Older men's experiences of masculine identities across the lifespan

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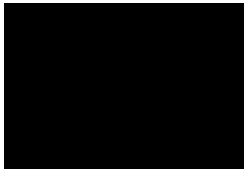Supervisors: Professor G. Lindegger and Professor M. Quayle

SUPERVISORS' SIGNATURES

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

Prof. G. L. Lindegger

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

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Prof. M. Quayle

DECLARATION

I, Andrea Zank, declare that

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Signed:

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14 November 2021

Supervisors: Professor G. Lindegger and Dr M. Quayle

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> we want you to feel that you *really* 'get' (qualitative research) […] that you know how to actually go about doing a qualitative research project (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 3)

> so rather than blundering uninitiated into the wilderness of qualitative research, and potentially getting lost or making some fundamental errors, you can walk confidently, with solid ground beneath your feet (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 19)

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this research was to investigate how men have experienced their masculinity across their life journeys as men, as revealed in retrospective accounts of life transitions. The research especially sought to understand how masculine identities were narrated and negotiated across the lifespan in retrospective accounts as, to date, most research on masculinity has adopted a cross-sectional perspective that does not consider the challenges of ageing in producing and maintaining a masculine identity across the lifespan.

With a theoretical framework combining thematic analysis (TA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), and honouring the idiographic commitment of IPA to small samples of very detailed interviews, multiple in-depth narrative interviews were undertaken with 10 men who were 60 years or older. These volunteers were sampled with purposive and convenience snowballing. Although the research took place in a specific context of South Africa in which the population is highly diverse and complex, the sample was relatively homogenous due to the research (1) an intentional focus on exploring ageing for men who previously had access to access to resources and the (2) the location of the study in retirement villages that are still racially homogenous a quarter of a century after apartheid. In-depth, repeated, partly unstructured interviews were used to access retrospective accounts of masculine identities across the lifespan. Five areas were focused on in the analysis: productivity along the lifespan, family / relationships, health in the present and over the lifespan, ageing and living in Africa.

The men defined themselves by traditional masculine identities and did not freely volunteer non-traditional masculine experiences. Their accounts of masculinity were oriented to the lifespan social clock, in other words, to accounting for achieving various milestones (or not) of masculinity on schedule (or not). Although these older men did not fulfil the hegemonic or dominant ideals, such as being young and virile, they did not present themselves as being invisible or genderless.

Various strategies were used to protect, maintain and reframe their masculine identities, for example, stoic acceptance, denial and relying on their wives to bridge the gap, such as accessing medical intervention, while the men were able to continue

Mostly the men presented their masculine identities as being consistent with dominant norms and unchallenged (denying age-related decline by omission). Where the men spoke of being in subjugated positions they often followed this account in various ways

in which the subjugated position was discounted and their hegemonic status re-established by emphasising hegemonic qualities that they possessed or subscribed to. In the present study, men avoided discussing the inevitability of old age when recounting their life journey as men retrospectively. However, the perspective of time is still an important concept in understanding how they produced their masculinity.

The present study shows that social expectations for masculine identities are dynamic, evolve over the lifespan and are sensitive to the "social clock", in other words, to normative expectations about what men should do and achieve at different life stages. Men are pressured to achieve masculine developmental social expectations on time, despite it becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the accepted standards of hegemonic and dominant masculinities. The implications for understanding masculinity in relation to ageing are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS USED

IPA   Interpretative phenomenological analysis

KZN   KwaZulu-Natal

TA   Thematic analysis

UKZN   University of KwaZulu-Natal

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Joe is in his eighties. He spoke about his life journey as a man. He referred to filling the ideal standards of hegemonic masculinity through his achievements at school. He excelled academically. He also displayed his virility, strength, competitiveness and youthfulness by playing first team rugby. He is now old, overweight, frail and dependent on others. He is greatly distanced from the highly valued hegemonic qualities.

When he left school, he fulfilled valued masculine identities of working, being a provider, a husband and father. According to the developmental social norms he achieved these on time.

However, although he worked throughout his life, he did not fulfil the ideal hegemonic standard of being an "excellent" provider. He had enough finances to come by but was not able to afford the latest cars and expensive hobbies. He used humour to deflect his lack of abundant resources and high-powered job to provide the best of everything for his family. He joked that his family never went hungry and that his wife never divorced him.

He was independent on many levels for twenty years after his retirement. This is another valued hegemonic standard. However, ageing inevitably caught up with him. He could no longer live on his own independently. His body had become frail and he required moving to frail care. Not only was he dependent on his carers but he was also financially dependent on his children.

Joe no longer had the financial and physical resources to be independent. He downplayed this loss of independence by focusing on being responsible by making the decision to move to frail care on his own. Being in control is a valued hegemonic characteristic. In this place of dependence, Joe was seen to emphasise the masculine qualities he displayed to defend and maintain his masculine status. By ageing, Joe had moved away from the ideal hegemonic standards of being virile, youthful, independent and strong.

This imagined conversation with Joe captures many features of being a man and experiencing ageing: a changing relationship to physicality; a slow decline in independence; changing access to economic and social capital through different life phases and so on.

These experiences are inevitable for men lucky enough to live to old age, and yet they do not feature much in research on masculinity.

Men's experience is often understood through the lens of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity positions gender within a patriarchal power structure. It also enforces and maintains it (Wedgwood, 2009). This conception of hegemonic masculinity focuses on the power relations in a specific period of time, a cross-sectional approach, as opposed to how it is experienced across a lifespan. For example, at one period of time, a man would be seen to achieve status by being a successful businessman and provider. Exploring hegemonic masculinity across the lifespan would involve examining how the man experienced his work identity from starting work, reaching a pinnacle of success and then retiring and having to relinquish his work identity. This would also impact his ability to provide. This present research goes beyond a static application of hegemonic masculinity to explore masculinity across the lifespan.

All men age. And, if they are lucky enough to reach old age, their ability to claim various aspects of hegemonic masculinity becomes tenuous. As we see in Joe's retrospective account of his life as a man, above, we see that different elements of hegemonic masculinity are claimed at different times, and contrast with the current, age-related challenges that potentially undermine his masculinity. While change with the passage of time is a universal feature of masculine identity, it is virtually absent in theoretical accounts of masculinity.

Spector-Mersel (2006) conceptualises masculinity from a temporal perspective. She raises the issue that masculine identity has been primarily studied cross-sectionally, that is, focusing on specific periods of a man's life. She proposes that to achieve a richer understanding of masculine identity, research should be conducted across the lifespan. She also identifies the potential impact of various components of a lifespan on a man's experience of his masculinity, for example, the pressure of developmental social norms. This is a valuable consideration as cross-sectional studies focus on the participants' experiences during, for example, a specific developmental stage, and neglect exploring their masculine experience transitions from one developmental stage to another. She proposes that masculinity identity and masculine expectations are truncated at middle age. She suggests that, as a consequence, men potentially become invisible and asexual. However, to date little research has explored how older men construct masculinity across their lifespans

or continue to position themselves as masculine, despite being robbed by age of many of the characteristics that previously defined their masculinity. Practically older men appear to continue engaging in life as men. Is this a farce? Do they negotiate their masculinity while ageing and thereby being distanced from hegemonic masculine ideals? If so, how do they do this?

In this present research, three areas are focused on in response to the call by Spector-Mersel (2006) to understand masculinity as a lifespan identity process. Firstly, how does a masculine identity present across the lifespan as opposed to being studied at a static singular point of time? For example, going beyond specifically focusing only on a man being a provider for his young children, to exploring the impact of ageing and growing frail on his identity of being a provider so that he becomes dependent on his adult children. Secondly, do – and if so, how do – components of lifespan, such as the social clock, impact on a man's experience of his masculinity across his lifespan? Does he experience pressure if he is "off time" according to the developmental social norms? Thirdly, how do men negotiate their masculinity as they age when – as argued by Spector-Mersel (2006) – the cultural expectations and hegemonic ideals of what a man is, are truncated at middle-age? In everyday life, older men appear to present as masculine men in many ways. This appears to challenge her argument. Do older men feel confident in their masculinity in spite of not complying to the ideal hegemonic qualities, such as being young and virile, or are their perhaps areas they feel confident but experience their masculinity as being challenged in other areas particular that are impacted by ageing? Then, going beyond Spector-Mersel's work, how do older men continue to position themselves as masculine despite being robbed by age of many of the characteristics that previously defined their masculinity? These areas of focus will be discussed in greater detail below. Multiple in-depth narrative interviews were undertaken in this study with 10 men who were 60 years or older in order to access retrospective accounts of masculine identities across the lifespan.

Spector-Mersel (2006) focuses on understanding gender using a temporal dimension across the life course; a developmental approach in which the interaction between masculinity and age can be considered. This is a rich concept which gives this study a unique angle to approach the study of masculinity. She proposes that, not only do various hegemonic masculinities exist across time, but also that they are "are tied to specific phases of the life course" (p. 71). She uses two examples to illustrate this. "An Israeli example

would be a combat soldier at age twenty who grew into a successful manager when he reached his fifties [.... and …] a brilliant college student in young adulthood who became a well-known professor in middle age" (p. 72). Both these examples illustrate how the work identity was expressed in a dynamic fashion over their lifespan. This present research aims to developmentally explore masculine identities experienced over men's lifespans, and particularly from the perspective of older adulthood. Doing a retrospective study can achieve an understanding of masculinity in greater depth as it proceeds along an individual's life. A more holistic picture of how a man experiences his masculinity may be achieved.

Spector-Mersel (2006) makes a strong argument that masculinity is bound to time. She writes:

> […] each culture holds an idea of the 'normal' or 'expectable' life cycle, identifying certain life events with certain times. This 'social clock' is maintained by means of age-norms that regulate progression throughout the adult years and indicate whether individuals are 'on time' or 'off time'. […] I suggest (a)s is the case with any other identity, such as familial or occupational, masculinities are bound to social clocks that ascribe different models of manhood to different periods in men's lives. (p. 70)

Spector-Mersel (2006)'s model raises important questions: do social clocks actually impact masculinity experienced across the lifespan? Do the men experience pressure if they are "off time" in a particular area of their lives? With much of the literature being cross-sectional, the impact of these aspects of lifespan on masculinity is not clear.

Spector-Mersel (2006) considers hegemonic scripts to be incomplete. She contends that clear ideals and values are evident in early and middle adulthood, but these "become vague and even non-existent, when referring to later life" (p. 73). She argues that masculinity in older age is portrayed as being "transparent and paradoxical social category, and indicate[s] an inverse correlation between masculinity and aging" (p. 67). In everyday life, there are obvious areas of life observed in which older men do not fulfil valued hegemonic qualities such as no longer having a work identity or being a financial provider, they are more vulnerable to sickness. Yet in other areas they appear to have intact masculinity. Spector-Mersel's proposal provides a powerful challenge for this research to explore.

The present study explores how older men negotiate their masculinity as their ageing progressively distances them from the ideals and standards of conventional masculinity. Will they access non-hegemonic masculinities to deal with their distancing from the ideal forms of masculinity?

Spector-Mersel (2006) highlights how hegemonic masculinity forms an essential role in forming men's masculine identity. She proposes that the hegemonic ideals are recipes to determine "how to be a worthy man" (p. 72).

In this study, specific focus will be on how men retrospectively account for what prevented them from resisting or enabled them to take up hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions at various points in the lifespan, as well as how the men manage and negotiate their masculinity as they become increasingly alienated from hegemonic masculinity ideals as they age.

In order to gain a rich understanding of these men's experiences of their masculinity across their lifespan, it was important that an in-depth analysis of their retrospective accounts be achieved. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) does in-depth analysis by focusing on subjective experience of the subjects. De Visser and Smith (2007) describe the aim of IPA as "explor(ing) in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world" (p. 53). Braun and Clarke (2013) explain how IPA focuses on "verbatim accounts and draw[s] from a small sample" (p. 181). To ensure such in-depth analysis could be achieved, a small sample of 10 participants was utilised in this study.

The data in this study were analysed both across the entire dataset and, very importantly, across the individual cases, specifically across each participants' lifespan, as this research adopts a lifespan developmental approach. Thematic analysis would be effective in capturing the themes across the dataset. IPA was considered ideal to analyse the themes in depth across the lifespan within a single participant's biography, much like a case study. IPA examines single cases at a time. These signify the lived experiences of individuals through in-depth examinations. IPA was therefore considered to be an effective tool to capture this retrospective account within an individual's lifespan through the detailed analysis of cases. This combination of methods would give a holistic overall picture of the similarities across men's experiences (TA) and the idiosyncratic features of each man's life experience (IPA). The relation between Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis and IPA, are further discussed in the method section.

This present research investigated several life stories in detail, each dealing with an issue or theme across each of the participants' lifespans in depth. These capture the essence of the retrospective, developmental lifespan approach utilised in this present research within the biographical account of each participant. This study will also be addressing in depth how issues in the participant's life are experienced by the participant in terms of their masculine identity and how they defend their masculine identity across their lifespan, in the context of their current status as older men.

I wrote the thesis in the third person except within the reflexivity section. I made this choice intentionally, to emphasise the individual nature of the issues discussed in the reflexivity section, which involved very personal experiences of research with a powerful, intimate and powerful impact. The contrasting between sections written in first- and third-person better capture the personal involvement of the researcher.

Overview of the layout of thesis

This thesis is structured into four sections: literature review, method, findings and discussion and conclusion.

The literature review, overall, deals with two core concepts: hegemonic masculinity and the lifespan developmental perspective. First the unique context of Africa and specifically South Africa is introduced, highlighting the unique cultural context in which the study took place. Following this, Connell's hegemonic model of power and gender (Connell, 2005) and alternate masculine identities (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Swain, 2006) are described in detail. Thereafter various negotiation strategies are discussed with which men have negotiated their masculine identities in other research. The second section explores various ideas around the concept of lifespan (Spector-Mersel, 2006) such as social norms, the social clock, categories of life events along a timeline, masculine developmental stages and identities along the lifespan, the impact of prior gender socialization, and studies utilising the lifespan approach. A developmental perspective is drawn on to illustrate a temporal understanding of masculinity. Other studies that have used a longitudinal approach to investigate masculine identities in a dynamic temporal way are discussed.

The method section is made up of seven subsections. The following are discussed: the rationale, objective and research questions, the research design, ethical considerations, standards of research enquiry and reflexivity of the researcher.

The findings and discussion are made up of five chapters unpacking the key themes experienced along the lifespan identified by the researcher's analysis. The first superordinate theme deals with living in Africa. The second superordinate theme is ageing. It is made up of three subordinate themes: providing across the lifespan, family and relationships and health. Providing across the lifespan is made up of the subordinate themes of providing, working and retiring. The second subordinate theme, family and relationships, consists of marriage, procreation, fatherhood and caring. The third subordinate theme, health, deals with acute and chronic health issues (and especially age-related frailty). A thematic map is used to make sense of the nested relationships between these themes, and the case-by-case variations between participants are discussed in detail.

The conclusion then summarises and draws all these findings together, and discusses the future recommendations and limitations of the study. The present study supports Spector-Mersel's (2006) call to consider masculinity as a lifespan process; but shows how masculinity is not truncated at middle-age as Spector-Mersel suggested. The analysis shows how men creatively engage with the challenge that ageing poses to their masculinity, and how, eventually, all have to engage with vulnerability.

In summary, this study applies a temporal approach to understanding masculinity accessed via retrospective interviews. Even though in masculine identity the passage of time is a universal feature, it is not evident in most theoretical accounts of masculinity. There has not been much research that has explored how ageing men construct their masculinity over their lifespan. This present research intends to explore how masculine identities present across the lifespan and how older men position themselves as masculine in spite of age robbing them of many of the qualities that had previously defined their masculinity. Different elements of hegemonic masculinity are experienced and narrated at different periods. The impact of the temporal components of identity, such as the social clock, is not usually visible in research because much of the literature is cross-sectional. By conducting a retrospective study, questions related to components of lifespan such as whether men experience pressure if they are "off time" will be addressed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to explore the development of masculine identities across men's lifespans; how men negotiate their masculinity across the lifespan, especially as they grow old; the various strategies used in their retrospective accounts as men to negotiate their masculinity across their lifespan; and, the impact of lifespan issues on masculinity, namely the social clock, as time is considered a key component of the research conducted. The overarching framework is hegemonic masculinity, which provides a theory for understanding the constraints in which men negotiate their masculinity within hegemonic hierarchies of power, dominance and status. Various counter-hegemonic masculinities will be discussed, and how men may negotiate local versions of masculinity that may be dominant even if violating hegemonic standards. Until now, most research applying this framework has been cross-sectional. This study will apply hegemonic masculinity across the lifespan according to the participants' retrospective accounts of their lives as men. Little research has focused on ageing, the challenges of producing hegemonic masculinity and negotiating dominant masculinities in old age, or the way that masculinity is constructed across lifespan narratives. This review of the literature will start with a brief background to men and masculinity studies, unpack hegemonic masculinity and other forms of masculinities, and investigate various strategies in which masculinity has been negotiated and theorised in other studies. After this, the literature exploring masculinity and ageing will be reviewed and then the literature considering masculinity as a lifespan process.

Masculinity

Brief background to Men and Masculinity Studies (MMS) and their contextual application

MMS is a field of study that is interdisciplinary and dynamic and is essentially "concerned with the social construction of what it means to "be a man" (Kimmel & Bridges, 2011, p. 1). This academic discipline has emerged over the decades in response to various factors.

By most accounts, the study masculinity began within the umbrella of gender studies in the 70s (Bridges, 2019). Bridges (2019) described this masculinity research as being explicitly feminist. However, this research was also reacting to sex roles identity theory (Reeser, 2020), which understands the similarities and differences between men and women

as a function of people adopting proscribed sex-based social roles within their society. Role theory supports the ideas that gender roles are constant and universal; "roles" are relatively fixed constructs that did not adequately explain rapid social change in the 1970s and 1980s (Bridges, 2019). Reeser (2020) described how, in sex role theory, masculinity was considered as singular, whereas masculinity studies moved to approaching masculinity as plural. He went further to explain that instead of gender being seen as preceding human activity, masculinity studies considered gender to be created through action or, as the subsequent sections will describe – *performativity* (Butler, 2010; Franks, 2020).

While masculinity studies emerged from within the field of feminist research. As men were increasingly recognised as gendered beings (rather than just the default human prototype), masculinity studies was gradually recognised as a distinct new field of studies as a complement to feminist studies (Reeser, 2020). Reeser (2020) explained that masculinity was now considered to be 'visible' which provided a new conceptual framework for understanding how masculinity maintained its power. In the 1980s, there was a breaking away from feminist studies in which men's studies were recognised as an independent academic movement (Appleby, 2014). Appleby (2014) described how the research was focused increasingly on multiple masculinities and addressing hegemony and hierarchy amongst men and women, as well as between men. Feminist studies of women and gender inspired MMS to explore the social construction of gender and in addition the role men play in the gender order (Kimmel & Bridges, 2011). Kimmel and Bridges (2011) explain how this has led studies of masculinity to emphasise how men have collectively benefited and also how various groups of men have been disadvantaged. Recently there has been some critique that MMS are diverging from feminist scholarship in which feminist knowledge, theory, and methodology are being neglected (Waling, 2019, p. 91) – for example the issues of agency and emotional reflexivity, both of which are vital concepts of feminist research.

However, these theories and frameworks were developed in a specific cultural context. Theories of masculinity developed in the global North are frequently applied in in the Global South, and are often indiscriminately accepted because of the assumption that they represent "universal, timeless, and context- and value-free knowledge in science" (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022, p. 1). Adams et al. (2018) go further by referring to the "practice of hegemonic psychology [as imposing a] particular regime of cultural knowledge as a global standard, often regardless of its fit for local ecology" (Adams et al.,

2018, p. 14). In response, Castro Torres and Alburez-Gutierrez (2022) reported that researchers working in the Global South (whether unconsciously or not) tend to justify their work by being transparent about their geographical focus with an indication of the non-universality and specificity of their work. Some authors have argued that this almost seems to be an apology that they are not conforming to the "default case" (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022, p. 1) of Western hegemony. Indeed, South African MMS and intervention programmes largely rely heavily on theories and frameworks developed in the "Global North" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 291).

"Coloniality is the underbelly of Western modernity" (Ratele et al., 2021, p. 44). It has been argued that coloniality persists after countries formally gain independence "[… particularly in] forms of knowledge and ways of being that colonial power imposed on the world as a hegemonic standard" (Adams et al., 2018, p. 13). Some have contended that this is particularly the case with academic knowledge and practices, which create, disseminate and crystalize knowledge (Ciofalo, 2022). The quote below refers to how entrenched it is in society, how it impacts the perpetuation of colonialization:

> According to the decolonial authors from the Global South, coloniality is deeply embedded in modernity maintained by the colonial matrix of power (CMP) that determines the colonial difference, thereby dividing the world between those who have power (the colonizers, the developed, the civilized, the superior) and those to whom power is applied (the colonized, the underdeveloped, the primitive, and the inferior) to extract profit and uncontrolled gain, and promote imperial expansion in the name of progress and civilization. (Ciofalo, 2022, p. 427)

Castro Torres and Alburez-Gutierrez (2022) define eurocentrism as a worldview that prioritises Western knowledge as superior, and argue that science and social science continue to reproduce colonialism in the questions and methods that are allowable (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022).

Authors from the Global South have challenged the assumption of universality of the knowledge produced in the Global North, arguing that it is only valid for specific contexts (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022). Mfecane (2018) argued that these research tools are not neutral, nor hold any universal truths by virtue of them being formed by the very specific cultural contexts within which they were created. Community psychology reflects

this thinking when referred to as being "a movement and paradigm only valid in its own social, cultural, economic, and political context" (Ciofalo, 2022, p. 427).

'Individualism' is important in the West, and this creates highly context-specific populations. Yet, when this idea has been challenged, the general response appears to have been dismissive, regardless of the consequences. Various authors have highlighted the extent to which "neoliberal individualism prevalent in settings that are Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and supposedly Democratic—in a word, WEIRD" (Adams et al., 2018, p. 14) is engrained in "modern mentalities" which has been imposed as a "hegemonic standard for global humanity and mainstream academic work" (Adams et al., 2018, p. 14). Whenever "Other ways of being have been encountered that have been different from WEIRD standards, the tendency has been to interpret such differences as pathological deviations that reflect societal immaturity and are productive of harm" (Adams et al., 2018, p. 14).

Castro Torres and Alburez-Gutierrez (2022) argue that the lack of shift away from largely Eurocentric thinking, in spite of its many critiques, can be described as the "unwarranted generalizability of psychology studies on Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) samples [being due to] the economic, political, and cultural hegemony of the Global North (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022, p. 1).

However, it is not only in research that models and frameworks of the Global North apply themselves to the Global South, it is in the daily lives of citizens. Many men in South Africa live out Eurocentric version of masculinity. In the early 1970s, the province of Natal (now the province KwaZulu-Natal in which the study took place) was affectionately referred to as 'the last outpost,' as if it was not part of South Africa but rather still a far-flung colony of the British Empire (Dictionary Unit for South African English, 2022). This referred to how culturally white English-speaking South Africans in this province used Europe as their yardstick for culture and values.

Mfecane (2018) argued that the Global North theories gave inadequate accounts of African masculinities because of them being entrenched in Western epistemologies. Further, he criticised them because of their narrow definitions of masculinity, which, he felt, robbed the theories of achieving a full understanding of the multifaceted life-experiences of African men. One issue the author took exception to was the "ethic of individuality which is regarded as a core feature of personhood in Western society" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 300). He then detailed what personhood in Africa is as is be discussed below.

Mfecane (2018) stated how the global North theories on personhood describe it as being a product of social performances and constructions. However, he explained that in most African settings personhood understands human beings to be more than that, being "composed of material and immaterial components" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 292). This highlights how the western "truth" is not universal to all communities. Mfecane (2018) continued to highlight how African personhood is conceived as being relational as opposed to the western value of individualism. He described how rituals form an important part of this reality, which are said to extend over the lifespan. He elaborated on how the actual participation in these rituals in the community confers personhood status. The author described the various life transitions honoured in South African communities through rituals beginning from childhood rituals "to adolescence, puberty, adulthood, parenthood, manhood, womanhood, elderly, and ancestry" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 297). Based on this discussion, Mfecane (2018) highlighted that:

> […] in order to account fully for the complex lives of African men, scholars need to develop theories of masculinity based on African conceptions of reality. Such theories should treat masculinity as both socially constructed and as being influenced by unseen elements of personhood, as encapsulated in traditional African thoughts. (p. 291)

Mfecane (2018) also provided a critique of masculinity-related "transformation programmes" conducted in South Africa, which target black men, but use the concept of hegemonic masculinity to inform their interventional work. He suggested that some of these interventions were ineffective because they were "incongruent with the real-life experiences of African men [and instead need to incorporate the] immaterial elements of personhood, which are believed to have an influence on social conduct of Africans" (Mfecane, 2018, p. 299). In response he suggested that it would be more productive to incorporate an intersectional approach which would incorporate issues of race, class, economic marginalization, and poverty. The author summarised his opinion on these programmes by saying:

> This implies that masculine transformation programmes in South Africa cannot be content with using gender transformation models formulated in the Global North. If African masculinity is believed to be shaped by forces existing beyond the visible

social realm, these should form part of our engagements with African men. (Mfecane, 2018, p. 299)

Ciofalo (2022, p. 427) made an urgent petition that "now more than ever, we must band together to co-construct antiracist and decolonial community psychologies in plural that are informed by epistemologies and praxes from the Global South as well as Indigenous psychologies". Mfecane (2018) concurred by highlighting how important it was to challenge the "philosophical premises of masculinity theories developed in the Global North" (p. 293), to expose the Western epistemologies underlying them, and to be more deliberate and careful in how and where they are applied.

One way of 'decolonising' theories of masculinity is by using intersectionality theory. The concept of intersectionality was developed by Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2014). This theory takes into account "the ways in which individuals are invariably multiply positioned through differences in gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national belonging and more"(Davis, 2014, p. 17). Intersectionality theory approaches 'reality' as multi-layered, and embraces the complexity of phenomena (Dharani et al., 2020). As the work of Moolman (2013) demonstrates, for more than a decade, there has been a "growing body of knowledge on the significance of an intersectional framing of masculinities as central in the reproduction/production of social power and social identities" (Moolman, 2013, p. 93). The potential usefulness of taking an intersectional approach in theorising masculinity is evident in work of Dharani et al. (2020), below:

> People identify with multiple social groups and their co-existence and contribution to identity are complex, as social categories mesh and intersect with each other [...] In respect of privilege, intersectionality suggests that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression based on different social groups that exist within an identity. (Dharani et al., 2020, p. 2)

Moolman (2013) argued that taking an intersectional approach offers an effective way to explore South African masculinities, as it can reveal how the "macro-practices of race, class, ethnicity/culture, and sexuality have had a profound (but maybe less visible) shaping of social, gendered identities" (Moolman, 2013, p. 93). Similarly, Whiteneir Jr. (2019) described the multiple ways in which blackness is experienced by people of colour,

in everyday contexts, arguing that "its intersectionality with class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and more is complex and cannot simply be transcended as if it does not shape our choices, our ideologies, and our cognitive frameworks (Whiteneir Jr., 2019, p. 129).

Ammann and Staidacher (2021) argue that in order to develop a full understanding of hegemonic masculinity, while acknowledging the multiple masculinities that co-exist in Africa, it is essential to "pay close attention to how gender intersects with other identities, such as age, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality" (Ammann & Staidacher, 2021, p. 759). Intersectionality has been used to "uncover social categories that played a prominent role in forming hegemonic masculinities in South Africa" (Dharani et al., 2020, p. 2), which used legislation, such a forced segregation "to assign hierarchical powers between men" during Apartheid (and, before that under British rule). The authors recommend intersectionality as a framework for understanding hegemonic masculinities in colonised nations in Africa, particularly in South Africa, especially considering the complexities of hegemonic masculinity. They described "the historic assignment of privilege based on race in the South African context, multiple racial identities and masculinities [.... that] conflate and complicate the view of both Black and White masculinities" (p. 4).

The concept of intersectionality is useful in masculinity research to understand the complex relations between social categories that can be held by people in a given society, such as gender, class, race, age and so on (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). Holm et al. (2022) describe how rich and complex intersectionality is in that it considers "[...] people [as] not a sum of their race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, etc. but rather, [as having] axes of identities that are influenced by interacting systems of oppression and power" (Holm et al., 2022, p. 1068).

The South African population is diverse. It consists of 80.8% black South Africans, 8.7% coloured South Africans, 7.9% white South Africans and 2.6% Indian or Asian South Africans (Alexander, 2018). South Africans are made up of many race and ethnic groups, and many different languages. "The race groups are [...] divided into language groups (primarily based on origin): most of the White population is Afrikaans-speaking (Dutch origin) or English-speaking (British origin). Just among the black population, there are nine dominant ethnic groups: Zulu, Xhosa, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Ndebele, Swazi and Tsonga. This diverse population has led to South Africa having eleven official languages" (Finestone & Snyman, 2005, p. 131). "The official languages of the Republic [of

South Africa] are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (Brenzinger, 2017, p. 44).

Carolin (2017, p. 111) described apartheid in South Africa as "a regime predicated on the separation, oppression, exploitation, and violation of bodies that were not white". Indeed, Whiteness has a privileged position globally, and especially in South Africa Bradach (2017). Spickernell (2016) described how being white comes with an unearned racial privilege in South Africa. Whereas "Black males continue to occupy the identity space of marginalisation, often not afforded a full range of complexity and humanity" (O'Shan & Harris, 2022, p. 1). However, "Whiteness remains enmeshed in normative practices of power and rooted in material conditions of inequality and ongoing relations of social injustice" (Carolin et al., 2020, p. 1).

Duncan (2022) described how important it is to consider how men are in some ways created by their history, in particular the men who experienced or were produced by South Africa's apartheid. He spoke of how important it is to not reduce these men just to the race category because "analysing them [only] as black people is to take away an essential part of their being" (p. 4). However, the inverse is true too, "to view black men only by their gender category without reference to the racial determinant lacks the depth that is crucial in such an analysis […] Men are fundamentally gendered as much as raced" (Duncan, 2022, p. 4).

Masculinity: A multidimensional construct

Masculinity can be understood as a multidimensional construct (Hoyt et al., 2013). In this view, multiple masculinities are found within various social-cultural contexts, as opposed to singular dominant masculine forms occurring throughout all social settings. Furthermore, Connell (2002; 2005) conceptualises masculinity within a matrix of gender relations. Instead of considering that "masculinity equates men", Connell's work on masculinity has sought to understand the position of men within a global hegemonic gender order. Masculinities, she argues, can then be defined by the ways in which both men and women engage through various patterns of practice that work to position them within a hierarchy of gender relations. Thus, "masculine identities, like every identity, can be considered as 'invented categories,' that is, fluid constructs anchored in specific historical conditions" (Spector-Mersel, 2006, p. 68). Furthermore, as King and Swain (2022) argue, "[m]asculinities are constructed, negotiated and performed, and are also multiple, fluid and contextual, dependent on time and place." (p. 4). This can be illustrated in one day of a

man's life. A man may adopt different masculinities in different times and places. He may be a gentle and caring father taking his children to school, during the day he may be an aggressive competitive businessman, in the evening he may participate in academic discussion when meeting with his friends he was at university with or be engage in household chores with his wife. Of course, he may engage in all such differing masculinities within minutes, for example being in a formal business meeting at work and then receiving a call from his child and suddenly engaging as a caring father. This present research is interested in what masculine identities might look like, not just over a day, but over a lifetime.

Connell's Hegemonic Model of Gender and Power

The are many ways of "being a man", but these are not all equal in status (Wetherell & Edley, 2014). To this end, Connell (2005, as cited in Wedgwood, 2009) developed a social theory of gender which conceptualised power as being enacted through social interactions within a system of hegemony (Wedgwood, 2009). Hegemony can be defined as the "cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (Connell, 2005, p. 77), and it exerts itself, partly, as an implicit set of ideals by which men judge themselves, and feel compelled to live according to these ideals (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). In contrast to prior theories of masculinity, such as role-based accounts, Connell's work argues that gender is located within a patriarchal power structure, where hegemonic masculinity acts as a distributed system of power for imposing and maintaining patriarchy.

In this model, Connell proposed four 'positions' of masculinity that are available for men to "take up": hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalised masculinities (Connell, 2002). Connell (2005) describes the relationships between these positions, within this hegemonic model of power, as follows:

> Hegemony, subordination and complicity […] are relations internal to the gender order […] These two types of relationship - hegemony, domination or subordination and complicity on the one hand, marginalization/ authorization on the other - provide a framework in which we can analyse specific masculinities. (p. 81)

These hegemonic positions will be discussed in detail below.

Positions Within Connell's Model

Hegemonic Masculinity

Coles and Vassarotti (2012) succinctly define hegemonic masculinity as male practices that sustain dominance of men over women. It also creates hierarchies of masculinity "that privileges those men in positions of power and wealth and subordinates and marginalises other [men and women]" (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012, p. 32), where the hegemonic system is held in place by all those within it, rather than being imposed by some powerful authority

In this sense, hegemonic masculinity can be thought of as a 'benchmark' against which all other masculinities are 'measured', because it is the most culturally valued form of masculinity (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). This will be interrogated in more detail in later sections. While few (or no) men attain all the ideals of hegemonic masculinity (and, even if they do, it may only be temporarily), social definitions of hegemonic masculinity act as fundamental yardsticks against which men evaluate themselves in their day-to-day lives. This is due to the infusion of power within the different versions of masculinity, as well as the struggle for dominance between them. This results in certain types of masculinity having more legitimacy than others. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the pinnacle of dominance, the zenith of societal gendered dominance. For example, if a man identifies with a valued masculine quality, such as being emotionally stoic (Hoyt et al., 2013), he might consider it to be a fundamental aspect of his masculine identity. However, when the man starts comparing himself with other men, and allocating to them a different status according to this normatively valued characteristic that defines him as a man (in this example, stoicism), he becomes enmeshed in a hegemonic social process. This is because these hegemonic characteristics - and the men who impose them – are positioned within a power hierarchy.

In most cultures studied to date, hegemonic masculinity is characterised by youth (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012); physical prowess (Sumerau et al., 2015); strength (Harris, 2010); being heterosexual (Farvid & Braun, 2018); being in control, self-reliant, and independent (Hoyt et al., 2013); having passion and drive for success (Baker & Levon, 2016); and being professionally successful (Berdahl et al., 2018). Easton et al. (2013) suggest that: "Masculine norms may include, for example, emotional control, dominance, self-reliance, disdain for homosexuals, and the pursuit of status […]" (p. 3). Other norms include being immune to illness (Courtenay, 2000) and not seeking medical assistance

(Choy et al., 2015). Demonstrating their masculinity to others requires demonstrating that they are, in some way, achieving these norms and ideals. To this end, Easton et al. (2013) refer to the pressure men may live under in terms of how they should present themselves, their attitudes, and actions. The embodiment of hegemonic masculinity, thus requires constant 'work' as it can be contested in any situation (Courtenay, 2000). Men therefore need to continually renegotiate their masculinity in different contexts.

Hegemonic masculinity is a constantly changing power structure in that it "shifts and adopts new practices in order to enable some men to retain power over others" (Duncanson, 2015, p. 231). Coles and Vassarotti (2012) concur that hegemonic masculinity is not a "rigidly structured hierarchy, [stating that] it is continually open to challenge and change by those subordinated or marginalised by it" (p. 33). Furthermore, it is possible for previously feminised characteristics to be absorbed into power structures of hegemonic masculinity to the extent that they continue to reinforce patriarchy. For example, men may avoid taking on feminised household chores as they are likely to "call [their] gender identity into question" (Besen-Cassino, 2019, p. 46), whereas tasks like cooking can be viewed differently. Besen-Cassino (2019) proposes that this is because "[p]reparing food often involves high technology, new equipment and knowledge-based technique and skills: all closely related to masculine identity" (p. 49).

The position of older men in relation to hegemonic masculinity is uneasy, as it becomes increasingly difficult to enact many core features of hegemonic masculinity, especially those related to physical virility, for example, developing erectile dysfunction as a consequence of prostate cancer (Gannon et al., 2010). This however does not stop men from trying. Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) argue that "masculinity remain[s] important for the identity construction of […] older men who, rather than becoming un-gendered in their old age, still [strive] to achieve masculine ideals" (p. 470) through accessing the resources available to them. Glendenning et al. (2017) refer to the inevitable distancing of men growing older from the "norm prescribed by hegemonic masculinity" (p. 142). To this end, Glendenning et al. (2017) refer to the theoretical value of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, arguing that it "is a useful reference point in that it establishes the criteria for masculinity and provides a lens for understanding the experience of men who, through their life path, are gradually forced to distance themselves from it and explore new variations of the traditional model" (p. 147).

One explanation regarding the disenfranchisement of older men from hegemonic masculinity refers to the hegemonic masculinity focusing on "youthful ideas, particularly those relating to the physical body" (Foweraker & Cutcher, 2015, p. 461) which becomes increasingly difficult for ageing men to uphold. Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) describe the distancing from hegemonic values as men age, for example, when men retire and are "no longer considered a productive members of society" (p. 460), and lose important identities such as being a provider and breadwinner. Also, as they age, men may encounter prejudices that view them as being invisible and 'un-gendered' (Sandberg, 2011). One way for older men to compensate for declining hegemonic status is through "still [being] "useful" to society and "active" [thereby] [...] dissociat[ing] themselves from the stigmatizing image of the "old man"" (Glendenning et al., 2017, p. 147). They may achieve this, for example, by working part-time, perhaps in a different field to their primary career, or getting involved in volunteer organisations.

The present study raises the question of how ageing men narrate their masculinity in their biographies, given their reduced status within the hierarchy of the hegemonic masculinity. However, it is clear that most men – even when young and healthy – are unable to enact all the normative expectations of hegemonic masculinity; and certainly not all the time. In these circumstances men frequently come to embody complicit masculinities.

Complicit Masculinity

The notion of complicit masculinity is extremely important in the literature, and yet it is marginalised and rarely discussed within the MMS literature or contemporary gender scholarship hierarchies and relations, and gender contemporary debates (Wojnicka, 2021). Connell (2005, p. 79) even described its importance when stating that "complicity is characteristic of the majority of men". Wojnicka (2021) highlights how hegemonic masculinity has been discussed as an independent concept in literature and not placed in relation to the hierarchies of masculinity, and being presented as existing in a vacuum. Messerschmidt (2019) illustrates why this 'decontextualised' approach is problematic, when he argues that "hegemonic masculinity has no meaning outside its relationship to emphasised femininity – and non-hegemonic masculinities" (p. 86). Wojnicka (2021) explained that complicit masculinity not only supports, but, also, legitimises current forms of hegemonic masculinities. The author emphasises that hegemonic masculinity essentially exists because of the approval of complicit men, highlighting how complicit masculinity

plays an active role in legitimising it. In relation to complicit masculinity, Connell (2005) argues that:

> The number of men rigorously practising the hegemonic pattern in its entirety may be quite small. Yet the majority of men gain from its hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women (p. 79)

In other words, men might comply with the norms of hegemonic masculinity, and gain a dividend from doing so, even when they might be unable to fully embody its ideals. This implicitly involves the subordination of other men too.

Aggression and violence are common features of hegemonic masculinity (Sumerau et al., 2015), particularly in relation to the subjugation of women. This has been recognised as an ongoing problem (Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021) and some interventions (Malonda-Vidal et al., 2021; Mfecane, 2018) are actively addressing the issue – often by focussing on the harmful effects of masculine stereotypes. Yet, complicit men do not constantly live out such extreme displays of hegemonic masculinity, but, rather, for example, show respect for women. Connell (2005) speaks of how there are often extensive compromises in daily life rather than "naked domination or an uncontested display of authority" (pp. 79-80). She elaborates on how many men still access patriarchal dividend while simultaneously never being violent towards women, respecting women, doing their share of house work, providing financially for the family. Thus, although complicit men benefit from hegemonic patriarchy, they might not explicitly engage in such harmful hegemonic practices.

Edley and Wetherell (1997) refer to an example in which complicity is enacted. Rugby players are often given high status as they represent hegemonic qualities of being rough, strong, virile young men. Edley and Wetherell (1997) speak of a young man who associated himself to some extent with the macho rugby players by claiming to have to some degree of strength compared to them. However, he negotiated this by invoking an alternate meaning of "strength". Although the rugby players had physical strength, this young man claimed that they lacked mental strength, positioning them as unthinking conformists. It was through this that he achieved some sense of equality with – and even dominance over – the rugby players.

Although both the rugby players and the young man were presented as being strong, the emphasis was that this was in different ways. He was able to sustain a complicit identity in spite of being different to the rugby players. This is relevant to this study as it raises the question of how the participants will negotiate the achieving of certain idealised hegemonic standards in comparison to other men, particularly along the lifespan and their diminished hegemonic status at the time of the interviews. There are some men who do not fulfil basic hegemonic criteria, resulting in their being subordinated in the hegemonic hierarchy.

Apart from its relation to hegemonic masculinity, Wojnicka (2021) argues that complicit masculinity also affects other components of the hegemonic order: subordinated and marginalised masculinities.

Subordinated Masculinity

Subordinated masculinity refers to that which is considered counterhegemonic (Ravenhill & de Visser, 2017). Homosexuality is associated with being inherently effeminate and is, therefore, subordinated within the hierarchical masculine structure (Ravenhill & de Visser, 2017).

Homosexual masculinities by virtue of oppression are positioned "at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men" (Connell, 2005, p. 78). Connell (2005) goes further saying that even some heterosexual boys and men are "expelled from the circle of legitimacy" (p. 78). Indeed, the notion of "heterosexuality policing" has been widely discussed in the literature related to hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Men who present with effeminate or weak characteristics – as judged by the other people they interact with – may also be subordinated (Knight et al., 2012). They may be referred to as "sissies" (South African slang for effeminate or gay). Being subordinated also includes having no authority, or being dependent or emotional – characteristics that are usually associated with femininities (Creighton et al., 2013). Being unemployed is also a particularly insidious problem for men in this regard, because it positions them as lacking power, authority and purpose (Yarwood, 2011).

Practically, subordination can take the form of material practices such as name calling, violence (street and legal) and economic discrimination (Connell, 2002), or can be more subtle, for example, being excluded. These responses have the social function of sanctioning unconventional masculinities, policing and regulating conventionality. These policing strategies are applied informally to shape men's behaviour and keep them within

the acceptable legitimate hegemonic cultural boundaries. For example, Fleminga et al. (2013) refer to their young male participants being called gay "if their behaviour was not in line with the macho norm" (p. 657). This treatment was not an acknowledgement of their sexual orientation, but rather a social sanction for not conforming. The accusations were rather seen as a protest because they had stepped out of the traditional expectations of masculinity. This is a core element of hegemony: that the social order is policed by all those within it, rather than being imposed by authorities from "above" (Connell, 2005).

Some non-conforming men respond by being intimidated and responsive to such pressure directed at them. Others embrace and enact the hegemonic ideal. Some men reject this power structure altogether but this is unusual and comes at a cost; at the least, being excluded from the patriarchal dividends accruing to complicit men and at worst, being entirely excluded or subjected to antagonism, violence or death (Connell, 2005). The practical consequence of the relationship between the positions of dominant and subordinated masculinities is referred to as marginalization.

Marginalization

Marginalization refers to the relationship experienced between those in dominant masculine positions and ethnic or subordinated groups (Connell, 2002):

> Because gender is a way of structuring social practice in general, not a specific type of practice, it is unavoidably involved with other social structures. It is now common to say that gender 'intersects' – better, interacts – with race and class (Connell, 2005, p. 75)

There is thus a systematic and intimate relationship between the social structuring of power and gender, and the social structuring of sexuality, ethnicity, and economic status (Courtenay, 2000). Harris (2010) argues that such issues, as well as religion and class, not only influence but interact with the progression of masculinity in men. In the era of apartheid in South Africa, race and gender particularly played an important role in the allocation and distribution of power. White males were considered superior over other people (male and female) (Ratele et al., 2021). Black men were stripped of status and authority (compared to men and women of other race categories) through the institutionalisation of power (Bradach, 2017). This race-based element to masculine experience was not unique to Apartheid South Africa, however. "Historically and today,

Black men […] experience more adversity in their day-to-day lives than many other groups" (Holm et al., 2022, p. 1081). Arday and Jones (2022) explain how the ongoing systemic racism in the USA and UK produce many dimensions of disadvantage for black people, and black men in particular.

Marginalisation also continues in post-apartheid South Africa (Baron, 2022). One key factor in continued marginalisation, is the lack of access to social, cultural and economic resources and capital (Clark, 2022). It is essential to address these factors as important dimensions in the development of masculinities as opposed being viewed simply as variables that need to be controlled in research. Race is simply one of the dimensions on which marginalization can occur. While refugee status is an excellent example in which marginalization can occur, it is beyond the scope of the PhD to explore further.

Reformulation

A key concept of hegemonic masculinity is that various masculinities are possible, but they are not all equal. This brings to attention "the diversity within masculinities, (and) to multiple masculinities" (Beasley, 2008, p. 88). Beasley (2008) suggests that "Connell's own use of the term slides between several meanings". She describes slippage in three ways. The first involves slippage "between its meaning as a political mechanism tied to the word hegemony" (p. 88). She continue to describe "its meaning as a descriptive word referring to dominant (most powerful and/or most widespread) versions of manhood" (p. 88). The author then refers its meaning "an empirical reference specifically to actual groups of men" (p. 88). This gives some understanding about why the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been applied inappropriately at times.

In 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt reformulated hegemonic masculinity in several ways. First, they did not eliminate the whole hegemonic theory, but, rather, emphasised the relational aspects of masculinity as opposed to the simple concept of domination. They highlighted how hegemonic masculinity may not be the most regular pattern of masculinity nor the most powerful. Character traits associated with certain forms of masculinity should not be referred to as a fixed entity. Secondly, hegemonic masculinity needs to incorporate gender identity in a more holistic manner. This involves acknowledging that, just as hegemonic groups have power, subordinated groups also have agency. Thirdly, the issue of embodiment – in relation to both non-hegemonic and hegemonic masculinities – should be considered more widely in the literature within the contexts of power and privilege. Finally,

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemonic masculinity should not only be engaged with on a society-wide level but also by "emphasizing the interplay of local, regional, and global levels" (p. 829). Messerschmidt and Messner (2018) offer an expanded delineation of these three levels. One level is global which involves transnational world politics, media and business. The regional level is constructed at the society-wide gender order level. The third level is local in which meaning [is] constructed in gender regimes involving the face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities" (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018, p. 39). Hegemonic masculinities in each level may be in conflict with each other.

Hegemonic masculinity as the present study's primary theoretical framework

Spector-Mersel (2006) proposed "the existence of various hegemonic masculinities across time", in which "hegemonic masculinities are tied to specific phases of the life course" (p. 71). She describes how hegemonic masculinity is impacted, temporally, across the lifespan (a concept that will be discussed in the following section), and how "meanings of masculine power" change as a man ages. According to Spector-Mersel (2006), the "social clock", a fundamental component of the lifespan approach, (to be discussed in detail in the next section) determines "diverse contents of desired manhood at different points in a man's life" (p. 71). Following Conell (2002; 2005), Spector-Mersel argues that hegemonic masculinity places pressure on men to conform to the ideal of what it means to be a man (Connor et al., 2021; Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). However Spector-Mersel (2006) develops the concept further, by incorporating a temporal perspective in which the pressure for men to conform to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity is seen to be influenced by specific expectations related to the stage of life a man is in.

This adds a lifespan dimension to the power structure of hegemonic masculinity, where the most valued characteristics of "the ideal man" are age-referenced. For example, being young and virile (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014) is a masculine characteristic valued for men of all ages, but most accessible to younger man to claim or enact. Sometimes a man might be able to enact youthful vigour and virility for longer if they are rich and famous, showing how lifespan-features of hegemonic masculinity might intersect with other attributes. The present study aims to explore how older men negotiate these ideal values of being a young man as they get older, and how men negotiate their masculinity in terms of the "gold standard" of hegemonic masculinity across their lifespan.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity also provides the means to understand how relationships are imbued with power differentials (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018). This can be seen in cases, for example, where a man is no longer able to act as a 'provider' (Affleck et al., 2018), and, because he evaluates himself in relation to the "gold standard" of hegemonic masculinity, he may see himself as a failure in terms of his identity as a man, husband, and father; and may therefore fear criticism and disparagement from his friends and society. Hegemonic masculinity thus provides a useful theoretical foundation for the present study.

Beyond Connell: Other Theories of Masculinity

Theories of masculinity are diverse and complex. Subsequent to Raewyn Connell's conceptualization of masculinity in terms of gender relations (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018), the model has been reformulated, and the concept of non-hegemonic masculinities has been further developed.

Dunne and Singh (2007) describe a heterosexual matrix as a framework in which "gender is systematically spoken through heterosexuality, and that is assumed in expressions of 'real' forms of masculinity and femininity" (p. 162). Anderson (2020) elaborates on this definition by stating that "the societal belief of the expected relationship between one's birth assigned sex, gender (including gender identity and expression), and sexual desire as the heterosexual matrix" (p. 3). In this framework, masculinity is seen to be generally constructed though the 'heterosexual matrix' (Tiller, 2018) in which "heterosexuality is a biological and cultural reproductive act; heterosexual intercourse reinforces the binary gender difference" (Tiller, 2018, p. 37). In this sense, gender and sexuality are mutually constitutive in the performance of heterosexual masculinity (Lahti, 2015). Sahil (2006) unpacks argues that gender is something that one *does*: "a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a "doing" rather than a "being" […and further explains that] [g]ender identities are constructed and constituted by language, which means that there is no gender identity that precedes language" (Sahil, 2006, p. 56). Essentially Sahil (2006) elucidates that "[g]ender does not happen once and for all when we are born, but is a sequence of repeated acts that harden into the appearance of something that's been there all along (p. 58).

