls” (p. 228). They go on to recommend the incorporation of gender education into the school curriculum. The findings of this research would suggest that issues relating to gender and to masculinity in particular are not adequately addressed within schools at present. Wolpe et al. (1997) in their report to the Department of Education state that it is urgent that the medium of education be mobilized “to develop in students the knowledge, skills and life orientation to ensure that they repudiate discrimination and gendered violence and become advocates against it” (p. 225). The Gender Equity Task team outlines a series of recommendations for action within schools to address violence and sexual harassment (Wolpe et al., 1997). Wolpe et al. point out that “Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st Century” is a document that “sets high value on the curriculum as an instrument for social change (p. 225). However, the emphasis in these documents would

appear to be on gender equity and the status of girls within the education system. While there is an awareness that issues of sexism, violence against women and sexual harassment need to be addressed within our schools, there seems to be little focus on constructions of masculinity which might impact on these phenomena. If it is true that boys construct their masculinity through those discourses which are most readily available to them and most appropriate to their context within a broader society, it is clear that schools face a challenging task in making available and acceptable alternative forms of masculinity. A meaningful gender education programme would need to ensure that an understanding of the social construction of gender is integrated throughout the curriculum.

What does emerge clearly from this research is that the teachers interviewed appear to hold essentialist views on gender and masculinity. There emerges an assumption that a relatively stable masculine “essence” exists which defines men and distinguishes them from women. This finding serves perhaps to highlight one of the difficulties in implementing either gender equity policies or gender education programmes within schools. While these views remain unchallenged, possibilities for change or for reorganisation remain limited.

8.5. Conclusion

“Different masculinities become relevant, common, or even possible, in different historical times, in different places, and in different political situations (Epstein, 1998, p. 49). This research strongly supports this notion. In addition, this research supports her notion that “Not only are there many different masculinities, but individual men are not uncomplicatedly one kind of man all the time” (Epstein, 1998). Interviewees in this study spoke with multiple voices and articulated concepts of masculinity that were often conflicting and contradictory. However, masculinity defined in terms of power and dominance over women and other men emerged consistently, although this power and dominance appeared to be expressed in different forms in different sites.

Connell (1993, p. 605.) argues that ethnographic evidence and research into gender “... wipes out sociobiology, any scheme of genetic determinism, or any ontological or poetic account of male essences, as credible accounts of masculinity”. Interviewees in this study consistently expressed essentialist notions of masculinity – expressed both in the belief that “boys will be boys” and in an adherence to sex-drive discourse. These essentialist notions preclude the

possibility of change and adherence to these notions needs therefore to be challenged.

Rivers and Aggleton (1999) argue that acceptance of Connell's contention that masculinities are socially constructed allows for the notion that dominant or hegemonic masculinities are not constant and the development of alternative masculinities is both possible and can be promoted. Results of this research support social constructionist approaches to masculinity. Masculinities emerge as "... plural identities which intersect with class, ethnicity and sexuality and which are taken up and performed in particular ways in locations such as the school or the streets" Frosh et al. (2002, p. 51). While individual interviewees express essentialist notions and beliefs, the ambivalence, conflict and contradiction so evident in their responses belies the very essentialism they claim to espouse.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: MASCULINITY IN SCHOOLS

- How do you respond to the statement “School is about turning a boy into a man”?
- What kind of young men does your school aim to produce?
- How would you define “masculinity”?
- How would you respond to a situation where a grade ten boy asked you: “What is a real man?”
- Comment on your ideas on co-educational vs single sex schools in achieving the kind of young man you would like to turn out.
- Does your school have a prefect system? Elaborate.
- What forms of discipline work well in your school?
- What sorts of difficulties do you think boys encounter on the road to becoming young men?
- What kind of men are most suitable for the education of boys. Elaborate.
- Comment on how you feel about women educating boys.
- Do you think differently now about educating boys from the way you have thought in the past? Elaborate.
- Has the advent of HIV/AIDS made you think differently about educating boys? Elaborate.
- How do you think an HIV/AIDS education programme should be run in schools and what is being done in your school at present?

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO SCHOOLS

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
School of Psychology

Private Bag X01, Scottsville, South Africa 3209.
Telephone 033-260-5335 Fax 033-260-5809
Email address: Lindegger@nu.ac.za

We are approaching you for your assistance in a research project which we are presently undertaking.