Aboim and Vasconcelos (2022) stated that the essence of masculinity is an embodied experience. They proposed that post-structuralism interprets bodies and

embodiment which results in the body being a contested site within gender and feminist theorization. They argue that the bodily-reflexive practices are the core of masculinity, in other words, embodiment. This can be seen in the centrality of the discipline of the male body (e.g. contact sports; physical violence; war) and sexual conquest in many versions of dominant masculinity. "Societal influences shape bodily practice and gender identification, but individuals also shape gender practice by relating their own bodily experiences to the social influences" (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2022, p. 46). According to Aboim and Vasconcelos (2022), individuals learn from experiences of the past and then orient their actions in relation to the future, highlighting how reflexive bodily practices are. "[M]asculinity can be seen primarily as a bodily-reflexive practice through which individuals confer meaning on their own masculinity and present it to others" (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2022, p. 46). The authors speak of bodily-reflexive practices being either enacted, discursive or physical. They stated that the body is neither a free-floating nor a final destination and yet the space for resignifying masculinity and gender is open to resistance. Aboim and Vasconcelos (2022) highlighted "how lived bodily experiences shape and redefine masculinities in ways that illuminate the nexus between bodies, embodiments, and discursive enactments of masculinity" (p. 52). Central to doing masculinity is bodily-reflexive practices. These models of body-reflexive practices are useful for understanding how men might orient to the changing abilities of their bodies to enact certain versions of masculinity (e.g. toughness; virility), and also to increasing frailty and dependence as they age.

Dominant Masculinities

Messerschmidt et al. (2018) suggest that "(h)egemonic masculinities are those masculinities constructed locally, regionally, and globally that legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities" (p. 41). However, "(d)ominant masculinities are not always associated with and linked to gender hegemony but refer to (locally, regionally, and globally) the most celebrated, common, or current form of masculinity in a particular social setting" (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018, p. 42). In other words, a core feature of hegemonic masculinity is that it is underpinned by unequal relations of power between women and men; whereas dominating masculinities do not necessarily enforce unequal relationships between women and men; and positive masculinities might even work to legitimise egalitarian relations between women and men.

Dominant masculinities may or may not incorporate gender hegemony, but do refer to the most current, common, and celebrated form of masculinity occurring in any social setting (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018). Another theoretical difference between hegemonic and dominant masculinities is that "dominant practices are 'individual', in the sense of referring to particular individualised practices, [whereas] hegemony involves a relationship that legitimates men's power over women and subordinates other forms of masculinity within gender relations" (King & Swain, 2022, p. 5). Essentially, dominant masculinity refers to versions of manhood that are the most common, widespread, and culturally celebrated forms of masculinity that allow men to exercise power in particular social settings (Beasley, 2008; King & Swain, 2022; Schippers, 2007). According to King and Swain (2022), if dominant and dominating masculinities fail to culturally legitimate unequal gender relations then they are not hegemonic, however at other times when they do, they may be hegemonic.

Messerschmidt and Messner (2018) suggest that conducting research on dominant masculinities is important for enriching our understanding of how hegemonic masculinity differs from other non-hegemonic masculinities; whilst also allowing us to explore the relations between various forms of non-hegemonic masculinity.

Hybrid masculinities

Bridges and Pascoe (2014) describe "hybrid masculinities" as:

[…] the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities and – at times – femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities [.… in which] hybrid masculinities represent significant changes in the expression of systems of power and inequality, though fall short of challenging them. (pp. 246-247)

They explain that privileged groups are afforded flexibility of identity by allowing them to incorporate once-stigmatised masculinities into hegemonic identities. However, this does not mean that once-stigmatised identities are being redeemed; instead hybrid masculinities can "be viewed as an adaptation strategy that reproduces unequal power relationships in refined and less explicit ways" (p. 876).

One of the ideals of hegemonic masculinity that men aspire to is having a strong and healthy body (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). However research shows that men who

aspire to hegemonic ideals may avoid seeking help (Salgado et al., 2019), and, consequently, this results in men being at high risk for both morbidity and premature mortality (McCreary et al., 2020). However, men who have embraced hybrid masculinities would be able to seek health care while not jeopardising their hegemonic status. This is usually because they have masculine capital for example, financial success or business achievements. The following paragraphs will provide three examples of the application of hybrid masculinities.

In the first example, Spector-Mersel and Gilbar (2021) investigated army veterans, who had presented with post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS), and attended therapy. The therapy offered alternative masculine discourses "which emphasise[d] sensitivity, emotional disclosure, self-care, and seeking help, as intertwined with their mental recovery" (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021, p. 863), as opposed those associated with "military masculinity" (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021, p. 877). The men who participated in the study were seen to embrace newly defined masculinities, thereby reaffirming their status as men (which involved being men who had signs of mental illness and needed therapy), while still conforming to hegemonic masculinity in line with their military identities (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). The authors concluded that these men were able to adopt hybrid masculinities and thereby maintain their power as men while still engaging with traditionally unmasculine behaviour. Connor et al. (2021, p. 5) suggest that "traditional masculinity norms […] require men to be stoic and resist sharing feelings and emotions, particularly with another man". Being in therapy, as discussed above, requires emotional disclosure (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). Thus, by attending therapy, the army veterans were engaging in practices that could be seen to be in direct conflict with hegemonic standards. However, they did not regard themselves as subordinated but rather maintained their sense of hegemonic status because they held onto aspects of being a military man while also attending therapy. This can be referred to as being hybrid masculinity. So, hybrid masculinity enables the men to sustain their experience of their hegemonic status even though they are performing in ways that are not traditionally considered hegemonic. This is seen to add a further layer to the initial formulation of hegemonic masculinity.

In a second example, Hill (2022) described the proponents of hybrid masculinity as treating "black masculinity" too simply by presenting black masculinity as being one dimensional. She investigated black professional men and how they constructed their

masculinity. This was because, for one, they had financial capital, as they were working in professional jobs, which gave them hegemonic standing. There is discrepancy experienced within the hegemonic hierarchy (Hill, 2022) . Although some men may find engaging non-hegemonic masculinity precarious, Research indicates that "cisgender, straight, white, middle-class men are afforded license to opt-out of hegemonic gender expectations without this choice detracting from their masculine status" (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021, p. 502) while other men find engaging with non-hegemonic masculinity as precarious.

Although some men may find engaging non-hegemonic masculinity precarious, research shows that cisgender, straight, white, middle-class men are afforded license to opt-out of hegemonic gender expectations without this choice detracting from their masculine status (p. 502)

The author unpacked black masculinity as being circumscribed, not only by gender norms, but, also, by its intersection with other factors, such as race and class privilege. She contended that by engaging hybrid masculinity black professional men – being considered of high-status – might be afforded "greater discretion and flexibility in gender expression than lower SES (socioeconomic status) Black men" (p. 503). Being middle-class has often been equated to being the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity (Stick, 2021). Typically, black men are excluded from this by virtue of their skin colour. However, black professional men would achieve hybrid masculinity because although they are middle-class and have probably have financial capital which black men of lower SES do not have. The latter men would be positioned as being marginalised unlike the black professional men.

Gough (2022) explains the transaction that occurs to sustain a man's hegemonic status while engaging in non-traditionally hegemonic activities. This also explains the dynamics that occurs in hybrid masculinities. Gough (2022) states that to be able to be flexible in a man's masculinity he needs to have accrued adequate 'masculine capital', affording him a position of relative privilege. This would form a buffer from the disapproval of his peers. The example Gough (2022) gives is for example, "being captain of the rugby team may grant some immunity from criticism for liking ballroom dancing, while baking cakes might be more acceptable if you are a success at work, and so on" (p. 228).

Returning to the Hill (2022) study, it was argued that professional black men adopted distinct hybrid masculine strategies. These black men tended to express their masculinity in both different and similar ways compared to their lower status counterparts.

The author argued that they were able to construct their masculinity differently compared to their White, high-status counterparts.

      The black professional men would likely be different to their lower-status counterparts by being considered middle-class and more financially well-off, thereby having greater social and masculine status. Although these black professional men would share being educated, middle-class and having financial capital with higher class counterparts, they would be different too by virtue of being black, a traditionally non-accepted embodiment of traditional masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Stick, 2021). The black professional men have sufficient masculine capital to ensure they are granted flexibility to be different and achieve hegemonic status. The above indicates how these men experience hybrid masculinities with both their lower status and higher status counterparts. Hill (2022) then highlighted how these black professional men thereby integrated both "dominant cultural norms alongside those valued within the Black culture" (Hill, 2022, p. 504). She described these men as having constructed "Black professional hybrid masculinity" (p. 498) thereby resisting being classified as either counterhegemonic or hegemonic. Black professional hybrid masculinity implies these men are educated, have financial capital thereby conforming to hegemonic valued standards enough to counter some counter-hegemonic features by virtue of not being white. The professional hybrid masculinity sustains the unequal relationship with other lower status counterparts, even though they are attributed with hegemonic status, thereby bolstering hegemonic masculinity rather than challenging it.

      In the third example, Wojnicka and Nowicka (2022) explored hybrid masculinities in relation to experiences of international migration. They highlighted how immigrants would be enabled through hybridity to free themselves from their old cultures while simultaneously adopt the "unfamiliar ethnic, religious and sexual diversity" (p. 245) in their new country, and thereby shape their masculinity in important and unique ways. This would be particularly noteworthy if the immigrants were from Africa, young, physically strong, poor and educated black men, immigrating to a predominantly white populated country. Being educated, young, strong and male are traditionally valued hegemonic characteristics (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Connor et al., 2021). These men would achieve a level of hegemonic status by complying to these hegemonic values, compensating for their race and lack of financial resources, thereby achieving hybrid masculinities. Spector-Mersel and

Gilbar (2021) made a similar argument, stating "most immigrants, […] acquire elements of the new culture while keeping some from the old one" (p. 878).

Getting old brings challenges that are often manifested in changes that force men into non-hegemonic positions – such as a man losing his full-time work identity and status, being physically frail, or vulnerable to illness. This could lead to the marginalization of such men for failing to embody the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. However, by adopting forms of hybrid masculinity, men might be able to retain their masculine status by continuing to engage and embody certain hegemonic ideals (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021) – such as being a sportsman, or transitioning to coaching rather than playing sport, or working (whether part-time or as a volunteer), while also experiencing counterhegemonic life changes such as being financially dependent on children. This would be about sustaining their failing hegemonic status without challenging it. The black men who have enough financial capital to achieve hegemonic status in spite of being black by accessing hybrid masculinities (Hill, 2022) are similar to the old men who have adopted various activities such as doing volunteer work, to also achieve hybrid masculinities to sustain their hegemonic status. This framework captures the complexity of the men's experiences by capturing how might be able to compensate for doing or experiencing things that are not considered traditionally hegemonic without losing their hegemonic status through hybrid masculinities. However, the framework does not quite capture how many different ways there might be of "rescuing" masculinity.

Personalised masculinities

Swain proposed a framework for understanding "personalised masculinities" (Swain, 2006). In his previous research at various schools, he noted behaviour of some of the boys that could not be best explained by theory at that time. The boys appeared to have "negotiated and renegotiated a number of alternative ways of 'doing' boy" (Swain, 2006, p. 341) that differed from traditional forms of (hegemonic) masculinity. Swain's (2006) intention was not to create a new theory of masculinity but rather to extend and build upon existing theoretical work, thereby offering a different approach to understanding how the boys were 'doing' masculinity.

Swain (2006) described the performative features and practices of the boys who embodied personalised forms of masculinity. The author described the boys as being seen to have strong, firmly established friendships with others who had similar interests; their group was

described to be egalitarian and non-exclusive. They did not seem to challenge, or desire to become part of, groups of boys who embodied ideals of hegemonic masculinity at the school, but, instead, prioritised a "good personality" (Swain, 2006, p. 342) over idealised characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, such as having sporting prowess.

Watson (2015) suggested that the softer masculinities (p. 119) (inclusive masculinity, personalised masculinities and mosaic masculinities) provide evidence of change in masculinity. However, the author expressed a concern that these softer masculinities were simply obscuring patriarchal heterosexism.

Caring masculinities

The concept of "caring masculinity" is a relatively recent development in the masculinity literature (Hunter et al., 2017; Liong, 2017). Lund et al. (2019) described how changing forms of masculinity increasingly involve practices of caring, especially in terms of fathering. Traditionally caregiving has been considered as a feminine domain (Lee & Lee, 2018), but there is growing evidence of practices of caring being integrated into masculine identities (Brandth & Kvande, 2018). Caring is becoming part of the prominent discourse of masculinity, alongside hegemonic masculinity (Hunter et al., 2017).

Mvune and Bhana (2022) position the construction of hegemonic masculinity as being in opposition to caring practices. Elliott (2016) supports this view by claiming that the core features of caring masculinity involve the rejection of domination and the integration of qualities of relationality and interdependence, which are not typically defining features of hegemonic masculinity. However, other authors (Beglaubter, 2021; Hunter et al., 2017) argue that the relationship between caring masculinities and hegemonic masculinity is more complex than that, suggesting that masculine identities and practices may feature both. Beglaubter (2021) describes the dynamic relationship between caring masculinity and hegemonic masculinity when she refers to how caring behaviour needs to either be incorporated into traditional masculinity, or notions of manhood broadened to include in the practices and values of care.

The one domain in which caring masculinity is especially enacted is in fathering. Hunter et al. (2017) claim that while traditional fatherhood is defined by hegemonic features – including emotional distance, absence, authoritarian attitudes, and being the primary breadwinner – there is evidence that fatherhood may no longer be entirely circumscribed by the ideals of hegemonic masculinity but might also have come to incorporate aspects of

caring masculinities. This stands in contrast to the arguments put forward by Mvune and Bhana (2022), who suggest that in order to engage in caring masculinities, men would need to reject traditional characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, such as aggression and domination. Hunter et al. (2017) propose that men might embody forms of caring masculinity when they adopt what were traditionally considered to be feminine characteristics (for example, interdependence, caring, emotional expression, and domestication). However, the authors argue that being a father engaging in caring and nurturing behaviour does not exclude them from occupying a hegemonic position.

The MMS literature has increasingly focussed on fathers who also act as primary caregivers (Liong, 2017). It has been suggested that primary caregiving fathers are able to incorporate caregiving practices into their (traditional) masculine identity by embracing traditional masculinity norms – for example, by engaging in hobbies and interests that are often associated with traditionally valued masculine characteristics such as being a handyman or engaging in sport (Hunter et al., 2017). Hunter et al. (2017) also highlight how these men determine and embrace traditional masculinity norms that bolster their masculine identity, while rejecting those that do not. Hunter et al. (2017) describe how these fathers redefine their manhood, not by fully rejecting a highly valued hegemonic norm, such as being a financial provider, but instead by expanding the definition and expectations of fatherhood. To this end, Preisner et al. (2020) suggested that the notion of "cash and care" might capture how primary caregiving fathers are expected to be both involved fathers and financial providers.

Full time caregiving fathers were seen to essentially enjoy hybrid masculinities because they had the status and capital to engage in non-hegemonic identities i.e. caring masculinity, with little risk of losing their hegemonic status. Having higher socioeconomic status is associated to having more capital and status which gives the man more leeway to deviate from standard hegemonic norms (Hill, 2022). It was found that middle-to-upper class men who were full time caregiving fathers had enough status and capital to comfortably take the risk of challenging traditional masculinity ideals by becoming primary caregivers (Hunter et al., 2017). Primary caregiver fathers resisted claims that they were not proper men, or gay or unmasculine, by enacting traditional masculine activities such as risk-taking and teaching their children to be independent (Beglaubter, 2021), alongside of being caring.

While there has been a growing literature on caring masculinity, the concept has also been critiqued. Hunter et al. (2017) emphasised the importance of critiquing the literature on caring masculinities. One issue they raised was the possibility of fathers to be *considered* more involved in caring than they are in reality, essentially taking more credit than due. Preisner et al. (2020) extend this argument by suggesting that the actual behaviour of the "new father" may not be as progressive as is reflected in much of the literature. Hunter et al. (2017) pointed out that it is important to be critical when approaching this work regarding caring amongst men as it is a complex matter and might otherwise lead to unrealistic expectations of fathers. The implication is that the fathers may, for example, feel they have to engage in caring fully because so many other fathers are doing this, meanwhile it is suggested that it is only a small proportion of men who have embraced caring masculinity fully (Hunter et al., 2017; Liong, 2017).They speak of how hegemonic masculinity has been conceptualised in relation to men having power over women, and thus suggest that when theorising fathering, mothering should always be taken into account concurrently.

Gender and practices of gender are forever changing (Snitker, 2018). Caregiving is seen as a critical locus of change as it compels men to enact traditionally feminine values of care while still negotiating their relationship with traditional values of masculinity (Beglaubter, 2021). Lund et al. (2019) propose that new masculinities as a concept is useful to elucidate the struggles and ambivalence experienced between hegemonic and caring masculinities rather than simply assume that the latter is subordinate to the former.

Dynamic Experience of Various Hegemonic Positions Across Contexts and Over Time

Wetherell and Edley (1999) highlight how the hegemonic gender does not have to be static or fixed (see also Edley & Wetherell, 1997). They propose that all men take on different hegemonic positions in different contexts and time, and even parallel positions at the same time. Instead of seeing men as constantly occupying a single position, they proposed that individual men "can shift between different modes of masculinity—at one time subordinate, then complicit, then hegemonic too" (Wetherell & Edley, 2014, p3). The authors state that they are:

> […] not arguing that individual men are inevitably inconsistent, but rather that the forms of regularity, consistency, and order in an individual man's gender identity over time are often complex, mixed, and fluidly deployed in different situations (p. 5).

Masculinity, then, is seen to be dynamic within a person, and over time. Swain (2006) highlights that "[m]asculinity is not only diverse; it is also dynamic, and the possibility always exists for change" (p. 340).

Wetherell and Edley (2014) refer to the dynamic experience of various hegemonic positions in an individual man's life, whereas Spector-Mersel (2006) gives an example of these dynamic positions in an organization. Spector-Mersel (2006) gives an example within an institution which highlights the "the plurality of masculinities found in the armed forces" (p. 69). The hegemonic representation within the army was the "man-as-fighter", which was dominant in relation to the subordinated clerical identity of the "professional organiser." However, outside the military sphere, the "professional organiser" may be seen as a representative of a hegemonic version of masculinity in that it belongs to the professional classes, whereas fighting masculinity might be perceived as more working-class. On the other hand, in the army, a warrior identity is more available to young men in the army, and a commander identity from middle age and above. Thus, rather than posing the existence of one hegemonic model, we may recognise "various coexisting hegemonic masculinities in a society" (Spector-Mersel, 2006, p. 69), and these are more or less available to men in different life-stages. Another issue that requires further attention concerns the strategies men use to negotiate their masculine identities across time and context.

Spector-Mersel (2006) applies a temporal perspective to the theory of masculinity. She proposes that masculine scripts are truncated at middle age, arguing that men become genderless and invisible thereafter. A retrospective study would test this hypothesis and provide cross-cultural comparison. It would become evident if the older men perceived themselves as un-gendered as they age, and whether they experienced hegemonic masculinity as no longer being relevant to them. However, even before embarking on that research, there is reason to believe that men will continue to engage in strategies to continue to embody favourable forms of masculinity as they age.

Compensatory Strategies in the Renegotiation of Masculine Identity and or Hegemonic Status

Ageing inevitably involves loss. The gradual (or sudden) decline of physical, mental, and social power is inescapable. Despite this fact, men are never released from the subjectifying effects of hegemony and therefore need to renegotiate their position(s) of

masculinity over time. The need for such negotiation strategies illustrates the power of hegemonic masculinity. For example, Glendenning et al. (2017) illustrate how men constantly orient towards hegemonic ideologies in order to monitor their own masculinity. Such negotiating strategies take many forms but are almost always focused on enabling men to continue to embody admired features of manliness. In contrast, Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) suggest that older men access new and different forms of masculinity rather than conforming rigidly to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

Various strategies for negotiating masculinity will be described in the sections below. However, the distinctions between strategies are in some ways arbitrary as all the examples are broadly concerned with how men defend against feeling they are not – or are not being perceived as – attaining the hegemonic ideal. This section explores examples in which men of varying ages, in various scenarios, negotiate their masculinity.

Disparaging those aspiring to hegemonic masculinity ideals

De Visser and Smith (2006) refer to a strategy whereby men who are seen to fall short of embodying hegemonic masculinity respond by taking on an "authentic" masculine identity that involves, for example, "disparag[ing] boys and men who blindly endorse[d] and aspire[d] to hegemonic masculinity" (p. 693). By dismissing what they might see as thoughtless adherence to such norms, they defend themselves against having failed to attain the hegemonic standard; and can thus claim a more authentic and valued version of masculinity. Indeed, they can claim to have achieved a superior version of masculinity. Yet the men are not seen to be creating alternate forms of masculinity. Instead the qualities by which they define themselves still fall within the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. The men are thereby seen to take on complicit positions rather than disturbing the hegemonic hierarchy.

Adopting Hypermasculinity

Some studies describe how men negotiated their hegemonic positions through the embodiment of hypermasculine beliefs and actions. Courtenay (2000) refers to men negotiating their hegemonic positions through adopting beliefs that are culturally sanctioned. This enables these men to compensate for their less privileged and subordinated social positions. Courtenay is referring, specifically, to men who identify as gay or bisexual who might use this strategy as a means of compensation. These men are seen to compensate for their subordinated position through adopting hypermasculine activity, thereby defending

themselves in the face of a failure to attain hegemonic masculinity or explicitly being subordinated to lesser masculinities. They may be seen to be more traditional in their presentation of masculinity than men who are exclusively heterosexual.

Courtenay (2000) also describes subordinated men as aiming to compensate through the construction of alternate forms of masculinity and defying hegemonic masculinity. This is through accessing and utilising other resources to achieve a reconstructed position of "true masculinity." "These 'hypermasculine' constructions are frequently dangerous or self-destructive" (p. 1392), involving behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime and dominance, and fighting. Younger men have been associated with engaging in high-risk activities in order to remain complicit and thereby sustaining their hegemonic masculinity.

Renegotiating relationships with different forms of masculinity

The studies that follow refer to men negotiating their masculinity by challenging and even rejecting aspects of hegemonic masculinity while also claiming aspects of it, or redefining their masculinity in a way that still establishes their masculine positions. Lamont (2015) identifies compensatory actions as "[other] elements of hegemonic masculinity (which are emphasised) in order to offset the ways in which they fall short" (p. 273). The author exemplifies this in relation to working-class men who are unable to achieve the breadwinner ideal and thus compensate by engaging in exaggerated forms of masculinity, thereby separating themselves from women as well as justifying the privileges of being male.   Coles and Vassarotti (2012) show how middle-aged and older men can challenge the emphasis on youth in hegemonic masculinity and thereby shift their position in the hegemonic hierarchy, drawing the focus to those aspects of hegemonic masculinity they were closer to. They hold onto those hegemonic aspects that privilege their hegemonic status, for example, being heterosexual, embracing sports and consuming alcohol. They reject the key defining values of hegemonic masculinity that they no longer fulfil. A key example is related to the highly valued ideal of youth, which is a central marker of hegemonic masculinity, like virility and strength. With the ageing of their bodies, men become increasingly less likely to embody these ideals. They respond by reframing their ageing masculinity. For example, "they highlighted their own life experiences as culminating in a more mature masculinity that was superior to younger men's masculinities" (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012, p. 38). These men renegotiate their positioning in the hegemonic

hierarchy by challenging or rejecting certain aspects of masculinity and claiming or redefining others.

A similar strategy is observed when men respond to bad news with masculine unemotional rationality rather than feminine emotionality. Gannon et al. (2010) describes a single man's response to being diagnosed with prostate cancer. This man rejected responding in the stereotypically feminine manner of being emotional and even hysterical. Instead he adopted "masculine qualities of control, rationality and emotional restraint […] This emotional restraint, verging on disengagement" (p. 262). Despite being confronted with a medical diagnosis that challenges masculinity on many fronts, responding stoically was a way to impose masculine control over a situation that was otherwise intensely vulnerable and uncontrollable. This man was therefore seen to engage with a traumatic event in ways that enhanced his hegemonic status.

Illness and ageing pose a substantive threat to men's masculine identity. Age-related illnesses expose men to vulnerability that threatens their status in the hegemonic hierarchy. For example, prostate cancer involves unavoidable and invasive rectal examinations, frequently referenced in homophobic humour; and illness generally threatens a man's virility and vigour. Maliski et al. (2008) explain that men used the strategy of "normalising" to claim erectile dysfunction as a conventional aspect of older masculinity. These men also prioritise the social aspects of being a man rather than the physical.

Indeed, "ageing has a profound impact on how men negotiate masculinities over the life course" (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012, p. 39). For example Coles and Vassarotti refer to how youth is a key characteristic of masculinity; and men who age find their bodies conforming less and less to these values of a youthful body. Eck (2014) refers to the changing expectations of men as they grow old. She makes reference to "cultural standards of manhood" (p. 166) that vary according to age. Her participants spoke of reinforcing and relying on acts of manhood according to different phases of their lives. This work emphasises that masculine hierarchies are stratified within categories (like age groups), allowing men to compete for power and status in different ways as they grow older.

Choice and control: not conforming by choice

De Visser and Smith (2006) describe their participant, Rahul, who presented, not as having failed the idealised hegemonic standard, but rather as assuming "an elite position of authenticity […] founded on his competence in several 'masculine' domains" (p.

693). From this place of authenticity, Rahul was equally able to "reject the need to conform to hegemonic standards of masculinity while also feel confident that he could meet this standard if he chose to" (p. 693). For example, he positioned himself as not "engag[ing] in excessive drinking characteristic of hegemonic masculinity" (p. 690) by presenting himself as both someone in the past who was an experienced drinker and as currently a lighter drinker (a non-masculine position). This meant he could drink excessively if he chose to which gave him credit for not doing so presently. This strategy is a way of claiming power since the feature of hegemonic masculinity is rejected by choice. Rahul's case demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity can be simultaneously rejected and retained paradoxically. De Visser and Smith highlight that Rahul was able to do this by being extremely aware of hegemonic masculinity and social norms. Rahul had relied on other means of being masculine. This example illustrates the careful identity transactions by which a man protects and sustains his hegemonic status

Accessing resources

One powerful strategy utilised by men is that of trading capital to sustain their masculine status (Coles, 2008). Since changing relationships to resources is naturally a central theme for men as they move into retirement, it is worth briefly explaining Bourdieu's social theory of practice. This theory helps us understand how power is retained by groups that have it (Tichavakunda, 2019). It "is a multilayered framework conceptualizing individuals as producers of social practices in social space while following specific logics of practices. They are using their respective capitals […] that are acknowledged as symbolic capital in the respective fields" (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2010, p. 5).

There are three pillars to the theory: habitus, field, and capital (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2010). Tichavakunda (2019, p. 657) describes habitus as consisting of what is learnt as disposition in consequence to culture, social class and family. "While one's habitus is durable, it can change depending on what the person experiences, thereby exhibiting the interplay of the probable and the possible" (p. 657). He describes fields as consisting of "complex relationships and have specific forms of cultural and social capital" (p. 657). Additionally, "fields are social domains rather than physical spaces, and so defined by the individuals who occupy those domains […] Participants in a field share common beliefs, an adherence to which determines one's membership of the field" (Beckman et al., 2018, p.

204). Thorpe (2010) discussed the work of Cole (2009, as cited in Thorpe, 2010) in which he "explores the possibility of multiple dominant masculinities operating simultaneously within various subfields bound by a "field of masculinity" Thorpe (2010, p. 182). Thorpe (2010) expresses concern about this approach because he considers the concept of a field of masculinity problematic, because, essentially, it presents gender, especially masculinity, as a separate field. "According to some feminist scholars, gender does not constitute a specific social field as it is sometimes assumed but "enters into the 'game' of different social fields in ways specific to each field" (Thorpe, 2010, p. 182).

Beckman et al. (2018) explains what capital is and what determines its value. They explain that a person's ability to succeed in a field depends on their access to capital. "Capital refers to assets that may include cultural and material goods and wealth that are derived through developing and maintaining social relationships, networks, skills and knowledge (Beckman et al., 2018, p. 206). The value of the capital is determined through the recognition of others.

Beckman et al. (2018) defines the various kinds of capital. Economic capital is made up of physical resources, commodities, material and monetary wealth. Cultural capital consists of qualifications, taste, lifestyle, skills and knowledge. Institutionalised capital refers to academic qualifications. Social capital includes "useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits" for the individual [whereas]an individual's social capital is determined by the size or number of networks, the capital that the members of the network possess and confer, and the individual's ability to derive benefit from these networks of connections" (p. 206). Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer (2010) clarify that "[o]nly if capitals are 'acknowledged' in the respective field do they become symbolic and, for this reason, a valid currency" (p. 6). While Bordieu's theory of cultural capital is not a central focus of the current analysis, it is useful to note that access to dominant, or hegemonic, versions of masculinity requires access to capital of various forms, and men have different access to these across their lifespans.

Need to research masculinity negotiation strategies across the lifespan

While it is clear from this review of literature that masculinity is dynamic, across cultures, across time, across context, and even within individuals, there is very little research exploring how men engage with masculinity across their lifespan. Some studies emphasise changes in masculinity, and strategies for negotiating masculinity, that developmentally

occur along the lifespan. However, there is a lack of research exploring the developmental process regarding how men negotiate their masculinity across the lifespan, from a longitudinal rather than cross sectional perspective, and working through many different types of scenarios and challenges.

In summary

In summary, this review has described masculinity as a dynamic and multidimensional construct, and emphasised that there is little research to date exploring the dynamic components of masculinity, especially relating to ageing across the lifespan. Hegemonic masculinity is considered the pinnacle of masculinity against which most men are measured, but few actualise. The issue of dominance is a key factor of hegemonic masculinity in relation to other men and women. It is particularly important that there are subtypes to explain this issue of dominance (positions of hegemony, complicity, subordination and marginalisation). Men who ascribe to hegemonic masculinity are positioned in relation to other men; and "real men" gain status in relation to women in general and subordinated (often feminised) men, like homosexual men. Marginalised masculinities refer to the relationship between hegemonic masculinities and subordinated groups, which may be defined on many dimensions, such as wealth, class, ethnicity, and so on. Hegemonic masculinity is not a static concept, but is constantly adapting according to the current cultural masculine values as well continuously being challenged by subordinated and marginalised masculinities.

Various non-hegemonic masculinities were explored. Dominant masculinity refers to versions of masculinity that is the most culturally celebrated, widespread and common forms of masculinity in men are allowed to exercise power within specific social settings. Dominant masculinities may or may not involve gender hegemony. Hybrid masculinities allows men to experience traditionally non-masculine qualities while not jeopardising their hegemonic status. This would often be because they had access to masculine capital, for example. Personalised masculinities can be produced, in which men negotiated and re-engage number of alternate ways of 'doing' a man that differ from traditional forms of masculinity. These men would still benefit from the hierarchy of hegemony, but do not tend to subordinate others. Caring masculinities describes men involved in caring practices especially in the area of fathering.

As the literature has illustrated, men who are unable to embody the ideals of hegemonic or dominant masculinity might engage in strategies such as: disparaging those aspiring to hegemonic or dominant masculinity ideals; adopting hypermasculinity; renegotiating their relationships with different forms of masculinity; selecting specific aspects of hegemonic masculinity and defining their own hegemonic status via demonstrations of choice and control; redefining masculine criteria according to their present age; and relating to others with unemotional rationality rather than emotionality.

With most research on masculinity employing a cross-sectional approach, there is a gap in the literature. By adopting a retrospective perspective, the present study will explore how men experience and negotiate their masculinity across the lifespan through many different transitions and life challenges. It aims to determine if hegemonic masculinity and alternate masculinities are relevant across the lifespan; whether core hegemonic and dominant masculine identities continue to be relevant to ageing men (in contrast to Spector-Mersel's framework discussed below); and, how ageing men work at engaging and negotiating their masculinity, particularly when they can no longer embody hegemonic or dominant ideals, such as being youthful and virile. Focus will now turn to developing a theoretical framework for understanding masculinity from a temporal perspective.

Masculinity From a Lifespan Developmental Perspective

A Temporal Understanding of Masculinity

Time can be defined as "an occasion when something happens" or "a period of history" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). These definitions refer to time in a static manner referring to a single point or period in time. Spector-Mersel (2006) approaches gender in a dynamic way, exploring how people's relation to masculinity changes over time. She conceptualises gender from a lifespan time perspective. Within this perspective a person attains a "temporal comprehension of gender across the life course" (p. 67). She defines "[l]ifespan time [as] refer[ing] to the average life expectancy in a given society […] a time dimension that begins at birth and ends in death" (p. 70). Specifically, she applies this approach to exploring masculinity. This conceptualization of masculinity provides a unique approach for this research to explore.

Spector-Mersel (2006) proposes that masculine identities are often referred to from a static perspective in which only a single point of time is focused on. For example, some

cross-sectional studies have examined a topic at a specific time focusing their sample on specific age groups, such as university students (Khalaf et al., 2013), late teens to early twenties (Creighton et al., 2013), and men older than forty (Baker et al., 2010). Other cross-sectional studies have focused on specific aspects of masculinity, for example, competitiveness across the life span, in which the sample consists of a wide range of ages (Mayr et al., 2012), or men choosing to work in a career considered feminine (O'Connor, 2015). Both of these approaches are still static in their temporal understanding of masculinity.

A dynamic lifespan approach, as proposed by Spector-Mersel (2006), would be longitudinal, where various masculine aspects are studied in relation to each other, in a holistic manner. Cross-sectional studies view issues from a limited static manner. They explore the issues in depth at a specific period of time as opposed to longitudinal studies that gain a broader understanding of these issues across the participants' lifespan. Our understanding of masculinity from a life-course perspective, currently, is therefore a loose patchwork of findings from numerous cross-sectional studies. There is no continuity of the issues across the participants' lifespan in cross-sectional studies.

Retrospective studies provide a more comprehensive picture of masculinity. For example, instead of focusing on a single masculine identity at a specific time, they allow for a developmental lifespan approach. Masculine identities can be understood from a dynamic perspective in terms of which masculine identities men may consider important along their lifespan and place greater emphasis on at particular times. Importantly, lifespan studies can explore how these identities change over time. Longitudinal (or retrospective) studies enable a person to link various experiences, seeing a fuller picture as opposed to seeing them as isolated scenarios. The following review of dynamic approaches to masculinity will raise questions which orient towards the present study, which uses a retrospective lifespan approach, aiming to investigate masculinity in a dynamic manner by exploring how men experienced their masculine identities across their lifespan in negotiating many developmental challenges and transitions. Take, for example, the transition to fatherhood.

Höfner et al. (2011) describe the important impact having a child has on fathers, on multiple dimensions. They speak of "[b]ecoming a father [as] a crucial change within the life course, fatherhood thus having to be integrated into male identity" (p. 669). They then elaborate on some areas in which important changes could be experienced:

The transition to parenthood will very likely change fathers' relationships with their partners, their families, and their social environments. It will also change their habits of spending leisure time, affect their working lives, and is likely to transform them into individuals who cherish interests and values that are different than before this transition. During the process of pregnancy and within the first months with their new baby, parents are forced to get used to their new position, as well as to concomitant changes. […] Hence having a baby is a major physical, psychical and financial effort (p. 669)

Another issue raised by Höfner et al. (2011) is related to masculine issues. Would a retrospective life journey account be tailored to focus primarily on valued masculine identities such as being a provider and disciplinarian in fatherhood or would other less dominant masculine identities and activities of engaging with his family be described?

Ransaw (2014) argues that men, generally, have an "exceptionally impoverished idea about what fatherhood involves" (p. 6), whereby wives are expected to deal with the emotional aspects in the family (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009), and men are expected to be the primary breadwinners (Hancock, 2012). It is expected that the pressure to refer to and focus primarily on the masculine ideals valued in hegemonic masculinity, as opposed to discussing less valued and even subordinated values of masculinity, will be a factor for men giving retrospective accounts of their personal life journey as men.

Developmental perspective

Developmental psychology is "a scientific approach which aims to explain growth, change and consistency though the lifespan. Developmental psychology looks at how thinking, feeling, and behaviour change throughout a person's life" (McLeod, 2017, p. 1). This field engages with the dynamic concept of time progressing across the lifespan as well as the concept of change in a person's life experience. There have been many developmental theorists working in many sub-disciplines in the social sciences, and not all can be included, but the following section will provide an overview of the developmental perspective in psychology.

The essence of the lifespan developmental approach is that it formulates an overarching framework in which human development from conception to death can be better understood (APA Div. 20: Adult Development and Aging, 2018). Developmental

theories layout various guiding concepts and principles to explain and describe human development (Lumen Learning, n.d.). Syed and Fish (2018) spoke of how Erik Erikson developed a psychosocial theory of identity development which implied that each individual passes "through a series of developmental stages from birth to old age" (Batra, 2013, p. 250). The model was made up of eight sequential stages although these stages were not considered to progress in a linear fashion but rather organically overlap over the lifespan " (Batra, 2013). Donald Super developed a career decision-making model that was a life-stage model (Super, 1980). "Career development [was viewed as] a life-long journey that starts at mid adolescence and ends at retirement [... in which a] career [is considered to be] a lifetime development not an event" (Anovunga et al., 2021, p. 41). Anovunga et al. (2021) explained that vocational choice was deemed to have different meanings at different age levels. The authors described the Super model to be made of five stages of development in which the career development was viewed as a continuous process, although the sequence of the different stages would not need to rigidly adhere to chronological age. These examples illustrate how developmental models imply that change occur as people as they progress across the lifespan. Next Spector-Mersel's dynamic lifespan framework will be explained, starting with dynamic social norms.

Dynamic Social Norms

As discussed above, Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity implies a normative framework on men, including social norms. Social norms are enforced not by law but by social pressure, and consist of social standards and rules that guide and constrain social behaviour (Dempsey et al., 2018). However, Spector-Mersel's lifespan (2006) approach argues that the norms and demands of hegemonic masculinity differ across life stages. Additionally, the socially agreed definition of what counts as hegemonic masculinity changes over time. This can leave men who attained hegemonic standards in their youth stranded as the normative definition of real masculinity changes around them. This raises the question of whether older men find themselves at a loss on how to express their masculinity or whether they simply resort to adopting various strategies to negotiate their masculinity in dynamic ways in this phase of their lives.

The Social Clock

Spector-Mersel (2006) describes the pressure men are under to conform to the cultural social norms for achieving various life events within a certain period of time. She

refers to the social clock to explain the pressures on men to conform to these expectations related to particular stages of life:

> […] this temporal conception, suggest[s] that each culture holds an idea of the 'normal' or 'expectable' life cycle, identifying certain life events with certain times. This 'social clock' is maintained by means of age-norms that regulate progression throughout the adult years and indicate whether individuals are 'on time' or 'off time'. [..] Naturally, the clocks' time units are based on age. This is stressed by conceiving of the 'social clock' as an age-grade[d] system and age norms as a system of social control (p. 70).

The age-norms are essentially social norms on a temporal dimension. Not only is there pressure to comply with these social norms but there is an additional pressure of achieving compliance within a regulated or specific period of time. Men and women have unique normative clocks but this present study will be focusing on the normative clock for masculinity.

The "social clock" concept refers to people being "on time" or "off time" according to whether they comply with the age related-norms pf gender performance. Masculine identities are partly defined according to whether they are "on time" or "off time." It is expected, for example, that when a man leaves the educational institution he will begin working, and after he marries he will have children. Various masculine identities would be normatively expected at different times along the lifespan. This raises a pressing question of what happens to men who do not conform to the social clock. Would they be impacted? If so, how would their experience of their masculine identities be affected? Would they need to spend more time negotiating their masculine identities when being "off time"?

Categories of Life Events Along a Timeline

The focus of the lifespan developmental perspective is on the experiences and processes that occurred throughout the entire lifespan (Alwin, 2012). Life events are defined as "[s]ignificant events occurring across the life span that mark transitions from one life cycle stage (or state) to another that are accompanied by changes in roles, expectations, responsibilities, and behaviours" (Alwin, 2012, p. 3). These events tend to be age differentiated or age graded. They tend to signal transitions too.

An account of a person's life journey would be made of uniquely experienced life events "and transitions over the lifespan; both the original events and the retrospective account of them, would be shaped by the pressure experienced from social age-norms. Of course, a key point of analysis is exploring which lifespan events are reported and how they are constructed as important in relation to other events in the lifespan narrative and broader social structures, such as hegemonic masculinity.

A "turning point" is defined as "the point at which a very meaningful change occurs; a decisive moment" (American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 2016) and as "a moment when the course of events is changed" (Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, 2014). The present research is explores *critical turning points*, which are moments when men negotiate masculine identity at different stages in the lifespan. It is a key moment in which the outcome is seen to hang in the balance and which will be seen to determine the future in a man's narrative of their life as a man.

Masculine Developmental Stages and Identities along the Lifespan

Each of the subsections below refers to important dimensions of masculine identity and or developmental stages experienced by men across the lifespan except for working and providing because there is no set expectation when these identities begin. As evident in the discussion below, each impacts the other throughout the lifespan. For example, to be a provider a man needs to work; being a provider is an important role in conventional norms around marriage and fatherhood; and his level of being a provider will determine the financial independence of his retirement. This makes the sections that follow difficult to order. Men usually work before they are married, but need to provide for their wives and – if they procreate – their children; but they can procreate before they are married. They can only retire after they work. The sections that follow should therefore be considered to be tightly interconnected, and are presented in an order that aids explanation rather than the temporal order we might expect in a man's life. The section on health is placed at the end as these issues are impinged on the man's life rather than him seeking it out.

Providing across the lifespan

Providing is a dominant aspect of masculinity identity and, in particular, a valued aspect of hegemonic identity because it relates to men's access to material power in relation to women (Mvune & Bhana, 2022). Providing is not tied to a specific developmental stage as the act of providing occurs throughout a person's lifespan. A man can provide by

working (for example full time, part time, as a contractor, piecemeal work), living off a trust, collecting a disability grant / being on welfare, for example. Providing can include providing for oneself or providing for others too. Of course, a man may not be able to provide financially due to not working or, for example, if divorced, may not contribute to his initial family. A man may provide in non-financial ways for example, caring for his ailing wife or perhaps his ageing parents, or sharing the household and childcare workload.

Literature highlights how being a provider, the breadwinner, taking care of family is considered as being central to masculine identities (Hancock, 2012; Harris, 2010). Brown et al. (2017) describe how "notions of masculinity […] promote the role of men as providers" (p. 1225) and how being a provider enables the men to "perform idealized and dominant forms of masculinity [thereby] affirm[ing the] men's value and status in society" (p. 1235).

While being a provider is often framed as a positive sign of masculinity, it can also be experienced as a burden resulting in depression and stress. Smith and Winchester (1998) refer to how men are able "to express a hegemonic masculine identity through their breadwinning role, and gain a sense of achievement and recognition" (p. 334). This indicates how important the identity of providing is to men and how it is used to enhance their hegemonic status.

Of course, the identities of providing and working are both important masculine identities (Courtenay, 2000; Hancock, 2012) and are tightly connected, as (generally) a man has to work in order to financially provide for himself and others. Idris et al. (2019) explore "health help-seeking by men, specifically "masculinities and 'doing' male identities across the life course" (p. 1071). Marriage is considered to be an important milestone, and a shift in role where providing becomes important. Idris et al. (2019) describe the married men's priorities as "providing a comfortable life for their family by working hard and earning money" (p. 1080). A good husband as perceived through social expectations would support their family financially which was usually in terms of providing shelter, paying for the bills and buying food for their wife and children Idris et al. (2019).

This gives an indication that men focus on material provision for their family as more important than other dimensions like, for example, emotional support. The identity functions of work will be discussed in the section below. The current section focuses on provision.

Literature (Hancock, 2012; Kanaaneh, 2005; Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009) refers to the traditional expectation that the man is the primary breadwinner in a family while the wife focuses on homemaking and raising children. Settels and McMullin (2017) speak of how social norms in the early 1950s placed the expectations on families to conform where the men were breadwinners and the women would take care of the household. They note historical drift in these norms, as by the 1990s these norms were not conformed to as rigidly, as women assumed a more central place in the workplace.

However, Munsch (2015) reports that "[m]en still regard providing as their responsibility even if they welcome their partner's contributions, couples with similar wages tend to interpret women's earnings as supplemental" (p. 470). Springer et al. (2019) explore the transition of wives out-earning their husbands over the course of their marriage. It was found that "violating cultural expectations, such as the masculinity ideal of breadwinning, [was] associated with older men's poorer health" (p. 37). This emphasises how fundamental the identity of providing materially for their family is for men.

Retirement often leads to "opportunities to be the provider [being] reduced or cut off" (Idris et al., 2019, p. 1082). Retiring is associated with the end of the continuum of the work trajectory. To be a retiree implies a relinquishing of work identity. For most men, this also implies a loss of hegemonic status and resources, for example, financial and social.

Success in being a provider is not only judged by providing for dependents' immediate needs but by also having the foresight to provide for retirement in the future. A man can establish his masculine status and power by being wealthy during his working years; and perhaps more so by being wealthy in retirement. Being retired generally implies that the man's income has been reduced; and therefore, being wealthy in retirement is a particularly strong signal of masculine power and status. However, more often, retiring undermines the ability of men to claim the masculine identity of providing due to the often diminishing of resources through the termination of formal work (Valadas et al., 2019).

In summary, being a provider is an important hegemonic identity through which status as a man can be achieved. This identity carries importance across the lifespan even during retirement.

Working across the lifespan

This theme of working refers to particularly engaging in an activity for monetary gain, specifically in terms of working in a job or career. Work is an integral aspect of

masculine identity (Courtenay, 2000; Hancock, 2012; Pietilä et al., 2017). Arrighi and Maume (2000) aptly describe how essential the work identity is for most men:

> For the majority of men, paid employment is of paramount importance. It is the activity in which they spend most of their time and depend on most for their identity. Large pay checks are but one definition of a successful man. (p. 470)

Work is also an important component of masculine identity in its own right (Courtenay, 2000). It provides many opportunities to fulfil various valued hegemonic qualities such as being successful; being self-reliant; pursuing status and primacy of work (Easton et al., 2013); being independent and powerful (Hoyt et al., 2013); and of course – if possible – being economically competitive and successful (Ransaw, 2014; Sumerau et al., 2015).

Working provides the opportunity for men to have the financial resources to buy material things. For example, having the latest car is a potent indicator of being financially successful, which is a highly valued masculine quality (Harris, 2010). Kimmel and Tissier-Desbordes (1999) refer to the power found in buying commodities, such as the best car (e.g. in terms of size, power, speed), as not only a personally satisfying experience but also a means by which to make a statement of power in relation to other men. Such a commodity allows men to present themselves as performing financially better than the other men; portraying themselves as being as successful as or more successful that other men. The purchase of such an item would then symbolically give these men greater masculine status.

The identities of provider and worker are seen to impact one another and also be concerns that extend across the lifespan. Calhoun and Taub (2014) interviewed 22 entry-level men in the field of student affairs. The implication in this article was that pay in this field was not very competitive compared to other fields, and that men subtly oriented to this. The influence of "traditional male roles" was evident specifically with reference to the "traditional role of financial supporter". The men "who were projecting family commitments in the future […] acknowledged a time could come where the desire or need for higher compensation [financially] could outweigh reasons to stay [in their relatively poorly paid positions]"(p. 42). Here the possibility that the role of provider might be an important identity goal in the future was seen to influence the men's career choices.

Proserpio et al. (2016) refer to the psychological costs of a person losing his work identity:

> The psychological impact of job loss can be severe, with the unemployed exhibiting higher likelihood of depression and anxiety, social alienation, and hopelessness, as well as a variety of associated physical symptoms including being more sick, taking more medications, and making more doctor visits than employed counterparts. (p. 1)

Sherman (2009) elaborates on the destructive effects of job loss. This may make men more likely to perpetrate domestic violence and engage in substance and alcohol abuse. Sherman (2009) further states that "men tend to experience these symptoms more severely than women, because both their self-worth and masculine identities are often tied to breadwinning" (p. 601). Hancock (2012) concurs, referring to an erosion of masculine identity when work has been taken away. In addition, not having work undermines a man's ability to be a provider which also is an essential masculine identity.

Sherman (2009) refers to how the impact of the job loss affects families, depending on the gender strategies they apply in terms of how rigidly they hold onto traditional gender norms. The more flexible they are, the less impact of the loss of work. The inverse is also true. The more the men are able to "adapt to [their] job losses and changing masculinities" (Sherman, 2009, p. 600) the more they are able to adapt to being unemployed. Sherman calls this a flexible strategy, where men (and their partners) share responsibilities like earning income, caring for children and domestic labour more equally (and flexibly) (Sherman, 2009). These men are seen to embrace non-dominant ways of being a man.

Retirement and status

Retirement is associated with ageing and is a common developmental stage and expectation (Quadagno, 2017), although some aspire to retire early and others are financially unable to retire at all. Nevertheless, the social norm expectation is that a person retires from work because of his age. The socially accepted time of retirement is an arbitrary age defined differently by different institutions internationally, for example, by the various institutions issuing pensions (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Traditionally this had been in the age range between 55 and 65 years of age (Quadagno, 2017). On retirement, the work identity of being a man is theoretically lost, and this is its key defining feature. As in the

work category, it is apparent that a man continues to negotiate and even redefine his masculine identity in retirement. A primary issue around retirement relates to how the retiree creates and sustains his identity as a man, particularly in maintaining his social relations and status.

Retirement is defined as "the point at which someone stops working, especially because of having reached a particular age or because of ill health, or the period in someone's life after the person has stopped working" (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, n.d.-a). This theme is similar to the theme of work as it is also a developmental expectation (Quadagno, 2017).

Retirement impacts various life categories such as being a provider, formally productive worker and colleague. It is considered to be a major life transition especially in terms of economic productivity (Valadas et al., 2019). Stopping formal work impacts a person's income source. The potential loss of financial resources and identities also suggests a resulting loss of hegemonic status. On the other hand, being able to be financially independent and continue being the provider while being retired would be highly valued masculine achievements.

Valadas et al. (2019) refer to the marked impact finances have on the experience of retirement. "Financial issues are often the single biggest predictor of retirement age, with people leaving [paid work] when they are financially able to do so" (Frieze et al., 2011, p. 44). Being economically secure is a valued masculine achievement (Bandini & Thompson, 2013-2014). By being able to retire comfortably, men are able to display their financial acuity and success. This major event also potentially enables them to fulfil the identity of being a provider.

Retirement also presents potential crises in terms of a person's status in relation to hegemonic masculinity. For example, being young and having bodies that are impervious to illness are highly valued qualities in hegemonic masculinity (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012); whereas retirement is a period of time that is linked with physical changes associated with ageing. Coles and Vassarotti (2012) note that when "men age their bodies become weaker and more susceptible to illness and injury" (p. 33). This could be experienced as a failure and a crisis for the men's masculine identities during this period of life.

Losing his work identity as a man on retirement can be very difficult. Work is considered an essential identity of a man (Courtenay, 2000). The following quote expresses

the difficulty in giving up this identity on retiring, especially when the work identity has been a central identity in their lives (Valadas et al., 2019). Social and identity are created around work. "Consequently, leaving the labour market can be a negative experience with significant consequences in terms of physical and psychological health […] In this sense, the transition to retirement may be difficult, in particular for people who perceive work to be an important part of their identity" (Valadas et al., 2019, p. 41). Giving up a central masculine identity of work on retiring can be embraced or can be a negative experience depending to some degree on how important that identity was.

Retirement can be experienced in negative ways. Mann (2006) speaks of how retirement can be framed as a "signal [of] the end of an individual's useful life" (p. 37) by referring to retirement as being inactive and by implication purposeless. Tang et al. (2013) state that men who retire involuntarily for reasons such as ill-health "are very likely to experience a loss of […] identity, which is stressful and detrimental to their health" (p. 90). Vo et al. (2015) refer to those retirees who had to retire due to ill health as being more likely to experience greater psychological distress. This again emphasises how empowering it is to be able to choose and take control of when to retire.

However, retiring may also be experienced in a positive manner. Valadas et al. (2019) refer to retirees' welcoming the situation of no longer experiencing the pressures and demands of working, thus creating a greater sense of personal freedom. In this context, retirement potentially opens up opportunities for the person to engage in self-fulfilling interests.

Retiring is not automatically a negative experience but can be a positive new developmental stage in a person's life. Other factors such as the timing of retirement can determine whether the transition of retiring is experienced positively or not. This will be discussed below.

Ogg and Renaut (2019) refer to the meaning of the timing of a man's retirement. Many people base their decisions to retire according to their eligibility for pensions. Retiring is often then categorised according to being "early", "on time" or "late". Yet these are not reliable bench-marks regarding the timing of when to retire. Often whether the men retire "early", "on-time" or "late" will determine the hegemonic status gained by this transition.

Control is an important masculine characteristic (Sumerau et al., 2015), and men primarily have the opportunity to take control of the timing of retiring if they have health and wealth. Vo et al. (2015) describe the experience of retirement as having a positive impact on participants' wellbeing in cases when they were able to decide when they wished to retire. Being able to choose when to retire appears to enable them to be ready to retire and resolve this transition in a positive manner (Shultz & Wang, 2011).

Vo et al. (2015) describe the substantial difference between people who retire "on time" versus "off time" according to the social clock. Those who can choose to retire "on time" often experience a positive change in their well-being and lives. "For these people, retirement can be a time of reinvention and enhanced mental and physical well-being as they are relieved of the pressures of work and able to have greater freedoms over their time and activities" (Vo et al., 2015, p. 647). With other people, they have to retire due to external pressures such as needing to care for a loved one, ill health or redundancy. In these cases "retirement may be associated with poor mental health outcomes (Vo et al., 2015, p. 647).

This again highlights how being in control and being able to choose when a person enters into a new developmental stage can impact his experience of that transition. The act of retiring is surrounded by age norm expectations, and how it is done in relation to those norms is seen to impact the participants' experience of their masculine identity.

Marriage

Marriage is a powerful institution for claiming hegemonic status. An important normative characteristic of conventional hegemonic masculinity is virile heterosexuality (Hancock, 2012). This hegemonic expectation of being heterosexual is changing, but for most of the last century homosexuality was both illegal and socially abominated in South Africa. On the other hand, by marrying a woman a man can establish his heterosexuality and desirability. "Marriage is one of the central arenas in which men prove their manhood, demonstrating to the world and to themselves that they are 'real men'" (Johnson & Loscocco, 2015, p. 147). This action of marrying, in theory, would eliminate any doubts, if they existed, that the man was not heterosexual (Courtenay, 2000).

Brown et al. (2017) describe how marriage enhances a man's social status. Their participants' narratives revealed that marriage was marked by a transition from aimlessness to purposefulness, and conferred social status and credibility. Bandini and Thompson (2013-

2014) refer to the "taken-for-granted identity as a husband and life as a married man" (p. 136). Getting married is seen to be an integral part of a man's identity and a social developmental norm in which men also achieve hegemonic masculine status.

Procreation does not need to follow marriage although, according to the social clock (Eck, 2014), there is an expectation and pressure to procreate after marrying. Arrighi and Maume (2000) refer not only to the link between marriage and procreating, but also to how marriage enables a person to express gender identities and characteristics. Marriage and procreating are powerful developmental institutions by which to establish masculine status. On the other hand, failure to get married or procreate is frequently an aberration to be explained.

Eck (2014) refers to men in their later years who had not married as being exposed to unspoken judgement from their communities as not being real men; this included the implication that they were pathological due to failing to marry. Eck argues that this is a prejudice that older single men are exposed to. Men, therefore, who have never married or marry later in life need to "make sense of themselves as men without the symbolic significance of marriage" (Eck, 2014, p. 151).

Procreation

Being virile and being able to have penetrative sex are also highly valued masculine characteristics (Farvid & Braun, 2018; Oliffe, 2006). Producing children symbolically indicates that the men have been able to fulfil these values. Not procreating implies the men are not virile; and not even having the choice to procreate proves it. Childless older men therefore live with the potential assumption that they are possibly flawed and defective (Farvid & Braun, 2018), severely undermining their masculinity.

Brown et al. (2017) refer to the pressure both men and women experience to have children. "Within this socially constructed view of masculinity, men were expected to be strong, stoic, and productive both in meeting the needs of the family and in producing a family"(Maliski et al., 2008, p. 1618). Men experience pressure to conform to social developmental pressure in a "manly" way that conforms to hegemonic expectations.

Maliski et al. (2008) propose that having children may buffer the men's masculinity when threatened, for example, when undermined by prostate cancer treatment (and consequent erectile dysfunction). "Men who had offspring and a long-term relationship had fulfilled the masculine ideal of producing a family and providing for that family, perhaps

mitigating some of the demasculinizing effects of prostate cancer and its treatment" (p. 1619).

Procreating is an important value of masculinity. The above suggests that it can be a protective factor when the men "fail" in other areas of masculinity.

Fatherhood

Fatherhood refers to the man's relationship with his children. There are many ways to become a father including procreation (see above), adoption and marriage to someone who already has children. Morrell (2005) speaks of the benefits of "active fathering" for both children and men themselves. Important aspects of men's identities in South Africa are made up by the fathering identity, which forms a powerful means of positioning oneself as a man.

However, while there are many ways of constructing fatherhood, older men often have very conservative ideals for what it entails. Henwood and Procter (2003) describe the tensions the fathers experience between the traditional expectations (such as being emotionally disinterested, distant and detached, but a reliable financial provider) versus new models of fatherhood in which the father is nurturing and caring.

As discussed above, providing successfully for their family (Burkstrand, 2012) is a particularly important way of demonstrating his success as a father and thereby securing his status as a man. The opposite is also true: a man who cannot provide for his family may have difficulty establishing his manliness. Yarwood (2011) expands on what the breadwinning father entails:

> The breadwinner father focuses on notions of 'a good father' providing for his family's material needs by earning an income in paid employment outside the home. […] Earning an income which pays for their family's food, shelter and material needs is embedded within the breadwinner father identity. (p. 153)

The emphasis of being a provider as a father is on providing a safe place to stay and meeting practical material needs.

Creighton et al. (2015) refer to how "parenting remains a gendered practice" (p. 561) in terms of divide of responsibilities between mother (nurturing) and father (fathering) (Höfner et al., 2011). The consensus is that the fathers are the "instrumental leader and head of the family, whereas the mother is characterized as having emotional and expressive

functions" (Johansson, 2011, p. 228). Being emotional or nurturing are not traditionally valued characteristics of a masculine identity (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009) especially regarding the caregiving at home (Snitker, 2018).

Masculinities are often referred to as being in tension (Kirkman et al., 2001) and this is particularly evident in the father identity. Johansson (2011) refers to the complexity of the working out of this tension:

> We find a complex image of the father characterized by both demands of being the breadwinner and forces wanting to create a more gender equal fatherhood. The image of fatherhood is ambivalent, but slowly progressing towards shared parenting and family responsibilities (p. 237) [… and how] significant number of studies showing that fathers have become increasingly more present and nurturing (p. 228)

However Borgkvist et al. (2018) note that even when men have a desire to be an involved father, they may struggle to express it or integrate it into their masculine identity. Höfner et al. (2011) go as far as to refer to the men trying to live according to these new ideals as actually being left struggling with "a fragmentation of their masculinity" (p. 679). This highlights the pressure to fulfil the traditional model of a father as not being effeminate and being the stoic provider and disciplinarian.

Men may renegotiate their masculine identities while being nurturing fathers, by expanding their definition and experience of the identity of fathering to include activities and experiences previously considered as "mothering". Hauser (2015) argues that men incorporating these nurturing features of parenting into their masculinity frequently compensate by also adding more masculine activities into their parenting routines, and avoiding other feminised activities (such as parenting groups) and displays (such as such as obvious emotional weakness). Indeed, "fathers actively masculinize their parenting behaviours as a means of protecting their identities as men—identities which are threatened upon their entering the feminine domain of parenting" (p. 85) In short, even in nurturing, men are often proactive in defending their masculine identities by adding activities and dimensions that are recognizably masculine and de-emphasising features usually considered to be especially feminine (Hauser, 2015).

Health

The man who conforms to hegemonic characteristics is typically seen as being strong physically (Hoyt et al., 2013; Stick, 2021), not weak in any way, never requiring medical intervention and self-sufficiently avoiding organised health care (Choy et al., 2015). Novak et al. (2019) refer to how men experience social pressure regarding the expectations of being a man in order to avoid seeking medical intervention. Instead the men feel that they "are supposed to be tough, push through pain, and not go to see the doctor" (p. 5).

The man who enacts hegemonic versions of masculinity is portrayed as not having physical problems or illnesses (Courtenay, 2000; McVittie & McKinlay, 2010) and avoiding seeking healthcare services (Ilkka et al., 2016). Ironically, men embedded in conventional hegemonic masculinity are consequently at higher risk of poor health (Gast & Peak, 2011). This contributes to men's experiencing higher rates of mortality than women (McVittie & McKinlay, 2010).

Ageing is an inevitable process that occurs along the developmental lifespan (Marchant, 2013). It is not merely a social construct, but a physical reality. The consequences of ageing are practical and real (Calasanti & King, 2005). This ageing process makes negotiating masculinity difficult (Glendenning et al., 2017). Of course, people's bodies become more susceptible to illness and generally weaker as a natural and inevitable result of ageing (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). These changes are a threat to hegemonic masculinity, as being dependent and vulnerable are traditionally considered to be feminine (Oliffe, 2006). Independence is a valued masculine quality (Hoyt et al., 2013), and the gradual (or sudden) loss of independence in ageing is a potent threat to conventional masculine identity.

The masculine pressure to be independent and the simultaneous importance of getting help when required is a difficult tension. Smith et al. (2007) refer to a consistent theme of maintaining the capacity to be independent found in the diverse definitions of successful ageing. These authors describe how the societal masculine constructions of independence set up a double-bind on men regarding their health. Successful ageing encourages men to be independent; and yet, when independent, men tend to be criticised for maintaining their independence by not seeking help and accessing medical intervention. Wiersma and Chesser (2011) argue that masculinity has a complicated relationship to health

in which independence is seen to be intertwined with both ageing successfully and hegemonic masculinity.

Ageing therefore forces men to weigh different aspects of masculinity against each other, and help-seeking may then become viable if it preserves a more valued component of masculinity, like independence (Smith et al., 2007; Tannenbaum & Frank, 2011). Idris et al. (2019) give an example of how some men negotiated seeking medical assistance while still keeping their masculine identity intact by protecting and maintaining their independence. Specifically, they weighed up the "cost" to masculinity of seeking help against to cost of losing independence. For example, they could justify addressing an issue such as severe pain as long as it could enable them to retain their ability to work.

In this instance, remaining independent is seen to carry more weight in the hegemonic hierarchy of ideals than avoiding help-seeking, enabling a man to still be considered a man in spite of not achieving in another area of hegemony. Gast and Peak put this even more strongly, arguing "that the only time when it is considered acceptable for a man to adopt health help-seeking behaviour is if it validates a valued aspect of masculinity, such as in connection with sexual performance or being a good provider" (Gast & Peak, 2011, p. 320).

Women have been identified as being overseers of men's health (McVittie & McKinlay, 2010). Gast and Peak (2011) refer to wives as frequently acting as brokers in facilitating and enabling men "to overcome the traditional masculine gender script of avoiding medical help-seeking as well as engaging in health-promoting behaviours" (p. 323).

Impact of Prior Gender Socialization

Of course, identities and strategies available to men as they age partly depend on their life experiences, including their prior socialization. Harris (2010) unpacks the meanings of what his participants learned to associate with masculinities during their pre-college gender socialization. He expresses interest in investigating which meanings of masculinities that are learned and reinforced in college persist beyond men's departure from the institution. He puts forward a pertinent lifespan question to be investigated in the future: "How do life experiences, like becoming a parent, being engaged in a marriage or life partnership, or committing to a career influence the meanings men ascribe to masculinities?" (Harris, 2010, p. 316).

This point is pertinent to this present study as the study aims to investigate the men's experiences of their masculinity across their lifespan. This specifically refers to how lifespan occurrences impact a man's experience of masculinity. If a man accepts Kimmel and Messners' (2007) assertion that the ways in which men perform masculinities will change as they grow and mature throughout their lives, he can reasonably assume that meanings of masculinities will be shaped by these experiences. These points and questions raised above capture the value of having an approach where life events are not examined in isolation but rather in context of other life events across the lifespan.

Studies Utilising the Lifespan Approach

There have been some studies which have tracked the same men's experiences of being a man over a period of time. For example, Henwood and Procter (2003) explored new fathers' attitudes over more or less a year in which their first child was born. Bandini and Thompson (2013-2014) interviewed men who had been widowed over two to four years. However, this research was implemented over only a short period of time and with a specific focus (rather than on masculinity more generally). Cohler and Hammack (2007) biographically tracked two men's entire lives. Their focus was on how the men constructed their sense of masculinity and the impact of society on this process during their lifetimes in different eras, specifically in relation to the AIDS epidemic. The focus of this lifespan research was very specific. The participants were not interviewed. Instead, for example, journals were gathered to document their life stories. The outcome focused on the impact of the historical era they lived in, which played a large role in how different the men's experiences were with regard to contracting AIDS.

Only two studies were found to have utilised a similar approach to the present study. Emslie et al. (2004, p. 209) "investigate(d) older men's attitudes toward gender roles and the influence of social class". Twelve men were interviewed for their study. Their sample was part of a bigger study. They utilised non-probalistic sampling to select their participants as they chose their participants according to various criteria. Their study utilised semi-structured interviews. This present research accessed the participants from the community utilising purposive and convenience snowballing. The interviews were unstructured.

Emslie et al. (2004) began their interviews with a generic question to get an overview of their participants' lives. The interviewer then focused on "critical stages in each man's biography, for example, leaving school, entering the labour market" (p. 212). The

participants were asked to reflect on their lives as men at the end of the interviews. Emslie et al. (2004) noted how effective investigating life event categories across the lifespan was compared to simply taking into account the most recent life event in that category. The present study extends this work beyond concentrating on singular life events or events over a few years, as seen in the Emslie et al. (2004) study, to a more general focus on a life journey of events across the lifespan.

The second study (Firnhaber et al., 2018) interviewed students, examining how they constructed their masculinities in the time of transition of leaving home and going to university. They found the students used three strategies to construct their masculine identity during this period of change. This study only focused on one specific period of transition, from that of a scholar to that of a university student.

In conclusion

There have been several calls to consider the passage of time in studies of masculinity, which would require considering masculinity in a dynamic way in which many single life events, or events occurring over a few years, are focused on along the lifespan in a holistic manner. Wahrendorf et al. (2018) highlight the importance of research across the lifespan in which biographies are investigated, covering an extended time frame and exploring both the timing of specific transitions (such as retiring from formal employment), and "tak[ing] a more holistic perspective that describes entire patterns of life course 'trajectories'" (p. 1265). The emphasis is that of taking on a more holistic perspective, of events extending throughout the participants' life journeys, to understand how they experience their masculinity across their lifespans.

In the present research a constructivist developmental perspective is adopted to capture the richness of developmental change during the course of a man's life which is expected to impact his experience of his own masculinity. Previous research has tended to be cross sectional, regarding time as a static moment as opposed to being a dynamic integral part of the study.

In the present study, time is considered as a dimension of masculinity, for example, in the impact of pressure resulting from social age-norms, especially when men are "off time." This present study applies the lifespan approach to retrospective accounts to explore each participant's dynamics of biographical transitions from one life event to the next, particularly in terms of how they negotiate their masculine identities along their lifespan.

This brings a temporal dimension into understanding masculinity, rather than focusing on a static dimension such as a specific period of time or themes. Through doing a retrospective study, this present research aims to understand masculine identities across the lifespan, exploring which masculine identities are valued retrospectively, and how these identities overlap over time and impact each other. Much research is cross-sectional which does not address how social developmental norms impact on masculinity. By doing a retrospective study, a greater understanding can be gained on whether masculinity is impacted by the social clock; if so, how a man can narrate his masculinity if he is off or on time in achieving these social developmental norms can be explored. The next section will explain the methodology in detail.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The method section is made up of seven subsections. The following are discussed: the rationale; objective and research questions; the research design; ethical considerations; standards of research enquiry; and reflexivity of the researcher.

Rationale

Masculinity has often been studied by focusing on life themes and/or specific crisis points or life events such as issues relating to education (Iwamoto et al., 2013, p. 258), employment (Rochlen et al., 2008), or family (Baker et al., 2010). Spector-Mersel (2006) argues that these approaches offer a static view of masculinity. She proposes approaching the study of masculinity in a dynamic way, utilising a lifespan approach. Across the lifespan human lives are constantly in transition. It is proposed that studying the transitions experienced by a single man across his lifespan would be a dynamic way of utilising the lifespan approach. It would give a sense of how men negotiate masculine identities in relation to hegemonic norms across time within different contexts, as they go through predictable and unpredictable developmental changes. This present study aims to investigate the stability, change and challenges of masculinity across men's entire lifespans through a retrospective investigation. This is in line with the call from Emslie et al. (2004) to use biographical lifespan approaches.

Objective

The objective of this study was to investigate how a sample of local men has negotiated their masculinities across their entire lifespan as revealed in retrospective accounts of life transitions.

Research Questions

1. How do men negotiate masculine identities across the lifespan? What changes occur across the lifespan in the accounts of masculinity?

2. How do men position themselves in relation to hegemonic versions of masculinity at different points in the lifespan? What enables or prevents men from taking up or resisting hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions at different points in the lifespan?

3.   What are the silences around the critical turning points in the negotiation of masculine identity for men at different stages in the lifespan?

Research Design

The following will be discussed in this section: Interpretative qualitative paradigm, participant recruitment and sampling procedure, strategies of inquiry, collection of data and data analysis.

Interpretive Qualitative Paradigm

This section has been included under Research Design because the ontological, epistemological and axiological philosophical principles impact and "shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 19). These then shape the methodological approach to the study.

Walliman (2011) emphasises the importance of making explicit the stance the researcher adopts regarding the ontology and epistemology of the world and knowledge she wishes to research. These philosophical positions fall under the umbrella of the research paradigm adopted for the research being conducted. The importance of making these philosophical assumptions evident is that they "determine what can be regarded as legitimate knowledge" (Walliman, 2011, p. 15) and also impact how research is conducted. Thomas (2010) refers to assumptions underlying all research. These form what is considered as valid research and which research methods should be utilised in a specific study. It is therefore essential to identify and interrogate these assumptions.

The interpretive paradigm, which falls under the umbrella of the philosophical qualitative framework, has been adopted for this study. The interpretive approach "has been described as an umbrella term subsuming several different schools of thought, including phenomenology [and] hermeneutics" (Dean, 2018, p. 3). The generic qualitative framework may share many features with those falling under it but then each specialises at different levels (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Below, the interpretive qualitative paradigm will be compared to the quantitative paradigm in the areas of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. The unique qualities of the interpretive paradigm will also be elaborated.

Ontology "refers to the study of being, and is concerned with the state/nature of the world; with questions of what exists, and what relationship exists between the world and our

human understandings and interpretations of the world" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 333). The quantitative paradigm determines that a single reality exists which is relatively stable across setting and time.

In contrast, interpretive qualitative paradigms generally view knowledge as being true for one context but not necessarily for another context (Thomas, 2010). Truth is not considered to be stable or to be able to be generalised across all contexts. There is a bi-directional relationship between the context and the person (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In the quantitative paradigm, reality is seen as being independent of how people think of, or respond to, it. It is measurable and can be broken down into variables. Interpretive qualitative paradigms, in contrast, propose socially constructed, multiple realities which are impacted by people's thinking and personal or social constructions. In contrast to the quantitative reality that is seen to be governed by generalizable laws, the "realities" identified by the interpretive qualitative paradigm are not generalizable. Instead they are limited to a given space, time and context in which the groups of individuals were studied (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012):

> Interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology, where a single phenomenon can have
> multiple interpretations and there is no basic process by which truth can be
> determined. They aim to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its
> complexity in its unique context, not to generalize to a whole population (Riyami,
> 2015, p. 413)

The interpretive paradigm views "reality (as) subjective, multiple and socially constructed" (Dean, 2018, p. 3).

Epistemology is defined as "a theory of knowledge, which determines what counts as valid or accepted knowledge, and also therefore how do we go about obtaining or producing that knowledge" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 330). In the quantitative paradigm truth is seen to be verifiable based on observation and precise measurement. It can be empirically tested. In the interpretive qualitative paradigm truth is seen to be dependent on the context and needs to be seen in context. The quantitative paradigm esteems neutrality and objectivity, where knowledge is seen to be value free. In interpretive qualitative paradigms values are considered to be a vital aspect of social life (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). "Many social realities exist due to varying human experiences,

including people's knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences" (Thomas, 2010, p. 298). The interpretive paradigm views reality through the participant's eyes. Meaning is seen within contexts. When engaging with the data, the researcher is always taking a position as opposed to being "neutral" or "objective".

Axiology refers to the value and ethical philosophical assumptions adopted in the study (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). Being objective is valued in the quantitative paradigm, where experimenters value being uninvolved, impartial and detached, thereby avoiding any bias in the research. Instead of striving for objectivity and valuing impartiality, the interpretive qualitative paradigm "values personal involvement and partiality (subjectivity, reflexivity)" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). In the interpretive qualitative paradigm, the researcher is seen as being in the process, not observing dispassionately from above. Braun and Clarke (2013) define being subjective as "the idea that the researcher brings their personal and cultural history, values, assumptions, perspectives and mannerisms into their research, and these inevitably influence research, making it subjective, rather than objective; (this is) seen as a strength by most qualitative researchers" (p. 337).

Subjectivity and idiographic study are seen to add richness to the research. It is argued that impartiality is not only unachievable but also undesirable, as it can only ever be an illusion. As the researcher in the interpretive qualitative paradigm is seen to be subjective, it is considered good ethical practice for the researcher to clarify her "biases, assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study" (Thomas, 2010, p. 321). The self is seen as a critical research instrument. Reflexivity is considered essential. Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to reflexivity as being "concerned with a critical reflection on the research, both as process and as practice, on one's own role as researcher, and on one's relation to knowledge" (p. 335). An essential aspect of the interpretivist's reflexive practice in research is how the researcher and what they are researching are uniquely intertwined (Dean, 2018). Thomas (2010) goes as far as to say that "(r)esearch is the product of the values of the researcher" (p. 298). These values of the researcher impact the research process, the findings and are essential to be reflected upon (Saville Young, 2016).

Methodology is understood to be a "theory of how research proceeds" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 333). A particular paradigm may be associated with certain methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals. They use meaning (versus measurement) oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges. This is the interpretive approach, which aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action. (Thomas, 2010, p. 296)

Research questions may aim to understand how something is achieved as opposed to simply describing something, as in the descriptive approach, or investigating the construction of the participants' understanding of the issue/ the effects of language in the constructionist approach. This approach emphasises the need to interpret the data not by simply expanding on the data but by critically engaging with it. Braun and Clarke (2013) describe interpretation as "a process of making sense of, and theorising the meanings in, data; goes beyond summarising the obvious semantic content of data and puts an interpretative framework around it" (p. 332). The research questions of this study are a good fit for the interpretative paradigm as the focus was placed on establishing, for example, the critical turning points in the negotiation of masculine identity for the men at different stages of the lifespan.

There are generally fewer participants in qualitative research than in the quantitative paradigm because the emphasis is on "generat(ing) 'narrow' but rich data, 'thick descriptions' – detailed and complex accounts from each participant" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). "Broad" samples rapidly overwhelm bandwidth in available time, analytic capacity and even space available in the write-up of the analysis. At the extreme, a qualitative case study can have just one participant. Pietekiewicz and Smith (the founder of IPA) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) argue in their 2012 paper that there is no firm rule for sample sizes in IPA except that samples that are too large quickly overwhelm the analysts' bandwidth to apply the method, recommending anywhere from one to fifteen participants; and citing recommendations that six to eight participants would be an appropriate number for a clinical psychology doctorate.

Thematic Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) have been chosen to analyse the data. These related methods will be discussed in more detail below and the reasons behind the decision to utilise both methods. In this case, TA identifies links *across* participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006); and IPA explores threads *within* participants' own narrated lifespans (Smith, 2011). More general versions of TA go beyond Braun and Clarke's definitions and allow for within-participant themes (Hennissen et al., 2020; Reyes & Ana, 2019). After much reflection, as IPA prioritises within case meaning making, it was decided to still combine TA and IPA to analyse the data simply because it helps to keep clear the analytic focus on identifying cross-participant themes that describe more general experiences and within-participant case-studies to explore unique experiences in more depth. Ultimately TA is a very broad and general method, and the IPA in the present analysis can be considered a form of TA identifying within-participant themes and taking a more phenomenological perspective. However, it takes a very intentional stance towards acknowledging the research context of the *interview* when interpreting participants' talk, as discussed further below.

Indeed, Spiers and Riley (2019) refer to how complex qualitative data tends to be. They suggest that utilising a range of analytical approaches within a single dataset would be beneficial to access layered and multidimensional understandings and meanings within it. The social world is complex and diverse. Clarke et al. (2015) emphasise the value in utilising pluralistic research methods. They refer specifically to the applying to a single dataset more than one qualitative analytical method. They argue that each method will focus on different aspects in the data. They propose that "analytical pluralism has the capacity to produce richer understandings of phenomena and avoid reductionism" (p. 183).

Thematic analysis (TA)

Braun et al. (2016) capture the essence of TA and the value it would add in using it to analyse the data in this study:

> Thematic analysis (TA) is one of a cluster of analytic approaches you can use, if you want to identify patterns of meaning across a qualitative dataset […] It is not tied to a particular theoretical framework, and it does not come with methodological stipulations about, for example, how to sample, or to collect data. This gives the

researcher great flexibility in how they use TA […] That said, TA also provides a
tool that offers the potential for nuanced, complex, interpretative analysis. (p. 1)

TA thus provides a framework for identifying similarities across participants'
lifespan narratives as this research adopts a lifespan developmental approach. Unlike IPA,
TA "offers the researcher robust processes for identifying patterns, and interpreting them, in
a number of different ways, but detaches these from specific, or inbuilt, ontological and
epistemological anchors" (Braun et al., 2016, p. 3). Note that TA is naturally compatible
with the theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics, so TA is paradigmatically
compatible with IPA. TA is therefore an ideal method for identifying patterns across
participants' accounts. However, analysis in this study needed to be both across the sample
and within the lifespan of each participant. This is a keystone concept to this present study.
Therefore, TA was combined with IPA in this analysis.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

De Visser and Smith (2007) describe the focus of IPA as being on the "subjective
experience and meaning" (p. 7) of the participants' talk. Smith and Osborn (2009) define the
aim of IPA as the "explor(ing) in detail how participants are making sense of their personal
and social world"(p. 53). The analysis also deals with both the language use and the
semantic content (De Visser & Smith, 2006). It was felt that IPA would enrich the study's
analysis of the data in the way it values the participants' personal experience. As will be
seen below, IPA examines this personal experience in a detailed manner. The participants'
personal experience of their masculinity across their lifespan is a key focus of this study.

IPA has "two complementary commitments […] the phenomenological requirement
to understand and 'give voice' to the concerns of participants; and the interpretative
requirement to contextualise and 'make sense' of these claims and concerns from a
psychological perspective" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 102). Braun and Clarke (2013) capture
the tension in IPA between the personal experience of the participants and the researcher's
task of analysing the data by explaining the concept of the double hermeneutic.

IPA is based on a model of the person as a self-reflective, self-interpretative being
[…] IPA acknowledges, however, that researchers cannot access a participant's
world directly; researchers also make sense of the participant's world using their
own interpretative process, referred to a 'double hermeneutic' (hermeneutics refers

to a theory of interpretation): the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their world. (p. 181)

Smith and Osborn (2009) describe this double hermeneutic as a "two-stage interpretation process" (p. 53) in which "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (p. 53). Intellectual connections between theories of interpretation and hermeneutics are therefore seen in IPA.

> To sum up, IPA synthesizes ideas from phenomenology and hermeneutics resulting in a method which is descriptive because it is concerned with how things appear and letting things speak for themselves, and interpretative because it recognises there is no such thing as an uninterpreted phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 362)

Smith and Osborn (2009) refer also to "different interpretative stances […in which] IPA combines an empathetic hermeneutics with a questioning hermeneutics" (p. 53). Braun and Clarke (2013) describe this in more detail. They refer to an additional dual process in which the researcher aims to focus on the participants' unique accounts of their experiences. This is referred to as a hermeneutics of empathy. The second aspect refers to the researcher focusing on being more analytical and abstract. This is achieved by adopting a critical lens of analysis to engage with the data. This is referred to the hermeneutics of suspicion (Smith & Osborn, 2009).

This study aims to remain true to the participants' accounts by using many excerpts in the discussion of the analysis of the data and actually using their words where possible in the discussion around the excerpts. The researcher utilises the approach of suspicion to bring in a rich analytic aspect to the findings.

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) highlight the importance of keeping the analysis closely linked to the participants' actual accounts. They refer to themes to be engaged with in both describing and utilising extracts obtained from the interview. Then this is followed by the analytical commentary of the author/s. Importantly – by using the actual words of the interviewees – the essence of the participants' talk is still retained and the relevance of the researcher's analysis can be seen to be directly relevant to the data. This study has utilised

this format to write up the findings, thereby displaying how the analysis has remained close to the data.

Braun and Clarke (2013) describe one of the "core (prescriptive) features of IPA (as being) idiographic" (p. 181). IPA "is committed to the painstaking analysis of cases rather than jumping to generalizations. This is described as an idiographic mode of enquiry" (Smith & Osborn, 2009, p. 54). "As a consequence IPA is seen to focus on verbatim accounts and draw from a small sample" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 181).

> IPA is also said to be fundamentally idiographic, in that it is committed to the detailed analysis of a phenomenon under investigation. It takes great care of each case, offering detailed and nuanced analysis, valuing each case in its own merits before moving to the general cross-case analysis for convergence and divergence between cases. (Tuffour, 2017, p. 4)

The above emphasises why IPA is so appropriate for this study as the participants' experiences of their masculinity is explored in depth across their life journeys. This focus on "depth" in analysis requires small samples. Indeed, IPA examines single case studies at times:

> IPA is idiographic in its commitment to analyse each case in a corpus in detail. Sometimes this commitment is made manifest in the writing up of single case-studies which represent in-depth examinations of the lived experience of a single person. (Smith, 2011, p. 10)

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) speak of determining the number of participants in a study depending on "the depth of analysis of a single case study […] the richness of individual cases". In this present research, the analysis is driven by the developmental lifespan approach in which time is viewed retrospectively in a dynamic manner. A single issue within that participant's life story would then be explored across his life journey. Clouston (2019) refers to how the idiographic approach within IPA "underpins the value ascribed to the data extracted from a single case study" (p. 63).

This present research adopts an in-depth approach applied to those participants in which issues and themes extend across their lifespan. In this way, each participant's story will be treated as a case study. These capture the essence of the retrospective,

developmental lifespan approach utilised in this present research within the biographical account of each participant. It will be addressing how issues in the participant's life are experienced by the participant in terms of their masculine identity and how they defend their masculine identity if appropriate.

In the write-up of the analysis that follows, broad themes and trends common to participants are analysed with TA, charting themes that link the participants' accounts and drawing more general conclusions about masculinity across the lifespan to be examined. Where important disconfirming cases are identified, IPA is used to explore the case in more idiographic detail. In summary, this study accessed both IPA and thematic analysis to comprehensively analyse the data.

Participant Recruitment and Sampling Procedure

This section deals with the initial sampling plan, the actual sample and the sampling methods and recruitment.

Sample

In order to do such in-depth analysis of each participant's interviews in line with IPA a small sample is needed. Large samples rapidly overwhelm the available bandwidth in an analysis or write-up, resulting in emphasis on breadth over depth even if this is not intended. The necessity of the small sample is explained by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012):

> The main concern in IPA is to give full appreciation to each participant's account (case). For this reason, samples in IPA studies are usually small, which enables a detailed and very time-consuming case-by-case analysis […] IPA studies have been published with, for example, one, four, nine, fifteen participants. Larger sample sizes are possible but less common […] In general, IPA researchers should concentrate more on the depth, rather than breadth of the study. A detailed analysis of a single case may be well justified if rich and meaningful data has been collected, which allows the researcher to present original problems, mechanism, or experiences. This will offer an opportunity to learn a lot about the individual, his or her response to a specific situation, and consider connections between different aspects of the person's account. (p. 364)

Recent studies using thematic analysis have also been published also using small samples, for example, ranging between 6 and 14 participants (Bailey et al., 2019; Coppock

et al., 2018; Hennissen et al., 2020; Regan et al., 2018; Reyes & Ana, 2019; Schanche et al., 2019; Törnbom et al., 2019). This study, in line with IPA, has focused on in-depth understanding of the data rather than breadth. Therefore, an intentional decision was made to value depth over breadth, with a small sample of participants (N = 10) who were each interviewed multiple times (see section *Average length of the interviews)*. Twenty-one interviews were analysed in total.

Usually in IPA samples are preferably homogeneous (Smith & Osborn, 2009). This is due to the in-depth analysis of the dataset. There are various ways to define homogeneity. Obvious factors involve socio-demographic factors such as age and gender. It can also include "factors related to key elements of experience – such as the length and severity of experiencing chronic pain" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 181).

The sample of this study was homogeneous as defined by gender, age and location. All the participants were male and 60 years old or older and had retired in the same general location.

The sample consisted of ten men who were 60 years or older. This was a retrospective study examining the men's experience of their masculinity over the lifespan. The age 60 was arbitrarily chosen, guided primarily by its internationally being the average year that people become eligible for social benefits and occupational and statutory retirement pensions (Quadagno, 2017; Sigelman & Rider, 2009; Suntoo, 2012). Although 60 is generally considered the lower limit of "old age", it was felt that the men would have a rich lifespan to engage with retrospectively and would be engaging with issues of ageing by then.

The lack of diversity in my sample was impacted by a number of issues. Like many others, the present study falls foul of the general focus on white men in masculinity studies, or as Peterson (1998) puts it, "the standard for measuring and evaluating all bodies" since the nineteenth century, namely, "the bodies of white, European, middle-class and heterosexual men" (p. 16).While this was not intentional, it was – in retrospect – a predictable outcome of the research question and sampling strategy. As this research was focusing on ageing across the lifespan, a particular interest was that on men who had historically access to power and resources when they were younger, but during the process of ageing were seen to slowly lose their power and access to their resources. At an early stage, a very difficult decision had to be made whether to adopt a breadth-based approach in

sampling for breadth (including a wide range of South African men from a wider set of circumstances) or rather with the focus on depth (thereby focusing on a smaller subset but getting more representative of the "type" of middle-class retirees who previously had access to more financial resources and power as younger men). White people continue to benefit inherent power, various resources and lifestyle as afforded to them by the apartheid system even though it has been since dismantled (Spickernell, 2016). Therefore, there were relatively few men in South Africa who were suitable candidates for this study but not white.

The other issue is that due to the locality of the research and colleagues, middle-class white retirees were most readily available pool of men to access as participants. Apartheid enforced racial segregation however, even post-apartheid "segregation levels remain exceptionally high and rapid integration may require government intervention" (Christopher, 2001, p. 449). Those people who referred the participants in the snowball sampling procedure worked within the predominantly white town, where all the white participants were living. Despite extensive effort, the only black participant was recruited from where the researcher worked. He had worked in the government services for many years and retired in a managerial post. Therefore, he was a suitable candidate for the research where the focus was on ageing across the lifespan, in which men are seen to increasingly lose power and access to resources over this period of time. His case is particularly interesting, and justified the effort required in recruitment. He lived in a subsidiary town outside the main town referred to above.

Sampling methods and recruitment process

The sampling methods were both purposive and convenience snowballing. Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to three sources of recruitment: advertisements, identification of key people to recruit for the researcher and approaching various organisations to recruit through them (for a summary of the sources used in this study see table 3.1).

The researcher approached various colleagues and organisations to recruit participants for the researcher (more detail of these will be given below). As soon as the potential participant made contact with the researcher, times to meet were arranged. All who expressed interest in participating were interviewed except for one. The actual recruitment process is discussed in more detail below.

In the descriptions and analysis that follow, participants are referred to by pseudonyms chosen by the researcher.

Table 3.1

Participant recruitment and sampling procedure

	Austen	Edward	Elliot	George	Charles	Henry	Russell (RIP)	Bennet	Frederick	Darcy
Advertisement		X			X					
Colleagues				X		X	X	X	X	
Acquaintance / Researcher	X		X							X

Source of recruitments

The following four sources will be discussed: advertisements, colleagues, researcher and other.

Source of recruitment: Advertisements. Three advertisements (see <u>appendix</u> were placed at three different sports clubs frequented by older people. The chairman of each club was given a letter requesting that an advertisement be placed on their communal noticeboard (see <u>appendix 7</u>). The advertisements detailed primary selection of criteria of being men being 60 years or older, and the purpose of the research and the usefulness of the study. One participant (Edward) responded. His intention was to help the researcher as well as leave an autobiographical legacy (transcripts) behind for his children. An advertisement (see <u>appendix 8</u>) was placed at an elite retirement village on their communal noticeboard. Charles responded. He said he would like to assist the researcher and felt he had a lot to contribute because he had lived an interesting life such as working in five African countries. Also, his consulting work involved doing much research. These impersonal channels for recruitment were not very effective: only two participants responded from four venues.

Source of recruitment: Colleagues

What was requested of my colleagues

Various colleagues whom the researcher knew personally were approached to recruit potential participants. The clinicians were requested to refer men they thought might be suitable candidates (see appendix 5). The men needed to be 60 years or older, and able to speak about their life journey as men. Participants who had negotiated alternate, atypical or contested masculinities would be of much interest to the researcher.

Process of approaching my colleagues

Seven participants were referred by my colleagues. Each one had been told about the research verbally and then given a letter of invitation (see appendix 5).

The researcher explained to her colleagues the sample she was looking for ideally. However, it ultimately rested on their discretion on who they thought were suitable candidates and whom they approached. Unfortunately, no participants had been therapy candidates. The colleagues were given letters of invitation (see appendix 6) to give to the potential candidates.

One participant referred worked in the same institution as the researcher prior to his retirement, although in a different section, and with whom the researcher had minimal contact at work (the impact of this dual relationship is discussed below under *participants' demographic information: education*).

Source of recruitment: acquaintance or researcher. One participant was referred by his wife and one was approached directly by the researcher. Both men were emailed copies of the letter of invitation (see appendix 6). The researcher knew of both participants (Austen and Darcy) by name only from the community. This was not seen to be a conflict of interests or break in confidentiality. Darcy was approached by the researcher as there was one candidate already (Bennet) without children and it was felt that another candidate without children would enrich the study. One participant referred by a colleague was related to a very close friend of the researcher. Because of the close personal connection, it was felt that this proposed participant would not be appropriate and he was therefore not included.

Demographical information of participants

The participants demographic details are described in Table 3.2. All identified as male, and their ages at the time of their first interview ranged from 62 to 87.

Table 3.2

Demographic detail of the participants

	Age	Where stayed*
Austen	**63**	**Own home in community**
Edward	**74**	**Own home in community**
Elliot	**61**	**Own home in community**
George	**74**	**House in elite gated village (populated predominantly by people of retirement age, consists of independent homes with frail care facility available)**
Charles	**74**	**House in elite gated village (populated predominantly by people of retirement age, consists of independent homes with frail care facility available)**
Henry	**74**	**Cottage in retirement village (part of a network of different levels of independence and care for the retired, a cottage is smaller than a simplex)**
Russell (RIP)	**87**	**Frail care (medium-high care)**
Bennet	**68**	**Simplex in retirement village (part of a network of different levels of independence and care for the retired)**
Frederick	**83**	**Frail care (medium-high care)**
Darcy	**62**	**Own home in community**

* This information indicates whether the participant has entered into a formal retirement organisation / facility [and if so at what level of independence]

Race. The majority of the participants were white. One, Elliot, was black, and lived much of his life in South Africa under apartheid, a "policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority and non-white majority and sanctioned racial and political and economic discrimination against non-whites" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). There were, and still are, important power differentials among the different racial groups in South Africa, privileging white people. Race did not explicitly dominate the interviews with Elliot. However, the impact of being black in the apartheid and post-apartheid era of South African history was evidently an important feature of his narrative and, indeed, he was one of the few participants to orient strongly to the South African context.

Education. There was a wide range of formal educational experience between the participants (Refer to table 3.3 below). Note that in the following descriptions, "grade 10" (GR10) is equivalent to year 11 / fourth-form in the UK or Sophomore year in the USA; grade 12 (GR12) is equivalent to year 13/ sixth-form in UK, or Senior year in the USA. Two left high-school after completing grade 10 (approximately aged 16); two had PhD's; three had trade-based education and the rest had some intermediate level of post-school academic qualification.

Table 3.3

Highest level of education achieved

	GR10 *	GR12 **	TRADE ***	COLLEGE	DEGREE e.g. BSc	MASTERS	MBA	PHD
TOTAL	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2

Notes: *gr10: grade 10 (South Africa) equivalent to year 11 / fourth-form UK or Sophomore year in the USA; **gr12: grade 12 (South Africa) equivalent to year 13/ sixth-form in the UK or Senior year in USA ; ***Trade refers to training specifically to field working in or specifically doing a trade test

Brief biographies of participants

In this section the participants' will be introduced. First, they are described with demographic details, and then a brief biography will provide a more detailed introduction to each participant in more narrative detail. In these brief descriptions, the "voice" of the participant has been used where possible. Although not using direct quotes, their turn of phrase and ways of describing their lives have been captured as far as possible.

Austen

Austen had chosen to retire early while he was still at the top of his game. He was a passionate sportsman from his school days. He excelled academically at university and thereafter. He completed his master's degree a few years into teaching. Others recognised his leadership qualities from the last year of his school and onwards. He did a subsidised teaching degree (since it was a financially astute way of getting an education) with the intention of buying himself out so he could go work in commerce on completion of his

degree. However, before this happened he did a teaching diploma, excelled and discovered that he loved teaching. He said after 40 years he was still passionate about his profession. He was a school principal when he retired. Austen was a devoted family man. He and his wife had to be very financially strategic in raising three children on a single teacher's salary (his wife stayed at home to care for the children). He was involved in the community in various leadership positions. He was looking forward to his retirement, for reasons like spending time with his grandchildren.

Edward

Edward was born in the United Kingdom. His family moved to Kenya when he was a few years old. He was taken out of school because his parents had divorced and left the country. He no longer qualified to attend the school. At the age of 16, he went to work as a manager on a farm. He worked in various jobs involving husbandry. After Kenya declared independence, he took his family to Zimbabwe. As a white male, he was subject to compulsory military conscription to fight in the "Rhodesian bush war". Eventually he moved his family to South Africa. He reasoned his sons would be afforded better education than he could provide in Zimbabwe. He worked as a salesperson for many years. At present, he works as a handyman. He cannot financially afford to retire. Work and sports were important to Edward throughout his life. Edward valued being married. He did not have much time for interpersonal relationships, such as his extended family and grandchildren. At the time of the interviews, Edward was emotional at times, as he was negotiating the decline of his present wife's health resulting in her eventually requiring admission to a care facility.

Elliot

Elliot was the only black African participant in this research. He was born in South Africa. His story is one of courage, perseverance and determination. Living in the period of apartheid, Elliot was forced to leave school after completing grade 10 because his family had no money and he had to go to work. Regardless Elliot never gave up his dream of getting an education and at the age of 47 years, he completed his grade 12. He married at 26 years of age and had 4 children. He owned his own small home at 27 years. Elliot was also an avid sportsman when he was young. He excelled in soccer, judo and boxing. However, by 28 years that passion was robbed of him when he began to have problems with his hips. Elliot pursued his education by completing a computer course even though his job at that time only involved manual labour and he was unlikely to have use such a qualification.

However, as soon as apartheid was dismantled, clerk positions for non-white candidates were advertised in the institution he was working in. Elliot had the qualifications to apply for these posts. In the last few years before he chose to retire, he had achieved a managerial level. Elliot spoke of feeling satisfied with his life.

George

George has lived by the motto of taking every opportunity given to him. He said this attitude had opened many doors for him. Music has been important throughout George's life. At school he participated in dramatics, singing in the choir, tennis and water-skiing. He has been happily married for 48 years. He has 2 sons and two grandchildren. He has been involved in charitable work throughout his life in various positions such as a volunteer, chairman, president. He began his teaching career in 1997. A few years later, he began a post as a section head at a teachers' training college. He left in the position of Vice Rector. He has a lifelong love for nature. As a volunteer, he eventually headed the education division of a wildlife society. Eventually he was offered the Regional Director of Education in the same society. He left the education department to take this post in spite of a large decrease in salary and no job security. He eventually was promoted to National Director of Education for that organization. In 1994, he became the CEO until he retired in 2006. It meant a lot to him that he had achieved important accolades for his work in conservation. George not only fulfilled his lifelong ambition of retiring at 60 years, he retired at 59. He has many hobbies such as flying and growing bonsais.

Charles

Charles volunteered to participate in this research as he felt he had lived a unique, interesting life which involved working in many African countries. At 74, he was still doing consulting work. He said he could never do nothing all day but also could not financially afford to retire. He was born in Zimbabwe. He was proud of being captain of various sport teams and head boy at school. He did not complete his diploma after school due to poor health. He was energised telling of brilliant engineering projects he was involved in across various African countries. He did not specify in what positions he had in these various projects he mentioned. In his thirties, Charles worked for his father in Malawi, until he started his own business in 1984 in Zambia. His business closed suddenly. He had to start his life all over again at the age of 51 years. His wife divorced him at the same time after 22 years of marriage. He started doing consulting work from then on. At the age of 65 years,

Charles completed a degree in construction management. He was 69 when he finished his MBA. Family life was not a focus during his interviews. He spoke of engaging with his sons and their families in the last few years.

Henry

Henry approaches life in a black and white manner, tolerates no corruption, and takes a hardnosed approach even when considered a trouble maker. He applied these values while working in a government institution. At the age of 45 years, he left to become an independent consultant. He chose to go on a sabbatical at the age of 63 years. He had not worked for 12 years by the time of the first interview. He was a family man. He spoke of how his world circled around his wife, children and their family. He has been married for 52 years. His religion was very important to him. Henry was traumatised by his poor health over the last few years. A tumour was found on his colon. After several operations, Henry was left with an ileostomy and a urine bag. This has negatively impacted his life on many levels. He said he would die trying to achieve a bag reversal.

Russell

Russell was the eldest participant. He was 87 years old at the time of his first interview. He died shortly after the interview. He was born in Zambia and grew up in Zimbabwe. He attended a boarding school and played rugby. Family was very important to him. He spoke fondly of being a husband, father and grandfather. He qualified as an auto-electrician at 31 years. He did this work until he retired at 65 years. Five years later he and his wife moved into a retirement facility until he moved into frail care 3 years before the interview. His wife died after they had been married for 56 years. He had a few medals on the wall in his minimally decorated room at frail care, which were from the Rhodesian Bush War. He said he had enjoyed camping with the family, sewing some of his wife's clothes (after he had retired), working on cars and cooking.

Bennet

Bennet worked in the laboratories in the field of geology. He was very strategic in getting promotions throughout his career. He chose to retire at 55 years. However, later he was invited to help build a brand-new laboratory. He accepted. He is now only involved in the business in a quality control consultant position. His faith was very important to him from 1976. He has enjoyed outdoor sports. These days he walks vigorously. Not being

married at 68 (the time of the interviews) troubled Bennet. He highlighted that this was not due to a lack of opportunities but not having found the right person.

Frederick

Frederick was the second eldest participant (82 years old). He was born in South Africa. At school, he played in the first teams of cricket and rugby, and was the captain of the athletics team. He chose a career in geology. He completed his PhD by 28 years. He became despondent in the field and so completed a law degree by the age of 35 years. He then joined a research institute in the field of geology where he eventually became a deputy director. During this time, he published a textbook that is still being used today. He was then promoted to Director of an agriculture college. He chose to retire at 63 years because he had been demoted to deputy director with the amalgamation of departments after the dismantling of apartheid. Frederick was happily married for 42 years even though his wife developed Alzheimer's about 10 years before she died. He looked after her for many years in the community, and then visited her daily after she had been placed in a care facility. He had a stroke in 2013. Soon after this he decided to auction everything in his home, sell his house and then move into frail care. He has a son who is a lawyer and visits him every few weeks.

Darcy

Darcy was born in United Kingdom. His father worked in the military. This meant moving every few years all over the world and having to maintain a military image regardless. He excelled in the steel industry. He achieved his PhD by 24. After the steel plant closed abruptly, he began studying information technology. He worked in various information technology businesses, and finally began working in this field in a private college until he was medically boarded. Darcy began experiencing problems with his health from the age of 24 years. He nearly died due to a bladder infection at 24 years. This caused ongoing medical problems. In his mid-thirties he was diagnosed with low grade prostate cancer. By 40, he had aggressive prostate cancer that became virulent by the time he was 46 years old. He had a radical proctectomy but reportedly the cancer had spread. He constantly fought it but was still medically boarded at 60.

Strategies of Inquiry

This was an interpretive qualitative study. It used a retrospective approach to access the data sought after using in-depth interviews. Braun and Clarke (2013) describe the

interview to "a one-on-one method of collecting qualitative data, where a participant responds to the researcher's questions" (p. 332). Further detail on the type of interviews will be discussed in the *Data collection* section (subsection Format of the interviews).