The project broadly focuses on an understanding of rapidly changing patterns and emerging crises around what it means to be a man in to-day's society. Answers to these questions have obvious implications for a deeper understanding of issues such as prevention of HIV/AIDS, domestic and social violence, and the reduction of substance abuse.

There are various stages to this project. At this stage the focus is on identifying some of the major issues facing educators in the education and socialisation of boys, especially in the context of many national crises of the kind identified in the previous paragraph. In order to conduct this stage of the project, we want to briefly interview a sample of school heads and teachers with regard to their experience of these matters. We are contacting a range of schools, and would ideally like to interview a Head and/or one or two teachers from each school. The interview would last about 30-40 minutes, and could be arranged at a mutually suitable time and place. We are ideally hoping to conduct these interviews during the school holidays, in order not to disrupt any school programme.

We wish to assure you at the outset that these interviews will be both anonymous and strictly confidential. No schools or teachers will be identified or identifiable from the research data. In addition, our primary focus is on the experience of individual teachers rather than any official school policies. We would be most grateful if you would give this matter your consideration, and hopefully your approval, and also bring it to the attention of any staff who you might consider interested or suitable.

We will be in contact with you by telephone to follow up this matter in the next week.

Many thanks for your consideration.

APPENDIX C

PAGE BY PAGE SUMMARY EXAMPLEHistorically White single sex boys' school.

P1

- single sex school with 500 boys
- explains why school is divided into different groups, stating that boys needs differ at different ages Middle school is grade 8, 9, 10 and ages 14, 15 and 16.

P2

- he points out that it is during the middle school years that boys identities are formed and it is at this time that there is a *“shift from boys being more dependent on their mothers...then assuming a closer relation with the father.”*
- This reflects some of the reading, where there is a stress on the need for boys to break away from mothers – especially mythopoetic stuff, which emphasises the need for this close relationship with fathers
- He goes on to suggest that boys who have made this break with the mother are generally *“more independent and more robust”* and *“more socially settled if he’s made that break”*. This break with the mother seems to be in some way connected with a need for greater discipline as well as increased exposure to the “real world”
- Suggests that by age 17 identity, whether straight or gay, is formed (the only interviewee who did not make an absolute assumption that all boys are heterosexual)
- He suggests that disciplinary issues in upper school may relate to sexually devious behaviour – he is the only staff member interviewed to make this suggestion, which I should have pursued, but did not
- He suggests that boys aged 14 – 16 probably need more discipline, whereas self discipline becomes more relevant in the upper school

P 3

- Returning to the issue of sexual orientation, he states that the school is “*quite homophobic*” and homosexuality is not accepted.
- He points out that this is not a stand taken by all the staff, but is the official line of the school. He adds that there is a vision of “*what men should be*”
- He stresses that this might not reflect his own personal views, but that the official line in the school is that “*men should be polite to women and they must be physically robust and they must be independent and they mustn't whine*”
- He suggests that this idea of a man leaves little space for culture and the creative arts.
- He mentions the stereotype that boys who are involved in drama is effeminate
- He emphasises that “*this is a robust boys' school*”, a stand made clear by the headmaster
- He mentions that some of the senior boys are fairly openly effeminate/gay...this is echoed in some of the reading, especially Connell, Edley and Wetherell , where alternative masculinities are set up in opposition to hegemonic forms in schools. These boys have in this particular school found some sympathetic staff and this has caused “*interesting dynamics between management and staff*” . He is fascinated that this sort of open effeminacy should have arisen against the “clear message about men and masculinity” which the school delivers. (Interesting that here effeminacy is equated with homosexuality.)
- He points out that this school does “accommodate the individual” and this might in part account for the different kinds of masculinity that emerge.
- He points out that although senior members of staff support a strong rugby culture, this does is not in fact reflected in the boys. He suggests too that there is very little racism at the school and “*very little homophobia amongst the boys*” which is in strong contrast to the other single sex male schools interviewed. He suggests this is due either to a generational factor or to the particular ethos and culture of the school, where the boys “own” the school.
- Suggests too that the history of the school may be partly responsible. I find it really fascinating that he should suggest that there is little racism, little homophobia, little support for a rugby culture, despite a very strong message from the head and senior management! So what accounts for this claimed difference from the other schools interviewed?

- *“you will have an apparent message of homophobia and rugby is important coming through but the boys actually don't always buy into it”*
- he stresses that the school is unpretentious and that there is a fairness and a sense of community. Individual rights are respected.