Data Collection

Interviews

   This section looks at various aspects of how the interviews were constructed and conducted.

   Format of the interviews. In-depth, one-on-one, partly unstructured interviews were used to access retrospective accounts of masculine identities across the lifespan. Given the in-depth approach required by IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012, p. 365), the interviews were designed to elicit rich and detailed descriptions of masculinity across the lifespan. Where possible each participant was interviewed at least twice to allow the researcher to probe more deeply into aspects that seemed important after reviewing notes from their first interview.

   The interviews were unstructured. Braun and Clarke (2013) defines an unstructured interview as having a "list of themes or topics to discuss with the participant, but the interview is strongly participant-led" (p. 79). A list of guiding questions (see appendix 10) was developed. The purpose of the study was to establish how the participants negotiated their masculinities along their lifespan. The participants needed to raise the topics that were meaningful to them as men, as they reviewed their lives.

   Therefore, where possible, deviations from the plan followed theoretically interesting threads of narrative to explore masculinity across the lifespan from the participants' experience as fully as possible.

   There is a considerable amount of leeway in conducting the interview as emphasised by Smith and Osborn (2009) "(t)he interview does not have to follow the sequence on the schedule, nor does every question have to be asked, or asked in exactly the same way, of each respondent" (p. 64).

   Narrative interviews. Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2015) describe narrative interviews as placing the interviewees at the heart of the research being conducted. The authors explain that narrative interviews capture the stories of the unique experiences of the people being interviewed. Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2015) state that the researchers using narrative interview techniques do not set out with a fixed agenda. Instead the interviewee is

given the means to control the pace of the interview, content and the direction. The authors indicate that a narrative interview typically would start with open questions. This research began the interview with an open question.

Conducting the interviews: initial generic question. The researcher began with one set question ('What comes to mind when you think of a man?') immediately after working through the information sheet and consent form (see <u>appendix 9</u>). The researcher aimed to get a general understanding of what the participants considered a man to be by asking this very specific question at the onset of the interview.

Conducting the interviews: open ended question with appropriate minimal prompting. The researcher then prompted the participant to speak about his life journey as a man. Each story was unique. Practically life events and experiences do not neatly fall into decades of one's life when retelling one's life story, but rather narrative themes can be a can be short lived, or threads that weave in and out of one's entire life. The researcher aimed to achieve what Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to as the ideal interview which they described as being "flexible and responsive to the participant; (in which) good interviewers follow up on unanticipated issues and ask spontaneous and unplanned questions" (p. 79).

Import of using the terminology of "life journey". Instead of simply asking the participants to speak of the ups and downs / peaks and lows they experienced across their life, the metaphor of a journey was used, for example, "tell me about your life journey as a man". Schroots and Assink (2005) speak of how this metaphor includes various dimensions of life such as both effect and time; that it extends from one's birth to the present, and inherently the metaphor provokes the sense of "when one alternately crosses the mountains and valleys of life" (p. 184). By using the metaphor, it was felt that it would facilitate the participant to embrace the unique story of their life in a dynamic way.

Conducting the interviews: request for memorabilia. At the end of the first interview the participants were invited to bring memorabilia to the second interview. The memorabilia were intended to facilitate the discussion of how the participants negotiated their masculinities across their lifespan. All participants were interviewed at least twice (except for Russell who died shortly after the first interview). Only four participants brought memorabilia, for example, photographs, a power point presented at a farewell function, items the participant had made. The meaning of what they chose to bring to the interview was discussed. The memorabilia were never intended to be included in the study in any

archival sense, but rather to provide prompts and talking points used as a tool to unpack the men's experience of masculinity from different angles. It has been hoped that the memorabilia would be a more useful tool facilitating deeper conversation about their life journey as men, but it turned out to be something that the participants did not connect with particularly well. Regardless of whether the men brought memorabilia or not, the follow up sessions were used to fill in gaps / clarify issues / see if they had new information to bring to the table.

Average length of the interviews. The interviews ranged between twenty minutes to just under two hours. The first interviews with each participant generally lasting between an hour and just under two hours. Participants were interviewed at least twice, except for Russell who passed away after the first session. Twenty-one interviews were conducted in total. "(IPA) interviews generally last for a considerable amount of time (usually an hour or more)" (Smith & Osborn, 2009, p. 63) because of the in-depth analysis involved.

Dates of interviews. See in table below.

Table 3.4

Date of interviews

Interview	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Austen	2016-08-16	2016-08-17		
Edward	2016-08-21	2016-08-28	2016-10-30	2017-01-21
Elliot	2017-09-01	2017-10-05		
George	2017-11-11	2018-01-19		
Charles	2017-11-11	2018-01-26		
Henry	2017-11-14	2017-12-12		
Russell	2017-11-15	RIP		
Bennet	2017-11-16	2018-01-12		
Frederick	2017-11-24	2017-12-02		
Darcy	2017-12-20	2018-02-06		

Analysis in progress from initial contact. Analysis began from the initial contact. For example, when Charles called the researcher, he elaborated on his position as a working man even though he was in his seventies and also why he felt he could contribute to the research. The researcher wrote this down and these research notes were used as part of the analysis that continued from the first interview, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013).

Venues. Smith and Osborn (2009) highlighted how important the choice of the location tends to be when they said "(p)eople usually feel most comfortable in a setting they are familiar with, as in their own, but there may be times when this is not practicable and a different venue will need to be chosen" (p. 63). It was a priority for the researcher that the participants' felt comfortable where they were interviewed. Over half chose to be interviewed in their own homes (Austen, Edward, Charles, Russell, Bennet, Frederick), three chose the researcher's office (Elliot, Henry, Darcy, Edward) and only one candidate (George) chose to be interviewed in the researcher's home.

Safety measures for the researcher when going to the home of a participant who was a stranger to the researcher. Precautions for the researcher's safety were taken into account. A buddy system was set up. A colleague was approached to assist in ensuring the researcher's safety when accessing the home of a participant whom the researcher did not know. An estimated time was determined by when the interviews were expected to end, after which the researcher needed to contact her colleague to inform her that she was safe. The time span had to make for provision for interviews running up to two hours even though in theory they were expected to last an hour only. Fortunately, this was built into the agreement as three participants' interviews ran much longer than the expected one hour. If the researcher, in the unlikely event, did not make contact with her colleague within the agreed time, then her colleague would have been able to access the contact details of that participant. Her colleague would call the participant initially. If the response was found to be unsatisfactory then her colleague would access the participant's address details and would then have to decide whom she should call on to accompany her to the participant's home.

Equipment and data storage. The researcher had two recorders for all the interviews. The interviews were saved onto computer systems (each recorder's data on separate systems) that were password protected. The equipment was tested beforehand. The

researcher wanted to ensure that she was familiar with the equipment used in order to ensure the setup and use of the equipment was professionally done and, more importantly, not to waste the participants' time. By using two recorders the researcher ensured that she had a backup plan.

        Transcription. The interviews of the participants were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim using a simplified Jefferson notation system (Rapley, 2007) to capture the richness of the participants' accounts. The next table indicates the notations used in this thesis.

Table 3.5

Simplified Jefferson transcribing conventions (Rapley, 2007, pp. 59-60)

SYMBOL	EXAMPLE	EXPLANATION
(0.6)	That (0.5) is odd?	Length of silence measured in tenths of a second
(.)	Right (.) okay	Micro-pause, less than two-tenths of a second
_____	I know that	Underlining indicates speaker's emphasis or stress
(( ))	I don't know ((coughs))	Words in double parentheses contain author's descriptions
WORD	About a MILLION	Capitals, except at beginnings, indicate a marked rise in volume compared to the surrounding talk
…	They went to town… later it was	Part of excerpt is deleted
[ ]	I live in a [large city]. Instead of saying "I live in Cape Town"	Words in single square brackets indicate the replacing of specific information with marked generic descriptions

        The researcher bought transcription software (Express Scribe Transcription Software Pro, version 5.78, NCH Software) to facilitate the transcribing process.

Data Analysis

This section deals with the process of analysis and the application of thematic analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Process of analysis

Analysis began from the first interview. Braun and Clarke (2013) advise that coding and reviewing analytically should be done while the data is being collected, as these insights will inform further interviews. By beginning the data analysis from the start of data collection, fresh insights were gained that guided future interviews, helping to align them with the research questions, and to continually interrogate and improve the research questions in response to emerging data.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data initially. Thematic analysis is a "method for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 175). See the example below.

Figure 3.1 Example of a chronological diagram for the event of "Retirement"
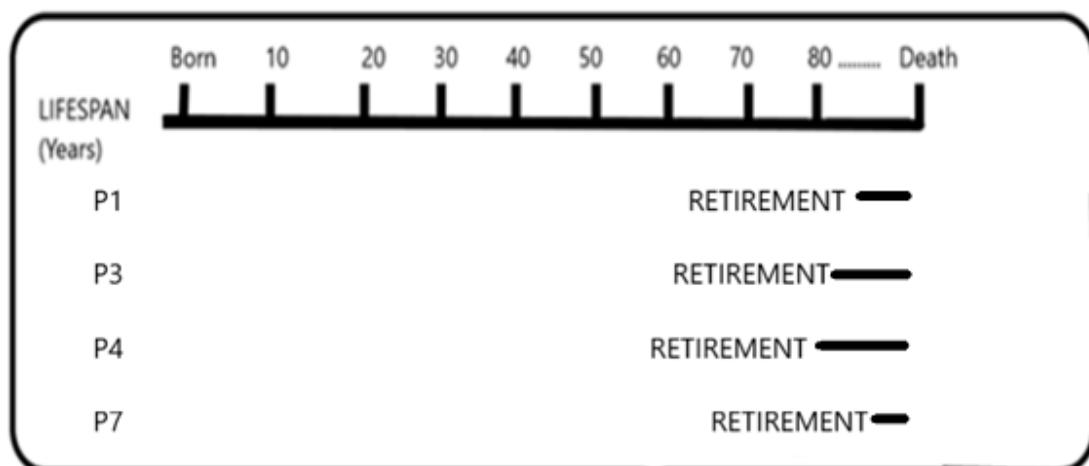
For example, the theme of retirement was found across the dataset from the time the participant had retired. The content of this theme relating to what each participant (data unit) said about the act of retiring was then analysed across all the interviews (dataset). The difficulty arose when a theme was found not only across the dataset but also within the interviews of a single participant that is across his lifespan. This was considered a difficulty because at the beginning of the research it had been determined that thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was going to be the tool of analysis. Initially it was

understood that thematic analysis does not easily facilitate meaning or pattern identification within cases. However, several themes were found within, but not between, participants. To address this issue, IPA was incorporated to resolve this methodological tension. Later still, it was realised that more general versions of TA go beyond Braun and Clarke's definitions and allow for within-participant themes. After much reflection, as IPA prioritises within case meaning making, it was decided to still use both TA and IPA to analyse the data. It is felt that the research has been enriched by using IPA to complement thematic analysis. This will be discussed in more detail below.

   Data analysis over the lifespan. This section speaks to how a) investigating themes that had been identified as being present across the dataset (all the interviews) and were also evident within a data item (individual participants) over a period of time (over the lifespan of the said participant) and b) how the latter finding impacted the practical application of thematic analysis in a non-traditional manner. The codes that made up a theme ran across the participant's lifespan. This aspect highlights the temporal dimension of this study (lifespan), that is, themes identified across the dataset and within data units. That theme within the data item (interview/s of a participant) was then analysed to establish whether change in that unique participant's experience of masculinity regarding that theme could be observed. IPA utilises case studies to do in-depth analysis and capture unique aspects such as these findings. These findings are then analysed again across the data-set (all the other interviews of the other participants).
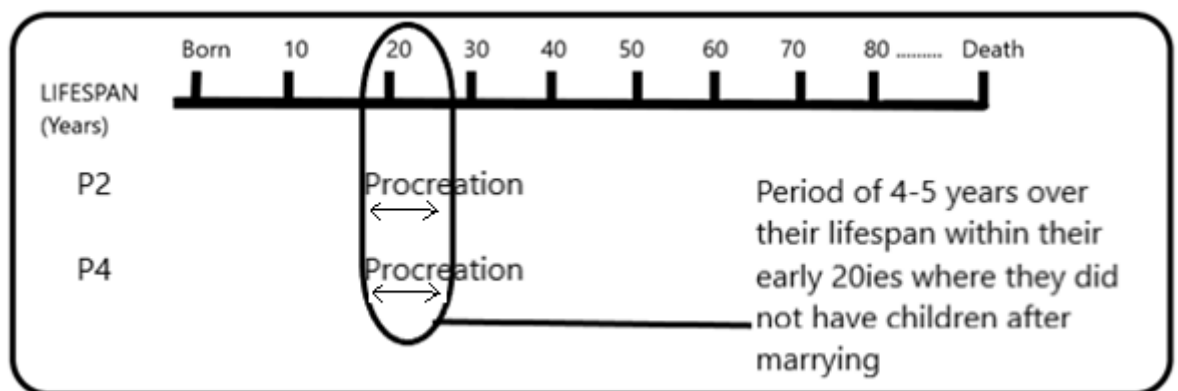

Figure 3.2 Example of a chronological diagrammatic format to illustrate analysis of a theme across the lifespan within a data unit.

For example, in the first section of chapter four, the theme of procreation is discussed. Edward and George both experienced pressure because they delayed in having children for a period of 4-5 years after getting married in their early twenties. The manner in which Edward negotiated his masculine identities over this specific period of time was very different to George. The themes on procreation specific to Edward and George were discussed in detail (analysis within the data unit over their lifespan). At times Edward's and George's themes were compared to each other by highlighting the similarities and differences (analysis across the dataset). Figure 3.2 indicates the challenge of analysing themes of individual participants across the lifespan.

The six phases of thematic analysis. The six phases of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) were applied iteratively and recursively. These phases are: 1. Familiarization with the data. 2. Generation of initial codes. 3. Searching for new themes. 4. Reviewing of themes. 5. Defining and naming of themes. 6. Producing the report. These phases will be discussed in detail below (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013).

Phase 1. Familiarization with the data

This phase involves becoming immersed in one's data. This is achieved through the repeated readings of interviews and listening of the audio versions of the interviews. Doing the actual transcribing of the data is an excellent manner of familiarising oneself with the data and in addition checking the original audio recording against the transcript. Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to this process as beginning to get a sense of the data, what stands out as interesting, whether it be a concrete issue or a more conceptual aspect. This is not a systematic or precise process at this stage. They emphasise that

> (f)amiliarization is not a passive process of just understanding the words […] it is about starting to *read data as data*. Reading data means not simply absorbing the surface meaning of the words […], as you typically absorb a crime novel […] but reading the words *actively, analytically* and *critically,* starting to think about *what the data mean. (pp. 205, italics in original text).*

As one engages with the data more and more, so the above becomes more evident. The aim is to get a sense of the breadth and depth of the content of the data.

Phase 2. Generation of initial codes

Coding is a "process of identifying aspects of your data that relates to your research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 206). The codes are thereby providing labels for these potential areas of interest. They may be in the form of a short sentence or just a word that captures the essence of what has caught your attention as potentially useful and relevant to your research question. Coding can be either semantic or research-derived. "Research-derived codes go beyond the explicit content of the data; they are *latent* codes which invoke the researcher's conceptual and theoretical frameworks to identify *implicit* meanings within the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, pp. 207, italics in original text). Data that has been coded is not the same as a theme or unit of analysis. A theme is usually broader. It is important to collate the appropriate data with the relevant codes.

Phase 3. Searching for new themes

The next step is to look across the dataset (all the interviews) for larger patterns: Pattern-based analysis rests on the presumption that ideas which recur *across* a dataset capture something psychologically or socially meaningful. In working out which patterns are relevant and important in relation to your research question, it's not a question of which are most frequent. While frequency is an important factor, it's also about capturing the different elements that are most *meaningful* for answering your research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013, pp. 223, italics in original text).

This is an active process in which the codes are examined and used to create potential patterns. These begin to formulate into provisional themes. They are considered candidate themes because these will be further refined and revised through additional analysis. To identify good themes consideration needs to be taken of their relationship to the other themes. The theme on its own needs to make sense, be distinct while fitting together with the other themes to create an overall meaningful analysis. It is important again, to ensure the identified coded data be collated with the appropriate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Phase 4. Reviewing of themes

This involves going back to the codes and data that have been collated, and the whole dataset to ensure that the meanings evident in both are accurate and coherent, throughout the process implementing the continuing challenge of letting things go that are

not pertinent to the overall picture as a form of 'quality control'. All these parts need to be coherent, work well together and importantly, capture the essence and meaning specific to the research question.

Phase 5. Defining and naming of themes

The core meaning or worth of the theme needs to be identified. The themes must be neither too diverse nor too complex. Defining the themes involves writing up the uniqueness of each theme and how it fits in the overall picture. It is useful to define what the themes are and are not. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96) encourage that the "(n)ames need to be concise, punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about". Braun and Clarke (2013) consider this to be an important process which requires creativity and thought. The names need to indicate both "the content of, and your analytic 'take on' data" (p. 258).

Phase 6. Producing the report

This phase involves the final analysis and capturing of these comprehensive findings formally. "The task of the write-up of a thematic analysis […] is to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93). Sufficient data extracts need to be provided to demonstrate the strength and substantial quality of each theme and to effectively convey the point being made. Vivid examples from the data need to be used.

Note that thematic analysis is explicitly oriented to finding patterns *across* participants. To explore patterns *within* participants' accounts it was paired with IPA as explained above.

The phases of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The eight phases of IPA as described by Braun and Clarke (2013, pp. 202-203) are discussed in detail below, except for phases that are identical for TA and IPA already discussed above.

Phase 1. Data preparation (transcription) has been discussed above.

Phase 2. Reading and familiarization; taking note of items of potential interest has been discussed above.

Phase 3. Coding

As IPA and TA code for different text features, this step was undertaken separately for the two methods. Braun and Clarke (2013) described three levels of coding in IPA:

> Coding in IPA is referred to as noting or commenting […] a code is more like a brief commentary on the data. This commenting occurs at three main levels: descriptive […], linguistic [… and], abstract or conceptual" (p. 214)

Phase 4. Developing emergent themes (within that data item)

> In this phase, the initial notes are refined into concise phrases that reflect the text. This phase is moving into a more abstract level. This occurs while diligently ensuring it is in line with the participant's actual words. (Smith & Osborn, 2009)

Phase 5. Searching for connections across emergent themes (within that data item) and generating superordinate themes (with emergent themes nested within them)

> During this phase a representation of the analysis in a tabular or figurative format may be developed (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is very similar to finding themes in TA, but within accounts rather than across them.

Phase 6. Stages 3-5 repeated with other data items

> At this time, the following participants' scripts are then analysed one after the other.

Phase 7. Identifying themes and superordinate themes across dataset

> This phase is dynamic in which decisions need to be made in order to decide which themes to focus on.

Phase 8. Writing up – finalising analysis

> Not only does this phase focus on capturing the themes into narrative but also vigilantly ensuring that "(c)are is taken to distinguish clearly between what the respondent said and the analyst's interpretation or account of it" (Smith & Osborn, 2009, p. 76). The emergent themes and superordinate themes from IPA will be presented in the analysis chapters.

> **Selection of participants within the Findings and Discussion chapter**. Attention was paid to ensure that all the participants were represented in the Findings and Discussion chapter when analysing across the dataset. This analysis gave a rich and broad understanding of the lifespan and developmental norms on the participants' experience of their masculinity and defence thereof when appropriate.

> When conducting analysis of the data across the individual participant's lifespan, case studies were utilised. This accessed the retrospective developmental lifespan approach in this study. Topics that extended over a period of time (from a few months, years or a

lifetime) within a person's life were discussed in depth within each case study, capturing the richness of the retrospective analysis within the individual's biography.

Silences and omissions in the narrative. Leaving things unsaid especially around critical turning points is potent in omission. This can be done by participants by, for example, not talking about a topic at all, not talking about it directly, distancing themselves, focusing on other areas, not freely volunteering such experiences or not defining themselves in these areas. Murray and Durrheim (2021) spoke of silence being a way to sustain the status quo. It keeps difficult narratives invisible. It becomes an unspoken backdrop in the generative narrative. It is very important to be vigilant about omissions and silences in the narrative.

Ethical Considerations

The following will be discussed: ethical certification, philosophical principles applied and consent form. The ethical process needs to be unpacked first. The section below may be described as being very formulaic as opposed to being participant oriented. The researcher aimed to addressed the ethical issues that may arise during the interviews, ensuring the participants were treated ethically. This was outlaid in the section below in the ethics review as required by the university. In practice, the ethical dilemmas were more complex in ways that were not anticipated. The following section describes the procedures for achieving ethical clearance. In the reflexive section the issues that arose that were more complicated in practice will be explored in more detail.

Research Ethics Committee Approval

This study was reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (protocol reference number HSS/082/015D). (See appendices 2, 3 &4).

Philosophical Principles Applied

Wassenaar and Mamotte (2012) refer to "four widely accepted philosophical principles (applied in) research ethics […]: autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons; non-maleficence; beneficence; and justice" (p. 12). The ethical considerations will be discussed under these respective headings. Finally, the content of the actual consent form is discussed.

Respect for the dignity of others and autonomy

This principle refers to respecting the decisions made by adults capable of making decisions (Jahn, 2011). Issues of general respect, informed consent, freedom of consent, confidentiality and privacy are dealt with in this section to enable the person/s to make informed decisions.

General respect. The language used in all communication with the clinicians and particularly the participants was aimed at being clear, respectful and accessible to enable them to make informed decisions (Canadian Psychological Association, 2017; Health Professional Council of South Africa, 2022).

Informed consent

Providing appropriate information. The information sheet (see appendix 9) contained the purpose and nature of the research, detailed the identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisors, included their contact details.

Clarification of expectations / responsibilities / roles of the participants and researcher. *The* participants were informed of the expectations of them as participants, for example, meeting for about an hour a few times, and that the interviews would be conducted through informal conversations.

It was made clear that should the participant become distressed during the interviews, the researcher would refer them to someone to support them accordingly, thereby separating the role of the researcher and potential counsellor.

Access to information / anticipated use of research. Permission from the participants was obtained to allow their interviews to be audio-recorded and their memorabilia/ photos of them to be used for research purposes. One participant wanted to use the transcripts as memoirs for his children. It was agreed that the researcher would give him hard copies of all of his transcripts. Another participant wanted the transcripts to be emailed to him so that if something happened to him, his family would have access to these to obtain a richer understanding to his actions and choices. They were assured that only the researcher and, as appropriate, her supervisors would have access to their transcripts. The data collected would be referred to or quoted in anonymised segments from the transcripts in the PhD or academic articles documenting the research.

Freedom of consent. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary. Participants were assured that at any time they would be free to withdraw from the research without any undesirable or negative effects on themselves.

Confidentiality. The participants were informed that the consent forms would be kept apart from the data in order to maintain confidentiality, thereby ensuring the real identity would not be connected with their pseudonyms.

As the researcher foresaw the interviews as being very pleasant, satisfying experiences for them, no limitations on confidentiality were set. See *Researcher's distress and complication of dual roles* for further discussion on this matter.

Anonymity, Pseudonyms, and Expectations of Privacy

Since the interviews were expected to cover intimate and personal ground, much thought was given on how to ensure privacy. It was also important that participants fully understood these protections, to allow them to speak freely.

Privacy. It was emphasised that the participants' interviews would be treated in a confidential manner and that anonymity and privacy would be ensured, for example, allocating pseudonyms at the time of transcribing the data. They were informed that this approach would be applied as well to any person/s and other potential identifiers talked about throughout the interviews. They were informed of the storage process and minimum period of time the research data would be kept, the safety measures taken and how the data would be disposed of.

Anonymising data. Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to "anonymizing data (as the) removing or changing any information that could identify the participant" (p. 169). This involved changing information such as events, places, occupations and people's names. In the present study, pseudonyms have been used for all the participants. These were selected by the researcher. However, it is not just names that can identify people in data. Braun specified two ways in which identifying information could be changed:

By changing details and providing unmarked, appropriate alternatives (e.g. towns, ages, hobbies).

By replacing specific information with marked generic descriptions (indicated by square brackets, so 'London' might be replaced with [large city]; 'Michael' with [older brother], 'running' with [form of exercise] (p. 165).

Places: The town/s or district from which the research participants were accessed have not been identified but instead only the province, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), referred to. One reason is that many retirement organisations and villages may be found in KZN.

Specific information: Generic descriptions were used to replace specific information, for example, [eldest son] instead of the name of the participant's son. participants' ages have not been changed, as this has been one of the selection criteria of the participants and forms part of their stories. Some hobbies have been changed for similar activities.

Braun and Clarke (2013) went on to say:

It's important to consider what information may be potentially identifying not in isolation, but as a *cumulative* effect. […] Whether you remove or change such information, and the degree to which you change it, depends on a number of factors, including the extent to which a participant is identifiable by others who may read your research, the importance of *complete* anonymity to individual participants, and the importance of such information to your analysis (p. 169 italics in original text).

This has been taken into consideration and sensitive adjustments to minor details of respective participants' biographies have been made. For example, I have not identified specific organisations that the participants worked in. Without these minor adjustments, some of the participants would have been easily identifiable because of their unique life histories.

In line with Braun and Clarke (2013) the unchanged original documents have been stored separately, as well as the changes made, should it be necessary for the researcher to check any of these changes.

Beneficence

This principle refers to "a moral obligation to act for the benefit of others" (Jahn, 2011, p. 225). In the consent form, the participants acknowledged that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could at any time withdraw from the study without any negative repercussions. They agreed that they had been informed that should they need emotional support as a result of being distressed by the interviews, they would be referred to professional support resources.

Non-maleficence

This principle refers to "an obligation not to inflict harm on others" (Jahn, 2011, p. 225). Should the interview be considered to be causing the participant distress in any form, the interview would be terminated. Options for professional assistance would be offered. They were assured that should the questions be too intrusive they would be free to not answer them, and that at any time they could stop the interview and/or choose to withdraw from the research. They would be provided professional support resources in the unlikely event that the interviews caused them harm or distress.

Justice

This principle compels one to "equitably distribute benefits, risks, costs, and resources" (Jahn, 2011, p. 225). The benefits of adding to the literature by their participating in the research were highlighted. Participants were informed that they would not be remunerated for participating in the study and, other than their time, no costs were expected to be incurred by the participants. They were offered to receive feedback on the research on completion.

Consent Form

The consent form summarised the issues discussed above for the participants to sign. In the consent form (see appendix 9), the participants agreed to having understood the purpose and means of implementing the study, to being given the opportunity to interrogate the study and be answered satisfactorily. They were again given the contact details of the researcher and ethical committee should they have any further queries or concerns regarding the research or researcher. They formally gave consent to their interviews being audio-recorded and for their memorabilia/ photos of them to be used for research purposes.

Standards of the Research Enquiry

Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are conceptualised and evaluated differently in qualitative research compared to quantitative research. This is due largely to the subjective nature of qualitative data and specific contexts and small samples often accessed (Jootun et al., 2009).

Key components to ensure rigorous qualitative research

"Trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and confirmability" (Henning et al., 2013, p. 147) and transferability (Nowell et al., 2017) are key components to ensuring

rigorous qualitative research (these are discussed in more detail below). This calls for care and reflexivity throughout the research process.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was upheld by being explicit with regard to the research procedure utilised. This involved being vigilant in keeping a documentation trail. The researcher had aimed "to give a detailed account of how the evidence emerged (in relation to what sort of questioning, prompting and in what context) and how it was processed by the researcher in terms of cleaning, summarising and organising" (Kelly, 1999, p. 427). This would make explicit the context and manner in which the data was accessed, collected and analysed. Keeping a reflexive diary was essential as it is considered useful to track the choices / decisions and influences leading to the development of the project. This also encouraged reflectivity in which particularly the influence throughout the research of the researcher was highlighted and worked with. Morse (2018) argues that trustworthiness cannot be accepted as an absolute, but rather that the researcher should work to convince the reader of it. This highlights the responsibility of the researcher to be extra diligent in the process of doing (and reporting) the qualitative research to ensure she produces qualitative research that is of a rigorous standard.

Credibility. "Credibility addresses the "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). Credibility was achieved by using the constant comparative method (Silverman, 2011), which involves a recursive process of continually pitting emerging findings against the data as analysis progresses, and intentionally trying to find disconfirming cases. This process ultimately achieves a good fit between the views expressed by the participants and the manner in which the researcher portrays them. This promotes confidence in the logic and consistency underlying the findings and implications.

By transcribing and analysing the data throughout the research process instead of at the end of the collection of data, themes were identified and developed, clarified and or explored further in future interviews (Rapley, 2011). It was important to keep close to the data throughout the research process (Kelly, 1999). This was achieved, for example, by the researcher typing up the transcripts herself, and regularly going back and re-listening to the audiotapes of the interviews and rereading the transcripts, ensuring "prolonged engagement" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3) with the data. Kelly (1999) highlighted the need to "constantly

reflect on or evaluate the process of the dialogue, that is, to reflect on the research process itself" (p. 425).

Dependability. "To achieve dependability, researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented […] When readers are able to examine the research process, they are better able to judge the dependability of the research" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). Dependability was achieved by complying with conventions and rules of qualitative methodology. The research questions were refined in order to be stated in a clear concise manner. The argument linking the research questions and the research purpose and design was aimed to be developed in a logical manner. The researcher familiarised herself with the key actions of the analytical methods chosen, as well as the specific norms and rules of application (Rapley, 2011). Kelly (1999) refers to communicative validity, which involves "testing the veracity of knowledge claims in a dialogue with either the respondents, general public or the scientific community of scholars" (p. 432). This was achieved by returning to the research participants for second and further interviews where concepts initially raised were clarified, developed, or those concepts omitted introduced. The researcher met regularly with her supervisors throughout the research process. She also used opportunities to present her work at colloquia, conferences and seminars to debate and discuss the research process such as the methodology, findings and analysis, with her peers.

Confirmability. Confirmability seeks to ensure the experiences and perspectives of the research participants are accurately reflected in the data. This was achieved by interviewing the participants at least twice. Also by using the simplified Jefferson method of notation it was hoped that the subtle nuances and meanings intended by the participants would be further captured. Nowell et al. (2017) emphasised that "researchers (should) include markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study, so that others can understand how and why decisions were made" (p. 3). This methodological section has been very detailed to achieve this. Confirmability also "takes into account the researcher's impact on the context of the study and the development of the interpretive account" (Kelly, 1999, p. 429). By utilising the tool of reflexivity one ensures awareness, transparency and openness in "the reciprocal influence of participants and researcher on the process and outcome is a vital part of ensuring rigour in qualitative research" (Jootun et al., 2009, p. 45). The section on *reflexivity* grapples with some of these concepts.

Transferability of findings. Research would seem fairly pointless if the results were unique and had little relevance to any other setting. In quantitative research this is achieved through the generalisability of the research results. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined generalisability as "the ability to apply the results of a study to the wider population" (p. 331). The premise behind this concept is that it "reflects the generation of (universal) laws as an aim of research" (p. 280). This is not a relevant goal for qualitative research. Its assumptions are very different. Qualitative research is concerned with the context in which knowledge is generated and on idiographic, subjective study.

Instead of generalisability, the concept more frequently used in qualitative research is that of transferability. Braun and Clarke (2006) define transferability as "the extent to which qualitative research results can be 'transferred' to other groups of people of contexts" (p. 338). Transferability is strengthened by the detailed description of the specific circumstances, participants, setting and context of the study. This enables the reader to appraise the potential of the study results of being applied to other participants or contexts. In this approach, the onus is on the reader to assess the transferability of the results. The reader needs to determine whether their settings and circumstances are similar enough to the original study to permit a justifiable transfer. To facilitate transferability "the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3).

Reflexivity

When referring to the research relationship, Maxwell (1997) referred to "the term reflexivity (as) often used for this unavoidable mutual influence of the research participants and the researcher on each other" (p. 86). In this statement the author is referring to the inevitable impact both researcher and participant would have upon one another.

In relation to reflexivity, Braun and Clarke (2013) highlight the researcher's role in the research relationship. They speak of the researcher co-constructing meaning during the interview with the participant. This is inevitable. It cannot be minimised nor should it be. What is necessary is for the interviewer to be reflexive in the process. "The interviewer should reflect on how their practices and values may have shaped the data produced" (p. 79). Nowell et al. (2017) emphasise how this self-critical reflection dealing with the research process should include "their internal and external dialogue" (p. 3).

Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to two types of reflexivity. They emphasise that reflexivity in research involves reflecting critically. The first type they refer to is functional reflexivity. This refers to when the researcher critically reflects on the research process and tools used. Personal reflexivity is about "bringing the researcher into (the) research, making us visible" (p. 10). Throughout the research process I aimed to keep a reflexive research journal. After each interview I would write about the experience. I especially would also write up things that were troubling me. This is in line with Nowell et al. (2017, p. 3) "A reflexive journal can be used by researchers to record to document the daily logistics of the research, methodological decisions, and rationales and to record the researcher's personal reflections of their values, interests, and insights information about self".

In this section, I reflect on the power in the interviews, the impact of my experience of distress in some of the interviews, and the pressure to step out of the role of researcher into that of therapist. As this section relates directly to me as a researcher, I switch to writing in the first person here.

This discussion has been included in the reflexive section because I am going to explicitly speak of what drew me to this research topic and how I engaged with the theory. I have always been drawn to older people. I was interested in their experience partly through my personal experience as well as my professional work. I started to wonder, especially as I live in a town with many retirement villages and engage with older people all the time, how is it that men reconcile the demands of masculinity with the frailty of age? I then came across the work of Spector-Mersel (2006). Where most research on focuses primarily on cross-sectional understanding of masculinity, Spector-Mersel introduced the concept of time being an important dimension of masculine identity production. However, I was dissatisfied by her argument that (hegemonic) masculinity is effectively truncated at middle-age. The older men I could see around me evidently continued to engage with hegemonic masculinity as they aged, but faced many dilemmas as age changed their relationships to the resources needed to embody hegemonic masculinities (e.g. finances, health, physical strength, positions of power). I realised that retrospective narrative research would be a rich way to capture this, and allow several modest contributions to the understanding of masculinity: how a man's identity is experienced across his lifespan, how a man's identity is impacted by critical turning points and how men negotiate their masculinity while getting old.

Researcher's Dual Roles: Power in the interview

Understanding of power in interviews prior to the actual interviews

The interview itself has been considered to be an "unnatural and contrived situation" (Henning et al., 2013, p. 52). However, it is still a very useful tool in the analysis of construction of the social world. Miller and Glassner (2011) spoke of it being "useful to pay close attention to how the interview context shapes the account" (p. 144). This was considered particularly pertinent when considering the issues of power. It was easy to assume that the researcher would have the power during the interview and not to consider that a man who is older may actually have the power, as is illustrated in the paragraph below.

Researcher-participant relationship impacted

The level of education did not appear to impact the researcher-participant relationship except with one participant. Only Elliot made reference to both the researcher and participant being equal because, not only had he too studied later in his life, but he still enjoyed studying:

> **Excerpt 3.1**
>
> **Elliot**: You too I think you are sitting on the same ambition as I am. I am still reading whatever at home, I like going to church. I like it so. This gospel thing I read. I see you want a PhD at your age. I can see that. We have something in common. (Interview 1)

Retrospectively this also could have been an attempt to equalise the power imbalance of when they worked together at the same institution before he retired. Although they had very little to do with each other, Elliot was in the administrative field while the researcher was in the clinical field, which inherently carried more status. If this is an accurate assessment of the situation, Elliot had used education as a tool in the conversation to equalise the previous power differential in the work place as well as the power differential in the interview.

Researcher feeling disempowered in interview

I, as the researcher, experienced a power differential in the interview with the first participant. I was so nervous as it was my first interview. I realised afterwards I was intimidated by someone I perceived as a gracious giant of a man, firstly, because I felt as if I was bumbling as a researcher, not quite knowing how to go about the interview in a

meaningful way. I also became aware that I knew of the participant in the community (he is well respected professionally and, in the community,). His reputation went before him even though I had had no direct contact with him. When he made references to being "naughty" in his high school years, there was no way, even though I was interested, that I would ask him to elaborate on what he was referring to, even though this was to a degree detrimental to the quality of the interview. Interestingly, I also found I did not want to know because I did not want to lose respect for him.

I was also intimidated by George because of his status as retired CEO and his informing me that he was a very busy man and would not make any appointments without his diary. However, this was quickly dissipated by his generous, passionate, engaging manner. I suppose I also did not have a personal investment in whatever his reputation unfolded to be. If I, the researcher, felt intimidated and silenced, this gives a deeper insight into how the power dynamics inherent in interviews can silence participants' opinions or stories and create difficulties "going to places" they may have been unsure the researcher would want to go, or would be interested in.

Distressed Participants and Researcher During the Interviews

This section looks at the impact on me, the researcher, when feeling distressed during the interviews with the participants and the potential impact on the research. It also explores the process I underwent when sensing a participant was in psychological distress and feeling caught between being a researcher and clinical psychologist.

I consider myself to be very open and able to cope with much shocking information shared by others. However, one participant was a hunter. It distressed me so much hearing about a pertinent incident that involved describing a kill, and also other incidents detailing activities around hunting. I actually found myself thinking during the interview, while he was telling me these stories, about the dread of having to re-listen to these interviews. I also found that my verbal and facial responses became more wooden. I felt terrible. This had nothing to do with the participant but my personal aversion to hunting (and it did not even help to remind myself that I am not a vegan or vegetarian).

This did not seem to impact the interview. The participant did not seem to be perturbed or aware of what was going on in the researcher. It is unclear why. In the first two interviews, he spoke of hunting as being an integral part of his life but in the third interview

he changed this opinion. I wondered if he had picked up the discomfort I experienced and therefore distanced himself from hunting.

Throughout the interviews, Edward kept referring to how shocked he was at how much he was talking. He assured me that he never spoke this much; he shared things in the interview with me that even his present wife did not know about. This is in line with the experience of Bennett (2007) who wrote:

> On the whole I have assumed that the interview is a private space; many of the men talked about how useful (in a quasi-therapeutic sense) the interview had been, giving them an opportunity to discuss issues that they were unable to discuss elsewhere. (p. 347)

Late in the evening after the third interview, I accessed a voice message on my cell phone used for research purposes. It was Edward, sounding very distressed. He said he remembered things that had only been stirred up because of the interviews. He thought it would be important to talk about them for the sake of the research.

I sent an email (30 October 2016) to my supervisors indicating the distress and conflict I was experiencing in response to his message. I explained how it was an ethical question. My concern was that, even though I had made it clear in the beginning of the research, if therapeutic issues should arise, he would need to seek a therapist to deal with these issues. However, I was very concerned that he had repeatedly said that I was the only person he had raised these issues with. I was left with the ethical dilemma of then directing him to a stranger to begin this story again. It seemed unlikely that he would do so. I was concerned that he needed assistance and was not sure if it was ethical to refer him to someone else, given that I am a practicing clinical psychologist.

In the end I did not have to face this ethical dilemma. As suspected, when I called the next morning, Edward was calm. When I asked him about how distressed he had sounded, he put it down to his wife not being particularly well the night before. Another interview was scheduled to discuss the things that Edward had since remembered. This incident had disrupted the societal expectation that men are not emotionally vulnerable. Knowing this increased the pressure on the researcher to see the participant because he was being so out of character and vulnerable.

Reflexivity is essential in interpretive qualitative research particularly in situations stirring up ethical dilemmas. By naming them and processing them, it allowed me to be prepared for various scenarios should they have played out and ideally identifying which route would be least damaging and most advantageous for the participant and situation in general. By my keeping a record of them, they have potentially added richness and depth to the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS: PRODUCTIVITY ALONG THE LIFESPAN

Through the process of analysis described above, an interrelated set of themes were identified. Their relationships are visualised in the thematic map presented in figure 4.1. Two superordinate themes were identified: ageing and living in Africa, with living in Africa being the most general theme, since all the participants were in Africa and the interviews were conducted in the South African context. Despite this, it was invisible and unspoken for many participants. The analysis of this superordinate theme focuses on coloniality and apartheid, and makes sense of why it was a silent omission for many participants. Ageing is the next most general theme There were three subordinate themes within ageing; nested because ageing has an inescapable impact on how the others can be accessed at different life stages. Productivity across the lifespan, family and relationships, and health are subordinate themes. Working, providing and retiring are subordinate themes within productivity across the lifespan; but note how "providing" intersects with both productivity and family. Marriage, fatherhood, caring and procreation are subordinate themes within family and relationships; but take notice of how procreation particularly intersect with health, as it is a "family function" that can only be accessed if health allows, and participants expressed struggles with this. Physical frailty, short term health issues and long-term health issues are subordinate themes within health.

Ageing is seen to be relevant in all three subordinate themes. For example, in the first subordinate theme, as men age they then are expected to retire from work. The impact of ageing is most evident in procreation, in the second subordinate theme, where men as they grow very old are seen to be taken care of by their children as opposed to looking after their children when they were young. In the health subordinate theme, as they age, older men become more vulnerable to certain illnesses such as prostate cancer (Maliski et al., 2008). Further, ageing is a fundamental research focus along with the concepts of masculinity and lifespan.
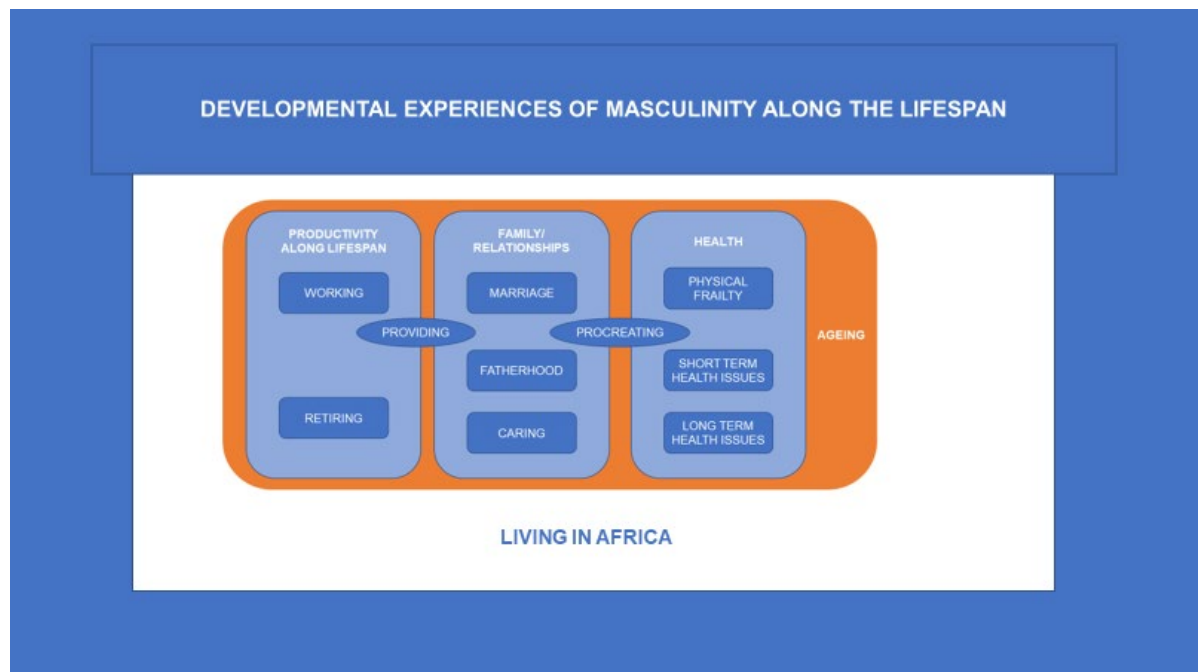
Figure 4.1: Overarching superordinate themes and subordinate themes

Productivity along the lifespan: Providing, Working and Retiring

This section deals with three essential identities of masculinity. The participants engage with normative developmental expectations and take on these dominant identities across their lifespans. The analysis that follows extends the current literature by indicating how these identities are important across the participants' lives, and how these identities intersect with each other as opposed to being isolated entities. Also, regarding retirement, there is evidence of the participants' diminishing ideal masculine status due to decreasing resources as they narrate their biographies from the position of ageing men. Various strategies are seen to be utilised to defend their masculine identities whenever under threat or being subjugated.

Providing: [My wife's] got what she wants. She's never short of anything

This section explores the taken for granted, unquestioned expectation of the provider identity for all the participants. It delves into how this identity drove some of the men to provide extensively, often at great cost to themselves and explores what is meant by being a provider.

A novel finding highlights how the participants' identities as providers were seen to progress developmentally across the lifespan. It extended from their providing for their

wives, their children, to providing for their parents, and finally to losing this identity and –
for some – their dependents becoming their providers. This progression across the lifespan
highlights how, in the first section of the provider narrative, they were empowered and able
to satisfy the dominant masculine standards of providing but, as they got older, they had
diminishing resources and were less able to achieve this aspect of dominant masculinity.

Providing: an essential masculine identity across the lifespan

The following examples highlight how fundamental the providing masculine identity
is to the participants as well as how it extends throughout their life. It is not focused on one
aspect of their lives, but instead over many developmental events, for example, tertiary
education, medical care and preparing for their family's retirement. Their role as provider is
evident in all of the following extracts, with provision sometimes providing an unspoken
backdrop for the related events, such as children going off to private school or university.
The following excerpt gives an indication of how providing is a taken for granted aspect of
being a man.

> **Excerpt 4.1**
>
> **Henry**: I courted my wife and we decided to get married […] So that was also a
> major decision. A responsibility […] The responsibility. I didn't shirk it. I didn't
> want to. But I realised it was a responsibility. You are now deciding if you going to
> take somebody under your wing and you going to be that person's protector and
> provider. If you if you take the oath that you quote or the minister reads out and says
> that you take so and so and will provide until death does us do part etcetera etcetera.
> So, the responsibility of knowing that was big for me.
>
> **Int**: How old were you?
>
> **Henry**: I was 22. (Interview 1)

The extent of the commitment of being a provider for Henry extended over his entire
lifespan as was emphasised in the way he spoke of "until death does us part". It has
extended from when he was 22 to now in his early seventies, a life time. As will be
discussed in the Retirement section, Henry continued to be a successful provider into his
retiring years.

When Henry says "will provide until death does us do part", he appears to be
referring to common knowledge of the wedding vows and social norms of the time he

married. However, note, that he goes well beyond these vows in constructing masculine provision as a moral value.

In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Church Publishing, 1954) current at the time Henry got married, the vows a man and wife make to each other at their marriage are "for better for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law" (p. 442). While the vows ask the couple to commit to a lifetime of financial abundance or poverty, they make no reference to who should provide (or how much). So, Henry has gone beyond his wedding vows to frame the social expectation that a man should be a provider as a moral law. This is evidenced by how seriously he takes these vows when he said "But I realised it was a responsibility. You are now deciding if you going to take somebody under your wing and you going to be that person's […] provider […] So the responsibility of knowing that was big for me". For Henry at least, this feature of providing of dominant masculinity was considered to be more like an unbreakable commandment than a soft "norm". In other words, he had taken a social norm (that is dominant masculinity) and given it the weight of moral/religious obligation even though the religion itself does not. This reiterates how essential the identity of providing is in dominant masculinity. In the following three excerpts, the participants do not use the word provision explicitly, but nevertheless describe how they provided for their immediate family members through their action.

Excerpt 4.2

Bennet: By this time having a sense of moral responsibility. Um. I got into looking at my parents. […] then my father died after 7 years […] I looked after my mother. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.3

Charles: And my kids – they went to school in Malawi and in Botswana. And then I decided to send them down to [KZN]. And uh they went to [a private primary school and high school]. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.4

Frederick: And uh my son was at a private school in Pretoria. And when we moved down he went to [a private primary school]. And then after that he went to [a private high school]. […] And eventually he went to university. (Interview 1)

Charles and Frederick did not explicitly speak of the identity of providing. However, both their actions as described in the data above indicated that they were financial providers for their families. Charles and Frederick were seen not only to provide for their children's education but also to ensure they went to private schools. This symbolically suggests that they were successful financially as they were able to send their children to elite schools. The identity of provider is seen to extend across the participants' lifespan.

Charles was living in various African countries at the time he sent his children to private schooling in South Africa. In relation to the literature review on intersectionality (Mfecane, 2018), the importance of the role of the socio-economic status that plays in Africa comes to fore. Traditionally there has been a stark contrast and economic divide between African states (often considered "third world" countries) and South Africa (at that time considered a "first world" country) (Bulow, 2002). The intersectionality between white masculinity and the contrasting socio-economic status highlights how this man's masculine identity and power would be further boosted because he could provide private schooling in spite of living in a "poor" African country.

Frederick was in South Africa when he sent his son to private schooling. However, when taking the theory of intersectionality (Moolman, 2013) into consideration, it is evident that this man's masculinity is enhanced not simply by his ability to successfully provide financially for his son. It is also necessary to appreciate how the financial disparity between white and black people at that time during the apartheid era (Spickernell, 2016) impacted his experience of his masculinity. The apartheid era, gave white men more status than black people, and also generally gave white men more advantage in many areas, for example, financial opportunities, schools for only whites which were generally of high standard (Michael et al., 2012). The framework of intersectionality enables one to have a deeper understanding of the complexity of masculinity for men in Africa. The below excerpt highlights how carefully Austen planned caring for his future family throughout the lifespan.

Excerpt 4.5

Austen: And when we both started teaching when I joined her the next year, we made the decision to live on her salary. And to save mine. So, we did that for two years. Then we had our first child. And then at the end of our career – and that

savings that we made has seen us through all the thick and thin bits right through the time, we have managed to put our children through university as a result of it […] And then when my youngest child finished his engineering degree we went back to living on my wife's salary and saving mine. So that is how we sorted of planned for retirement. Because my wife gets no pension. (Interview 1)

By being strategic, in spite of only having a teacher's salary, Austen was able to provide for his children and their tertiary education as well for his retirement. Austen also spoke of a sense of teamwork between himself and his wife, where together they ensured the children were looked after and financially they met all their own and their family's needs. This is in contrast to the traditionally valued masculine traits of being independent and self-sufficient (Courtenay, 2000). This extract highlights how the theme of providing extends across the lifespan from when a man begins to earn all the way through to his retirement. For Austen, being a provider was seen to carry importance as a defining aspect of being a man throughout his lifespan. He not only took into consideration taking financial care of his children's upbringing and tertiary education but also kept in mind, in the long term, the need to provide his and his wife's retirement.

It could be argued that Austen adopted a hybrid masculinity (Stick, 2021) in which he was able to integrate values that are given great masculine status, such as being white, male, well educated (he had his Master's degree), professional, having a steady income in a well-respected profession, having great initiative and self-discipline to ensure he provided for his family throughout his lifespan; while still failing in other areas that are traditionally valued characteristics, such as being "poor" relative to men working in industries outside of the government education department and unable to afford buying the "best of the best" material goods. He was able to still define himself as a successful man in spite of not achieving certain traditional masculine standards.

Overall, the men discussed above, were able to feel empowered because they satisfied what was prescribed by society's idea of what it means to be a man, in particular to provide well financially. This appeared to be a pervading, socially accepted norm on how to be men which is a dominant form of masculinity; but it is also hegemonic, because it provides men with financial in relation to women and other dependents.

Providing: a focus on material provision and being the sole provider

The following excerpts give insight into the practical aspect of what providing involves. They also highlight the depth of responsibility providing involves. The participants usually spoke of shouldering the responsibility for being sole provider for their families regardless of whether their wife worked or not. Munsch (2015) spoke of how men considered being a provider as their responsibility and only considered their partners' contribution as supplemental. It is evident how central the identity of provider is for these men. Three excerpts below (one from Darcy, and the other two from George) describe how these men view providing as a taken for granted responsibility.

Excerpt 4.6

Darcy: Making sure she's got a nice home. Making sure I am bringing in sufficient funds to cover the needs even though my wife went out and worked because she wanted to. It was still driven from my side to be able to cover the costs and have sufficient left over to go on holidays and the like […] She's got what she wants. She's never short of anything […] financially. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.7

George: I think […] it's his primary responsibility to be make sure that there is a steady income, there's food on the table etc. etc. […] The mother might also be working as well. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.8

George: Yes. Yes. Ja it's certainly something I've personally always felt is that it's I would be the person who would be primarily responsible for providing for the family. (Interview 1)

The pressure on Darcy to provide is evident when he spoke of being "driven", "making sure" and "she's never short of anything". This constructs a sense of him being compelled or relentlessly striving towards achieve the goal of ensuring his wife's needs were comprehensively provided for. Being a provider appeared to be a very important masculine identity for him. This is highlighted again in the Work section when he lost his job for a short period of time and how negatively it impacted his experience of his masculinity.

The pressure is felt on the man to provide, with George referring to words such as "chiefly responsible" and "his primary responsibility" implying that the man was principally accountable to ensure the family's essential needs were met. The masculine identity of being a provider was emphasised and taken for granted by both Darcy and George.

Providing: an all-consuming masculine identity regardless of the cost

The following excerpts highlight how the men enact their masculine identities of providing without question, regardless of the cost. This gives a richer understanding of how essential the identity of provider is to a successful man. The following discussion calls on several of Edward's excerpts. While all of the men took providing as a fundamental component of manhood, Edward expressed this particularly extremely. In the below excerpts Edward speaks about the expense of medical care and how hard he had to work to cover these costs, as well as the costs involved in putting his children through school.

Excerpt 4.9

Edward: My first wife said 'no more chemo' […] And you know it was expensive. And that is why I had to work my butt off. I had to leave at 5 in the morning and get back at 7. Then spend an hour on the phone. So, there was not much of a life. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.10

Edward: I was what seven years I was with them, I was rep of the year twice. So, I was working my butt off. So, I was trying to earn maximum commission, put the kids through school. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.11

Edward: I was away most of the time working my butt off to try and earn enough to keep everything together. So, I was a so I was a top rep. Earned top commission. But cos I had to be. I had to have that extra income. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 4.12

Edward: I'm having to work now ((in his early seventies)). But that I don't mind. There is no pressure. I don't have to support anybody other than my ((present)) wife. (Interview 1)

For Edward, work consumed his life at much cost ("So there was not much of a life") in order for him to meet the financial needs of his family. Edward referred throughout

his interviews to the heavy weight of this responsibility demanded by his identity, for example saying "(I was) busting my gut to earn money" (Interview 2) to provide for the family.

The first few excerpts show how Edward unquestioningly provided for his first wife and children. He highlighted the stress with his words of "work[ing his] butt off". It was no easy task. In the last excerpt he referred to providing for his present wife at the time of the interviews. He was in his early seventies. He repeated the word "pressure" which fits in with the sentiment that he shared in the first few excerpts even though the pressure was less at the time of the interviews. Ultimately, he was communicating how hard it was to work, providing for his family across the lifespan.

Elliot took on whatever job he could regardless of the cost to him physically. Elliot was driven by the need and sense of duty to provide for his young family. This sense of duty is epitomised in phrases like there was no choice" and "I had to be". Not achieving the masculine identity of family provider was not an option. Being a provider affords highly desirable masculine status. The below quote refers to Elliot doing work that involved physical work regardless of how much pain it physically caused him because he had to provide for his family.

> **Excerpt 4.13**
>
> **Int**: Was that less of a physical job?
>
> **Elliot**: Haai, it was a physical job.
>
> **Int**: Oh, you saying that as far as I understand your hips were starting to go. So physical labour must have been very hard for you.
>
> **Elliot**: It waaas.
>
> **Int**: But you did it.
>
> **Elliot**: But I did it. There was no choice. I had to do it […] Then I had to go and find a work there. And you can imagine climbing the ladders. ((he laughs)) Painting the ceiling the walls everything. Because I had a responsibility I had two sons to look after. And they were young by then. So, I had the responsibility. I had to. (Interview 1)

Again, the identity of being a provider is intertwined specifically with the identity of fathering as seen when Elliot speaks of "((having)) the responsibility", and then specifically

"a responsibility I had two sons to look after". Elliot put his children's needs over his own even if it cost him much physical pain. This gives an indication of how important the masculine identity of being a provider was for Elliot.

Edward and Elliot positioned themselves by their words and actions as responsible and strong men who did what needed to be done regardless of the cost. The concept of responsibility appears to be a core aspect of providing. These qualities are valued masculine characteristics (Hoyt et al., 2013). As seen in the literature (Smith & Winchester, 1998) the primary masculine identity of being a provider enabled the men to enact many other dominant masculine qualities (such as demonstrating his success, being strong) thereby enhancing their status as men.

Losing identity of provider

The findings suggest how ageing men are no longer able to fulfil the valued dominant ideal standards such as being young, virile and financially independent providers (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012; Hoyt et al., 2013). In the below excerpt Russell describes how he lost the identity of being a provider. Instead, his children were now supporting him.

> **Excerpt 4.14**
>
> **Russell**: I then my daughters – in fact it was my daughters who organised me to stay here. Uh cos it's quite expensive living here. I couldn't but my pension couldn't cover it all. (Interview 1)

Russell was the oldest participant of the study (87 years old). He had become frail and was needing full time care. He had limited resources both physically and financially as he grew older. He was not able to fulfil the dominant valued characteristics of being financially independent and physically virile (Sumerau et al., 2015) as he became older and financially dependent on his children.

Frederick, the second oldest participant, spoke of a time before he moved to frail care. He was hospitalised because he had had a stroke. His daughter in law took care of his wife, who had Alzheimer's. She proceeded to provide financially for a carer for his wife too.

> **Excerpt 4.15**
>
> **Frederick**: Eventually I looked after my wife. […] Until basically after I had my stroke. Fortunately, my son's wife […] she came up to my house to look after my

wife while I had the stroke. And she got the most wonderful person to come look after my wife. […] I don't know what it cost. It must have cost a fortune per month. (Interview 1)

The manner in which he accounted for the cost paying for the carer is revealing. He did not directly say that his daughter in law was paying for the carer. Instead, he spoke of ignorance of the actual amount. This is possibly a way in which he could protect his masculinity. This way he did not have to admit that he was no longer a self-sufficient provider for his family and that he was no longer financially independent. Instead of owning that loss of masculine identity of being sole provider, he distanced himself from who actually made the payment and how much was paid. Frederick used the strategy of discursively distancing himself from no longer being financially independent thereby protecting his masculinity.

Spector-Mersel (2006) proposed that the scripts of how to be a man terminate by middle age whereby older men lose their valued identity as a man. Intersectionality theory, could help explain this, by considering the various factors involved during this period of life (Dharani et al., 2020) other than simply gender and age. Bourdieu's theory of capital (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2010) explains how having financial capital and physical or health capital gives a man status. Getting old tends to rob a man of specifically these capitals. Financially, men often lose a steady income by retiring, and, as they grow older, their financial resources diminish further. Both Russel and Frederick (the eldest two participants) were reliant on their children for costs of frail care. They had grown too physically weak to maintain their independence and had no choice but to move into frail care; and no choice but to accept their children's generosity. In essence they were failed men with regard to these specific resources and traditional masculine values. Intersectionality theory helps to explain how the many other factors such as age, physical strength, limited resources, can impact whether a man is viewed to be successful or not or not; and this analysis shows how intersectionality can have dynamic effects across the life span, as people move in and out of age-anchored masculinities.

Work: You have to find a job. So, you find a job.

This section explores the value of the work identity to men and how it extends across their lifespan. Work is seen to be used to enhance their masculine identity. The impact of losing his work identity unexpectedly and off time is explored. The close link between work and providing is made evident too.

Working: an essential unquestioned masculine identity across the lifespan

The following examples demonstrate how essential the identity of working is for the participants, how it extends across their lifespan, and links to a developmental expectation of relinquishing this identity on retirement. The negative impact on the participants' masculinity is explored when their work identity was terminated unexpectedly and off time. Note that South Africa has never had any welfare system or social safety net to speak of, making unemployment a particularly threatening prospect. The following three excerpts indicate how Russell, Frederick and Edward refer to working as something that they have no choice but to do, it was spoken of as an unquestioned norm that men engage in.

Excerpt 4.16

Russell: Well mainly you know you do the only thing is that you had to do you had to conform with life. I mean the first thing is when you go through school. You do the best you can at schooling. You leave school. You have to find a job. So, you find a job. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.17

Int: When I say what is a man, what comes to mind to you? […] Do you find that men you would expect a man to fulfil certain responsibilities? Or do things particularly in the family in the work?

Frederick: Yes, a man must do certain things.

Int: What type of things were you thinking of?

Frederick: He's got to get a job. A proper job that looks after his family and himself. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.18

Int: What made you decide to leave school [at 15 years of age]?

Edward: I didn't. It was decided for me […] The following morning I was on the bus to Tanganyika […] And that was down to my mother and this reprobate ((her

partner)) […] But I can't remember that I stayed there more than a couple of weeks and I said that I am getting out of here.

Int: Then what did you do?

Edward: I went back to Kenya and found a job. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.19

Int: Edward you had a choice when you were 15 […] And you had a choice.

Edward: I didn't really have a choice I it never entered my mind not to knuckle down and get on with it. Whatever it was. There was no real choice. (Interview 3)

Russell, Frederick and Edward give insight into how taken for granted taking on the work identity is for them ("you have to find a job", "he's got to get a job", "knuckle down"). Work overlaps with providing, yet work in itself accords a particular masculine status.

Edward gives an indication of how deep the identity of work is for a man. At the age of 15 years, when he was no longer at school, he chose to find work. When the interviewer highlighted that this was a critical turning point in Edward's life in that he could have decided to stay at home with his mother or go find work, Edward was adamant that there was no choice involved. "There was no real choice". He just had to "knuckle down and get on with it". There was a sense of exasperation that the interviewer could even suggest that Edward had a choice not to work ("it never entered my mind").

Russell, Frederick and Edward refer to work as something that just has to be done. They do not question it but rather it is a taken for granted aspect of their lives. It would seem that the identity of work is a common and most celebrated form of masculinity. Work is a dominant masculinity for these men.

Work identity evident across lifespan

This section discusses how important work identity is for men as is evident by their biographies carefully detailing their career advancements. This research captures how work is meaningful to men across their lifespan in a dynamic way. An important feature of their descriptions is how they narrate chains of activity and recognised work positions; conspicuous by their absence are descriptions of gaps or periods of rest or abstaining from work.

The first excerpt below illustrates how Charles defined himself by the work he did. The second extract emphasises how much he defines himself by his work as seen by how

much it dominated his first interview. The second extract is a lengthy extract in which various job positions or types of work mentioned by Charles are highlighted.

Excerpt 4.20

Int: Something grabbed your attention when you saw the poster at the centre. What grabbed you?

Charles: I don't know I guess I have had an interesting life and I just thought um I've lived in quite a few countries in Africa. And I've done a lot of things a lot of other people have never done. I just thought you know it would be interesting to share it with some of your research. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.21

Charles: And I was asked to go to Zambia […] We were building a **hydroelectric scheme** on the 4th gorge of the um of the falls […] spent 4 years there […] And then I I left and came back to Rhodesia. […] And uh I was there for about uh a year and a bit and then my boss from Zambia was became the boss in [] in Southern Africa in Cape Town. And he invited me to come down there to **work on some projects**. […] I went down and I ended up running their **planning division** which really was a lot of fun. And I **ended up on some really nice projects**. […] Then I moved back to Rhodesia.[…] I was **project manager on a power station** in Hwange. […] So, we all as soon as we finished our projects **we were all made redundant**. […] And my father [..] asked me if I would be interested in **working with him and for him** and go to Malawi or run one of his divisions on either side to go to Malawi. […] So I moved there (Botswana) […] And uh again **I started a business** from a zero base.[…] I was there for 14 Years […]. And then around about 95. […] it cost me my business. […] And I went back (to Malawi) and worked a little bit with ((my brother)). […] And uh and then I was **head hunted** approached to look at assisting on some economic development work in um Malawi and elsewhere. […] And in the mean time I had done quite a bit of work. I was **employed by a number of people to turn companies around**. […] Anyway, I ended up doing this study. It was a **3 year study in** Tanzania [...] I've been **doing recycling**. Ah. I've been promoting small projects around that's where I had my head around. […] And I got **involved in biodiesel**. […] I've sort of been **bumbling along**. Working for a number of people who didn't quite understand what I was trying to do. (Interview 1)

The text made bold highlights job positions/work mentioned by the participant

When asked why he volunteered to participate in the study, Charles spoke of his unique life experiences (Excerpt 4). In the above excerpt he narrates how these unique experiences were related to his work experiences. In the first 35 minutes of his first interview, Charles spoke almost exclusively about the different jobs he had throughout his working career until the present. Note how frequently he implied that he was in charge, or sought after for his entrepreneurial leadership skills. Being in positions of authority or being "head hunted" for his reputation is a good marker of status. As seen in the last excerpt, Charles frequently gave monologues in which he progressed from one work position to another. He would often then expand in some detail on what that job involved. This indicates how a man's work identity can be almost his whole identity. It also illustrates how the identity of being a working man extends across his lifespan without diminishing in importance.

This was similar for other participants. George, Henry and Bennet describe their careers below. The next three excerpts capture how each man described their progression in their career across their lifespan.

Excerpt 4.22

George: So, I taught at [**high school**] and then […] I left because I was offered a position at a brand new teachers training college. […] I was **appointed head of Environmental – Social and Environmental Sciences**. […] And I was then had been **promoted to Vice Rector**. […] So, I resigned from ((from the training college)), took up the job as **Director of Education**. […] And so, I then became the [**head of national training** in] the society […] And then they asked me to take over the entire organisation. So, I became **Chief Executive Officer**. And that was the job until I retired. (Interview 1)

The text made bold highlights job positions mentioned by the participant

Excerpt 4.23

Henry: I started my career as an **apprentice electrician**. And then I went through the mill and I became a (()) **manager**. And um when I was after being 25 years as a […] **supervisor** […] And about a year later. […] I was called in by my director […] So then he said to me, he said 'Henry we've been watching you for a while now […]

We are also going into software. We are handpicking candidates to go (for this **training**) and represent us and […] you have been picked by me'. […] And so, I went through three implementations. Two where I was part of the staff and the one where I was a **sub-environment leader**. And at that stage salaries were always important. […] And I actually resigned. And I went outside as an **independent consultant**. And I worked from <u>18 years</u> in that environment. (Interview 1)

The text made bold highlight job positions mentioned by the participant, the underlining emphasises how long the participant was in that particular position

Excerpt 4.24

Bennet: I realised I needed more experience if I was to **qualify** […] So, I resigned and went to ((a laboratory)) where I was then a **lab assistant**. I took four positions back. I was promised if you qualify after 18 months. I got my **diploma** and I moved **in charge of the laboratory**. That was an achievement. […] I went down a step but within a year I was given promoted and **given 2 more sections to run in a rather large laboratory**. (Interview 1)

The text made bold highlights job positions mentioned by the participant

George and Henry described their career in which their success was depicted by each job becoming more prestigious, and involving more leadership responsibilities. Work again was seen to accord a definite status. Bennet highlighted how he was strategic in achieving the positions he wanted across his career. In this section, the importance of the work identity for men across the lifespan was evident as can be seen by the way the participants gave detailed accounts for their work career across their life, and described in detail their career progression or range of experience.

Each man in this section, take work for granted. It is an unquestioned identity in their lives which plays a meaningful role across their lives. This work identity appears to be a common culturally celebrated form of masculinity. Work is a dominant dimension of masculinity for these men.

Material Acquisition: Keeping up with the Jones's

This section focuses on how success in a man's working identity is evident by the acquisition of "every luxury", "keeping up with the Jones's" and having the "smartest car". Kimmel and Tissier-Desbordes (1999) refer to the power in acquiring material possessions;

and how material possessions become signifiers of power. Edward and Russell present themselves as subjugated men as they spoke of not being able to fulfil these hegemonic displays of success. Austen however defended his masculinity by distancing himself from this definition of success ("I've not felt the same way", "Never been my ambition to do that"). Edward also stated that he "never felt the urge to do that", but also clearly links material possessions to status as I will discuss below. In the excerpts below, Edward describes the current dominant masculine expectations and then Austen also acknowledging this but distancing himself from these expectations.

Excerpt 4.25

Edward: I think a lot of things is is how uh much (clear throat) much store you set by (clear throat) uh material things. There's a lot of people they've got to have every luxury that's going […] I'm just grateful for the wheels I can get around on I mean the but the status of anything means absolutely nothing to me […] A lot of people like keeping up with the Jones's and so on I've never felt the urge to do that. And I've never been able to afford to do it anyway so that's quite simple really. No, I've never felt the urge to um live above my station so to speak or try to think that someone's going to think I am better because I've got a fancier vehicle. It doesn't work for me. (Interview 3)

Excerpt 4.26

Austen: It's never been my ambition to do that. Although I have seen that in other men. It's not been mine. Um. It's not ever been my ambition to have a smartest car. I just wanted one that went and worked well and was safe. (Interview 1)

Edward named the status associated with having material things ("every luxury"). Austen's definition involved providing functionally and not focusing on prestigious material items associated with status. Edward spoke of accepting his "station" in life and being "grateful for the wheels (he) can get around on". He seems to be justifying why he had not achieved having material needs as would men with hegemonic and complicit status relating to this issue. He was seen to also accept Austen's definition regarding material possession not indicating his status as a man ("status of anything means absolutely nothing to me"). However, he also added that a prime reason was that he could not afford it and demonstrated a strong awareness of the status accorded by such attributes; and of his subjugated position

in the status hierarchy given that he has not been able to afford such things ("never felt the urge to um live above [his] station"). It suggests that he links material possessions with hegemonic status. He implied that he did not have "a fancier vehicle" not out of choice but simply because he could not. In this way Austen *owned* choosing not to have his masculinity be defined by possessions; essentially building a hybridised masculinity. Choice and taking control are important hegemonic ideals (Sumerau et al., 2015). Edward defended his masculine status by speaking about stoically accepting the situation by stating that he had no urge to "live above ((his)) station". Note that wanting something and failing to get it is more of a defeat than not having it and not wanting it; in other words, magnanimously accepting the cards he has been dealt. Edward is seen to be explicitly positioning himself in a subjugated position in relation to the hegemonic hierarchy, but in a way that makes it clear that this was a somewhat intentional decision. Russell relates similar financial challenges, but does not present it as an intentional choice.

> **Excerpt 4.27**
>
> **Russell**: Well that's we battled financially all our lives really ((laugh)). But uh uh we manage alright. We never got divorced. We had our fights and everything else.
>
> **Int**: What was it like being married?
>
> **Russell**: It was good. It was a good life. Very hard financially as I say. But uh we managed […] we certainly never starved or anything like that […] We couldn't go buy a new motor car or that type of thing. We were happy with what we had.
>
> (Interview 1)

Russell is seen to hold two masculine positions. He presented himself as having not achieved the hegemonic ideal of "buy[ng] a new motor car". At the same time, he presents himself and his wife as being the victors of an ongoing "struggle". In this way he is able to offset the loss in status as a man through humour, and minimises the impact of his inability to provide well by portraying himself as struggling, but managing and even thriving. Despite struggling they succeeded in "certainly never ((having)) starved" and being "happy with what ((they)) had". Nevertheless, his inability to afford a new car and "that type of thing" was "very hard" and a "battle". So, Russell was happy *despite* not achieving material success.

Excerpt 4.28

Austen: I think they need to prove themselves and I've not felt the same way – not the same way. […] I think they they perceive manhood I think in providing for your family financially mostly […] They need to have good cars, good homes, good areas, good schools, where they can. (Interview 1)

Russell noted that other men perceive financial success as a mark of manhood and "need" to have markers of financial success (good schools, cars, neighbourhoods etc.). Austen overtly rejected this standard of manhood, saying he has "not felt the same way". For Austen providing was not about getting the best a man could financially ("smartest car") but more about meeting the family's need in a functional and practical manner (for example, a functional car that "went and worked well and was safe" (Excerpt 4.25), and doing things together as a family.

Where Russell presented himself as not achieving a dominant masculine ideal of providing his family with the latest cars for example, Austen rejected that definition. Taking a hybrid position, he distanced himself from this ideal ("It's never been my ambition to do that" (Excerpt 4.26) and thereby protected his masculinity. Instead, he positioned the men who ascribed to this definition as being inadequate and less powerful by saying that "they need to prove themselves". It implied that these men had to argue or defend their manhood by acquiring materialistic objects.

Austen was highlighting that he was still achieving the hegemonic identity of working but that it was not in the same way as these men defined being a successful worker. He could be seen to be adopting a form of hybrid masculinity. This enabled Austen to keep his status being a man who enacts hegemonic versions of masculinity even though he was working in a profession (teaching) that was not well paid. Edley and Wetherell (1999) describe in their paper how the "nerds" defined themselves at having more status in comparison to the "jocks" by claiming core features of hegemonic masculinity but changing the dimensions on which these features should be judged. Similarly, Austen was seen to also define himself as having more status – despite his comparative lack of material success – by emphasising different valued hegemonic characteristics compared to the men he had described. Indeed, having the strength and moral fibre to reject materialism and thrive despite having to do more with less is constructed as moral strength and practical ingenuity.

Edward and Russell's sentiments are seen to reflect previous research (Harris, 2010; Kimmel & Tissier-Desbordes, 1999) in which success is symbolised by a man's possessions. However, Austen particularly resists this. It could be argued that he has stepped out of the hegemonic hierarchy and created his own value system. It could also be argued that this is simply a defence against his choice to work in a profession considered to be poorly paid (being in the teaching profession) and thereby being unable to afford expensive possessions. The strategies used to defend a man' masculinity in this section was that of rejecting the standard hegemonic definition of success, stoically accepting the things as they are and minimising the impact of a negative situation using humour.

It could be argued that Austen is producing a personalised masculinity (Swain, 2006) in which he rejects what most of the men complied to regarding acquiring the best of the best of material things. Austen said that he valued being creative rather with the limited finances in his possession as he had to provide for his large family. He did not reject the normative standards of what makes a man, but simply stepped away from these particular materialistic norms and created his own masculine values in which he could construe himself as being a successful man.

Another perspective to consider with regard to what led Austen to develop his own personalised masculinity, is that it would seem it was an economic necessity. He did not have abundant finances because he chose not to work in the open market but instead enter the field of education in the government, which is traditionally paid less in comparison to the open market. In effect, his choice of career made it necessary for him to either accept a lower rung in the masculine hierarchy or creatively produce a more valued position.

Another way to interpret Austen's experience is that he adopted a hybrid masculinity. Austen achieved the local dominant masculinity through his respectable work position and academic achievements, for example. However, he did not have the financial resources to fulfil the masculine expectation of acquiring material items to consolidate their sense of masculinity. Austen is able to live with these masculine and non-masculine qualities through his hybrid masculinity.

Termination of work "off time" and impact on masculine identity

Darcy, Charles and Elliot abruptly lost their jobs. It was unexpected and off time (as opposed, for example, to leaving his job for retirement). Their experience of losing a key masculine identity across their lifespan is explored. What follows gives an indication of the

impact of this loss on their masculine identity. It also shows how the men defended their masculinity during these periods of vulnerability.

Sudden loss of their work

Both Darcy and Elliot were impacted by historical events in their countries particularly with regards to their work. With Darcy, after [an international war], the Prime Minister closed all [] factories resulting a workforce of 8000 people being unemployed within months. With Elliot, the workforce at his factory went on strike to fight the injustices occurring at the workplace. In one day, the entire workforce of 400 people was dismissed. Most of the employees were from one town. The town was devastated by the mass level of unemployment. Neither of the men was expecting this outcome.

Both men's sense of masculinity was impacted negatively by this. Hancock (2012) finds a similar erosion of masculine identity when work has been taken away. Not having work undermines a man's ability to be a provider, which also is an essential masculine identity (see Providing).

Darcy spoke in very strong terms of the event of retrenchment as being traumatic and impacting his sense of virility as he suddenly was unemployed and no longer a provider. Unemployment devastated Darcy's experience of his masculinity.

> **Excerpt 4.29**
>
> **Darcy**: When [the international war] finished the prime minister of that time […] closed the [] plant I was in. And that was hugely traumatic. Hugely traumatic. And that to a great degree hit my virility because I went from being very well paid to picking up ((unemployment)). Quite literally within 6 weeks. So, there I was doing what I could do for my wife. And we were doing well. And then suddenly I was there and my virility in terms of my ability to support her took a huge knock. (Interview 1)

Virility is an important characteristic of masculine identity (Farvid & Braun, 2018). Virility refers to "male sexual strength or qualities […] such as manliness and masculinity" (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, n.d.-c). It is meaningful that Darcy spoke of feeling stripped of this sense of masculine strength and manliness by becoming suddenly unemployed. He implied a loss of status in his work masculine identity as he moved from "being very well paid" to the shame of claiming unemployment.

It was also seen to be very shocking as seen by his repetition of the words "hugely traumatic". Darcy spoke of not only providing for his wife but "doing well". He was proud of being a provider (also see the section on Provider). The developmental expectation is that a person only stops working at retirement. This seemed to exacerbate the sense of powerlessness regarding the loss of the masculine identity of being a provider. Darcy was later also seen to be as distressed when he was medically boarded as opposed to leaving formal employment in his own time (discussed in the section on Retirement to follow).

The effects of being dismissed differed radically between Darcy and Elliot due to the resources available within the community. Darcy was not living in South Africa at the time. Hancock (2012) refers to the impact of "local opportunity structure" (p. 406) on a person. Elliot did not have much local structure to support him or provide him with opportunities to help him overcome being unemployed abruptly. However, Darcy had a well-developed support structure and it made a noteworthy impact on how he was able to respond resiliently as a man to suddenly becoming unemployed.

The next extract shows how Darcy responded proactively, reclaiming his identity of provider by being a shrewd business man and getting the maximum benefit from the government policies regarding people unemployed in the manner he was. This boosted his status as a successful man.

Excerpt 4.30

Darcy: There was a system within the [government] where you could go and get retrained if you didn't want to stay in the industry […] But I thought well – while you doing the course – you get your full money with no tax taken out of it. There's no deductions whatsoever. I was earning a good amount of money. […] So, I thought if I do the [] course. That is TWO years, 24 months, cos I'm quick like that, of FULL money [[the implication is that of receiving a full salary]]. I'm not going to argue about that. So, the two came together and I went and did the course. I just loved [the course]. I loved the money even more. And uh. When it was all over. I started up a little [business]. (Interview 1)

He was proud regarding his proactive decision after becoming unemployed. He carefully chose the course that was sponsored by the government. He strategically chose a course which ensured he got the most out of it financially. It happened to be in a field of his

personal interest but what was very important to him was the money he walked out with. Being a provider was very important to Darcy (see Provision). By making this decision he was still able to financially provide for his wife comfortably and that evidently was as an important achievement for him as well as his being astute business-wise, so that at the end of the two years he was able to set up a "little" business of his own.

In terms of capital, it is evident that Darcy's masculine status was boosted by the institutional capital that was available to him. The government provided this opportunity for Darcy to study further rather than just be retrenched and be without work. It gave him the resources to continue being a provider to his wife while studying and enabling him to enter a new field of work in which set up his own business.

Note how Darcy took control over the situation ("I'm quick like that") which reinforced his masculine identities of being a provider, financially astute, showing initiative and a man who was in control, despite his unexpected retrenchment. Rolling with the punches, and being in control, decisive and self-reliant are valued masculine qualities (Hoyt et al., 2013; Oliffe, 2006). The resources accessed from the government enabled Darcy to exercise these qualities and be financially independent. This highlights how masculinity is impacted by the intersections of other sectors such as, in this instance, the availability of financial resources.

Excerpt 4.31

Darcy: Well the industry was in a terrible state. So, lot of guys just took early retirement and vegetated. Uh. Other guys went and did other things […] ((He then proceeded to talk about how he chose the course he went on sponsored by the government – see above excerpt)). (Interview 1)

Darcy is seen to be derogatory about the men who chose to take "early retirement" by saying as a result they "vegetated". The Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary (n.d.-b) defines vegetate as "to live or spend time in a way that lacks physical and mental activity and effort". In a way it implies that they stopped living and rather became passive vessels that just existed. Instead, he described himself in a dynamic way in which he actively strategized his way forward and was able to set himself up as an entrepreneur after he completed his studies. Being busy seemed to energise Darcy and give him purpose, unlike his colleagues who "vegetated" in their retirement. It seems as if he was able to reclaim his

experience of virility, and essentially his masculine power, by being so dynamic and proactive, and also by putting down the men who were not. It also reflects the ongoing contest of dominant masculinity amongst men. Note that being inactive and taking a chance to not work is portrayed as "vegetating", or becoming less than human. In this formulation, work is not just a feature of dominant masculinity; it is a feature that makes men people. The "lot of guys" that took early retirement are portrayed as having made a bad choice compared to "other guys" who "did other things," essentially having been made less human.

Elliot's personal experience was very different from Darcy's. Elliot experienced substantial losses. He had to set aside his dream of improving his life by studying part time; his wife had to go out and work ("My wife wasn't working at that time. But fortunately, my neighbour did find her just this domestic work for her" (Interview 2), his family had to rely on handouts from the local church ("So one day I saw this Father (priest) to my house. And he said take this something like maybe a mieliemeal [...] you will be getting this weekly so eggs and other few stuff" (Interview 2), and due to the high unemployment in the area Elliot battled to get work.

In this situation, Elliot was seen to be vulnerable in terms of capital. Living in a society that systematically favoured white people, he had minimal education and jobs were scarce. He was part of a workforce that was fired overnight and he thereby lost his financial resources. He had no institutional capital as the government, for example, did not provide training as Darcy's government did when suddenly unemployed, nor did the government provide support to the whole community when it had been devasted by sudden unemployment. Elliot did have access to social resources through the church. However, although this helped to provide for his family, it was not a valued masculine resource as it involved Elliot accepting handouts from the priest which is counter-masculine. During this time, his wife became the chief provider for the family when she started working and brought home her menial salary. Again, Elliot's family was being provided for but at great cost of him not being able to fulfil the highly valued masculine norm of the man being the primary provider for the family.

Being independent and self-sufficient are valued qualities in a masculine identity (Courtenay, 2000). However, in contrast to Darcy, there were no opportunities for Elliot to get work during this period. Instead, he lost his independence and had to rely on others to provide for his family. The loss of work and the potential to work immediately thereafter

robbed Elliot of fundamental values of masculinity. Elliot spoke of the deep impact of unemployment in the quote below.

Excerpt 4.32

Elliot: It wasn't me alone because the whole work force was dismissed. So it was that a community problem […] I was depressed being a houseman, not working, you know it disturbs a lot […] So my dream (('to better (his) life' through studying)) faded somehow. Because now I was married by then. So, I now had that responsibility now to fulfil now […] Because I registered for 6 subjects ((the year of the strike)) but I was fortunate to make it for three subjects by then ((he only passed 3)) But after the following year I couldn't register because you know when you are depressed you know it's not easy to study. (Interview 1)

It did help that it was not personal but impacted a whole community ("it wasn't me alone", "a community problem"). Instead of responding with anger and frustration, Elliot spoke of being depressed and how it impacted his ability to apply himself to study. Darcy was empowered by utilising the resources available to him after becoming unemployed. However, Elliot is seen to become disempowered and depressed. Being depressed is a characteristic that diminishes a man's masculine identity (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009) and still Elliot owned that emotion. In this section, he presents himself as disempowered as a man where his masculine identities of working and providing for his family were ripped away from him. Yet, this was softened by naming that it was not a personal failure but experienced by most of the community he lived in.

Both Darcy and Elliot were devastated by the sudden loss of their work. Their identities of working and providing for their families were undermined. Darcy was able to re-negotiate his masculine identity as resourceful, astute and shrewd almost immediately, due to the government resources available. He walked out with a new dynamic career path. His masculinity was boosted by this. For Elliot it took years of being a "houseman" before he found full time work again and was able to pick up his lifelong dream of completing his high school education. For many years, in these areas Elliot was in a subjugated position.

Charles also experienced financial hardship when he realised his business was in trouble and had to close it immediately. He chose to do this himself.

Excerpt 4.33

Charles: […] so I pulled the plug on my own business. I made sure no one was going to pull the plug on me. And uh I obviously. I lost everything I had.[…] The fact that I had to do it myself. It's the hardest thing I've ever done in my life was pull my own business. Cos most guys get put into liquidation by one of their suppliers. And I went to see all my guys and said hey guys this is where I am and I am sorry. There is nothing I can do. I spoke to everyone one to one. The hardest thing I've ever done. But I've got to do it. I'm not going to hide from anyone. I can't you know. As much as you don't want to do it […] And I lost everything. It was a bit sad. Lost a couple of million dollars. And uh and I started my life with a bakkie ((a South African term for a small light pickup truck)) and a trailer. Loaded up. And I decided to go back to Malawi cos I had – I still had a share. (Interview 1)

Charles said an option was to let his business be liquidated by others. However, he chose to rather "pull the plug" on his business himself. He personally went to his suppliers and explained the situation in spite of it being "the hardest thing (he's) ever done in (his) life". The magnitude of having to close his business down himself was evident in how he repeated "the hardest thing I've ever done". Yet he was stoic about this. Regardless of how hard it was for him, he took ownership and regained narrative agency, speaking of "The fact that I had to do it myself" and "But I've got to do it". Despite other men being forced into liquidation by others, he positions himself as having no other option but to face this difficult situation head on. In this way he constructs himself as a man with strong moral character; backbone. By taking control Charles was seen to be defending his masculinity in a helpless situation. And, despite losing everything, he remains stoic and experiences it as just "a bit" sad.

Gannon et al. (2010) describe an effective masculine strategy to negotiate and defend his masculinity in which men respond to a very difficult situation with masculine unemotional rationality rather than feminine emotionality, where they present themselves stoically and as almost distanced from the traumatic event. The men are seen to engage with the difficult situation while sustaining their ideal masculine status. Charles was seen to utilise this strategy in the face of a very taxing situation.

He also downplayed the severity of the situation by saying "It was a bit sad" and flippantly stating "lost a couple of million dollars. And uh and I started my life with a bakkie and a trailer". He presented himself as accepting the situation and as content with the little he had. He did not dwell on the remarkable drop in status, income and possessions, but by referring to "a couple of million dollars" Charles could also be drawing attention to the high status he had before closing his business.

He focused on the challenge of his decision to face closing his business down as opposed to the emotional impact of such loss. He presented himself as acting like a man who did not shirk his responsibilities regardless of how hard it was. By being stoic he demonstrated that he was able to withstand the hardest situation he had ever experienced and demonstrate his masculinity from the substantial loss: showing that he is a man who faces his responsibilities instead of hiding from them, no matter how difficult or what the cost. But his narrative pairs stoicism with proactive optimism, as he emerges from the disastrous situation with a pickup-truck, a trailer and a new adventure in Malawi. This is the story of a self-made man about to make himself again.

Retirement: Let me enjoy the other years relaxed

Work is considered to be a core identity of a man's masculinity. Giving up work can be perceived as a potential failure of men's masculinity, except if they can retire comfortably and by choice. The implication of retirement, therefore, is that retiring men would be less able to satisfy the standards of dominant masculinity. This section will explore how the participants engaged with this period of major transition from working and thereby losing important ideal masculine identities (for example work and providing), and the strategies they used to defend their masculinity. It also adds to the current literature in highlighting how retirement is about the process of potentially relinquishing the fundamental identities of masculinity: provider and worker. Ageing and decline is inevitable: brains and bodies eventually fail us.

Retiring "on time"

While this section deals with the participants' achieving this major transition on time, nevertheless they are still seen to be losing or loosening their identities as providers and workers. How these men negotiate this transition will be explored.

Elliot embraced the transition from working to retiring. He was comfortable with retiring at age 60 because he had already achieved his dreams.

Excerpt 4.34

Elliot: […] then I left ((work)). But I was satisfied because my dreams had been fulfilled. I was satisfied […] I left ((work)) when I was 60.

Int: What's it like being retired?

Elliot: Well for me, I don't know how I can describe it. […] Let me enjoy the other years relaxed. […] It's the second year yes.

Int: And you enjoying?

Elliot: Very much. (Interview 1)

Elliot framed his decision in a positive light. He had fulfilled his dreams and wanted to enjoy the rest of his years. He moved his focus from the loss of his work identity to a positive future. The lifespan approach allows a holistic view and understanding of Elliot in which his satisfaction experienced in retiring was enabled by his actions and fulfilled dreams extending throughout his life. This impacted his masculinity. His masculine identity was boosted because of these achievements. He was proud of his achievements. Being successful (Harris, 2010) and having professional status (Skovholt & Morgan, 1981) are valued masculine characteristics.

For Russell retiring seemed to be a non-issue.

Excerpt 4.35

Int: So, you worked in [a specific trade] until you retired.

Russell: Yes, I retired when I was 65. (Interview 1)

Russell is seen to relinquish his work identity in an unquestioning manner. He spoke in a matter-of-fact manner that he retired at the age of 65. It is almost as if retiring at 65 was a foregone conclusion that was not to be questioned. In retrospect, it would have been useful to discuss this in more detail. Elliot and Russell live by the dominant masculine discourse that sets the "social clock" expectation of retiring at 60 or 65 years (Quadagno, 2017; Sigelman & Rider, 2009). They do not justify their decision to retire, and their matter-of-fact responses signal that they do not defend their masculinity in relation to retiring at this age. Austen describes himself as resolute to leave at the pinnacle of his career.

Excerpt 4.36

Austen: I was very determined also to close the door when I I knew things were going well […] I have seen too many colleagues staying too long. And too many colleagues reaching their sell-by dates. (Interview 2)

Austen chose when he would leave his career. He said he wanted to leave when he "knew things were going well". He observed that his colleagues were not being so discerning and, in his opinion, pushing on and working for too long. Austen was seen to put down other men who did not acknowledge when it would be appropriate to retire and make the choice to leave work when it was best. Staying beyond your "sell-by date" of course means that you are no longer useful; perhaps even starting to decay. This reveals a clear link between age and work-related masculinity (where age makes one less effective and less able to maintain positive work identity).

Indirectly he was giving himself more masculine status by having being proactive, analysing the situation well, taking control of the situation and leaving on his own terms. Austen enhanced his identity as a man by taking control of when to retire. Austen had framed work as a phase in life that was coming to an end and was getting ready to embrace a new phase in his life. Austen is seen to be defending his masculinity from a possibly perceived failure as a result of losing a key masculine identity (work) by focusing on other aspects of successful masculinity, "in order to offset the ways in which they fall short" (Lamont, 2015, p. 273).

Austen accepted the common form of masculinity that to retire around 65 years of age was acceptable. Not only did Austen simply accept the unchallenged yardstick of dominant masculinity of retiring at 65, but also decided to retire earlier ("I was very determined also to close the door when I I knew things were going well […] I have seen too many colleagues staying too long") compared to his peers. Since early retirement was presented as a strategic choice, this was not a failing; quite the opposite.

Retiring "before time"

This refers to the relinquishing of formal employment early. The way that this impacts on masculinity depends on whether it is volitional. Retiring "before time" (and voluntarily) raises the image of winning the race and getting there before others. This might enhance a man's masculine standing, where the focus is on achieving accelerated timing of

retirement as opposed focussing on (ultimately being forced to) end the fundamental masculine identity feature of formal employment or economic activity.

George positioned himself as a man with vision and determination. It was a lifelong goal that he should retire by 60. Like Austen, George also made his decision to retire, using other men as markers as when to retire.

Excerpt 4.37

George: I had seen my parents who couldn't retire ((because of lack of finances)). I'd seen a couple of my uncles who could but always wanted to make that extra thing and didn't retire and ended up dying at work kind of thing. And I from a fairly young age. I decided I was never going to be in that kind of situation. So, one of the goals I set myself in life was that I would be retired from formal employment – probably the best way I can describe it – by the time I turned 60. And that was a goal that I set myself. And I achieved it. I retired when I was 59. (Interview 1)

George boosted his status as a man not only by choosing when to retire but also by achieving extra credit by bettering his goal and retiring a year early. George used other men as markers to help him formulate his vision of retiring by 60. His parents were robbed of the choice to retire because they had no finances, whereas his uncles did not exercise that choice and continued working till the end of their lives. It was not a life George wanted. George gained further status by retiring a year before his dream goal of 60 years. This displayed many valued masculine characteristics such as being in control and achieving his dreams.

In a sense, George produced a personalised masculinity (Swain, 2006) in which it was very important before he turned 60 years of age, even if that involved some financial sacrifices. He held himself to the own standards he set himself to. He was very proud that he had achieved this goal (even retiring a year earlier, at 59 years) which was clearly seen to consolidate his masculinity.

Both Frederick and Bennet left their formal employment because staying was untenable. They were near retirement age and therefore chose to take early retirement. The following excerpts highlight how the men position themselves towards them no longer wanting to continue working because of the changes at work.

Excerpt 4.38

Int: How old were you when you retired?

Frederick: 63.

Int: What made you retire at 63?

Frederick: I tell you. […] the amalgamation came he became the director of everything. […] That was in 1993. So in 1997 I I retired.

Int: So the new system didn't work for you.

Frederick: And uh the new system didn't really work. In fact, after my retirement I have never been back […] because it's just gone downhill all the way. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 4.39

Bennet: I retired early because there was what they called transformation. […] I then resigned early because I realised at 55 I took early retirement because I didn't agree with the transition. (Interview 1)

Both Frederick and Bennet presented with stoic acceptance that their work environment had changed in a way that they disapproved of. They could not control the changes in their work situation but they could choose to leave instead. They responded by accessing valued dominant masculine qualities of taking control (Hoyt et al., 2013) of the situation and responding in a stoic manner (Berdahl et al., 2018), thereby defending their masculine identities from perceived failure in losing their work identity earlier than they had possibly anticipated. By voluntarily leaving work they demonstrate that they were in a position to "take it or leave it", as compared to someone forced to continue working in those conditions.

Note that here we see one of the rare examples of white South African participants orienting to the unique South African context in which they live their lives as men. They both retired because of the changes in their organizations following the fall of apartheid ("amalgamation"; "transformation") were unwelcome and, to them, felt like things were "going downhill." This early termination of employment as a consequence speaks to their loss of (overt) white-male privilege as a result of the transition to democracy; but this was implied rather than expressed directly.

Henry described his retirement differently to the others. At 63, Henry took a "break" from working.

Excerpt 4.40

Int: So how did you decide to retire?

Henry: I was 63 and I actually looked at the economy and I needed a break. I said to myself I wanted a a – what do they call it – a sabbatical. And I said to (my wife) 'I'm tired now. […] And I said to her 'I want to take a sabbatical – 6 months to a year. Just take it off. 'And she said 'well it's not as if we can't afford it. We can do it. And then see how it goes. See the market demands'. And that's what happened. I took a sabbatical and never went back. But I have other investments that I can – we haven't lived off them yet. They are for the pension period. So, I am semi-retired. […]

Int: How long have you been on pension for?

Henry: 12 years. (Interview 1)

Henry decided to leave work without giving up his work identity. He was "tired" and took a "sabbatical." A sabbatical is considered as a period of time a worker takes off with the intention of returning to work. More specifically, it is a recuperative break, often oriented to learning new skills or consolidating progress. One of the benefits of retiring is no longer experiencing the pressures and demands made by the work. Henry did not say that he wanted to retire for this reason. Instead, he spoke of being "tired". Rather than phrasing his reason to leave in a positive manner, he seems to be admitting the weakness of possibly not having the stamina required to maintain his work. Presenting retirement as a sabbatical rather than a permanent shift in status pushes against the inevitability of getting older and not being as strong and virile as he used to be as a younger man.

He said he was able to take a sabbatical because he could afford to financially. By having access to financial capital, Henry was able to make a decision to step away from work. Having resources in one area allowed him freedom to give up a traditionally valued masculine identity. This hybridity allowed Henry to position himself as a credible man by speaking of being a successful provider when he chose to take a break from formal employment. A little later he emphasised his financial astuteness and identity as a provider by speaking of having investments "for the pension period" which were at that time still untouched. By speaking of "the pension period" he again was distancing himself from being a retiree. The implication was that the time of being on pension was still in the distance.

Henry is seen to defend against the loss of a key masculine identity, working, and rather to focus on other successful qualities, such as being a successful provider.

Henry was very strategic in this move to take a sabbatical. He was able to keep a fundamental identity of masculinity, namely his work identity, while still stepping away from the industry when he chose to. He has been less decisive about returning from his sabbatical; he took control and made the choice to stop working. These are valued masculine characteristics (being in control and having a work identity). Henry eventually made an indirect reference later in the interview recognising that he would not return to work ("when we (Henry and his wife) finally decided I wasn't going to work again" (Interview 1) yet he still identified himself initially as "semi-retired". This gives some indication of the remarkable importance and status the identity of the working man is in being considered as a real man. Using this strategy, Henry was able to maintain the dominant masculinity of working by not "officially" leaving work.

Retiring "off time"

There are social norm expectations within the lifespan social clock with regard to retiring. It may be anticipated that the masculinity of men who do not retire at these times would be impacted. This section will explore Darcy's experience of being forced to leave the work force by early retirement due to being medically boarded, and of Edward and Charles who did not achieve retiring on time, not out of choice but rather due to lack of finances.

Darcy did not want to give up his identity of working. He was not given a choice. He was medically boarded in spite of much resistance and protest on his side.

Excerpt 4.41

Int: And so did you choose to retire? […]

Darcy: Uh. No they they medically boarded me. (Interview 1)

Darcy distanced himself from the concept of being medically boarded. He referred to those who facilitated his being medical boarded as "they", as opposed to saying "I was medically boarded". This hints at Darcy's inability to choose when and how he would retire. Darcy described how he fought the idea of being medically boarded. Tang et al. (2013) refer to men who retire involuntarily for reasons such as ill-health as being "very likely to experience a loss of […] identity, which is stressful and detrimental to their health" (p. 90).

In the following two excerpts Darcy describes how severe his health situation was and still how hard it was for him to consider being medially boarded from work.

Excerpt 4.42

Darcy: I woke up in intensive care. I had my first heart attack on the ward. […] And then at that point the urologist came to see me with somebody else. "Darcy we really need to start thinking about a thing called medical boarding with you". And he laid out the implications of it. And uh I went back to work. And initially I didn't say anything to (my bosses). But I realised I wasn't well […] And I've been back at work probably a month and had another episode in the office. And they rushed me down to the hospital. And I was in hospital for about 10 days there. Uh. [...] During that time the head master came to see me. […] I said "you know [head master]. I think I might have to look at this medical boarding they have been talking to me about". (Interview 2)

Excerpt 4.43

Darcy: Yes. The medical boarding, I took a long time to come to terms with that. But again, that's again because medical boarding means it that in some way you are starting to fail. […] And my goodness me I fought that medical boarding. (Interview 2)

After his first heart attack, his urologist spoke about considering being medically boarded. Medical boarding refers to a person's not being able to fulfil the requirements of their job because of ill-health (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, n.d.-a). Darcy would have none of it. He returned to work without telling his seniors. Being strong, having physical prowess (Sumerau et al., 2015) and being aggressive (Burkstrand, 2012) are valued masculine qualities. Darcy was not physically strong. In fact, his body was growing weaker. Darcy referred to "starting to fail". However, emotionally he seemed to go into battle by fighting medical boarding as much as he could rather than surrender a core masculinity identity, namely, work.

In Darcy's account, it was only when he landed up in hospital the second time that he relented and started considering medical boarding. This did not mean he had accepted it. A successful man is healthy and invincible (Farvid & Braun, 2018). The prostate cancer had taken its toll and now he was robbed of his identity of being a working man. His body had

failed him; and he had "fail(ed)". Darcy gave further insight not only into how medically boarding meant a failure in his body but also into losing his identity as a working man. He then spoke of the implications of losing his work identity. The undesired vulnerability in Darcy's account (being exposed as too weak to work) was entirely absent from the accounts of men who retired of their own volition; although hinted at with images like going beyond their "shelf life".

Darcy highlights how powerful the celebrated form of masculinity of working by the intense reactions he displayed by fighting against losing his work identity ("The medical boarding, I took a long time to come to terms with that"). In this area, Darcy was seen to fail the dominant masculinity of working.

Darcy tried to maintain agency (McCullough & Anderson, 2013) throughout the situation in which he developed heart issues. He vigorously ignored the signs of the illness, then he determinedly downplayed its severity and later fought the idea of being boarded throughout the process. However, he failed. Regardless of his actions of protest, he could not stop his body from failing to the extent he could not work. This exposes a potential vulnerability (Shefer et al., 2015) as his masculinity was called into question specifically in terms of the expectation of not getting sick or losing his working identity.

Ogg and Renaut (2019) refer to how some individuals are unable to retire at the time social age-norms define because of a lack of finances. This is in line with Edward and George's experience. These participants framed retirement as a "signal (of) the end of an individual's useful life" (Mann, 2006, p. 37) by referring to retirement as being inactive and, by implication, purposeless. These men could be seen as losing some ideal masculine status because, although they had retained their masculine work identity, they could not fulfil the social expectation of retiring on time because they had not provided sufficiently to be able to choose to do so if they wanted to.