P4

- younger boys might give more disciplinary problems, and *“more often to women teachers at that level”*
- he feels that the middle school years (14-16) are very nb for boys in terms of testing boundaries, exploring pornography etc. Risk behaviours such as alcohol and tobacco too. He deals with this by ensuring that the form teachers are competent and *“they happen all to be men”* He looks at the issues of development in terms of discipline, and points out that at certain ages boys need a more cut and dried approach. He emphasises “testing limits” and “testing boundaries” as being an nb part of 14-16 year old boys – masculinity as testing the limits!

P5

- on being asked what type of young man the school is trying to produce, he points out a certain ambivalence, as there are clearly some differences between the head and senior management on the one hand, and certain staff members on the other.
- He himself feels that boys need to be confident, have self-esteem, be positive, achieve academically, have self-knowledge and have some direction.
- The head will tend to emphasise *“robustness”* more
- *“he will look more at elements like robustness, competition, standing on your own two feet, helping yourself, initiative”*
- on the question of what makes a real man, he suggests a real man should not feel threatened, should have a strong sense of himself, a quiet confidence (not arrogance or bravado) should be aware of and not ashamed of sensitivity, tolerating different attitudes, know himself. He should be academically and intellectually critical. He rejects the *“bravado aspect”* of masculinity. He adds that it is important to be able to develop a good relationship with a woman.
- He stresses the role of physical activity. He feels it is of critical importance, and links physical activity to physical development. Somehow he manages to relate this to the issue of puberty, stressing that *“normal”* puberty is best for boys, as early puberty

leads to problems “*he gets an unfair advantage which is disproportional to what’s going to come*” and he goes on to say that “*late puberty is very problematic because of the physical nature of boys*”, pointing out how much size counts with boys. (so again there is a stress on conforming to a norm, to the difficulties faced in peer culture if one is in any way different)

P6

- Points out that it is very important for boys to play sport competently “*and therefore you’ve got to have certain physical ability and certain physical size*” –(as this is clearly not a reality or possible for many boys, what does it mean for them?)
- Although he has stressed that this is not a rugby school, he now states “*sports here is fanatical*”. He goes on to say he believes this is appropriate, that there should be this emphasis on sport.
- “*I think the emphasis on sport is good so therefore if you’re a late developer it’s problematic*” –which makes me wonder, again, what this in fact means for the late developers. And there is a suggestion that boys SHOULD develop at the right/normal time (whenever that is).
- He again states that there is a sort of scepticism around mainstream sport in the school and a “*slight resistance to becoming a rugger-bugger school*” (yet in a sense this is still defined against and in opposition to a hegemonic masculinity – “*the clichéd South African rugby playing male*”)
- He points out that junior boys play two sports in winter – rugby and hockey. And he points out that this keeps them very busy, which he emphasises is important. He believes it is very important to keep adolescent boys busy (again the suggestion that there is a need for control, the essentialist idea that without the right control, boys will be doing the wrong thing)
- He points out that “*boys definitely have more energy than girls physically and therefore they must be kept busy, they must be tired at the end of the day*”
- This is to keep control at the school – and also he points out the essential difference between boys and girls, “*the way a boy works is different to the way a girl works*” – suggesting that girls are naturally more conscientious than boys (reflecting again the reading that suggests that there is in schools an essentialist assumption regarding the nature of boys and girls)

- In contrast to....., there is no “skivvying” and no senior boy can make a junior boy do anything for him. He points out that the head is strongly egalitarian and that outside in the real world you can only get people to do things for you if you employ them. I find this contrast to interesting, as there there is a very strong emphasis on hierarchy, and skivvying is seen as a valuable part of the tradition.
- He points out that if you “*don’t manage your boarding establishment*” you will get “*a strong sort of very destructive culture developing very quickly, so we work very hard at it*” Again this supports the belief that essentially males are uncontrollable and destructive.
- He speaks of initiation: “*the back seats of busses in boys schools are well known for initiation happening*” - and then contradicts his earlier statement re hierarchy, for in buses the seniors are in the back and juniors in front “*that’s very hierarchical*”
- Interesting point here – he describes the sexual nature of an initiation incident, where a mascot has to be masturbated, and then goes on to make an extraordinary connection “*I think sexuality has got to be very clearly defined and I think that’s the head’s approach that is why he has got a very strong vision of what a man is and its not homosexual*” He appears in some way to be linking the sexual nature of the initiation right to homosexuality – why?
- Describes an earlier ritual where boys coming into boarding establishment were initiated by having to masturbate into a cup. “*so you’ve got to manage your boarding establishment very, very, very carefully because you know little rituals come in you know*” .