In response to the researcher's asking Edward if he had ever retired, Edward responded that he could not.

Excerpt 4.44

Int: So, you haven't retired ever?

Edward: No, I can't. Let me be honest. I can't cos I have to earn a living. (Interview 2)

By saying "let me be honest" it suggests that Edward was about to be unusually transparent, as if gesturing to the possibility that he might not disclose this in other circumstances. It seems that not being able to retire because of finances is not something a person would commonly be honest about. By not having access to financial capital (Beckman et al., 2018), Edward could not choose whether to retire or not. Out of necessity, he kept on working. He then used extensive justification to explain why he continued to work. Then Edward went on to state that he would not retire even if he could.

Older South African men appear to have a clear understanding that dominant masculinity requires retirement between 60-65 years; that early retirement is admirable if it demonstrates access to financial capital, but exposes a vulnerability if it demonstrates physical or mental frailty; and that late retirement is admirable if it indicates virility and having skills in demand; but exposes a vulnerability if it indicates insufficient financial capital. Edward was not able to fulfil this dominant masculinity because he did not have access to adequate financial resources, and this required extensive defence.

Excerpt 4.45

Edward: But if I could retire as such I wouldn't – I don't know what I would do – I've got to keep active […] I can't just sit around. I don't know how these people do it. Retirement villages and so on. I can't do that. I would rather I would rather just keep working until I drop literally. That's what I want to do. I just want to drop dead. (Interview 2)

By saying "I don't know what I would do" and "I've got to keep active" he appeared to be commenting on how he associated being retired with being inactive and not having direction. This construction of retirement as un-masculine and passive echoes Darcy's description of early retirees as "vegetative". Edward positioned himself as having purpose when working, implying that those without work have no purpose ("I can't just sit around"). He set up extreme images from "got to keep active" (working) versus "just sit(ting) around" (being retired). Being retired is being portrayed as passive and being meaningless and pointless, and therefore looked down upon.

The other extreme image he speaks of is that of having a purpose in his life through being active by working ("earn a living" and "keep active") and then preferring to "drop(ping) dead (literally)" (Interview 2) rather than being inactive. This gives a sense of

how *doing* is a fundamental aspect of a man's identity. This gives insight into why a man's work identity is such an essential masculine feature. Being dead would be a better option than not having a purpose in life. Work provides him with that purpose and essential identity.

The way Edward positioned himself, retirement would be a living death for him as he could not see any purposeful driven activity in it. By being involved in purposeful activity through his work, Edward positioned himself favourably as a man by presenting retiring negatively and thereby distancing from the masculine valued qualities of having a choice and having the financial resources to retire.

Charles did not speak of retirement. Instead, he positioned himself as a high-powered man, dealing with large projects and big companies in Africa. Only as an aside did he refer to not being able to retire because of financial constraints. The following two excerpts reveal how Charles positions himself as a successful entrepreneur but also conceding that at present he was financially in a very poor situation.

Excerpt 4.46

Charles: I was desperate to try and get these projects off the ground. And I spent ooh **the amount of money I have spent of my own** and just about ran myself dry on promoting these projects. […] [**The project] is huge**. I mean these projects are in the region of **1 and a half billion dollars. A 20 million** (feasibility study)) is nothing in the context of the project. […]. I did a **huge presentation** to [international conglomerate businesses] in [African country]. […] So that was **my vision** […] You can just see the opportunities that Africa can actually put it on its own bloody feet. […] So I am **very passionate** about what I do. And I eventually had to realise that I was **running out of money again**. Cos I had spent about I can't remember I spent nearly **another million dollars** on all this work. And I **started running out of pocket money**.

Int: How old were you this time? ((he was 71 at the time of the interview))

Charles: This time about a year ago ((long laugh)) So. That's why I continue to work. But um but it's something I still believe in. (Interview 1)

The text made bold highlight job positions mentioned by the participant

Excerpt 4.47

Charles: And it's hard cos I don't have the cash to ((invest in my projects)). You know. And I guess that's one of the handicaps I have now is is living this sort of twilight world where I am living sort of hand to mouth. (Interview 1)

Charles worked very hard at defining himself as a man with a vision, as a passionate man regarding his work, a man with intense humanitarian concerns, and a man who not only believed in this vision but also had personally invested in these very ideas to his financial detriment. Charles worked very hard at proving his success as a man seemingly in spite of running out of money and thereby not being able to choose to retire. Charles aimed to neutralise his financial failure and thereby not being able to choose to retire because he still was committed to his vision and that, due to bigger dynamics, ("politics") he could not get his projects off the ground.

Charles actively worked at gaining masculine status and credibility by implying that he had been a successful wealthy man at one time where he had "millions of dollars", and that this amount was considered "pocket money", small change. On the one hand, it is better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all; and Charles' narrative of all-or-nothing engagement in his philanthropy, with little thought to his own needs, is a hypermasculine construction of his current, relatively helpless situation. On the other hand, this image was somewhat undermined by revealing how he seemingly undiscerningly invested into his ideas (undeveloped projects) leaving him presently with a very limited budget. Valadas et al. (2019) refer to planning that is associated to leading up to retirement. Charles was not seen to plan for his retirement unless it could be framed that he gambled in aiming to be very well off in his retirement. At 71 he was broke as opposed to being very rich.

Charles accessed a hybrid masculinity in which he could sustain his masculinity but acknowledging that at present he did not have the financial resources to retire but this was negated by him having previously having access to "millions of dollars". Charles achieved dominant masculinity by being a consultant and still working, living in a high-income retirement village, and had a history of earning well over his lifespan. However, he also failed the common form of masculinity of retiring on time because he could chose to, for example, he had the financial resources. He was saying that because he had worked with work projects that involved an impressive amount of financial capital ("1 and a half billion

dollars […] 20 million"). He did not say that he personally had "1 and a half billion dollars." Or "20 million" only that he participated with work projects that had that much worth.

Conclusion

Providing and work are fundamental aspects of masculine identity (Hancock, 2012; Mvune & Bhana, 2022; Pietilä et al., 2017). The present analysis supported this. The participant's interviews were dominated by the themes of providing and work, which were presented as common and culturally celebrated forms of masculinities, and it is clear that these can be considered dominant features of masculinity for these participants. There was no question that the participants would fulfil the expectations of working and providing. Also, the gravity of these dominant features of masculinity was evident in the way the men had to work up their responses when they were unable to provide or work. Providing and work impacted the participants across their lifespans, not just at one particular period of time, and the demands of producing acceptable masculinity in relation to not working or not providing depended on the life stage at which this occurred.

This chapter adds to the current literature in highlighting how retirement is about the process of potentially relinquishing the fundamental identities of masculinity: worker and provider. However, with career success, good planning, and good fortune, the role of provider can be maintained long after the working identity is relinquished.

Ageing and decline is inevitable: brains and bodies eventually fail us. The participants appeared to find it difficult to name the ageing process and the inevitable changes and losses that occur in relation to work, for example the social and financial changes required on retiring. This is highlighted by the fact that they did not speak of getting old and being increasingly distanced from the hegemonic ideals and identities of, for example, working formally, being a provider, and maintaining the social standing that comes with work and provision. Instead, the men's retrospective descriptions of their lives as men appeared to hedge against this gradual (or sudden) loss of agency. For example, they focused on their past successes (such as the difference they made in their career). When they retire (whether on, or off, time) impacts this transition in terms of their ability to claim masculine standing.

Retirement is linked with ageing and is a common developmental expectation and stage (Quadagno, 2017). The participants were aware of this dominant masculinity. There

was tension in the data with regard to when and how the participants retired. Those men who chose to retire "on time" or "before time" appeared not to have their masculine status challenged. They had fulfilled this developmental expectation. One significant factor that impacted the participants ability to retire was their access to financial capital. Those men who could not afford to financially retire, were observed to justify their inability to retire by denigrating those men who did retire, for example, criticising them for doing nothing all day and how important working is. The social clock, an important component of lifespan, was seeing to have a noteworthy impact on the men's masculinity across their lifespans (Spector-Mersel, 2006). Even though retirement is a developmental expectation which the participants took for granted to be fulfilled, there was also a negative aspect of retiring that can detrimentally impact a man's masculine status. Retiring means a man giving up his work identity and more importantly often results in undermining the man's ability to be a provider because of diminishing of resources through the termination of formal work (Valadas et al., 2019). One participant circumvented the issue of leaving his work identity by simply taking a "sabbatical" and never going back to formal employment (yet still describing himself as "semi-retired"). He had the financial resources to produce this hybrid identity.

The participants engaged in the transition of retiring in different ways. Some stoically accepted the process, others took control and actively chose when they would retire, others avoided facing having retired, and others spoke of not having the choice to retire due to financial constraints. Various strategies were utilised to defend their masculinity in the transition of retiring. In a unique way this research has extended the insight into the diversity and richness of the process of retiring and how it impacts men's masculine identity. It is especially evident that the framework for masculinity subscribed to by these men does not easily accommodate the process of ageing, and the loss of work is difficult for men to incorporate into their identities unless volitional and on their own terms.

Various non-hegemonic masculinities were evident in this section. Hybrid masculinities were adopted by participants who did not fulfil traditional masculine achievements, such as choosing to work in a traditionally poor-paying profession in spite of having a large family, and not being able to accumulate prestigious items such as expensive care. Capital accessed to counter these non-masculine qualities included being educated, having a steady income and job, being a professional and white. This capital provided a

counterweight, enabling such men to not have their masculinity questioned. Another way of interpreting this is that the men adopted personalised masculinities which rejected the traditional masculine values of needing to afford "the best of the best" and "keep up with the Jones's", instead redefining what it means to be a man, for example, by focusing on providing for their family well (but not necessarily lavishly), and being creative in making their salary stretch to meet their large family's needs. These men who adopted personalised masculinity still benefited from the hegemonic hierarchy (Swain, 2006).

For all the men, and even when producing hybrid or personalised masculinities, it was clear that they were still positioning themselves in relation to dominant and/or hegemonic features of masculinity. This is contrary to Spector-Mersel's (2006) proposal that men's cultural expectations and masculine ideals are truncated at middle-age. Although the ageing men were increasingly distanced from traditional valued ideals of masculinity, they were seen to use various strategies and engage with different forms of masculinities to counter this along their whole lifespan.

Various strategies were utilised to navigate situations throughout their lifespan in order to protect their masculine status, for example, being creative to overcome financial limitations in order to still provide well, placing focus on other valued masculine qualities to minimise the masculine areas they were failing in, comparing themselves to other men to elevate their own masculine status and taking control in difficult situations for example, retiring early rather than endure difficult circumstances at work. Having access to various resources had a significant impact on the men during these stages. Coles (2008) refers to how trading capital can be a powerful strategy for a man to sustain his masculine status. One participant had access to institutional capital in which the government provided the option to study and enter a new profession after being retrenched. Not only did this sustain his masculine status, but he presented his masculinity as having higher status because he said he had been strategic in his choices to ensure he achieved the financial maximum benefit from this opportunity. Another participant was part of a large work force who was suddenly fired. The government provided no support. It was evident in the interviews how this impacted not only the participant but his whole community from the lack of access to institutional capital. The lack of access to financial resources also severely impacted men's masculinity who were then not able to retire.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS: FAMILY / RELATIONSHIPS

Family/ Relationships: Marriage, procreation, fatherhood and caring

A major emphasis in this chapter is on lifespan issues. In the discussion below the men's experiences of their masculinity were impacted by a) whether they achieved the social and developmental norms along the lifespan and b) whether they achieved these on time or off time according to the lifespan social clock. The participants in the present study went to great lengths to defend their masculinity when not achieving the above. These insights, though modest, extend the current literature on masculinity by showing that men's masculine identity is produced in relation to lifespan events and how these are interpreted developmentally (as on time or off time). A particularly important normative lifespan event for this cohort of men was marriage.

Marriage: we decided to get married. […] So that was also a major decision

All but one participant had married during his lifetime (see table below). This section highlights the general assumption (for these participants at least) that men will fulfil this developmental social norm of marrying. One participant's account (Bennet) forms a powerful case study in which failing to achieve the social and developmental expectations of marriage, on time, is seen to impact his perception of himself as a man, throughout his lifespan. This is evident in the lengths he went to, during his interviews, to defend his masculinity in terms of still being single at 68 years of age.

Table 5.1

Participants' marital status

	Austen	Edward	Elliot	George	Charles	Henry	Russell (RIP)	Bennet	Frederick	Darcy
Times married (M)	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1

Ever divorced (D)		Yes		Yes						
Ever widowed (W)		Yes					Yes	Yes		
Presently M / D/ W / S (Single)	M	M	M	M	D	M	W	S	W	M

Unquestioned social norm according to the social clock across the lifespan

For the most part, marriage was a central aspect of life as a man for these participants. The theme of the pressure to marry is evident across the following participant's interviews: Austen, Edward, George, Charles, Henry, Russell, Frederick, and Darcy, as seen in the following excerpts, which highlight the unquestioned normativity of marriage.

Excerpt 5.1

Austen: I was I was absolutely certain that when I met the right person I would marry. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.2

Edward: I suppose another highlight of my life sort of got off a plane in Nairobi and bumped into my future wife ((chuckle)). (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.3

Int: Did you always imagine you would get married? […]

Edward: […] I got married because I wanted to have my own house as well with my wife so. I got married. […] So ja I I knew I was going to have because it's aaaalll of the things that I fantasised I was fantasising about.

Int: It was part of your dream.

Edward: Yes. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.4

George: I met my wife through playing in a band. I was actually playing at her sister's wedding. And um rather fancied the chief bride's maiden […] And then we decided to get engaged. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.5

Charles: Then they wanted me to go to Joburg. And I said no I didn't want to go to Joburg. […] And I enjoyed Cape Town. I had a lot of fun on the beaches. And I got married. My girlfriend came down from Rhodesia. We went back to get married. And went up to Malawi for a honeymoon. Worked there for another nearly a year. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.6

Henry: Um. I think to go back is to when I courted my wife and we decided to get married. […] So that's was also a major decision. Um. A responsibility. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.7

Int: And then you said you got married early. Were you always intending to get married?

Russell: No no but I I met my wife and 6 months we were married.

Int: ((Laughing)) so you weren't intending to get married – then this lady whisked you off your feet.

Russell: More or less ja. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.8

Int: Tell me did you always imagine you'd get married? […]

Frederick: Ja. It's just nature (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.9

Darcy: I got married in this beautiful church. Went on honeymoon. Went to Majorca like everybody else does. All the standard stuff. Package tour off 7 days in the sun. Come back burnt, drunk, hungover, back to work. (Interview 1)

The above quotes emphasise how the participants never questioned getting married. Austen spoke of being "absolutely certain […] (that he) would marry". He left no doubt that he would fulfil this developmental norm. Elliot referred to "fantasising" about getting married. It was part of his dreams regarding the future. George and Henry spoke about "fancying" and "courting" their wives and then marrying. Edward and Russell implied that their marriage just happened ("(I) sort of […] bumped into my future wife", "I met my wife and six months we were married"). The participants' mind-sets are well summarised by

Frederick's words: "It's just nature". They did not question the normativity of marriage, and generally spoke of it as a natural part of a life course.

Bandini and Thompson (2013-2014) refer to the "taken-for-granted identity as a husband and life as a married man" (p. 136). These social and developmental norms usually form an integral part of masculine identity. However, not all men get married. The following case study examines the pressure of a man's response to his perceived failure to fulfil the social, developmental norm of getting married on time.

The above participants were seen to access social capital by marrying. Social capital (Beckman et al., 2018, p. 206) has been defined as "useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits" for the individual. Beckman et al. (2018, p. 206) describe the power of accessing capital in which "[a]n individual's ability to succeed or manoeuvre in a field (i.e. their position in the field) is determined by their capital".

These men highlight the widespread culturally celebrated form of masculinity of getting married. It was taken for granted. They all fulfilled the dominant masculinity regarding marriage.

Denial of not fulfilling the social norm of marriage according to the social clock

However, Bennet's account of his life journey as a man was dominated throughout by justifying why he was not married even at the age of 68 years, implying the normativity of marriage as a criterion of effective masculinity. This theme extends across his lifespan from his late teens until the present. His other masculine identities such as work were meaningfully pushed aside and minimised throughout his interviews. There seemed to be an unspoken pressure that Bennet had to work very hard at qualifying why he was not married, as though defending against the implicit realization of the failure of his masculinity. This defence is necessary because, as Eck (2014) documents, there is prejudice directed at unmarried older men because of their deviance.

Bennet highlighted that he was not married not due to lack of opportunity, but by choice. He defined choice as having had the opportunity to date and get married but choosing not to. He did this by speaking of women available to him throughout his lifespan. Being desirable is a prized successful masculine value. He was thereby defending his masculine identity in spite of not being married at 68. He did not give an explanation as to why he chose not to take up these opportunities to date. The following excerpts indicate how strong the theme was across Bennet's narrated lifespan.

Excerpt 5.10

Bennet: ((In his late twenties)) I had a **number of** very good uh you could say **boyfriend-girlfriend interaction** where we were going out together being together with one another. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.11

Bennet: ((In about late fifties)) And I I had a **number of interactions** with ladies […] (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.12

Bennet: ((In his early sixties)) But in the meantime there had been **a lot of opportunities** of people of my own age to be involved. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.13

Bennet: ((In his late sixties)) My long-term future although it is very – ((I'm nearly)) 70 – it doesn't rule out a relationship. There are ladies who are **definitely are on my radar** so to speak. Uh. There are one or two specifically one and I am working on it. (Interview 2)

*Bold text emphasises Bennet's opportunities to get involved with women

Bennet presented himself as a desirable man with many opportunities to get involved with a woman if he had wanted to. This supported the assumption that he was a heterosexual man who was unmarried out of choice and not due to a lack of opportunity.

De Visser et al. (2009) describe such situations in which "important distinction[s are] made between choice and ability" (p. 693). By doing this, it is possible for the man to "have his cake and eat it too, by rejecting the need to conform to dominant standards of masculinity while also feeling confident that he could meet this standard if he chose to" (p. 693). Bennet had not married. However, he made it very clear that it was not due to lack of opportunity or willingness to marry in terms of dating and committing. Instead, Bennet seemed to be applying this principle by saying if he had wanted to, he could have married, but he chose not to, therefore his masculine identity was not at stake. He could still be considered as a desirable heterosexual man albeit still unmarried. Again, this theme is seen to extend across his lifespan as he carefully detailed the available women in his life at different ages in his life.

Bennet spoke of how important getting married was but then set very high standards of what being a husband meant to him. These standards seemed to rob a man of his dignity and masculinity. It would seem that being in an intimate relationship would be at a high price. These standards seem extreme and unappealing, not encouraging the faint hearted to get married.

Excerpt 5.14

Bennet: Understanding the protocols of relationships. That can be difficult. Um. […]. I I I am going to give a Biblical aspect to this. In Ephesians 6 we more or less told how we can interact as Christ gave Himself from the to the church which is the body of the believers so a male must give himself to his wife. So, what is it. It is sacrifice of the latest car, of the pub, of a fish a fishing expedition, of a hunting expedition, of owning weapons, of having the latest toys. These are the very these are the things that need sacrifice. Even if you've got to go to work with holes in your underpants and holes in your socks and a frayed shirt. That's the way you do it. ((Sigh)). (Interview 1)

To Bennet, marriage would come with a very high price for the man. He quoted from the Bible to explain how he understood marriage to involve sacrifice. He referred to a "man giv(ing) himself to his wife" which for Bennet meant the "need (for) sacrifice". This sacrifice included giving up many things that are associated to masculine identity. The sacrifice also involved extreme poverty in which the man would have "holes in (his) underpants […] and socks and a frayed shirt". Being a husband was seemingly equated to being stripped of many activities and status of being a man. Marriage was presented as having spiritually mandated expectation. The long list of masculine possessions and activities that must be sacrificed amount to being emasculated for Bennet. He seemed to be torn between the two extreme scenarios. Yet he adamantly refused to say that marriage was not for him.

He spoke of it being the natural way: "That's the way we are built" (Interview 2). He is seen to be almost implying that it was an innate part of masculinity and an essentialised reality. Eck (2014) refers to how unmarried men need to "make sense of themselves as men without the symbolic significance of marriage" (p. 151). However, here Bennet is seen

instead to try and define himself within marriage by saying how much he advocates marriage and wants to still get married.

Excerpt 5.15

Bennet: I will I will find someone. I never stop looking you know […] The Afrikaans have a saying: Elke pot het sy deksel*. (Interview 2)

*the literal translation is every pot has its own lid. The implied meaning is that every person has a good fit partner for them.

There seemed to be an unspoken pressure that Bennet had to work very hard at qualifying why he was not married. Eck (2014) refers to the pressure unmarried men have regarding marrying: "heterosexual men were expected to eventually ''settle down,'' get married, and occupy the roles of husband and father once they had ''sown their wild oats.''" (p. 148). Eck further spoke of how "single men are plagued by assumptions that there is something wrong with them" (p. 150). De Visser and Smith (2006) spoke of "(m)en who reject(ed) aspects of hegemonic masculinity or fail to meet some of its behavioural standards may fear being labelled as wimps" (p. 687). This emphasises the pressure unmarried men experience when they do not marry.

Much of Bennet's identity work in his interviews focused on maintaining his heterosexual masculine identity in spite of still being unmarried, instead of establishing "a way of signifying a masculine self-outside of the hegemonic ideal that resides in the institution of marriage" (Eck, 2014, p. 149). Ratele et al. (2012) speaks of how men can feel vulnerable when they experience their masculinity as uncertain and precarious. It seems by not accessing the valued social capital (Beckman et al., 2018) of marital relationships, Bennet presented as feeling insecure in himself, as if his power as a person was being questioned, and he was not able to "manoeuvre [powerfully] in a field" (Beckman et al., 2018, p. 206) due to the lack of capital in the field of relationships. Bennet himself highlighted how powerful the dominant masculinity regarding marriage was by the fact that although he achieved well professionally throughout his life, he still focused on how he did not fulfil the culturally celebrated form of masculinity regarding marriage.

This case study of an exception to the rule of marriage highlights the importance of (heterosexual) marriage to masculinity for these men. The above describes Bennet's avid defence against any perceived failure as a man. By conducting research across the lifespan,

as opposed to exploring a singular age period or specific event, a more holistic understanding can be reached of the impact that a developmentally social expectation can have on a man, for example, not marrying, throughout his life. This understanding extends the literature on masculinity. The issue of being off time or even not fulfilling a social developmental norm that is an important criterion of masculinity can impact a man throughout his life, not only when it is socially expected to fulfil that social expectation.

Procreation: I was absolutely certain that […] I would […] be a family man

From a masculinity point of view, procreation is also linked to the expectation that the man prove his virility by having children (Loizos, 2005). All but one of the participants who had married had had children (see the table below). The taken for granted-ness of procreating is evident in the manner in which the participants referred to having children, and the important impact of Darcy's failure to have children on his masculine identity is very evident. This present study builds on the current literature in highlighting how essential it is for a man's masculine identity to fulfil the social and developmental norms of having children along the lifespan.

Procreation refers to the man's ability to sire a child as a defining feature of masculinity (Loizos, 2005). The role of being a father, in contrast to actually being able to produce a child, was differentiated in the interviews. This is supported by Morrell (2005):

> The concepts of father and fatherhood are often used interchangeably, but it is important to distinguish between the idea of (biological) father and somebody who undertakes the fatherhood role. A biological connection with a child is not necessary for successful fathering. (p. 86)

Therefore, the present analysis will distinguish between procreation and fatherhood, and explore how these relate to different core concerns.

Table 5.2

The number of biological children for each participant reported in the interview

	Austen	Edward	Elliot	George	Charles	Henry	Russell	Frederick	Darcy
TOTAL	3	2	4	2	2	2	2	1	0

Unquestioned social norm of procreation according to the social clock across the lifespan

The following excerpts highlight the masculine normativity of procreation.

Excerpt 5.16

Int: So you always imagined yourself as a family man?

Austen: Always. I was I was absolutely certain that […] I would marry settle down and have a family and would be a family man. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.17

Edward: My late wife and I were –we had a lot in common. […] We both we both wanted children (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.18

Frederick: Well normally he's got to have children to see the next generation to come along. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.19

Darcy: When we first got married my wife and myself. Children weren't a big function in our life. We spoke about it. We were both on a similar plane in terms of not being that worried about it. But as life went on and my particular situation started to change – the fact that the ability to have children were slowly taken away from me has made thoughts of having children greater. It's an interesting dynamic. (Interview 1)

The taken for granted-ness of having children is exemplified by Frederick who spoke of it almost being an obligation for the continuation of society ("got to have children to see the next generation to come along"). Austen and Edward spoke as if it was an unquestioned norm to "want" to have children. Austen went as far to say that he was "absolutely certain" regarding one day having a family. Darcy described how having

children was not "a big function" in his and his wife's life, they were not "worried about it" until he could not physically produce children. Darcy and his wife assumed that they could have children when they were ready. It was an assumption, a developmental norm that they did not have to consider until it slowly emerged that they would not be able to fulfil it. The above extracts highlight the normativity of the developmental norm of procreating. This supports the literature which highlights how having children is expected of men (Brown et al., 2017; Maliski et al., 2008). Dominant masculinity is "the most celebrated, common, or current form of masculinity in a particular social setting" (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018, p. 41). It is evident that having children is an important feature of the dominant masculinity subscribed to by these men.

Issue of being off time in terms of having children

The following case studies give insight into the pressure the men experience when they are off time in achieving a valued criterion of masculinity. Masculinity is seen to be impacted by developmental social norms experienced along the lifespan.

Two participants (Elliot and George) delayed having children. Both participants communicated experiencing some pressure on their masculine identities because of this delay. It seemed that the pressure was less intense for George because he and his wife had chosen to delay having children whereas Elliot wanted to have children but there was a delay of a few years before his wife fell pregnant. These situations will now be discussed in more detail.

George indicated how careful and in control he and his wife were in preventing pregnancy at first. Being in control is a valued dominant masculine value (Hoyt et al., 2013).

Excerpt 5.20

George: And of course, we couldn't have children under those circumstances. So, we were very careful about ((getting)) pregnant […] about not falling pregnant. (Interview 1)

He had gone to university as an older student and he and his wife decided practically it would be best to have children only once he had completed his degree. George emphasised the control he had over the situation by emphasising how "very careful" he and his wife were about her not falling pregnant.

George felt that the pressure from their friends was only related to having children. He said that they understood why he and his wife were financially strapped.

Excerpt 5.21

Int: So (your wife) was exposed to the peer pressure.

George: Just from the baby point of view. I don't remember – and I certainly wasn't conscious of anybody in our world "shame you can't come on holiday or gee we've got a new car". They knew our circumstances and I think I think they accepted it […] So, we were a little behind ((procreating)). That put of lot of pressure on my wife. She used to be quite upset about that. (Interview 1)

George described his friends as not having an issue with his financial limitations while he was a student ("I think they accepted it"). It is wondered if whether simply being a student impacted his friends' expectations of George as a man. A man working full time would be expected to be a good provider, for example, acquiring a "new car" but students are not expected to work full time and often have to make do with what they can afford. So, George's identity as a provider was not being challenged ("I certainly wasn't conscious of anybody in our world "shame you can't come on holiday""). Having institutional capital (education) (Beckman et al., 2018) gave George the means to protect his hybridised masculinity in the face of his friends. Coles (2008) explained how this is a powerful way in which men trade capital to sustain their masculine status.

Literature has linked marriage and procreation (Arrighi & Maume, 2000; Hauser, 2015). There is a social norm expectation that when a person marries the next step is to have children. This would also provide an explanation as to why George did not feel pressurised about being a provider and no longer working but being a student, but he did feel some pressure in being married but not having started a family thereafter. It also explains why Bennet did not mention the issue of procreation at all. It is apparent that "getting stuck" in the life clock possibly relieved him of the obligation to defend failings related to the other social developmental expectations which depend on first achieving this one.

However, in this excerpt George positioned his wife as experiencing a "lot of pressure" placed on her. He acknowledged that his wife became "quite upset". However, he was seen to defend the perceived questioning of his masculinity by undermining the

problem in saying that they were only "a little behind" the social norm of procreating after marrying. Literature refers to women in relationships tending to carry the emotional load (Johansson, 2011) and will be discussed in more detail in the section on Fatherhood to follow. This is seen to be perpetuated where George is seen to be stoic about the situation, whereas his wife carried the emotional impact instead.

Excerpt 5.22

George: So, we were very careful about pregnant you know about not falling pregnant […] [my eldest son was] born almost the day I graduated. We had planned it so closely. (Interview 1)

He also positioned himself as being in precise control with regard when <u>not</u> to have children and when he <u>planned</u> to have children. Being in control and having choice are also highly valued aspects of masculine identity (Sumerau et al., 2015). George gained credit for being a virile man because not only did he procreate but he chose precisely when this would happen.

Elliot and his wife desperately wanted to have children. They were expecting to fall pregnant. Year after year they waited.

Excerpt 5.23

Elliot: The only problem I had was that we were expecting to have babies. Uh like when we got married in 1982 we then expected then that we might be getting babies of which it didn't happen […] 1987 it happened then. (Interview 2)

Elliot and his wife did not have control over this situation of seemingly being barren. It was a "problem". Their expectations of procreating after they married were not being fulfilled. He went on to describe various ways, over the five years of not having children, in which he and his wife experienced pressure from the community regarding not having children on time. He spoke of how he was not approached directly by the community regarding the delay in having children but rather his wife was exposed to the family's concerns via gossip.

Excerpt 5.24

Elliot: And I think uh they were not facing me like straight forward […] She ((his wife)) was hearing those things but they were not coming direct to me. (Interview 1)

It was as if his ability to sire children, his manhood, was not being questioned (directly) instead the blame was placed on his wife. He actively spoke of being unaffected by the pressure:

Excerpt 5.25

Elliot: It wasn't a pressure that it wasn't a pressure to me it wasn't giving me that much pressure. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.26

Elliot: So, I was fortunate because in 1983 I had the house of my own […] We were staying just about 700m away from each other. So, I wasn't hearing those things or facing them daily or looking at them daily now. So, we were a bit relieved. (Interview 2)

Although Elliot is overtly denying that he was experiencing pressure, the repetition of the word "pressure" three times in the sentence and the admission "it wasn't giving me *that much* pressure" creates a sense of the actual pressure he was under. He gave explanations of why he did not respond to the family pressure. The first was personal. He kept his first wife "(w)ell because uh we loved each other" (Interview 1). He also said what made things easier to cope with the pressure was that physically they lived away from his family and that the family never confronted him directly. This enabled Elliot to ignore the gossip.

By mentioning that he had a "house of his own" he was asserting a valued masculine status symbol in which he could provide for his wife in spite of the difficulty of not producing children. He qualified as a man. Having financial capital (Beckman et al., 2018) gave Elliot the power to defend his masculinity. Here it is seen how he defends himself against the perception of failure to attain one criterion of masculinity by emphasising his attainment of a complementary criterion of masculinity. Elliot highlighted again that he was able to avoid being affected by this pressure because he had the resources to distance himself from "those things" which would potentially cast aspersions on his manhood. After five years the couple fell pregnant, and eventually had four boys, relieving the "pressure".

Both Elliot and George indicate how powerful the current dominant form of masculinity is regarding to having children after getting married as seen by the pressure they

experienced by those around them ("So, we were a little behind [procreating]. That put of lot of pressure on my wife. She used to be quite upset about that" - George, "It wasn't a pressure that it wasn't a pressure to me it wasn't giving me that much pressure" -Elliot). Even though neither had children "on time", both had access to resources to enable them to sustain their masculine identity ("I was fortunate because in 1983 I had the house of my own" - Elliot, "They knew our circumstances and I think I think they accepted it" - George) which protected them from their masculine status from being challenged.

Impact of inability to fulfil the social norm of procreating

The following detailed example gives insight into how devastating not being able to achieve a valued criterion of masculinity is on a man's experience of his masculinity.

Excerpt 5.27

Int: what is a man, what comes to mind for you?

Darcy: I would suppose being a man virility would be the first thing that comes to mind. Particularly with me because of the the state of my health. That's one of the things that has been taken away. So, it tends to have a slightly bigger and somewhat dysfunctional part of my life. So, where a man would normally look at virility 'I'm a man' I look at virility and I say I used to be a man. But I'm no longer in that sort of variance. So, virility yes.

Int: Are you talking about um are you talking about um having children or you talking about sexual function.

Darcy: No having children. (Interview 1)

Virility was vital for Darcy in defining what it means to be a man. Virility is a fundamental aspect of masculine identity (Eck, 2014). The term virility implies strength and potent masculinity (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, n.d.-c). Note that the loss of fertility is a universal feature of ageing for women; but men can remain fertile well into old age, making the loss of virility particularly stigmatising for a man.

Darcy referred to being a virile man before but now he used the past tense specifically thereby stating that he no longer fulfilled the criteria of being a man. Darcy went on to speak of "no longer (being) in that sort of variance". Variance is a neutral statistical term, implying a wide range of masculine attributes that fall into this category; but that he is excluded from it because of his lack of virility.

Virility was "taken away" from Darcy because of the "state of (his) health" which constructs him as having previously qualified for this aspect masculinity, but no longer ("I used to be a man"). He thereby had been disqualified or debarred from that identity of being a man because physiologically he no longer had the capacity to father a child. This phrasing makes it clear that it was not by choice, and he would not have chosen it. Darcy negotiated not being virile like other men in a neutral, unemotional, distanced manner with the use of a technical term (variation). Yet the very term "virility" is potent and emotive.

Darcy's account gave a deeper understanding of the impact of not having children on a man's sense of masculinity. By not being able to physically produce children, Darcy referred to himself as a "faulty […] model" (Interview 1). This implied that he was defective and flawed version of a man. Being able bodied is a valued characteristic of masculine identity (Farvid & Braun, 2018). Darcy named his falling short of this characteristic by referring to himself as faulty. Again, the term "model" is distanced from being human. It gives the impression of an inanimate device or machine, but while being "a machine" is frequently a construction of conventional dominant masculinity, here Darcy uses the metaphor disparagingly. This would seem that Darcy constructed his health-related inability to procreate as dehumanising, "faulty", and undermining his masculine identity in this area.

Darcy highlighted that a core issue for him about the loss of being able to produce children was the loss of choice and control (and note that he framed his loss of virility as something *taken away,* above). Choice and control are important characteristics of masculine identity (Sumerau et al., 2015).

Excerpt 5.28

Darcy: It wasn't so much having a child it was the thought of being able to have a child […] that decision-making process was non-existent because even if we sat down to say it's time we have we couldn't. (Interview 1)

Darcy's distressed reaction to not being able to have children suggests how powerful the widespread current form of masculinity regarding having children is. By failing to fulfil this expectation (or by failing to have the choice to do so), Darcy spoke about being a failed man regardless of how successful he was for example having a successful well-earning career. Darcy spoke of how his access to dominant masculinity was being challenged with regard to procreating.

Darcy differentiated the loss of being able to procreate versus the loss of choice and control of deciding if he wanted to have children, and argues that the potent aspect of not being able to have a child was less important than the masculine quality of being in control. Perhaps if he had *decided* not to have children ("even if we sat down to say it's time we have we couldn't"), his virility would not have been questioned to the same extent; he certainly would not be labelled as "faulty". It can be seen that by not being able to produce children physically, Darcy was robbed of his masculinity in multiple ways. His masculine status would likely have been negatively impacted, as the above discussions show, in his not fulfilling the expected developmental age norm of procreating. Darcy could be seen to be feeling vulnerable (Rudrow, 2020b) by not having fulfilled important masculine ideals.

Darcy's account is particularly poignant when you consider that the "on-time" schedule for procreation was some 40 to 50 years prior to the interview. Yet this "fault" still defines his masculinity in retirement, long after it could be rectified even if he was physically able. Successes or failures at earlier points in the lifespan still define masculinity at later points, despite being difficult or impossible to rectify "off-time".

Fatherhood: I want to be good father

Being a father is a developmental expectation along the lifespan. This section explores what being a father means for these participants and the identities they assume in being a father. Some men are seen to mostly conform to the traditional expectations of being a father, which emphasises being a provider and being a disciplinarian and leaving the emotional and practical bringing up of their children to their wives. However, as the men get older, they frequently lose masculine resources and power, often even becoming dependent on their children. Discipline is only required – or possible – when children are younger; and provision dynamics frequently reverse in old age. The impact of this is seen in their relationship with their children.

Importance of being a father

In the following extracts the potent words used highlight how valued the identity of being a father is for these participants. Being a "good father" appeared to be of equal value as being a working man to Austen, as indicated by his referring to both these identities as being important to him as a man when looking back on his life.

Excerpt 5.29

Int: What would you say that your farewell PowerPoint captured that means something to you as a man?

Austen: Um. I want to be good father, a good grandfather, a good husband and a good educator. So it captured all of those things. (Interview 2)

One of the key identities Austen mentioned above was that of being a "good father". He considered one of the highlights in his life was "watching (his children) grow". In the extract below he explains the transformative impact of the birth of his eldest child ("I was quite sure I was about 10 foot tall") and that it was the same for each child.

Excerpt 5.30

Austen: [The PowerPoint indicates] Highlights ((of my life)) have been clearly our family, being with ((my children)), growing them up, watching them grow. […] And now of course highlights of course watching grandchildren grow up.

Int: What's it like to become a father?

Austen: Fantastic. I could not believe what it was like when my eldest child was first born I was quite sure I was about 10 foot tall and ja. It was the same with each of them. (Interview 1)

Henry spoke of experiencing an "all-consuming love" for his children. In the following extract he relates how he "insisted" on being at the birth of his children even though in those days it was not "encourage(ed)". This positions him as being more than usually invested in fathering.

Excerpt 5.31

Henry: Um I insisted that when they were born I wanted to be there. Doctors in those days allowed it but they weren't uuuuh very encouraging. (Interview 1)

Below, Henry explains the transformation of becoming a father and the "all-consuming love" involved. It is noteworthy that here, in the context of describing his children, Henry speaks of emotion ("love") with freedom absent in other parts of the interviews.

Excerpt 5.32

Int: When you say it was life changing, um, what that impact. What struck you about it?

Henry: Once more the responsibility and the father role. And I presume most people feel like it at least initially. But that love you can't believe that you can – the way I loved my wife and the way I loved that baby daughter was not the same. It definitely wasn't the same. It was a different love. But it was an all-consuming love. Your whole. When you are courting your whole centre of gravity. There is only one moon and one star. And that star is going around whichever. Now suddenly you have these two different um planets in your life. It's almost like you do a figure eight almost type of thing because you now encompass the other planet as well. (Interview 1)

In excerpt 4.1, Henry spoke of how seriously he took the responsibility of being a "person's […] provider" when he was deciding to get married. He referred again to "the responsibility" in the above excerpt in relation to "the father role". Possibly Henry was able to express such emotion regarding his children because it was elevating him as protector. This would enhance his status as a man.

It would seem that Henry lived out a personalised masculinity (Swain, 2006) as highlighted by his actions as a father going against the norm at that time. He said that it was not "done" having fathers at the delivery of their children when his children were born but he insisted on being there. The way he continued to express his fatherhood experience also went contrary to the dominant masculinity. "Traditionally, fathers are expected to be breadwinners, working outside the home, and leaving the caregiving and daily running of the household to mothers" (Snitker, 2018, p. 206). When he was a new father the dominant masculinity during his age stratum was that of primarily being a breadwinner (Lipenga, 2014), and being less emotionally involved with children and family (Hunter et al., 2017). Henry presented himself as being emotionally involved father ("But that love you can't believe that you can – the way I loved my wife and the way I loved that baby daughter was not the same. It definitely wasn't the same. It was a different love. But it was an all-consuming love"). The other participants focused on providing and discipling their children (for example, "I was away working for days and weeks on end. [my wife] basically brought

the kids up. All I did was give them a hammering now and again if they gave her too much of a hard time" (Edward, Interview 3).

In the extract below, Frederick emphasises the centrality of fatherhood (or family generally) to masculinity.

Excerpt 5.33

Int: I can see family is very important to you.

Frederick: Ja. I mean it's a central part of your life apart from the work. (Interview 2)

Working is an important identity in masculinity. By saying having a family was a "central part of (one's) life)", Frederick was implying that the role of being a family man was as important to him as his work identity. This was the same sentiment expressed by Austen. Having children in these men's lives played a key part in their masculine identities. This section highlights the importance of fatherhood as a transformative life event in the masculine lifespan.

Comparative responsibilities of fathering and mothering as highlighted in the participants' account of their life journey as men

The participants spoke of various masculine identities they accessed in response to their children, although these were generally distanced from femininity. It is evident that the men are not only impacted by the lifespan developmental expectations of being a father but also shaped by masculine expectations as evident by the masculine identities they produce in relation to these events and experiences.

Austen explained that being a disciplinarian and protector was central to his fathering to the extent that his children (affectionately) called him "the security officer".

Excerpt 5.34

Austen: I I I was very - I was extremely – I mean the children called me the security officer because I was so protective in many ways. (Interview 2)

However, Austen balanced this protectiveness with creativity in devising fun family activities on a budget and enjoying doing things with his children. Note the active construction of "doing things with" them, rather than just "spending time with" them.

Excerpt 5.35

Austen: We had to do lots of family things together. Um. That didn't cost money cos we didn't have any. So that was also really good thing. Because we had to create. We had to be very creative in what we did. […] I did enjoy doing things with my children. (Interview 2)

Elliot emphasised the wisdom required for fatherhood; that a father needs to have firm direction and not be easily swayed by others. This is frequently described in popular culture as being a "rock". This individualistic strength of character, moral fibre and stoicism is well established as a core feature of successful masculinity (Berdahl et al., 2018).

Excerpt 5.36

Int: And was fatherhood what you imagined it to be? What do you think a father should be?

Elliot: I think ah if you are a person no not to say a father only if you are a person you must know what you want yourself. You must be yourself. You must know what you want. Not being easily influenced by people or misled. You must know exactly what you want. If you are standing firm on that then you know where you are going. (Interview 2)

Edward, on the other hand emphasises discipline more centrally. Indeed, he notes that he was absent much of the time, reducing his fathering primarily to provision and discipline.

Excerpt 5.37

Edward: Ja she she she's largely responsible for the way they are now. I was away working for days and weeks on end. She basically brought the kids up. All I did was give them a hammering now and again if they gave her too much of a hard time. (Interview 3)

George combined wisdom and discipline, constructing "severe disciplining" as leadership despite noting that his wife decided whether it was needed while he was out of the house working.

Excerpt 5.38

George: I think the leadership role also came in from a point of view if there was any severe disciplining to do my wife would gently say "kinda wait till dad gets home" sort of thing ((smile in his voice)) […] If they had done something wrong they knew it about if from me and they got into trouble and it was warranted they'd get into big trouble. (Interview 1)

George's division of emotional labour in childcare is emphasised below, as he explains that a woman's role is creating a home while a man is providing.

Excerpt 5.39

George: Whereas I see the woman's role […] bringing up the children, providing that steady home background for them whilst the man might be out working. (Interview 1)

Charles notes that a woman's role in home-making also extends to supporting children's education. There is no suggestion that he as the father should have participated in getting involved in helping his son.

Excerpt 5.40

Charles: My youngest son was not boarding school material until about the last year. Um. It was quite stressful. He was very dyslexic. Um. And my ex-wife was an amazing person with him. She was just so good with him. She did so many things with him to try and assist him in his sort of challenges. He passed his matric by 2 points. (Interview 1)

Henry notes the continuity in fatherhood across masculine generations, as he explains how he came to better understand his father's actions when he was a father himself. This emphasises the way that masculinity is experienced across a lifespan; and he constructs the image of sequential generations of men experiencing masculinity similarly across life stages as they come to them one after the other.

Excerpt 5.41

Int: Even though your father worked shifts he still spoke into your life.

Henry: Ja very much so. And he had a wide – 2 inch wide – leather belt which ensured that you heard every word that he said. […]. He didn't play around. And many times, I didn't understand and I didn't accept the whacking that I got. Um. Today I look back and I am ever so grateful for those hidings that I did get. Because although I didn't understand then, now, later in life and earlier when I was a young parent, I understood cos we also said when we were bringing our children up. We were not going to pack our tables off and put these things away put those special things away. They had to grow up with it in the house. And you would say 'no don't touch. No don't touch. I am going to say it once more and then I'm going to smack your hand.' Touch. Whack ((displayed fingers being smacked)). And they learnt and then they screamed and cried. […] And we applied those disciplines early in their foundation years. And uh I think they worked if I look at the results now. You know how they are in their lives. (Interview 1)

But, despite describing himself as a strict disciplinarian – and imposing physical punishments on his children that are now illegal in South Africa – he describes himself as being fully engaged in nurturing activities that are frequently considered women's work, like changing nappies and night-time feeds. Possibly Henry was able to adopt these more traditionally feminine aspects because he had offset them with being a strict disciplinarian like his father.

Excerpt 5.42

Henry: I brought my own kids up. Middle of the night feeding them, bathing them, changing nappies. I did everything. (Interview 2)

The majority of men described living out masculinities consistent with the dominant masculinity of their time. Hunter et al. (2017, p. 579) described the traditional father identity in contemporary South Africa as "authoritarian, disinterested, absent, and emotionally distant". Henry was the exception where he adopted more of a caring masculinity long before caring masculinity became acceptable or common.

Shifts in the father-child relation during later stages of the lifespan

Russell and Frederick note how fatherhood is a relational identity that has extended into their children's adulthood and their own old age. They were also examples of how the

father-child power relation reverses over the life course. These men were the two oldest participants in the study. They were still in relationship with their children, but now in their eighties they were dependent on them. For example, they waited for their children to visit them; and their children provided for them financially.

Excerpt 5.43

Int: So they fill – the place [frail care] here is filling in the gap. So, your daughters can rather just visit you than have to worry about your everyday care.

Russell: And they do. They visit me at least once a week. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.44

Int: And is your son part of your life? ((Frederick now living in frail care))

Frederick: He comes and sees me you know about once a month and comes up. And we go out. Often, we go out to (restaurant) for lunch and for a drive and so on. It's nice. (Interview 1)

Russell and Frederick described a change of power between them and their children now that they were living in frail care. Earlier Austen had spoken of how he "created family things" to do whereas Russell and Frederick spoke of how they waited for their children to come to visit them ("they visit me at least once a week", "he comes and sees me […] about once a month"). These participants were no longer seen to be the head of their family, resourceful and independent, but rather dependent on their children to have the resources to initiate activity (visiting). This demonstrates the inevitable changes in masculinity as men age.

Caring masculinities: She's just part of you. […] You just carry on with them

Only three participants spoke about their wives having medical conditions or emergencies. Their different reactions, various ways of expressing their caring, and how they understood these medical conditions is discussed below. Edward lost his first wife to cancer, his present wife was suffering from progressively worsening Parkinson's, Frederick's wife died after years of suffering from Alzheimer's, and Charles described how his wife lost twins when she was eight months pregnant. Bennet discussed how he practically took care of his parents when they got old.

Caring in doing

During the interview Edward left to go check on his wife. Later he chose to end the interview early to go feed his wife.

Excerpt 5.45

Int: I heard a bell. [stopped taping for a while Edward went to check on his wife.] (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.46

Int: Okay. Do you need to stop now or just go and see how she is doing?

Edward: I think it might be wise to stop I've got to try and get some food down her.

Int: Okay. Thank you very much for your time. Um. ((switch off)) (Interview 1)

Frederick described how he physically cared for his wife who was in frail care through his actions of caring. He visited her dutifully and regularly, buying her treats sometimes.

Excerpt 5.47

Frederick: And fortunately, she ((his wife)) was quite happy to be in [local private frail care]. And I went to visit her every day. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.48

Frederick: […] when my wife was in [local subsidised frail care], I used to walk up there from here uh every day except when it was over 35 degrees or except when it was raining. I used to walk around with her. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.49

Frederick: I used to buy for her birthday cakes and so on. Frail care – at least the home industry used to – I used to ask them to make 3 or 4 cake loaves to send up – and they took them up there to [frail care] and everybody had cake and so on. (Interview 1)

Ageing cannot be "fixed"; and these men were not able to fix the situation or heal their wives. This is at odds with many features of dominant masculinity: fixing problems; being a protector and provider. Here, they could not protect their loved ones from ageing or debilitating illness, nor provide interventions that would fix them but they could care for them practically.

Both men appear to respond with a personalised masculinity (Swain, 2006) in which they step out of the dominant masculine identities of being omnipotent protectors and providers, and engage in non-masculine ways such as practically caring for their wives. They took physical care of their ailing wives in different ways. They did not talk about emotions but rather through their actions they cared for their wives. They were seen to express their caring through doing.

However, there are still hints of dominant masculinity here: stoicism; commitment; physical action and financial provision (for example, providing cakes for his wife and her community).

I don't have the words to comfort my wife

Charles seemed to not know how to take care of his wife when she miscarried. He did not seem to understand why she was so traumatised for years to come. In the following two excerpts Charles explains the situation in which his wife lost twins in utero and how he responded.

Excerpt 5.50

Charles: Ironically when my kids were 2 and 4 years old, my wife lost twin girls in Malawi. And it was so sad because they were very very they would have survived anywhere else in the world. Didn't have an incubator. They were – she was 8 months gone. And uh it was quite sad. She had placenta praevia or something and she was very ill. And they were worried that she was going to die. And it was very traumatic cos she never recovered from it. Something that women that you don't understand as a male. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.51

Charles: For me I guess as a male it's easier because those kids were never really born if you know what I mean. She had a caesarean and those and so I considered it that she had a couple of miscarriages before. So for me it was just another miscarriage if you know what I mean. It was quite traumatic. I mean I was I was very distraught when it happened. But as I say a male doesn't give to anything. So it's not as for us it's very alien to I don't know what would you say to to have the same that that inborn feeling […] (Interview 1)

Charles began the telling of the loss of his in utero eight-month-old twins with the word "ironically" as if it was a paradoxical or absurd event. It was as if it was something he could not fathom. He seemed to try and make sense of it by saying in the next sentence "it was so sad". The word "sad" seems to fall so short of the intense loss and emotional impact of this traumatic event. Later Charles said "[i]t was quite traumatic. I mean I was I was very distraught when it happened. But as I say a male doesn't give to anything. So, it's not as for us it's very alien". He claimed that it was traumatic and distressful for him, but then seemed to quickly neutralise this intense experience by stating how foreign the emotional impact of the loss was to him as a male, having never undergone the unique female experience of bearing children.