P7

- he goes on to state that there is something “*quite base*” about male sexuality at adolescence and “*I think you’ve got to educate against it*”
- he points out that he himself is fanatical about sport, but that he hates the “*machismo that goes with sport*”, although he thinks the image is now softening, due to market forces and needing to present a ‘*Mr Nice-guy image*’ He then points out the initiation rites of adult Springbok rugby players and how shocking he finds them. (The suggestion being that initiation rites are not restricted to adolescence, and that there is some connection between men in groups, sexuality and initiation.)
- Interesting that he points out that in this particular instance, the Black players were shocked by the form of initiation, pointing perhaps to cultural differences in initiation rites?

- HIV/AIDS – again, boys in the environment operate under the assumption that AIDS does not affect them. He states that he has no idea of the degree of sexual activity amongst the boys. In terms of HIV education he seems a little uncertain, stating that it is covered in Biology etc, that it is not a taboo, that condoms are not a taboo issue, but concluding that *“I think we’re not enlightened enough”*
- He feels that “masculinity” as a topic or issue is not suitable in itself for the curriculum, stating that boys are quite simple and that education should be about a few key ideas.
- What he is suggesting is that it is through the type of ethos and culture of the school that boys come to develop for example self esteem and concepts of masculinity, rather than through a conscious discussion and awareness of these issues.
- He has strong feelings AGAINST co-education. He points out that coeducation *“disadvantages boys because girls are academically and personally more disciplined and therefore achieve better within the confine of the school environment”* This was pointed out atas well, also in terms of quoting authorities to support their points of view. It raises a number of interesting issues – is it a problem if girls achieve better? If so, why? And again that essentialist idea that girls are naturally more disciplined. Are they?
- He goes on to point out that *“during the development phase in adolescence boys don’t work as hard as girls do, because girls give more attention to detail and are more reliable generally speaking”*. Because of these differences, he believes that in a co ed setting, boys *“are actually overshadowed so they need the space to all mess things up together”*. So the suggestion here is that in fact males are weaker and more vulnerable than girls and need the space and time to grow up without being overshadowed?
- He adds, however, that he is referring to day schools – that he is not in favour of isolated single sex boarding schools
- He goes back to the arena of discipline and school ethos, pointing out that one needs to keep things simple and clear cut with boys *“we’ve got four aims here, work hard, play hard, get involved and respect stuff and people”* He believes that the process of educating has to be kept very *“simple and repetitive”* and *“concrete”*.

P8

- believes in being proactive rather than reactive

- when I brought up the issue of violence he immediately related this to sport, where he said there is a very clear distinction and clear line on rough play, dirty play, fair play etc. He adds that “*rugby obviously is the one that lends itself most to this type of situation its very very severely dealt with because of its propensity to violence*” While I have not really focused on sport in this work I do find it fascinating that there is this entire world of controlled violence and aggression operating in sport. In rugby especially, there must be aggression, but there are strict rules containing the aggression – and then there is the violence of discipline around these issues – for eg in my own experience in a school the first team rugby captain was beaten six for dirty play.

APPENDIX D
CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED

Dominance
Discipline
Homophobia
Heterosexism
Heterosexuality
Sexuality
HIV/AIDS
Peer Pressure
Violence
Sexual Harassment
Boys in relation to girls
Adult models of real man
Real man
Independence
Aggression
Risk behaviours
Masculinity as risk taking
Masculinity as dominance
Masculinity as breadwinner
Masculinity as taking charge
Masculinity as self confidence
Masculinity as strength
Masculinity as power
Masculinity as success
Masculinity vs “other”
Role of fathers
Role of mothers
Role of teachers
Civilising effect of girls
Sport as violence
Sport as keeping control

Competitiveness
Marginalized masculinities
Race and sexuality
Race
Playboy mentality
Sexuality
Violence
New man
“Macho” man
Initiation rite
Sex drive discourse
Male sexual pleasure
Effeminacy
Hierarchies
Essential nature of boys
Essential nature of girls
Playboy mentality
Gangs
Changing status of women
Displaced boys
Traditional beliefs
Cultural beliefs
Role of tradition
Racism
Boys and fathers
Boys and mothers
Discipline
Corporal punishment
Rugby boys in choir
Role of arts
Role of women