Empathy is a fundamental aspect of caring. Charles battled to verbally empathise with his wife. He tried to make sense of it by othering her as a woman versus himself as a man. He also approached the trauma of the loss of the eight-month-old twins in utero, in a logical rational manner. These are traditionally valued masculine characteristics as opposed to being emotional and irrational (Stick, 2021). He rationalised that his wife had experienced previous miscarriages and so he could not understand why this event should be any different. His talk was very disjointed compared to the other parts of his interviews (for example when he lost his business unexpectedly) which may suggest how he was grasping for words to try and capture his experience of this traumatic event. Traditional masculine characteristics involve men being stoic and not being emotional (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). He was trying to capture the emotional experience of his wife, but he did not have the words or understanding. It was as if he lacked the emotional language.

Caring for older parents

Bennet was an only child. His parents as they grew older struggled financially. Bennet realised he needed to take on the responsibility of caring for his parents as they got older. In the following two excerpts, Bennet describes how he cares for his ageing parents over their lifespan.

> **Excerpt 5.52**
>
> **Bennet:** By this time having a sense of moral responsibility. Um. I got into looking at my parents. Beforehand I hadn't really looked at my parents with any long-term goals in mind. They had steadily generated where they had a rent controlled flat in Berea Road and they were really in poverty. […] So, I bought a place in Highlands

North. A nice little 3-bedroom older type bedroom and moved them up there. They had 10 years there. I used to go through on weekends cos it was a fixer upper. An old house but it was very satisfying. To me it was a real responsibility. […] I then my father died after 7 years. Um. I sold up and moved to a little town house. I looked after my mother. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.53

Bennet: I looked after my mother for 12 years after my father died. The last 14 months um my mother eventually couldn't cope anymore. […] So, she went into ((local frail care)). (Interview 1)

Bennet had the capital to provide for his parents. He was a white male (noteworthy in the era of apartheid), was educated (having completed various specialised courses), had a steady job and income, as well as a promising career. However, Bennet emphasised that over and above these resources he also held himself to "moral" principles that compelled him to take on the responsibility of caring for his ageing parents. Once again, the theory of intersectionality provides the tools to appreciate the richness and complexity of masculinity that goes beyond simply gender. The theory of intersectionality embraces the complexity of phenomena and regards reality to be multi-faceted (Dharani et al., 2020). In this situation, various factors are seen to be at play (white privilege, good education, stable well-paid employment; the ability to purchase second properties) in addition, moral responsibility ("By this time having a sense of moral responsibility. Um. I got into looking at my parents"), which according to Bennet obliged him to care for his parents ("By this time having a sense of moral responsibility. Um. I got into looking at my parents").

Wojnicka (2022) argued that being a protector and breadwinner is not the same as caring. He explained that the reason is that there is a power differential between being a protector and a breadwinner. He argued that "[…] providing financial and/or physical protection to dependent women and children is not seen as a male form of caring, but strictly as providing protection, which is not, as in the case of caring masculinity, a power-free and non-hierarchical activity (p. 31S)". Bennet's parents were vulnerable financially ("really in poverty"). They had no choice but to rely on the provision of Bennet. They had no agency over their situation; he decided where they would live, and when they would move. This could suggest that Bennet was enhancing his masculine status by engaging in a

more powerful masculinity than that of caring identity, that is, by embracing a protective masculinity by providing for his parents financially. This is evident in the way he made decisions regarding where to buy homes for his parents to stay in ("they had a rent controlled flat in Berea Road and they were really in poverty. […] So, I bought a place in Highlands North"), and when to sell these places ("my father died after 7 years. Um. I sold up and moved to a little town house"). This excerpt suggests that Bennet did not only provide financially for his mother but also cared for her until she could not cope living with him anymore: "I looked after my mother for 12 years after my father died. The last 14 months um my mother eventually couldn't cope anymore".

Never ending illness, feeling so helpless

Edward described how the illness, management and prognosis of his first and present wife was so different and how that left him being at a loss regarding engaging with the situation as a man. In the following excerpts, Edward describes how he battles with the uncertainty of his wife's illness and not knowing how to help her in the process.

Excerpt 5.54

Edward: Ja. I the worse thing is that I don't know where it is going to end. You know. At least with my late wife I knew she was going to die. […] But I knew what was going to happen there. So, I was able to bear. […] I don't know what's happening now. That's the hard part. I just don't know what to expect. And I know I know it can't get better. That's the problem. It can only get worse. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.55

Edward: I myself it – it just gets more and more harder and harder cos she can do less and less. As she needs more care you've got nothing more to give. So, I don't know what to think. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.56

Edward: Other than make my wife, make her as comfortable as I can possibly can um in every way. There's no – if I could take the pain away from her I'd do it myself […] Well yeah. Like I say this is harder than the hardest thing in my life. (Interview 4)

Edward's first wife died of cancer. He described the process as being easier to cope with because he knew what to expect ("But I knew what was going to happen there. So, I was able to bear"). Not knowing what to expect and not being able to take his present wife's

pain, made the situation very hard to experience ("Like I say this is harder than the hardest thing in my life."). This uncertainty and hopelessness of this situation stripped him of fundamental characteristics associated with being a man such as being in control (Hoyt et al., 2013).

Love in action

Frederick is seen to "do" his caring for his wife without hesitation, with steely unquestioning determination. The following excerpts detail how Frederick managed the situation when he realised his wife had Alzheimer's, and how he coped with the changes in his wife due to this illness.

Excerpt 5.57

Frederick: You know I decided early on not to tell my wife that she's got Alzheimer's. Because you know if you tell a person that they've got the will know what's going to happen. And that that makes – that could make them scared. I am sure it would have made my wife scared. So gradually she drifted into it not knowing. Which is a blessing. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.58

Int: Frederick what was it like. It sounds like when the two of you were retired you two were such close companions, what's it like having someone you are not quite sure, knows who you are?

Frederick: Not a problem.

Int: How come?

Frederick: She's just part of you. Finish and klaar ((Afrikaans saying "it is complete, over and done with")). It's like getting a cold. If somebody is with you gets a cold they get a cold. It doesn't bother you at all. You just carry on with them. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 5.59

Frederick: You know the day she died she was as good looking, slim as the day she got married. No different whatsoever.

Int: That must make it so hard seeing her body looking like the same person -

Frederick: Not really.

Int: She was part of you it didn't matter. How did you cope here your wife has Alzheimer's and then you had a stroke?

Frederick: Just the same thing. You just carry on. Just carry on as normal as you can.

Int: Cos I think it would have – I think I would have been angry or -

Frederick: No. No. That's just how it happens. But uh it's how it is. (Interview 1)

Frederick became aware of his wife developing Alzheimer's from the beginning. He approached the whole process of her getting progressively sick and eventually dying in a stoic, matter of fact manner. Being stoic, showing toughness and emotional control are valued masculine characteristics (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021), and choosing not to tell her the truth about her condition – while done with kind intentions – took power over her, positioning her as a subordinate without knowledge of her own condition or (presumably) any role in making decisions about it. It was "finish and klaar", no negotiation, he would care for her physically until her dying day regardless of whether she recognised him or not. He showed his caring, devotion and dedication to his ailing wife through his actions not his words or emotions. He expressed his love in action by caring for her needs practically. He sustained his masculinity through his stoicism and deliberate control of the situation (Easton et al., 2013).

Possibly, Frederick could be seen to be adopting a hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014) in which he was able to embrace being a caring masculinity without jeopardising being considered to be a man. He determinedly engaged in the practical caring of his wife, while shutting down any discussion otherwise ("Not a problem", "She's just part of you. Finish and klaar", "That's just how it happens. But uh it's how it is."). His deliberate choice to engage with the problem in a caring way, but also shutting down emotions in a firm stoic manner regardless of how difficult the situation became, suggests that he sustained important masculine characteristics in a traditionally feminine arena of caring.

Do I have the money to care for you?

Edward and Frederick indicate how the practical concerns of finances are part and parcel of caring for someone, especially when older, retired and with diminishing financial resources in the excerpts that follow.

Excerpt 5.60

Edward: Finance isn't critical right now. It will become critical if this carries on. And it can't get better the Parkinson's. It can't get better. So we are looking at possible cost of carers will indefinitely I am not sure. It's still early days. […] We split everything

50/50 so I don't have to support her. And that's more the worry now with this
Parkinson's how that's going to affect her income in terms of what she has to spend to
ward off all these problems. (Interview 2)

Excerpt 5.61

Frederick: Ja. And uh. Eventually I looked after my wife. She's okay. Until basically
after I had my stroke. Fortunately, my son's wife, she was having holidays at the
moment from teaching. Fortunately, she came up to […] my house to look after my
wife while I had the stroke. And she got the most wonderful person to come look after
my wife. […] And she got the most wonderful person. I don't know what it cost. It
must have cost a fortune per month. (Interview 1)

Getting old is a process of increasing vulnerability. Ageing is associated with having
access to less and less capital. Generally, an old man will have retired and stopped actively
generating income. This means his financial capital will likely diminish over the years.
Neither of these men's wives were physically well. Edward spoke of being concerned that
there would not be enough financial resources to continue with the provision of his wife's
care ("And that's more the worry now with this Parkinson's how that's going to affect her
income in terms of what she has to spend to ward off all these problems."). Edward was
aware of potentially being out of control and not being an adequate provider in time
("Finance isn't critical right now") but he was worried. Frederick remained in ignorant bliss
("I don't know what it cost. It must have cost a fortune per month."), by acknowledging that
paying for caregivers is an expensive affair, but he did not know what the actual cost was.
Frederick let his daughter in law handle those financial burdens. This seemed to protect him,
and the experience of his masculinity, from facing the reality that he was not a sufficient
provider anymore for his family and instead he and his wife were being provided for.

Conclusion

A major emphasis in this chapter was on lifespan issues. The participants'
experiences of their masculinity were impacted by a) whether they achieved the social and
developmental norms along the lifespan and b) whether they achieved these on time or off
time according to the lifespan social clock. The participants in the present study went to
great lengths to defend their masculinity when not achieving the above. These insights,

though modest, extend the current literature on hegemonic masculinity by showing that men's masculine identity is produced in relation to lifespan events and how these are interpreted developmentally (as on time or off time). A particularly important normative lifespan event for this cohort of men was marriage.

Marriage and having children enhance a man's social status (Brown et al., 2017; Farvid & Braun, 2018). Bandini and Thompson (2013-2014) described how being a married man was a taken for granted identity. The findings in this study support this literature. All the men except one participant were married, and only two of the participants had not had children. It seemed an unquestioned reality that the participants would marry and have children. Another indication of how powerful these dominant masculinities are was how the men who did not marry or have children reacted. The single man spent much of his first interview explaining and justifying that he could have married if he so wished but had chosen not to do so. This supports Eck's (2014) finding that men who do not marry are often exposed to unverbalised judgement that they were not real men. The attention that the single participant paid to defending his un-married status hints that he was oriented to this being read as a problem for his masculinity. Another participant spoke of losing his sense of virility, being a "faulty model" because he was not physically able to have children. This also supports the findings of Farvid and Braun (2018) that the potential assumption that older childless men confront is the assumption that they are defective and flawed, thereby undermining their masculinity. These issues were seen to be significant to the men across their lifespans. In this section the social clock was seen to impact the men's masculinity in powerful ways.

Even in 2015, Creighton et al. refer to how "parenting remains a gendered practice" (p. 561) in terms of the division of responsibilities between mother (nurturing) and father (fathering) (Höfner et al., 2011). The mother is characterised as being emotional and nurturing and the father as being the head of the house (Johansson, 2011, p. 228). The participants in this study predominantly conformed to these dominant masculinities. The responsibilities they narrated involved providing financially for the family and disciplining their children. This conformed with Hunter et al. (2017, p. 579) description of the traditional father identity in contemporary South Africa as being "authoritarian, disinterested, absent, and emotionally distant". One participant did fathering differently. For his age stratum, he had adopted a personalised masculinity in which he was actively

involved with the care of his children ("I brought my own kids up. Middle of the night feeding them, bathing them, changing nappies. I did everything"). His decision to do this did not impact his masculine status, he just did things differently for that time. His parenting practices were more in line with the recent literature that refers to practices of caring, especially with regard to fathering. Traditionally caregiving has been regarded as a feminine domain (Lee & Lee, 2018), but there is increasing evidence of practices of caring being integrated into masculine identities (Brandth & Kvande, 2018). Caring is becoming part of the prominent discourse of masculinity, alongside hegemonic masculinity (Hunter et al., 2017). The concept of "caring masculinity" is a relatively recent development in the masculinity literature (Hunter et al., 2017; Liong, 2017). This participant was ahead of his time with regard to his attitude towards caring as a father.

"Caring masculinity" is a fairly recent development in masculinity literature (Hunter et al., 2017; Liong, 2017) especially in the area of fathering. Several of the participants in this study engaged in caring activities. However, it was not related to fathering; it was related to caring for their ailing wives. This is an age-related issue. People's bodies become more susceptible to illness and generally weaker as a natural and inevitable result of ageing (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). The men and their wives were over the age of 60 years. Their wives had succumbed to illnesses, namely, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. These participants became carers for their wives, not so much by choice but because that is simply what one has to do, and because paying for care is very expensive. They presented as being stoic about it. They acted out their caring through actions, for example, physically checking, feeding, buying cake. As these men aged and no longer complied with traditional value masculine qualities, they were seen to adopt alternate masculinities and use various strategies to maintain their sense of masculinity, as opposed to Spector-Mersel's proposal that masculine ideals are truncated at middle age.

Both men were seen to engage in non-hegemonic masculinities. In one aspect, they engaged in a personalised masculinity by not questioning their masculinity when they engaged in traditionally non-masculine caring of their wives; but on the other hand, their caring was profoundly masculinised, for example, in not telling the patient that they have a debilitating progressive neurodegenerative disease; by not expressing emotions; by just "doing" the caring. One participant could be said to have adopted a hybrid masculinity by cutting off any possible discussion about emotions or the impact of losing a wife to

Alzheimer's, by ardently stating "That's just how it happens. But uh it's how it is […] ((it's)) not a problem". All through his life, he had been rational and matter of fact especially when during his years as an academic. He was able to hold onto these masculine qualities regardless of how difficult and emotionally challenging caring for his wife was.

Choice was a powerful strategy that impacted the men's experience of their masculinity. Those men who could choose to have children (even when they chose to delay getting pregnant) did not express their masculinity as being challenged. Whereas men who did not have a choice, for example to have children, spoke of feeling devastated and not real men. This would explain why the single participant emphasised emphatically that he could have married if he so chose to. The wives in the participants' lives were also seen to be a buffer for their masculinity. When they were not meeting the dominant masculine standards such as having children "on time", the women were seen to carry the emotional burden (the wives were seen to be upset by any potential censor from the community) thereby allowing the men to be distanced and stoic about the apparent failure to have children "on time". One participant defended his masculinity by accessing his financial success of owning a house at the time he was still childless. One participant used distancing as a strategy to defend his masculinity by referring to his failure to have children in technical unemotional terms for example saying he was a "faulty […] model", or "I look at virility and I say I used to be a man". Perhaps it is a little ironic that "choice" is so important to maintaining masculinity through ageing – a process we little choice about.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS: HEALTH IN THE PRESENT AND OVER THE LIFESPAN

Health in the present and over the lifespan

This chapter uses five case studies to explore how health is engaged with across the lifespans of each participant discussed. Russell and Frederick are seen to grapple with losing their masculine identity in terms of independence, power and physical prowess when they came to the decision to move, and then moved into, a frail care facility. They utilised various strategies to negotiate their masculine identities. Darcy and Henry are seen to struggle with health issues in which they need medical intervention. They are observed to grapple with the ideal masculine identity in which men do not show weakness such as getting sick and needing help. Darcy and Henry deal with this dilemma in vastly different ways: Darcy rigidly adheres to dominant masculine standards whereas Henry is seen to negotiate his masculinity in a creative manner. Darcy struggled with health issues throughout his whole life while Henry only for the last 4-5 years of his life. Both men can be seen to be compensating for the threat to their masculinity. George has had lifelong back issues and yet he has refused to let it impact his lifestyle in any way.

Physical Frailty: Well unfortunately my eyesight started packing up

Moving from a home of independence to frail care

Ageing and becoming physically frail is a developmental experience along the lifespan, avoidable only by untimely death

Russell and Frederick, about 2 years prior to the interviews, relinquished their homes where they lived independently to move into frail care, which epitomises a loss of independence. Both men were in their eighties when they were faced with the decision to move into frail care. They were the oldest participants of the study. The men are seen to stoically accept the physical changes and to be out of control of the process. However, they are both seen to take control in making the decision to move, thereby making an attempt to defend their masculinity.

Factors leading to the need to move to frail care

Both men appeared to stoically accept the failure of their bodies that robbed them of their independence. Both focused on other aspects, such as protecting their daughters or

being responsible citizens, that offset their physical frailty and failure to meet ideal masculine standards such as being young and physically virile and healthy.

Russell mentioned two primary factors that led to his deciding that it was time to move into frail care. The first issue was a physical problem and the second was taking into consideration his daughters.

Excerpt 6.1

Russell: Well unfortunately my eyesight started packing up. And uh so I couldn't drive anymore. I have macular degeneration. And uh and it's gradually got a bit worse and worse. (Interview 1)

Russell's eyesight "started packing up". This resulted in his having to give up driving. Russell was very matter of fact about it. He spoke of how he took control of the situation. Being stoical and in control are valued masculine qualities (Hancock, 2012; Sumerau et al., 2015). Having a strong healthy body is also a valued masculine quality (Farvid & Braun, 2018). Russell did not have control over the functioning of his body but he could rationally and independently take control, for example, by choosing to stop driving.

The final straw leading Russell to move to frail care was his concern for his daughters. He did not speak about how the macular degeneration was impacting his day-to-day functioning at home nor that he had been sickly for a period of time. Instead, his focus was on his family. Russell was seen to change his focus from his ailing body to considering others above himself. In a way he was positioning himself as still being a protector of his family, even at his own expense. This is a valued masculine quality (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009). Russell is seen to preserve his masculine identity through this strategic approach.

Excerpt 6.2

Int: So, when you gave the car up is that when you decided to move here?

Russell: Ja. No. I still stayed by myself for quite a while there. A maybe 6 months I it was. Then I decided. Ja. I tell you what – I just remembered now what happened was – I was getting recurrent doses of flu. […] and that ((is when)) I thought to myself– look I am a responsibility to my kids and how they going to have to keep coming here and checking on me and that. I said to eldest daughter let's rather do this. Now I know that if I get sick they can they don't have to rush here.

Int: You've got nursing care.

Russell: Got nursing care. (Interview 1)

Russell expressed concern that his children kept coming to check on him every time he got sick. He did name a change in the parental relationship in which he named that he was no longer responsible for himself but "a responsibility to ((his)) kids". Now that he was in his eighties, the dynamic of the father-daughter relationship had changed. Instead of fighting for his independence and self-sufficiency, Russell made peace with the situation and made decisions in accordance with it. Yet he still took control, as can be seen by the use of his words such as "I decided", "I thought to myself", "I said", Russell owned the decision that was made. It was not made for him.

The primary factor leading Frederick to move from his home in the community to frail care was related to his having had a stroke two years before he moved. He had lived independently, taking care of his wife until he was 79 years old. He had had a stroke when he was 77 years old.

Excerpt 6.3

Frederick: After I had my stroke I realised that I couldn't manage everything you see. I could interestingly I could drive a car as easy as anything but you know if I had a flat tyre I couldn't change a tyre because of the wobbling in the arm ((raised his shaky arm)) […] And um that was when I thought myself – I've got macular degeneration of the eyes, I can't manage – I can manage the car now but I won't be able to in the future, and I had the stroke. So, I couldn't really manage myself you know. If I had an accident or somebody bumped into me or if I bumped into somebody else in a motor car I wouldn't have been able to manage you know being able to take down everybody's address and everything. (Interview 1)

Driving generally epitomises being independent. It seems that not only driving but also driving responsibly represented independence for Frederick. The primary focus was not on his ailing body but rather on the functional implications of having had a stroke. It distressed him that he was not able to perform simple tasks such as changing a punctured tyre. Indeed, this appeared to be a buffer, since once moved, Frederick would not have to face a body that was deteriorating physically by focusing on practical tasks he could no longer perform ("I couldn't change a tyre because of the wobbling in the arm", "If I had an

accident […] in a motor car I wouldn't have been able to manage you know being able to take down everybody's address and everything"). He referred to the "stroke" and having "macular degeneration" but he did not speak of the fact that this can often be expected as a man grows older. He ignored the inevitability of growing frail and having diseases and conditions associated with getting old. He was thereby defending his masculinity from being vulnerable and getting old by focusing on an external failure rather than a personal one. It would seem that he negotiated his masculine identity by bringing in other factors, thereby distracting from the fact that he could no longer fulfil the dominant masculine qualities of being physically healthy (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012) and independent (Bennett et al., 2003).

However, by making the decision to move into frail care before time ("I can manage the car now but I won't be able to in the future"), he took control of the situation. If he had left it too late, he implies, the decision would have been made for him. So, despite losing independence in the move, by making the decision himself and keeping to the appropriate clock, he was able to maintain a sense of independence, control and personal responsibility.

The participants' attitudes with regard to this living in frail care

The researcher asked how both participants felt about living in frail care, implicitly referring to having given up their independence. They were both living in single rooms. When Russell was asked what it was like now living in frail care, he responded that it just had to be done. Russell was stoic in his response. Stoicism is a valued masculine quality (Hancock, 2012).

Excerpt 6.4

Int: Oh, good I'm glad. And and I'm sorry I'm harping on it I just want to try and understand. Was it shock moving from uh -

Russell: From your own responsibility from looking after yourself-

Int: Yes, and having a home and then coming to a single room?

Russell: Well not really. You know if you you you sort of you know you've got to do it. (Interview 1)

Russell again named the shift from being responsible for himself to being cared for. Russell spoke of it being a necessity ("you've got to do it"). It could also be said that he was claiming agency by stating that he just had to do it. It was not that this had been done to

him. In a position of dependence and physical frailty, Russell is seen to claim his independence and strength in taking control of the decision to move.

Yet the ambivalence of living in this place of dependency is evident in the number of times he repeated "you know" and "you". Also, the word "got" created a sense of obligation in this context. There was no choice ultimately. His body had failed him. This might suggest how difficult it is to negotiate a man's masculine identity in situations where he loses his independence. This seems to be supported by the following excerpt. Even though he had been living in the frail care facility for 18 months and was 87 years old, Russell referred to still being independent.

Excerpt 6.5

Int: Did you come straight to frail care?

Russell: This isn't frail section.

Int: Oh, what is this called.

Russell: This is like – this is A section. We have A – B and C. C is the frail care. Here you have to fend for yourself. Except everything is done for you. Um. You know. (Interview 1)

When the researcher clarified which section of the frail care he lived in, Russell immediately responded how in his section "you have to fend for yourself". But the next sentence he relinquished the fantasy that he was still living independently when he said "except everything is done for you".

Frederick spoke well of the frail care unit he was in.

Excerpt 6.6

Frederick: So eventually because of [social worker], I got hold of this. Which is a very fortunate place because I have somewhere nice to sit outside here and uh I am looked after because I've got meals looked after, washing looked after, bed made, looked after -

Int: And you've been happy staying here?

Frederick: Ja. You know another advantage of staying here is that […] I am not on my own. I say hello to everybody you know. And you move around and there are people. […] it's not as if you are all on your own. So, uh. In that regard it's been nice […]

Int: So, moving here has been the right thing.

Frederick: You telling me. And you know when I was in [previous home] I talked to nobody. Here I am at least talking. Talking to you. Talking more than ever before. (Interview 1)

Frederick seemed to not be perturbed that he was no longer living in a large house but in a small room and having everything done for him. Indeed, conventional masculinity has never been threatened by having someone else do the domestic labour! Instead, he spoke of being very pleased with the positioning of his room and all that being "looked after" entailed. He embraced being cared for. It was not an affront to his independence or self-reliance which are traditionally valued masculine qualities (Hoyt et al., 2013). He also maintained a sense that his "stay" was volitional and providing him with opportunities to be independent and proactive that were not possible previously. In this sense he constructs a sense that "staying here" facilitates his masculinity.

In fact his stoicism served him well in that he was able to let the past go and keep his attention on the present. Gannon et al. (2010) refer to how stoicism is a powerful strategy in defending a man's masculine identity. Frederick's focus was on how his social and physical needs were being taken care of and on the positives of the situation. The situation of losing his independence was reframed as gaining opportunities to act and engage that were denied to him previously. The overt loss of independence was seen not to impact Frederick's experience of his masculine identity even though he no longer fulfilled the ideal standards of being independent, in control and self-sufficient.

Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) refer to how older men are often considered to be ungendered. While it is evident with these two eldest participants that the process of ageing has robbed them of their physical health, financial and physical independence, they were still actively working in their interviews to produce viable masculine positions. Getting old has left them vulnerable (Shefer et al., 2015) to having decreasing access to various resources such as financial and health.

Rudrow (2020a) explored vulnerability in masculinity, showing how a hip-hop artist positioned himself vulnerably by presenting himself in a way that is contrary to traditional masculine standards (for example, feeling vulnerable sexually) making him vulnerable to the scrutiny of his manhood. The difference between this artist and the participants is that

the artist chose to expose himself in such a vulnerable way. The participants have not been able to stop ageing, growing frail and needing comprehensive physical care. This suggests that this would leave the participants feeling very vulnerable in relation to their experience of their masculinity. They have had no choice in this process which is very disempowering as a man. Nevertheless, they find ways in the interviews of recovering masculinity, for example, by showing that they took control of the situation, or that their new circumstances allow them to be more active and less of a burden on their dependents.

Short-term and long-term health issues

Impact of rigid adherence to dominant masculine ideals regarding seeking medical intervention. The two case studies discussed below indicate how adhering rigidly to dominant masculine ideals of refusing to seek medical help can prematurely cost a man his life. Also, they show how men's lives are seen to be spared by relying on women to compensate for their attempt to maintain their strength and independence by avoiding medical help.

Short-term health issues: resisting medical treatment

This sub-section refers to the contest about seeking medical help for men. Henry acknowledged the idealised masculine characteristic of not seeking medical intervention. In response to his wife's determined prompting and the premature death of his brother-in-law from seeking medical intervention too late, he conceded and sought out medical intervention.

Seeking medical intervention

In his late sixties, Henry's body began to cease to physically function as it had before. His wife persisted in badgering Henry to seek help and also reminded him of his brother-in-law ("he was too hard-headed […] that's why he died") who had not sought out medical intervention timeously.

Excerpt 6.7

Henry: Then I – and I am as regular as clockwork. I don't have problems with my plumbing at all. Have never had. And I got a touch of diarrhoea and also thought "ag it's the water". Sometimes the water does give you the runs a bit. And then my wife said to me "go and see the doctor". Also "ag no". "Go see the doctor". "Go see the doctor". After about a month, she said "Your brother-in law-died because he was too

hard-headed to go see the doctor. That's why he died. And now go see the doctor".
So, I went to see my doctor. (Interview 2)

In response to experiencing some physical problems, Henry verbally underplayed them. He gave various excuses why he should not worry about the symptoms. His wife was nagging him to take the matter seriously. She finally got his attention when she eventually threatened him about being like his deceased brother-in-law (he will be discussed in greater detail below). Henry's wife is seen to be an important factor in persuading Henry to seek medical intervention. Both Henry and Darcy used the same strategy of outsourcing help-seeking to women. By doing this both protected their masculine identities because they did not initiate seeking help.

However, another motivating factor to seek medical help for Henry was his late brother-in-law's health decisions and issues. Henry described the journey of his brother-in-law in getting sick and dying 18 months after getting a formal diagnosis.

Excerpt 6.8

Henry: My brother-in-law […] got diarrhoea […] In any case he got ill. His wife "(Brother-in-law) go see the doctor". "Ag no man I've just got a little upset stomach". It went on for months. And then one day she arrived at his place of work. He said to her "what are you doing here?" Because […] you never come to my office". And she said "I've made a doctor's appointment for you and I've come to fetch you". He said "I'm not going anywhere". She said "I've made the appointment and I'm here to fetch you – get in, it's time to go". Okay big moan and groan. He got in the car and she took him to the doctor. The doctor examined him and said "you don't go home. From here ((doctor's rooms)) you drive to whatever the nearby hospital's name. You go direct. I am phoning the specialist now. They will receive you by the time you get there they will be ready for you. You go see that guy now". And he had colon cancer. His colon cancer was quite advanced. And within 18 months he passed away. It ate him up and invaded his body and he passed away. (Interview 2)

His brother-in-law also presented with diarrhoea. His wife also nagged him to go see the doctor for months. Like Henry he also minimised the problem and refused to seek help.

His brother-in-law was seen to stubbornly adhere to the dominant masculine values of "opt((ing)) for avoidance, self-reliance […] and tough self-talk rather than help-seeking […] until (having) reached (a) crisis point" (Levy & Cartwright, 2015, p. 1166). Eventually his brother-in-law only went, albeit resentfully, because his wife took charge and made the appointment with the doctor. Gast and Peak (2011) speak of men being more vulnerable to having poor health should they hold more traditional views of masculinity.

Again, like Henry and Darcy, this man was seen only to seek medical assistance through the actions of a woman. His brother-in-law was still able to protect and maintain his masculine identity. However, by the time his wife forced him to seek help it was too late. Even though his brother-in-law was operated on immediately, "within 18 months he passed away". It could be said that adhering rigidly to the dominant masculine values of not seeking medical intervention resulted in his premature death.

Henry seemed to concede because of his wife's persistence in his seeking medical intervention and the reminder of the cost his brother-in-law paid by rigidly adhering to masculine values and also, due to the active intervention of his wife, seeking help but too late. He simply stated: **"**So I went to see my doctor". Henry was able to defend his masculine identity by focusing the attention on others (his wife and "hard-headed" deceased brother-in-law) resulting in his seeking medical intervention.

Another explanation to Henry's experience is that he integrated this un-masculine behaviour, of getting ill and needing to seek help, with his current experience of his masculinity, a successful, white, privileged male, by adopting a hybrid masculinity (Bäcklin, 2022). This would enable him to continue seeking medical assistance without threatening his masculinity.

Long-term health issues: health issues across the lifespan

In this narrative, Darcy is seen to experience serious health issues in his early twenties and then in his fifties. He is seen to hold rigidly onto the dominant masculine values of not seeking medical assistance throughout his lifespan. Twice Darcy nearly lost his life because he refused to initiate seeking medical intervention. It took the intervention of his wife on both accounts for him to concede to seek medical intervention. He makes it clear that he did this under great protest thereby, continuing to defend his masculine identity despite his help seeking.

Early in his twenties, Darcy was not able to urinate for 36 hours. Darcy spoke of how ill he was ("I was very very poorly with it", "I became very ill very quickly", "I felt really really ill") and how he refused to acknowledge he needed medical help ("No no I've got no problems, I'm just feeling very ill") in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 6.9

Darcy: I was[…] about 24 years of age. […] We had flu ((national flu epidemic)) […] And I caught it. I was very very silly. I was very very poorly with it. But I was just going to the doctor getting the usual muti for the flu […] But I stopped urinating. And as a consequence, I became very ill very quickly. And and I think I had the flu for about three days. I had stopped peeing for about 36 hours and I felt really really ill. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 6.10

Darcy: But the stubborn side of me didn't tell my wife that I had stopped urinating […] And my wife said you look terrible Darcy you're going back to the doctor. I said "Can't be bothered. Can't be interested" […] Anyway, my wife made a phone call and got the GP to come and see me […] And the GP knocks on the door. […] she said "Oh Darcy you're not doing very well at all. What's the problem?" ((I responded)) "No no I've got no problems, I'm just feeling very ill". Not a word about not being able to urinate […] And she said "Darcy you're going to hospital now". 'I retorted "What the heck for?" […] And the next thing I knew – in fact she didn't even wait for the ambulance - she put me in a car and took me to the hospital. But the damage was done. (Interview 1)

Darcy referred to his "stubborn side" which refused to acknowledge ("I've got no problems") that he had a problem, let alone the severity of it. Darcy was seen to comply with dominant standards as explained by Courtenay (2000):

Forgoing health care is a means of rejecting "girl stuff". Men's denial and disregard of physical discomfort, risk and health care needs are all means of demonstrating difference from women […] These behaviours serve as proof of men's superiority over women and as proof of their ranking among "real" men. (p. 1390)

Darcy was embodying ideal masculine standards. Yet there was a part of Darcy that recognised that this was unreasonable behaviour by his words of "I was very very silly". He portrays himself as having had no say in receiving medical care. Both his wife and the GP took control of the matter. His wife organised medical help ("Anyway my wife made a phone call and got the GP to come and see me") and his GP took him to the hospital ("she put me in a car'). His masculine identity was protected while he received medical assistance because of the intervention of two women.

Heart attack in his fifties

Darcy described how when he was in his fifties he experienced physical symptoms for a period of time which he proceeded to ignore. Darcy spoke of how being aware of the severity of the symptoms he was presenting with ("And I knew something wasn't right because that is not normal") and how he refused to acknowledge he had a problem and needed help ("I didn't tell my wife", "just really put it to the back of my mind"). It took his wife's intervention, once again, to get him to the doctors and receive the medical intervention just in time as evident in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 6.11

Darcy: And at work it was the strangest thing – at work whenever I was talking to somebody if I stood up I'd suddenly stagger off to the left. It was very strange […]

Darcy: When this started [...] And I got pins and needles. And I knew something wasn't right because that is not normal. You don't normally stagger off to the left. And if you do get pins and needles something has just happened. Helllow wakey wakey. So, I kept shut on that.

Int: So, you just didn't tell anyone.

Darcy: No. I didn't tell my wife […] I suppose you could say I looked at the problem that I got. (3) and just really put it to the back of my mind. (Interview 2)

Although Darcy did not tell his wife – and this, again, is suggestive of masculine stoicism, and not wanting to be nannied – in the end the symptoms became obvious enough that she noticed. Once again, his wife intervened.

Excerpt 6.12

Int: Just like when you were not urinating ((see section before)), you didn't tell anyone.

Darcy: Exactly. Kept quiet.

Int: Quite serious symptoms.

Darcy: And then they started to come quicker and quicker. […] And then my wife noticed that this was happening. Well she couldn't miss it because I would be talking to her and suddenly [smile chuckle] – […] I don't know if I told you – […] I got home […] and she said "you're going to see GP blahdy blahdy blah". And the rest was history. But it took my wife to force the issue. […] Anyway, I came back from work the one Friday. My wife had made an appointment with the doctor. And uh I was most displeased. I didn't want to see a doctor. (Interview 2)

Once again "it took [his] wife to force the issue" and make "an appointment with the doctor". Darcy demonstrated how ardently he opposed openly acknowledging that he had a problem and seeking medical intervention with his words "blahdy blahdy blah" and "I was most displeased. I didn't want to see a doctor". The extent of the pressure to ignore his health was indicated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 6.13

Int: What would it have taken for you to ask for help?

Darcy: I probably wouldn't have got there until I had either the first heart attack which happened on the ward later that evening, or had a stroke – whichever would have come first. (Interview 2)

Darcy was not able to ask for medical intervention. He would have had to have a "heart attack" or "stroke" otherwise he "probably wouldn't have" proceeded to ask for help. This gives an indication of the serious outcomes for men who fail to accommodate their vulnerability.

Darcy's narrative was consistent with the common finding that dominant or hegemonic masculinity involves avoiding medical help seeking:

It has been suggested that help-seeking and concerns for health are culturally associated with femininity, whereas hegemonic masculinity leads men to hide any weakness and vulnerability and thus avoid health care contacts (Ilkka et al., 2016, p. 268).

Darcy is seen over his lifespan to avoid both being weak and vulnerable as well as avoiding seeking medical assistance. Hoyt et al. (2013) referred to how men's health is impacted by their investment in the masculinity paradigm. Outcomes tend to be poorer when the men's health experiences "are inconsistent with hegemonic or dominant forms of socially constructed masculinity, (which are) often characterised by expectations to be independent, self-reliant, in control, powerful, strong and stoic" (p. 66).

Darcy held onto the masculine qualities of being independent and physically strong regardless of the reality of his physical wellbeing across his lifespan. He did not re-evaluate them in light of how this attitude had nearly cost him his life earlier in his life. Instead we see him, later in his life, still holding tenaciously onto the self-same qualities, again regardless of the potential life-threatening costs to himself. This example indicates how a man's view of his masculine identity and his coping strategies to negotiate critical points in his life do not necessarily shift as the man ages across his lifespan.

A lifelong physical condition

George's father modelled how a "true" man should handle having a severe physical problem throughout his life as seen in the next two excerpts.

Excerpt 6.14

George: As I said earlier I came from a family that was not particularly wealthy. My dad had to leave school at a very young age because he was very badly injured in a rugby accident. He ended up spending nearly 4 years mainly in hospital in and out but mainly in hospital. Almost four years. Um. Having had something like 25 major operations he eventually had to have his leg amputated right up down to the hip. That happened when he was 14 and he had just started at school. And he never went back to school. By the time he had finished all these hospital operations he was a young man of 18 and he wasn't going to go back and start at the beginning of standard 7 ((this is equivalent to grade 9 (South Africa), or to year 8 (UK) or Freshman year in USA)) again. […] . So, neither my parents had an education. My mom a standard 6 and my dad a bit of standard 7 and that was it. Um as a consequence of that and my dad's handicap he never held down a high-powered job […] (Interview 1)

Excerpt 6.15

George: You know my dad with his handicap I never ever heard my dad complain about his handicap. Never. And there were so many things he couldn't do. I remember him he tried everything cos when my sister got married he wanted to walk her down the aisle. And he did in the end but he had to do it on crutches. He wanted to find a way to walk where he didn't have to be on crutches. And um (tearful voice). I get quite emotional about it cos (clear voice) again never complain just that was his life. (Interview 1)

Talking about his father's physical disability, George became tearful remembering that his father never complained about his physical limitations. His father coped with this as a "real" man, never complaining in spite of the severe limitations on his life.

George slipped in the fact that he had a back problem and during the first interview briefly mentioned that he had had several back operations ("I have a back problem. I've had a few back operations. (Interview 1)"). Yet it clearly had not impacted his lifestyle in any manner. At school, in spite of having back problems, George did a sport that was potentially harmful for a person with back problems. On speaking about it in the first interview, he reflected that actually it was not an ideal sport for someone with a back problem.

Excerpt 6.16

Int: I was also worried that the reason why you didn't do well ((in his final year of school)) because you spoke of your back ops. And I was thinking about how your dad's whole high school was about operations.

George: Ja. Look I only had my first back op after I left school. Quite a long time after I left school. But from a young age, I can't remember exactly, probably 12 or 13, even earlier, anyway certainly not later than 12 or 13 I had back problems. And I still have back problems to this day. It's just one of those things. […]. So you know that may have been an influence on my sporting interest. But I don't really think so because I was very active in canoeing. I did Duzi (a popular three day canoe race in the province) several times. […]

Int: […] cos I also know you did skiing. You said water skiing.

George: Yes. Yes water-skiing again. Again, that takes a lot of strain on one's back. Um and I was able to do that and do it pretty well. Um. So, I don't think my back

was really an issue At school in terms of […] it was just my lack of interest in the more formal sports. (Interview 1)

Like all other male schoolmates at school, George received a call to the army for conscription. Even though he was scared initially, he went to great lengths to get accepted in the army.

Excerpt 6.17

George: And all of a sudden, I'm going to the army. And I know nobody. And I was I was never a strong child. […] So, and I I was accepted which was quite a trick as well. Because I mentioned my back problems. So, when I went to the army doctor they wouldn't pass me. And then my enrolment was deferred. Then you had to go to a private doctor. When they did the army doctor […] You're either fit or you not fit. But when they saw my back and scars and so they said you won't survive the army. So that was the end of that. So, my call up was deferred. They never said you not going to be called up they just deferred it. Um. They deferred it and then when it came up the second time ((the call to go to the army)), they weren't having a mass inspection so I had to go to my own doctor. And I went to my own doctor and I got him to basically lie for me. And and I mean he did it knowingly and I told him why. I said 'I want to go to the army. I want to do my own bit. Everyone else is doing theirs.' […] And I I was everything I was fine with everything except my back. And you know he said you really going to suffer. And I said if that's the case that's the case. If they going to chuck me out but I want to go. He didn't lie we just didn't say anything about my back. Um. So ja. Off I went and then I did my year. (Interview 1)

George reported that during his retirement he did a great amount of international travel ("I used to probably 12 times a year be somewhere in the world." (Interview 1). The interviewer then asked how he coped with all the travel when he had lifelong back problems.

Excerpt 6.18

Int: I have also been amazed unless you get first class all the time, how much travelling you have done, knowing that you have had a lifelong history of back ops.

George: Oh well I wish I could say that I travelled first class or business class. That's never happened yet. Ja. You know I just make sure that I sit, I get a seat on the aisle. And I walk frequently throughout the trip.

Int: So you manage it.

George: Ja. I go to the back where the galley is and uh chaff the hostesses and stretch my back and do bends and so on. Just keep myself kinda moving.

Int: So you've got on top of it. Kinda like your dad got on top of his problem.

George: Yes exactly. (Interview 2)

In spite of having serious physical difficulty throughout his life, he refused to do much more than acknowledge its existence, let alone allow it to impact his lifestyle. George's father modelled his masculine identity on ideal characteristics of masculinity. George then narrated living his life in accordance with these values too thereby maintaining a robust sense of "traditional masculinity" (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021, p. 864).

Conclusion

Being physically strong and not needing medical intervention are strongly associated with highly valued masculinity ideals (Hoyt et al., 2013; Ilkka et al., 2016; Stick, 2021). This section deals with men who have had health issues either throughout their life or during specific periods of their life. The power of this dominant masculinity to be healthy and not seek medical assistance is seen in how the participants initially denied that they were seriously ill. One participant nearly died twice throughout his life because he refused to shift from this mindset. This is in line with literature that refers to men being at high risk for premature mortality (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021). Another participant refused to allow a serious back condition to impinge on his lifestyle throughout his lifespan. The power of this feature of dominant masculinity was also evident in the manner it was influential in the participants lives regardless of whether they were young men or older men. It impacted their lives across their lifespans.

One participant adopted a hybrid masculinity in which he initially adopted this feature of dominant masculinity (that men do not have weak bodies) despite having serious acute and chronic medical issues. However, he was able to shift and reach out for help, by accessing his current experience of masculinity. He was a successful white male consultant.

This enabled him to continue seeking medical assistance without his masculinity being threatened.

The participants accessed various strategies to protect or promote their masculinity. One strategy was changing his focus from his failing health to more valued masculine qualities such as choosing to seek help or move to frail care. Another was approaching the situation in a stoic, matter of fact way ("it just had to be done"). One strategy involved minimising the situation and refusing to acknowledge how seriously ill he was. Women are often tasked with the responsibility of overseeing a man's health status (McVittie & McKinlay, 2010). Several times the participants were seen to rely on their wives to buffer them from directly asking for medical assistance because their wives intervened and insisted the men get help.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS: AGEING

Ageing: I think I've just got old

This chapter focuses on the developmental lifespan issue of growing old. Ageing is inevitable. The concept of ageing was invisible throughout the interviews. Ageing men, by virtue of growing older, are seen to qualify less for the dominant masculine ideal. Although the participants were 60 years and older the concept of ageing or getting older was only directly referred to four times. It is almost as if speaking or acknowledging the process of ageing was taboo. Billig argues that conversational repression occurs when threatening issues are avoided by changing the focus to more benign ones instead (Wortham, 2001). In this case, ageing is often seen as threatening to a man's ideal masculinity status. Rather than name this, the participants are seen to avoid the topic instead. Murray and Durrheim (2021) refer to each of us "(a)s competent social actors, (in which) we individually and collectively leave things unsaid that might threaten to disrupt the status quo" (p. 283). These points highlight how important it is to note what participants (very clearly) do <u>not</u> talk about. Ageing very clearly forms an unspoken backdrop for the other issues more openly discussed. It was unusual for participants to address it, as Austen does below:

> **Excerpt 7.1**
>
> **Austen**: And it's more about what you do as opposed to who you are for young men. I think as you get older. Certainly, as one gets older I mean I still see all these macho men you know shedding tears at the slightest little thing which they would never have dreamt of doing before that. (Interview 1)

Austen referred to ageing in terms of different ideals held by younger and older generations, perhaps also hinting that the bounds of successful masculinity shift with age. Dominant masculinity refers to forms of manhood that are the most culturally, widespread and common celebrated forms of masculinity which allow men to apply power in particular social settings (Beasley, 2008; King & Swain, 2022; Schippers, 2007). Austen's experience indicates how the younger men's experience of dominant masculinity has changed compared to the ideal masculine norms that defined Austen throughout his life. It puzzled Austen greatly.

Excerpt 7.2

Darcy: I haven't become harder because of being forced not to show my emotions. I did. I became quite hard until probably 12-15 years ago. Now I show my emotions very quickly.

Int: What's been the change?

Darcy: I think I've just got old. (Interview 2)

Darcy was referring to age as being a passage of time, the process of maturing. His ability to show emotions increased as he became older. When Darcy said "I think I've just got old" it could imply that older men are less masculine; or that they are freed from the demands of ideal masculinity; or even that they have lost the strength to contain themselves.

Darcy adopted a hybrid masculinity. He did not fulfil the masculine ideals of being stoic (Spector-Mersel & Gilbar, 2021) but now "show((ed his)) emotions very quickly". Instead of owning the unmanly characteristic of being emotional, he distanced himself from this quality by putting it down to "just [getting] old". Darcy was thereby able to maintain his masculine status.

Excerpt 7.3

George: Ja. The other thing is the place that we live in, [upper market retirement village], where it's all old people. And we all have the same crickety knees and you know whatever it might be – loss of vision or erectile dysfunction or whatever. People just talk about it openly you know [chuckle] so you will just laugh about it. "For goodness sake go buy yourself some Viagra you know or whatever it might be". And I think because it can be dealt with at a light-hearted level it it is in a way be dealt with. It's not the in-depth personal discussion you would have with a very close friend or your spouse. But at least it is out there on the table. And everybody can talk about it.

Int: Kinda normalising.

George: Yes. […] And you also realise you know you are not the only one. You are surrounded by people who are all going on with the same nonsense you know. And the women all have their problems. And we just laugh and joke. (Interview 2)

George named the experiences of getting old. However, he undermined its importance by speaking of it in a jovial fashion ("dealt with at a light-hearted level", "so you will just laugh about it"). He undermined its severity by referring to issues of ageing as "the same nonsense". Except for George getting old was not referring to the ageing process. When George spoke of it, he made it less weighty by minimising it with humour.

Possibly George and the other residents have created a local dominant masculinity (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018) within their community. Their sense of their masculinity was not impacted when they joked about having "erectile dysfunction", which is a highly valued dominant masculinity value. Their community meant being a man even if they failed important successful characteristics; or at least this one.

Darcy referred to the pressure of getting old and still achieving valued dominant standards defining a man.

Excerpt 7.4

Int: Doing is a very important part of life. So, I wonder if not being virile or decreasingly not being virile has not broken you because you see the bigger picture (he lost his ability to have an erection in his forties). So, you are able to work and show your masculinity by being a success in what you doing, and looking after your wife, and being a good provider. So, it's there. And it's still a sensitive issue.

Darcy: It is. Because even now and even in this South African environment probably more so out here. The ability to uh to continue to perform in late age seems to be absolutely key to a South African male. Where it's not key to me. There are many other things that you need to be successful at besides able to do that for five minutes. (Interview 2)

Darcy referred to how central being able "to perform" sexually was to men in "late age". He drove the importance of this function by referring to two extreme words "absolutely" and "key" implying how unquestioningly fundamental it was. However, he distanced himself from this key masculine expectation by referring to the "South African male" (he was born in Europe) and also emphatically stating that "it's not key to me" (he lost the ability to have an erection in his forties due to prostate cancer) and by referring to other priorities he accesses to define himself as a successful man. This extract gives some indication of the conflict older men experience. Getting older means a man's body does not

function as well as it used to. This would include the ability to achieve an erection. However, Darcy refers to the pressure these older men experience because to be able to maintain the successful status of being a man, the men have to defy the ageing process and be sexually successful. Darcy seemed to be able to name this tension of getting older and fighting to keep his status as a successful man because it was not a tension that he was part of.

In this instance, Darcy adopted a hybrid masculinity. He referred to other men conforming to the dominant masculinity of performing sexually (Hancock, 2012) but separated himself from them ("Where it's not key to me. There are many other things that you need to be successful at besides able to do that for five minutes"). He framed it by saying that it was not a priority for him. Rather than focus on his inability to be sexually virile and thereby not fulfil this dominant masculinity, he focused on his other values, as a result protecting his masculine status. Another way to consider Darcy's experience is to view him as adopting a personalised masculinity. He was not impacted by the other men's expression of their masculinity. Instead, he had created an alternate way of "doing" a man (Swain, 2006) that differed from traditional forms of (hegemonic) masculinity.

Conclusion

Ageing occurs along the developmental lifespan and is an inevitable process (Marchant, 2013). It is a physical reality, not merely a social construct. The consequences of ageing are real and practical (Calasanti & King, 2005). It was expected that ageing would be discussed by the participants throughout their interviews. In spite of ageing being a developmental stage across the lifespan, it is not embraced by masculinity and was not spoken about very much, or very directly by participants. Instead, it was only specifically named four times by them. Wortham (2001) speaks of how people may avoid threatening issues by avoiding them or by changing the focus to more benign matters instead; and Billig (Billig, 2009) explains how such silences create dialogical repression – features that are ever-present but rarely spoken. The ageing process makes negotiating a man's masculinity difficult (Glendenning et al., 2017). The silence on ageing in the stories of the participants' life journeys as being men implies how foreign and unacceptable growing old is to masculinity. Growing old, regardless of its being an inevitable reality, is the antithesis of masculinity.

Several dominant masculinities were referred to in this chapter. One implied that older men and young men both conform to dominant masculinity. However, the content is different to each other, for example, the younger men could cry publicly without feeling this would be a threat to their masculinity. Another reference was to different global dominant masculinities. The participant born in Europe referred to older South African men's dominant masculinities and how they differed (he was referring to different attitudes about sexuality as older people). Another participant referred to a very specific local dominant masculinity, specifically from within the complex where he stayed, where the men could speak in a jovial manner about issues around getting older ("People just talk about it openly you know [chuckle] so you will just laugh about it. "For goodness sake go buy yourself some Viagra you know or whatever it might be").

Adopting hybrid masculinities allows men to maintain their masculine status by investing in the qualities that are valued masculine qualities while minimising the unmasculine qualities, for example, putting down being emotional to "just ((getting)) old" or framing not being able to perform sexually as a priority to him.

Ageing implies that the men were losing access to capital, for example, financial, physical well-being, and fulfilling the traditional qualities of masculinity. One participant spoke of having access to social capital (the community of men joking together about getting old).

In spite of ageing being a developmental stage across the lifespan, it is not embraced by conventional dominant masculinity and was not spoken about very much, or very directly by participants. The dominant ideal man is young and virile. Growing old and, for example, experiencing decline in his body distance a man from that hegemonic ideal. Ageing increasingly alienates a man from having status in the hegemonic hierarchy. The manner in which the above mentioned men avoided referring to ageing in terms of the inevitability of growing older or, when it was referred to it was done so in a jovial fashion, seems to imply how ageing does not fit into the discourse of masculinity along the lifespan. Spector-Mersel (2006) referred to the hegemonic expectations and ideals being truncated at middle-age. In contrast, the present study finds that growing old is a normal developmental stage across the lifespan and men continue to grapple with masculinity despite their ever-increasing distance from hegemonic ideals. The silence on ageing in the stories of the participants' life journeys as being men implies how foreign and unacceptable growing old

is to masculinity. Growing old, regardless of its being an inevitable reality, is the antithesis of masculinity; but men continue to embody its ideals as best they can.

CHAPTER EIGHT: ANALYSIS: LIVING IN AFRICA

A key feature of this research is that it is conducted in Africa and specifically in South Africa. It is a unique context, but very few participants were oriented to this. This explains why this section is fairly short in spite of it being a fundamental aspect of this research. Nine of the ten participants grew up in Africa, of which six grew up in South Africa (refer to table below). Three participants (Edward, Elliot and Charles) were openly oriented towards their Africanness but in completely different ways. One participant (George) showed an awareness of the privilege of being a white man in Africa although did not make direct references about this. Several excerpts particularly from George and Charles will be used because of their increased awareness of the influence of living in Africa and in particular South Africa compared to the other participants. Elliot was the only black participant. In his interviews he spoke of the direct impact of apartheid on him and his family throughout his life.

Table 8.1

Which country or countries the participants grew up in

Participants	Country Grew Up In	Race
Austen	South Africa	White
Edward	Kenya (moved there when three years old)	White
Elliot	South Africa	Black
George	South Africa	White
Charles	Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)	White
Henry	South Africa	White
Russell	Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia)	White
Bennet	South Africa	White
Frederick	South Africa	White
Darcy	Various European countries (moved to South Africa in his forties)	White

Living in Africa: [White] people are very insular [… they] have lived in this cocoon

Charles volunteered to participate in this present research because he felt that he had had unique life experiences because he lived in so many African countries throughout his life and had done things he believes many white people have not as he explains in the two excerpts below.

Excerpt 8.1

Charles: I don't know I guess I have had an interesting life and I just thought um I've lived in quite a few countries in Africa. And I've done a lot of things a lot of other people have never done. I just thought you know it would be interesting to share it with some of your research. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.2

Charles: I have been very fortunate in my life. That I have lived and worked in places that not many not many whities have lived. And not many Africans have had a chance in Africa to actually move around like I have. And I have been in some really interesting places where not many whities have been. (Interview 1)

Charles felt that his exposure to many African countries provided him with experiences that few other people in Africa have had ("I've done a lot of things a lot of other people have never done") particularly white people ("I have been in some really interesting places where not many whities have been"). It seemed that he was claiming his Africanness and the richness of being immersed in Africa. He did not refer to his experience of being influenced by being a white privileged man living in Africa.

The impact of colonialism

Edward and Charles experienced living in colonial worlds in a different way. Edward experienced the hegemonic privilege of living in one colonial world as a white, British male and being marginalised in another colonial country because, in spite of being a white, British male, he lost his hegemonic privilege by being a migrant worker in Australia. Charles was a child when his country disbanded colonialism. He did not experience this as impacting him as a privileged white man.

Intersectionality in the Colonial Worlds

This section discusses the intersection of gender, history, geography, class and race. This is understood as intersectionality (Dharani et al., 2020). Churchill et al. (2014)

referred to "[r]ace, class and gender [as being] socially constructed; [and] reflective of their social, cultural and historical contexts (p. 22)".

Edward lived and worked in three British colonial countries (two were in Africa) over about 20 years. Hegemonic masculinity is experienced globally in which norms in cultural norms vary in different countries (Messerschmidt & Messner, 2018) thereby positioning the same person on different levels in the hegemonic hierarchy. Edward's life story illustrated how various variables specifically gender, race, class and history, intersected and interacted in his life experience. Churchill et al. (2014) refers to "[w]hiteness [as not being a] a homogenous monolith, but rather multi-faceted and situationally-specific, varying in relation to gender, class and sexuality and so forth (p. 23)". Generally being a white man is considered a privileged position (Mfecane, 2018). However, when Edward worked as a migrant in Australia, he was subjugated by white Australians depending on where he was working and during what period of time. Hankivsky (2014) explains this more by describing the links between the power dynamics and relationships between processes (such as classism and racism) and social locations, and how these could "change over time and be different depending on geographic settings (p. 9)".

Living in Kenya

Until Edward was in his late twenties, he gained privileges seemingly because he was a white, British-born male (Adams et al., 2018) whereby he was given managerial positions overseeing black indigenous workers. Simultaneously, he was also subjugated in this system because of his relative lack of financial and educational status compared to his white male employer, who had much status and wealth. Bourdieu's social theory of practice (Tichavakunda, 2019) explains how, because of Edwards lack of access to institutional resources, such as education, he was caught in a position that perpetuated the continued inequality in his circumstances. The following three excerpts tell the story of Edward's experience of living in a colonial country which favoured white, British males.

Excerpt 8.3

Int: So you became a rancher and how did you long did you stay there for?

Edward: Well it was a massive ranch with 10 000 herd of cattle. And it was owned by Lord […] I was just 16. And I had no education in terms of um farming at all. So, it was a learning curve like you can't believe. […] When I was 16 they gave me a house on the farm. Which was a converted dairy in fact. And they paid me thirty

pounds a month. […] had to be. I had to be. Ja. I had a servant. He was a cook and house servant. Um I wasn't old enough to drive. I didn't have a licence so I had to have a driver to run around the ranch in bakkies [a South African term for a small light pickup truck]. Um. I could do that I could drive on the ranch. But whenever we went onto a main road a driver had to take over. Until I turned 16. You got a licence then at 16 after 16. Which was quite okay. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.4

Edward: Then they transferred me to another farm […] It was just being a responsible person there. […] Making sure the labour was up to scratch. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.5

Edward: When I think about it. It was very lowly paid. It was really quite a lowly job really. But um. I was grateful I had a job. (Interview 1)

Relative to the labour (who were generally black Kenyan people), Edward was granted the privilege of hegemonic status because of his race, citizenship and gender. At the age of 15, he was placed into a position that involved being "a responsible person there". It seems very unlikely that there would not have been some staff under his authority who were more experienced in age and farming to qualify for this same position, but were prejudiced against because they did not fulfil the qualities valued at that time and place (e.g. race; class; education; language). Instead at the age of 15, Edward was given various privileges: his own house and servants, driver (until he was old enough to get a car licence), overseeing a "massive ranch" and labour. In spite of these privileges and perks, Edward implied that the position did not garner respect as often is associated with a management position. Instead he referred to his job as "really quite a lowly job".

His employer was wealthy and had a title. In the following quote Leek and Kimmel (2014) refers to the superordination of race, gender, title, high SES, probably a good education and class. "In regards to race, superordinance is understood as whiteness, while in gender studies it is understood as masculinity. In studies of class, superordination can be understood as the dominant class, elites, the wealthy, or a range of other terms with similar connotations (p. 3)". This explains why his employer had greater hegemonic status even though both were white and male due to other valued qualities such as having title and being

wealthy. Although Edward had higher status than the labour force, he had no money and no education. He did not have job security but seemingly could be easily displaced e.g. instead of taking leave, he had to leave his job and was promised another if there was an opening.

Excerpt 8.6

Edward: At some stage I must have been um 17 I suppose um I went across to the UK and saw my father. And then I came back to the same company but they transferred me to a dairy farm. […]

Int: So did you leave or go on holiday to your father.

Edward: I was on holiday on the proviso that if I came back – which I intended to I didn't really know what I was going to do – if there was a job going. You know so. I only stayed in the UK for not even a month. Then I wrote to the boss 'I'm on my way back is there anything going?' He said 'yeah, there's dairy farm'. (Interview 1)

As much as Edward had many privileges as a white British male he was also treated as being dispensable in his work i.e. easily replaceable like people doing manual labour. This could be seen in how he could not take leave but, instead, had to leave work with the promise of being granted work on his return should there be an opening. His work was therefore precarious. He did not take leave but rather left his work. He would only be given work on his return if there was a place open. Hurtado and Sinha (2008) describe the idealised hegemonic qualities and how others are excluded from this idealised status regardless:

> hegemonic masculinity is embodied at the specific intersections of race, class, and sexuality. It is currently defined as white, rich, and heterosexual. Because these social identities are privileged ones, they interact in ways that exclude specific groups of men from systems of privilege on the basis of their devalued group memberships. In other words, being a man of Color, gay, and working class or poor creates various obstacles to accessing the full range of male privilege. (p. 77)

This suggests that as Edward formed part of the "devalued group" he would not be able to access the full hegemonic status because of his lack of education, for example. Hankivsky (2014) described how a "person can simultaneously experience both power and oppression in varying contexts, at varying times (p. 9)". At the same time, Edward was granted

privilege due to his race while being oppressed by his employer because of his lack of education and poorly paid work.

Australia

Edward decided to go to Australia for a period of time in his late teens and early twenties. The following three excerpts detail Edward's experience of being marginalised in spite of being in a colonial country, being white and British. He was marginalised because he was of a lower social economic status (being a migrant) and not a local (Australian).

Excerpt 8.7

Int: How did the shift from Kenya Africa go to Australia?

Edward: It wasn't that bad […] And I spent three months on a wheat farm. All I did was plant wheat all day. […]

Edward: I know but in Aussie you are on your own. You had to do the whole lot. […] It was tough work. But I've never been afraid of um I've never been afraid of hard work. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.8

Int: What was – did you notice anyone's attitude towards you doing such hard labour?

Edward: No. It was the norm it was the norm there.

Int: Australia was hard work.

Edward: It is.

Int: And so everyone just puts their shoulder to -

Edward: Well most people well especially migrants but not so much the Aussies. So, I was there for three months on the wheat farm and I realised that um. Again, I was miles from anywhere. I went out. The boss took me twice to a pub in the 3 months I was there. That was my R&R. I was working 7 days a week. Um. Anyway, I left there when the seed planting season was finished. I went down to Perth in Western Australia. (Clear throat) And eventually I joined an oil rig. Well not eventually in quite a short time I worked for an oil rig because I had to keep earning a living. […] That was incredibly tough. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.9

Edward: And you and I only had hard words with a guy once. And um his name was Bacon. His surname was Bacon. I will never forget that. He used to be an

abrasive Aussie. An um. I don't think he liked the fact that I was a migrant. But you see there were a lot of migrants on that ((oil))rig from all over the world. And um the migrants were the ones who stuck it out. The Aussies would go there and then after a month or so quit and go walk about.

Int: How long did you work there for?

Edward: On that rig I was there a couple of weeks a couple of da:ays short of 6 months. (Interview 1)

"Since colonization, Australian society has been hierarchically structured according to race, class and gender (Churchill et al., 2014, p. 21)". This was in line with Edward's experience working there at that time. It was apparent that the values given power were: being Australian (i.e. a local], and being the employer. Being a white British subject did not grant Edward the privileges he received in Kenya, a British colony at that time. Instead, he was viewed as a migrant labourer and seemed to be exploited. He did hard manual labour and worked "7 days a week". The hard work was absorbed by the migrants as opposed to the locals ("Well most people well especially migrants but not so much the Aussies"). He was given token privileges in that during the 3 months he worked on the farm the "boss took [him) twice to a pub in the 3 months [while he] was there. That was [his] R&R". He also spoke of how he was given a hard time by a local Australian seemingly because of resenting Edward being a migrant. Bilge (2009) referred to the "simultaneous workings of these power relations [of race, class, gender, age, ability and sexuality] that shape social locations, experiences and identities (p. 3)". Edward is seen to have a different experience by being treated very differently than he was in Kenya.

Edward then returned to Kenya for about another eight years. Edward explains why he left Kenya.

Excerpt 8.10

Int: Why did you leave the farm?

Edward: That's another long story. The Kenya government which was now independent – they had been for a while – independence was 1960. This was now 1972 uh when we left the farm it was uh I was 28 when I left Kenya the second time. So anyway, the farm was sold to the Kenya government. So, it became a government farm um with British government finance. So it was a private company sold to the

Kenya government. Cos they wanted resettlement farming. Ja. They offered me a job in fact. I carried on for three months but it just wasn't the same.

Int: Was there place for a white man?

Edward: There was no actual anti-white. You had to have a work permit. Um.

Int: Cos you were British you weren't Kenyan?

Edward: That's right. And um even you know they weren't actively unpleasant. It was indigenization story with certain there.

Int: So where did you go?

Edward: To Rhodesia. (Interview 1)

Edward left Kenya when it was no longer a British colony. He no longer experienced being privileged because of his race or being a British citizen rather being indigenous was now favoured ("It was indigenization story with certain there"). He was now treated like a visitor where he had to apply for a work permit. He was now just a white man with poor education, working a fairly menial job as a manager. This highlights, as demonstrated by the theory of intersectionality, that masculinity in Africa is complicated and not solely related to race or gender, but the political situation in a country can also impact a man's experience of his masculinity.

The intersection between race, gender, geography and history were explored. The above discussion gives a clear example of intersectionality in which Edward's hegemonic status is seen to fluctuate depending on which country he was in and at what time in the country's history. Christensen and Nora (2012) referred to how "intersectionality is an analytical concept that is useful for analysing and understanding differences and multiple inequalities in contemporary societies at both the macro- and the micro-level". This example has illustrated how rich it is to not see gender in an isolated manner but interrelated with other variables.

End of colonial rule

Charles grew up in a colonial country until he was ten years old. He said then the racial laws were abolished. Instead of running away from these changes, he was able to embrace these changes (he was only a child at that time). Regardless, he was still a white man in Africa and thereby experiencing the privilege of whiteness.

Excerpt 8.11

Charles: I was probably about 10 when the racial laws – Rhodesia was the first country in the world to abolish racial laws in the 50's. And I was about 10 years old. I grew up in a society where yes there was still this division but it slowly sort of moved and moved. And then you saw it later on how it sort of gelled. (Interview 1)

Charles felt that the abolishing of the racial laws brought about a form of equality ("sort of gelled"). However literature refers to the impact of colonialism continuing even after colonialism has been abandoned (Adams et al., 2018). Possibly Charles was referring to his experience that his privilege of being a white man in a post-colonial country was not impacted (Ciofalo, 2022).

Growing up in South Africa

Six of the participants grew up in South Africa during the apartheid era. Only the single black participant was oriented to the fact that apartheid impacted his life in a detrimental way. George spoke of awareness of the privilege of being a white man during this period in indirect ways. The other white participants were silent on this matter.

Excerpt 8.12

George: So, I borrowed money for a ring. And then I got into serious financial problems. […] And so, I went to a bank. I think in those days because you were white and breathing you kinda got a loan anyway. So, they gave me a loan which covered all my debts. (Interview 1)

George was flippant about the privilege of being white in the apartheid era. As long as you were "white and breathing" you were given easy access to economic resources. Spickernell (2016) referred to how being white, because of the system of apartheid, afforded them with unearned racial privilege ensuring political and social power over varied social contexts. George indicated the unearned privilege of accessing financial resources primarily due to his race. The intersection of race and gender gives an indication of the complexity of a person's experience as produced by the apartheid system (Duncan, 2022). "Between 1961 and 1993, military service was compulsory for all white men in South Africa" (Langa et al., 2018, p. 6). George named how this was unique to white males ("And when I did my military training uh compulsory military training which all of us young white guys had to

do." (Interview 1). These participants took it for granted and just spoke about it as being a part of their lives and sometimes as an important experience. The below excerpts will show this clearly.

Excerpt 8.13

George: And I did that when I went to the army […] I was a damn smart soldier. Um. And that opened up all sorts of doors. […] I loved all that military precision. And so so the army was a big factor in my life. In that amazingly I enjoyed it. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.14

Austen: I went to the army. I worked in the bank for a little bit in the building society. And then went to the army. When I was there I decided oh no I have to study. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.15

Henry: I enjoyed my military training but only after I was out. (chuckle) I never enjoyed it while I was there.

Int: Is that the compulsory -

Henry: Compulsory ja. I had to do military training. But I enjoyed it. I liked firearms and things like that. They attract me. And um and I we had a staff-sergeant. He was a reckless little guy but he was quite reckless. But I enjoyed it.

Excerpt 8.16

Bennet: When I left I matriculated I entered into the air force where I did my military training and that's where I learnt <u>real</u> discipline. (Interview 1)

For George not only did he enjoy the army but said it opened many opportunities for him ("And so so the army was a big factor in my life. In that amazingly I enjoyed it"). For Austen it was simply a stop along his journey of life ("When I was there [in the army] I decided oh no I have to study."). Henry enjoyed the army experience ("I had to do military training. But I enjoyed it".) and Bennet felt he grew from the experience ("[…] that's where I learnt <u>real</u> discipline). It is thought that Frederick (the second oldest participant) did not do military training because when it was first implemented he would have been in his forties ("1968-1993: An Overview of Compulsory Conscription into the SADF" (Edlmann, 2014, p. 31). Medrano (2018, p. 2) argued that "serving in the military not only gave white men

the opportunity to protect and defend apartheid (and to defend their wives and children against the swart gevaar ((Afrikaans for black danger)) but also provided them with the opportunity to attain a "good sense of manhood." Conscription was seen as a "manly rite of passage". These men were seen to unquestioningly take conscription as part of their lives. Apartheid was seen to be deeply ingrained in their psyche and just considered to be as something that they had to do. In a sense many implied it was a "rite of passage". These men had adopted a dominant masculinity in which participating in apartheid was a norm, something white males did. For the only black participant, he was not conscripted but he was impacted by apartheid in many ways.

Experience of apartheid

Elliot described what it was like to grow up in the era of apartheid as a black man. Over and over he describes situations in which black people had no access to resources. The institution of apartheid privileged the members of the white racial category (Carolin et al., 2020) which afforded them access to many resources such as financial, educational, and job opportunities. Carolin (2017) argued that "the very notion of whiteness on which the apartheid system was based is of course a legally and politically manufactured myth" (p. 113). Being white comes with simply an unearned racial privilege (Spickernell, 2016). The implication of this is that black people do not have such privileges such as job, educational and financial opportunities. And yet Epstein's claimed that "South African masculinities have been forged in the heat of apartheid and the struggle against the apartheid state" (Epstein, 1998, p. 49). The following two excerpts describe the poverty that not only Elliot experienced but his community as well, both in the urban and rural areas.

> **Excerpt 8.17**
>
> **Elliot**: So, uh when looking at eh what the past has done like to our parents then we saw I saw that uh well it shouldn't be good if I live their life. Because when I look at their life it was like miserable. It wasn't good. Because they grew up in the farms, and they were brought up in the farms […] And as they decided that if we live here our children will have no future like us because the oppression in the farms was too much. They couldn't take it that we cannot go to school. […] But for me […] I had that ambition ((to go to school)). […] I just want to one day to live a better life. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.18

Int: And that's how you said you were going to help your parents. You were earning money even as a youngster.

Elliot: Yes. Because it was hard that time. You go to school without shoes. […] Even when my mother say I don't have money […] Even if they hit me but I'll cry for money to take to school. Even if I don't have anything [no shoes, no food]. […] Like you know when other children are just eating maybe a quarter and a butter, or what. I would also have my empty quarter or less than a quarter, one eighth of the – go back eh to the back of the buildings. So, could hide and pretend as if I got the butter whatever. (Interview 1)

This section highlights the cost of being raised in the era of apartheid in that black people had limited financial and educational opportunities. There was extreme poverty in Elliot's home and community. There was no future for those living in the rural areas on the farms. His parents had a vision for their children. They moved to town to ensure their children were able to get an education.

The era of apartheid dictated segregation of schools. There were schools for white children and inferior schools for black children. The below quote describes the discrepancy between the quality of education system in South Africa as a consequence of the apartheid system:

> For centuries, the education system of South Africa was characterised by rigid segregation. White schools were, measured by physical resources, teachers' qualifications, learner achievement levels and the like, orders of magnitude better than the Black schools […] One of the causes of the socio-political turmoil in the years before 1994 was the unequal education system. (Michael et al., 2012, p. 63)

Education is known to facilitate greater opportunities in one's future (Al-Shuaibi, 2014). Once again, intersectionality theory (Mfecane, 2018) highlights how masculinity in Africa is not a simple entity, but is complicated by different privileges, financial resources and greater opportunities for the privileged white men during the era of apartheid.

In the apartheid era, black people were seen to be robbed of many forms of capital. They did not have access to the institution of education (Beckman et al., 2018), where for

example the black people in the rural areas were not given access to schooling. They had limited access to financial capital (Tichavakunda, 2019) which rob a person of wealth and status. This helps to explain how the powerlessness of the black people during apartheid was perpetuated.

During apartheid it was typical that black South Africans only had access to menial level jobs (Carolin et al., 2020). Elliot described how he became a cleaner, experienced racism when he looked to better himself through education and then opportunities opened up once apartheid had been disbanded.

Excerpt 8.19

Elliot: And fortunately, 1990 I was employed at (()) Hospital. January 1990, I started here.

Int: What were you doing?

Elliot: I was a cleaner in the wards. […] Another physical work. (Interview 1)

Elliot experienced racism while working at the hospital and was denied going to study to improve himself because of his race.

Excerpt 8.20

Elliot: This time it ((being discriminated against)) was because of the colour of the skin because there were people with standard 8 which was acceptable to become a nurse. And myself too I had standard 8. So, I was qualified to be a nurse but they were told if you want to be a nurse go to Edendale [traditionally a hospital for black people] not here. […] So, we had to work because we got our work. And others are sitting at home without work. So, we had to work. (Interview 1)

As soon as apartheid was dismantled, the ceiling of work opportunities for black people was lifted. Immediately Elliot successfully applied for an administrative job.

Excerpt 8.21

Elliot: It was easy work [cleaner in the ward] […] I enjoyed it up to from 1990 to 2000 doing the same work. Only late in 2000 I changed my work because the apartheid was gone. Yes. (Interview 1)

Elliot participated in a strike at his factory before getting a job at the hospital, during

the apartheid era. The workers created a group of men to oversee the work force during the negotiations. They called them "special boys".

> **Excerpt 8.22**
>
> **Elliot**: [During the strike] There were those negotiations which were not effective. Each day when we come to work we would gather in the canteen it was a big space like […] Then our shop steward would go and start negotiating. Day by day we would do the same thing. […] So, we then like the shop steward to control the workforce to come every day they sort of implemented things like uh special boys. Which was uh just uh a sort of uh what would you say those people elected amongst ourselves just to control the workforce not to scatter around damage the employer's property. Just to be together. Cos some were angry. So, to control that anger whatever that situation that was existing at the time. So, we had to formulate a group called *special boys* so that they can control. (Interview 2, emphasis added)

During the time of "marked oppression under apartheid, […] black people as a social group were positioned as inferior to whites […] black men were positioned as "boys" (Langa et al., 2018, p. 9). The word "boy" reflected the emasculation of black men (Zuma, 2009). The men at the strike were seen to take ownership of this belittling term even though they were applying this term to a group of men who were given power to control and manage the work force. This has clear parallels to terms like "queer" being appropriated by gay men, or "nigga" by black rappers. Taking ownership of a slur robs it of power and, to some extent, reverses it.

It is impossible to overlook how much Elliot spoke about race and apartheid compared to his white counterparts. Privileged positionality has been argued to be invisible (Bradach, 2017). This could explain why so few of the participants mentioned their privilege as white men especially as they lived in Africa. Most of the men were oblivious to race as an organising feature in their life stories. This is a standard characteristic of whiteness. This explains why there is so little data in this section.

Blindness to race and multicultural issues

Charles expressed his frustration at how he experienced many South Africans to be "cocooned" from issues experienced in Africa. The two excerpts below highlight this jarring of his experience as an "African" versus these "white, middle-classed South Africans".

Excerpt 8.23

Charles: Also, in Africa I have tried to understand African culture. And I have a very different view to I'd say to about 95-95% of South Africans. I really do. I I I live in a very different world. I live in a multicultural world that I've lived in all my life. And it's something that I find difficult here. It's it's very pronounced – yooh (blow out) it's hard. And you know it's very difficult for people here to perhaps understand. (Interview 1)

Excerpt 8.24

Charles: People who live in Africa have a very different outlook on life. And that's what I miss here. People are very insular. I go to ((local NGO)) here. […] it's made of a very much older people. People who are my age who are really old if you know what I mean. They they just you know some of them live around here in the ((middle class residential complexes)). And you just look at them and they just –

Int: They in a box.

Charles: In a total box. We had a presentation given by a crowd in ((a traditionally black township outside the town NGO based in)). Now that is a very displaced community. […] Now I go down there. I really enjoy it because that's what I've lived in Africa all about. Right. They came and did a presentation. And the remarks that came out of the people in that place from ((local NGO)). I was so astounded it's like. Like someone from Africa talking to an American. Just oblivious what is in their whole back garden. They just people ((incredulous)) have lived in this cocoon. And never – I find it bizarre. That's what I guess I find hard here ((laugh)). And that's why I find it hard to make friends here. (Interview 1)

He spoke about not feeling like he fitted because of this and how jarring it was to him that the people in his white middle-class community do not relate to the complexities experienced in Africa. He emphasised how estranged these older white middle-classed people were to the "liv[ing] in Africa" when he said "Like someone from Africa talking to an American. Just oblivious what is in their whole back garden. They just people ((incredulous)) have lived in this cocoon". In comparison to these people he spoke of how he has "tried to understand African culture" and had always lived "in a multicultural world". Charles was describing how rich the identities in Africa are, compared to the insular and

determinedly monocultural world of white retirement villages in the area. Ammann and Staidacher (2021) spoke of how gender identity intersects with other identities such as age, race, class and ethnicity. It could be understood that the people Charles spoke about were committed to a dominant identity specific to their race and class that was a common and widespread form of identity. Intersectionality theory helps us understand the richness of multiple masculinities that might co-exist in Africa (Ammann & Staidacher, 2021), and also to understand the quite particular version of it produced by white South African men growing old in the aftermath of apartheid. It highlights how multi-layered and complex masculinities are in Africa.

Conclusion

One participant said that "People who live in Africa have a very different outlook on life" and yet later he also stated "[White] people are very insular [… they] have lived in this cocoon". Coloniality continues, in spite of colonial rule being ended, for a long time (Adams et al., 2018). Theories developed in the Global North have been applied as universal, value- and context-free, timeless knowledge as if they can be unproblematically exported to the Global South (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022). Mfecane (2018) argued that the Global North theories provided insufficient accounts of masculinities from Africa. This chapter has highlighted how rich and complex the experience of masculinity is in Africa, even for white South Africans who imagine themselves as part of the Global North (like Americans in Africa, according to one participant). A single identity cannot be used to capture the "essential being". Intersectionality is able to capture this richness to some extent. This is because the intersectionality theory is approached as a multi-layered, complex phenomena (Dharani et al., 2020). However, this is limited to some extent by the participants' ability to articulate these complex issues, and it is clear from the analysis that many aspects of white masculinity in this context are unspoken, or conversationally repressed as Billig (2009) puts it. The participants most willing and able to articulate these complexities were those with more complex identities and life experiences.

One participant illustrated how gender and race cannot be seen in isolation. He lived in three different colonial countries. He was treated as a privileged white British male in Kenya when he was young, and then when he went to Australia in his early twenties, he was not afforded any privilege of being a white, British male because he was a migrant. He

spoke of two incidents in Australia where he was discriminated against because he was not a local but a migrant. The only black African participant spoke in detail about the struggles of living and working as a black man in apartheid. For the white participants, apartheid was only referenced vaguely, and its end was hinted to come with some regret, for example for the two men who took early retirement because of "amalgamation" and "transformation" following the transition to democracy in 1994.

Privileged positionality has been argued to be invisible (Bradach, 2017). This could explain why so few of the participants mentioned their privilege as white men especially as they lived in Africa. Most of the men were oblivious to race as an organising feature in their life stories. This is a standard characteristic of whiteness. This explains why there is so little data in this section in spite of most of the participants growing up in Africa. Six participants grew up and lived exclusively in South Africa. Despite growing up during the height of apartheid, only one white participant referred in passing to the privilege of being white during that period in South Africa. Being a white man is considered a privileged position (Mfecane, 2018).

However, the only black participant spoke of how apartheid impacted his and his community in a negative manner. He was marginalised and subordinated by the apartheid era. Whiteneir Jr. (2019) described the many ways in which blackness was experienced by people of colour (in the USA) was more complex because of its intersectionality with age, gender and class. Intersectionality is useful to uncover social categories that are implicated in dominant and hegemonic masculinity in South Africa (Dharani et al., 2020).

Education is known to facilitate greater opportunities in one's future (Al-Shuaibi, 2014). Once again, intersectionality theory (Mfecane, 2018) highlights how masculinity in Africa is not a simple entity, but is complicated by different privileges, financial resources and greater opportunities for the privileged white men during the era of apartheid. In the apartheid era, black people were systematically robbed of many forms of capital, and white people were systematically given opportunities and resources, like walking into a bank and easily getting a loan as related by one participant. Over and over, the black participant described situations in which black people had no access to resources. They did not have access to the institution of education (Beckman et al., 2018), and where they did it was a far inferior version than that provided to white people. They had limited access to financial capital (Tichavakunda, 2019) which rob a person of opportunities to accumulate wealth and

status. This helps to explain how the powerlessness of the black people during apartheid is perpetuated. Christensen and Jensen (2014) described the complexities evident in the gendered power relations in which social categories such as race/ethnicity, age and sexuality, class and gender, interact. The key difference between the white participants and the sole black African one, was that the black man was fully aware of the apartheid system, and who it privileged. The white participants spoke very little about race or systematic privilege, and these features were largely present in their silences and omissions.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

Joe's story, told in the opening pages of this thesis, was a fictional amalgam of stories told by the participants in this study. It highlights the developmental stages a man undergoes across his lifespan in relation to his masculinity. Joe's various identities were seen to evolve over his biography as he aged, for example, from being an independent financial provider to being financially dependent on his family to provide for him. He was not seen to experience social pressure from the social clock because he fulfilled the social developmental demands on time like getting married and having children on time. However, as he inevitably grew older, his resources diminished. By ageing, Joe had moved further away from the dominant or hegemonic ideal masculinity. By getting old, frail and losing his independence Joe's masculine identity was undermined despite being "on time". While this undermined his masculine identity, he used various strategies to protect his failing masculinity such as humour and emphasising hegemonic values other than being young and virile.

By investigating retrospective accounts across the lifespan, the present study makes several contributions to our understanding of masculinity. First, the main findings of the present study will be summarised, followed by a discussion of how these findings contribute theoretically to our understanding of masculinity.

Research questions

The study was undertaken with the following research questions raised while preparing the proposal and preliminary literature review. Each question is addressed, to some extent, by the analysis.

1. How do men negotiate masculine identities across the lifespan? What changes occur across the lifespan in the accounts of masculinity?

    As the men age, they are distanced from the ideal masculine identities. The men accessed non-hegemonic masculinities, such as hybrid and personalised masculinities, and adopted various strategies, for example by distancing themselves from the non-traditional masculine qualities, losing access to various resources; to counter this distancing from dominant masculine identities. Key masculine identities were sustained over their lifespans. There were changes as they aged, for example, some participants reported their professional

development over their lifespans. Then most men complied with the social norm of retiring, becoming further distanced from forms of capital that would allow access to features of dominant/hegemonic masculinity like provision, success and so on. For the oldest participants, failing health and mobility meant that they became completely dependent on family (previously their own dependants), financially and practically.

2. How do men position themselves in relation to hegemonic versions of masculinity at different points in the lifespan? What enables or prevents men from taking up or resisting hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions at different points in the lifespan?

Men were seen to produce traditional masculine identities throughout their retrospective lifespan narratives, in spite of conforming less and less to these ideal masculine identities as they aged. However, they did not generally directly acknowledge being distanced from dominant/hegemonic ideals, instead, they accessed alternate masculine identities such as personalised and hybrid masculinities, and various strategies, for example: focusing on other masculine areas they were successful in, to present themselves as 'real' men through their changing circumstances.

3. What are the silences around the critical turning points in the negotiation of masculine identity for men at different stages in the lifespan?

The most obvious silence evident in this research was the general reluctance to talk about actually growing old. Ageing practically distances a man from ideal masculine qualities. Regardless, these men still present themselves as men by accessing alternate masculine identities, such as hybrid and personalised masculinities, and various coping strategies, for example, being stoic in difficult situations. There was also a bias in the research, by virtue of the participants being asked to share their life journey as men. The participants then focused on their experiences that were traditionally masculine and were silent on experiences that were not masculine unless it impinged on their lives, for example, suddenly being unemployed, or caring for an ailing partner.

Hegemonic masculinity across the lifespan

Hegemonic masculinity is one of the key theories used to understand masculinity. It concentrates on how men are embedded (and embed themselves) in broader power structures through relationships. Usually, the focus is on specific time periods (a cross-sectional approach) as opposed to a lifespan approach in which experiences are explored across the lifespan. In contrast, the temporal dimension forms a key focus for Spector-

Mersel (2006). She points out that masculine identity has been studied primarily cross-sectionally but, she argues, to obtain a full understanding of masculinity, research should consider changes across the lifespan. The present retrospective study has indeed found it productive to study across the lifespan. Hegemonic masculinity has been found to be relevant throughout the participants' life journeys as men: from youth to middle-age to old age. Hegemonic identities and characteristics were accessed by the participants across the lifespan; but were characterised by a sense of receding in the rear-view mirror as narratives approached the participants' present-day ages.

Key themes

Two superordinate themes were identified from the data: living in Africa and ageing. Refer to figure 4.1 which indicates the interrelated relationship experienced between the ageing and the subordinate themes: productivity along the lifespan, family / relationships and health.

All of these themes were seen not to be specific to unique periods of time in a man's lifespan, but to extend across the lifespan. This contrasted with cross-sectional studies that focused on a static period of time (Spector-Mersel, 2006). Granted, specific aspects of the themes were more relevant and intensely experienced in certain periods of a man's life, for example, men tended to begin formal work after completing their formal education, tended to marry thereafter and to start families after that. We all age across the lifespan, but ageing becomes a key component in a person's life narrative in the latter part of life. Each of the themes clearly imposes different demands at different parts of the lifespan.

All the themes were seen to overlap and influence one another. Working (Arrighi & Maume, 2000) and providing (Hancock, 2012) are key defining characteristics of a man who conforms to hegemonic characteristics. These values extend throughout the man's lifespan, even beyond retirement, where men continue to define themselves by their prior work and achievements. Being a worker intersects with the theme of family/relationships (second primary theme) through providing well for dependents (wives; children; ageing parents). Sexism and heteronormativity are seen to be embedded in this assumption, since women are defined as dependents. Work is seen to be an essential component of being able to be a good provider; and being a good provider, a key defining quality of being a good husband and father. Not being able to provide adequately pointedly impacted a man's sense of masculinity in many areas. The interrelationship between the themes is evident.

Health factors sometimes impacted on a man's ability to work and provide and on the quality of family/relationships such as being a husband. This could be evident in not being able to work after being declared unfit to work; not being able to consummate a sexual relationship because of being unable to have an erection; or physically not being able to procreate. These have important detrimental impacts on the man's sense of masculinity. Again, the themes are seen to impact and overlap with one another.

Ageing was a backdrop to all the themes, as men's experiences and access to various forms of capital were quite tightly linked to life stages; but it was particularly noteworthy in the latter part of a man's lifespan. Ageing impacts a person throughout their life, for example, by no longer qualifying for the under 18s and under thirties for various sports, or by being old enough to vote or get a car license. Ageing (especially when life events are "on time") is reported in the earlier life stages as maturing and growth. However, ageing becomes more important, often in a negative manner, in the latter part of participants' life narratives. For example, it is a social developmental expectation to stop formal employment at this time of life. Often this impacts the man's ability to provide for himself and wife, and eventually, for some men, to provide for their own care. Ultimately, some men depended on previously dependent children to step in financially on their behalf. Ageing in the latter part of a man's life often left him losing his independence, as seen by those men who needed to move into frail care. In this situation ageing can be seen to compromise a highly valued hegemonic and dominant masculine characteristic, namely, independence. It is again evident how one theme impacts other lifespan themes. So, the lifespan approach reveals both shifts across the lifespan and connections between these key themes. Both of these dimensions are often lost in cross-sectional studies, which usually look at a single context at a life-point.

Productivity along the lifespan

This subordinate theme is made up of three subthemes: working, providing and retiring. The work identity is a core identity of hegemonic masculinity across the lifespan (Courtenay, 2000; Hancock, 2012; Pietilä et al., 2017). George and Henry described their careers in which their success was depicted by each job becoming more prestigious and involving more leadership responsibilities. This suggests how the identity of being a working man extends across his lifespan without diminishing in importance. Charles's interviews were dominated by his work which extended from young adulthood to when he gave the interviews in his early seventies. These work narratives greatly overshadowed his

other identities such as being a husband and father. This suggested how a man's work identity can be almost his whole identity, and how retirement can be an enormous threat to masculinity so constructed. These examples support how hegemonic and dominant masculinity is relevant throughout the lifespan, including when men are old and conform less to the ideal hegemonic characteristics.

Masculine identities narrated across the lifespan were interpretable according to the men's age at the time. For example, the masculine identity of providing was absent at early ages (e.g. at school). Later the masculine identity of providing was in relation to dependent families (for example, children's schooling up to tertiary level at times), then later making provision for their own retirement and even caring for their ageing parents. Often men were less able to fulfil their provider identity in retirement due to a reduction in economic capital after leaving work. Finally, some men were seen to lose their hegemonic provider identity in older age where they were sometimes no longer able to meet their own needs and were reliant on their children to provide for them. This progression across the lifespan is consistent with Spector-Mersel's notion of the "social clock" as an organising principle of masculine narratives.

Note that, in relation to *providing*, there was a clear pattern where, in the first section of the narrative they were empowered and able to satisfy the hegemonic and dominant standards of providing, (Smith & Winchester, 1998) but as they got older they had diminishing resources (Valadas et al., 2019) and were less able to achieve this aspect of hegemonic masculinity. The exception was Elliot who, as a black man, spoke of deprivation and struggle in his earlier years, and increasing access to resources after the fall of apartheid. Nevertheless, all men generally spoke of their struggles as things they overcame. This is consistent with Firnhaber et al. (2018)'s study, where young men worked hard to describe themselves as being essentially constant in all fundamental masculine ideals, in spite of experiencing much change during a single time of transition. The present study extends this, finding that *providing* is a consistent theme for masculinity across the lifespan.

Although retirement is a social developmental norm, it is still experienced as a threat to the ideals of being a hegemonic and dominant masculine man. In this present research, the participants were seen to engage with the social developmental norm of retiring in a variety of ways. Some embraced leaving formal employment, "on time", positioning themselves as having earned it, and looking forward to a productive life thereafter other than

in formal employment. George took control of this life stage by retiring early by choice, "before time", thereby giving himself extra credit as a man, as being in a position financially to do so was a clear demonstration of his success. Darcy was resentful and resistant at being forced to retire early, "off time", as he was medically boarded due to physical illness. He experienced this as a major injury to his masculinity. Others could not retire because of financial constraints. Instead of focusing on this as being a failure, they focused on the importance of working and being formally productive. These are valued hegemonic and dominant qualities. Some even spoke disparagingly of others who had retired early. One participant referred to these men as having "vegetated", a judgemental description of transformation to being a non-human, lazy, inactive object. These men were seen to have possibly adopted hybrid masculinities in which they had access to their work identity while disparaging men who had given up their work identity and were judged for "vegetating" instead, a very unmanly image. In summary, retiring is a social developmental norm. The participants were seen to negotiate this non-hegemonic event in various ways to maintain their claim to masculine status. Hegemonic and dominant masculinity evidently continues to be important to the way men produce their identity in the latter stages of their lives.

Family/relationships

This subordinate theme is made up of four subthemes: marriage, procreation, fatherhood and caring.

There is social pressure to marry (Eck, 2014). Nine of the 10 participants had married. This was not referred to as being important but rather considered as a given in terms of achieving the social expectation of having married. It was taken for granted by everyone except Bennet, who never married. His interviews were dominated by the justifications and reasonings why he had not married, even overshadowing his work identity. He emphasised that he still intended to marry, even though he was in his late sixties, and that he had not married because he chose not to and it was not due to a lack of opportunity or desirability. Eck (2014) referred to the pressure unmarried men experience in which their masculinity is questioned, supporting why Bennet had to work so hard to defend his masculinity. Men's masculine identities are costed when social developmental norms are not fulfilled on time, requiring defence of aspects of hegemonic manliness such as desirability and heterosexuality.

There is social pressure to procreate (Brown et al., 2017). Eight participants had had children. This was not raised as meaningful by any of them but rather a given in terms of achieving the social expectation of having procreated. There was a sense of it being taken for granted. They had fulfilled and completed this stage in response to social pressure and expectations. Elliot and George experienced pressure particularly from the community when they did not procreate within a certain period of time after marrying. George defended his masculine identity by emphasising another valued hegemonic standard of being in control (Sumerau et al., 2015). He emphasised how he had chosen to delay having children whereas Elliot bolstered his masculine identity by highlighting his achievement of symbolic masculine status by virtue of owning a house (Harris, 2010). This supports the claim by Spector-Mersel (2006) that men are pressured to conform to cultural norms of achieving various life events within a certain period of time. Both men possibly adopted hybrid masculinities in which they failed in a valued masculine identity but were able to focus on other masculine ideals or financial resources to leave their masculinity intact.

However, as men age they lose hegemonic or dominant masculine status through the loss of resources (Valadas et al., 2019) and independence (Hoyt et al., 2013). This is evident in fatherhood. A traditional expectation of being a father is being a provider (Hancock, 2012) and disciplinarian (Henwood & Procter, 2003). However, retiring often results in a loss of income and resources to provide (Valadas et al., 2019). In some cases, such as with Russell and Frederick, men become financially dependent on their children. Discipline is only required – or possible – when children are younger. These older men were seen to lose their status as fathers (when the definition used was the traditional one regarding fathers' being primarily providers and disciplinarians). This indicates how the provision and disciplinarian dynamics frequently reverse in old age, as evident in this present retrospective research.

A fairly recent development in literature is "caring masculinity" (Hunter et al., 2017; Liong, 2017) especially in the area of fathering. Various participants engaged in caring activities. Instead of the focus being on caring fathers (they engaged in the more traditional images of their age stratum in which fathers were strict and financial providers), these particular men cared for their ailing wives. This is an age-related issue as people's bodies become more susceptible to illness and generally weaker as a natural and inevitable result of ageing (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). Circumstances led these participants to become carers

for their wives, not so much by choice but because that is simply what one has to do, and because paying for care is very expensive. A significant coping strategy was that they presented as being stoic about it, rather, acting out their caring through actions, for example, buying their ailing wives treats or feeding them. As these men aged and no longer complied with traditional valued masculine qualities, they were seen to adopt alternate masculinities and use various strategies to maintain their sense of masculinity, as opposed to Spector-Mersel's proposal that masculine ideals are truncated at middle age.

Health

This subordinate theme consists of three subthemes: physical frailty, and short term and long-term health issues.

Two of the oldest participants, in their eighties, had had to move to frail-care. Each spoke about their body failing, forcing them to give up their independence. They never referred to the process of getting old or ageing. They rather distanced themselves from this age-related antithesis of masculinity by focusing on alternative masculine qualities such as being responsible, taking control and making the decision (Hoyt et al., 2013) to move in response to a failing body. These men focused on other valued masculine qualities rather than speaking of the consequences of ageing. This silence can be interpreted as a strategy to limit the threat of ageing to their ability to present themselves as (hegemonically) masculine. Murray and Durrheim (2021) described this leaving of things unsaid as a means to maintain the status quo, specifically, in this case, not challenging the legitimacy of their masculine identity.

Henry experienced physical illness over a few years, starting from his late sixties. He initially held to the hegemonic ideal of being healthy and strong (Hoyt et al., 2013). With the persistent prompting of his wife (Gast & Peak, 2011), he eventually sought medical intervention. He maintained his hegemonic status by using various strategies: he ridiculed another (De Visser & Smith, 2006) who had denied his ill health until too late, and died shortly after seeking medical intervention; and he presented himself as a thinking man who took control (Lamont, 2015) of the management of his health in the medical setting. Physical illness is a threat to a man's masculinity. By accessing various strategies, Henry was seen to defend his status as a man. Henry was observed to be adopting a hybrid masculinity in which he could justify accessing medical care, a traditionally non-masculine

activity, by holding onto his superiority and rationality and choosing to seek help, thereby not threatening his experience of being a man.

Darcy gives a powerful example of how the pressure of hegemonic masculinity can extend across a lifespan. He appeared to be heavily invested in being a man who enacts hegemonic versions of masculinity and who did not have physical problems (Courtenay, 2000; McVittie & McKinlay, 2010), whose body was impervious to illness (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012) and who avoided seeking healthcare services (Ilkka et al., 2016). He experienced life threatening illnesses in his early twenties and in his fifties. Yet on both occasions he did not seek out medical intervention. In response to being asked what it would take to be helped he responded, "I probably wouldn't have got there until I had either the first heart attack […] or had a stroke – whichever would have come first" (Interview 2). Darcy was seen to rigidly hold onto essential hegemonic values across his lifespan regardless of the cost to his life and well-being. By failing to adapt his masculinity to his changing health status he ironically made both his health and his masculine identity more fragile.

Ageing

Ageing is inevitable (Marchant, 2013) and therefore was considered a superordinate theme and a backdrop to the others. It is a social construct and a physical reality (Calasanti & King, 2005). It is a developmental stage along the lifespan. Eventually, if they live long enough, men's bodies will physically grow old, growing weak and even sickly. Power within relationships also inevitably changes as the men age (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012). Ageing could be considered an antithesis to hegemonic ideals and standards. In this present study the participants appeared to find it difficult to name or overtly speak about the ageing process (Wortham, 2001), and the inevitable social and financial changes involved, for example, on retiring. The silence on ageing is potent. Ageing increasingly alienates men from the status of hegemonic masculinity.

Spector-Mersel (2006), Sandberg (2011) and Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) referred to the prejudices that defined older men as being devalued, ungendered and invisible. This present research does not support this. The participants may not have referred directly to ageing and no longer fulfilling the ideal hegemonic standards (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012) but they still presented themselves as men achieving alternate versions of masculinity (Glendenning et al., 2017). So, while there is some evidence that the men were avoiding the

negative stereotypes of ageing, their narratives still employed several strategies (for example, adopting alternate masculinities such as hybrid masculinity or personalised masculinity, or choosing alternate values or using humour to deflect the impact of ageing) to maintain their claim to ongoing masculinity (Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011).

Chief of these was deflection: threatening issues were often avoided by changing the focus to more benign ones instead (Wortham, 2001). Ageing can be seen as threatening to a man's hegemonic masculine status. The participants avoided the threat of ageing to their masculinity through their avoidance of referring to getting old. Ageing can be seen to form an unspoken backdrop for the other issues more openly discussed.

In these interviews, as a whole, getting old was not often directly referred to or named. One participant referred to "getting old" in terms of having different hegemonic values in comparison with the younger generation of men. Another referred to maturing with age so he could show his emotions more readily. However, this could be interpreted that getting older means losing a man's masculine status by virtue of experiencing and expressing effeminate features such as being emotional. The pressure of older men to be sexually active was spoken about. Only one participant raised the practicalities of an old body ("crickety knees […] loss of vision […] erectile dysfunction"). However, this was done in jest and belied the difficult reality of physically ageing. Ageing for the participants in this study was not a welcomed or easy topic to speak about in the context of the interviews, which asked them to describe their life "as a man". This is a strategy in which difficult topics are avoided and more benign one are referred to instead (Wortham, 2001).

Living in Africa

This superordinate theme specifically deals with the participants' experience of growing up in Africa and South Africa, and – for most participants – their distinct lack of awareness of the impact of colonialism / apartheid on their lives. This theme highlights the complexity of masculinities in Africa which intersects with many other factors such as race and socioeconomic status. This highlights the value of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 2017) to enrich the understanding of masculinity in Africa. Being a white, British male in a British colony afforded one participant masculine privilege but when working in another colony, this did not give him any privilege because he was working as a migrant. The white South African men did not experience apartheid impacting on their masculinity nor recognised or named the privileges afforded to them because of their whiteness. However,

the black participant described how emasculating it was growing up and living in the era of apartheid. His life story as a man also included him experiencing opportunities opening up once apartheid was dismantled for him as a black male.

Masculinity as a psychological hurdle for ageing men. Managing the challenges of inevitable physical and mental decline in ageing is difficult in itself. These challenges are amplified by the need to try to maintain standards of hegemonic masculinity, which become increasingly unattainable. Sandberg (2011) referred to an alternative concept to approaching old age, described as affirmative old age. This concept challenges the negative connotations of decline and decay associated with getting old. Instead, alternative old age validates the differences between younger men and older men in an affirming way rather than in the sense of loss of equality. To ensure the long-term wellbeing of men, it is crucial for society to invent models of masculinity that allow men to maintain their identities or adopt into old age new ones, that are still valued and given hegemonic status (where hegemony refers to the currently accepted way of being a man). The challenge of course, is inventing masculinities that are less concerned with power, and that do not depend on subjugating women and subordinate men. Indeed, the narratives explored in the present study show powerfully how men are forced to engage with their inevitable slide down the hierarchy of subordination in the versions of dominant/hegemonic masculinity in which they are embedded, and how difficult this process can be.

Dealing with the passage of time across and within these themes. Although older men are increasingly distanced from the highly valued characteristics of hegemonic masculinity such as youth, virility and independence (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012; Courtenay, 2000), the participants still accessed hegemonic values that were different from the idealised version of hegemonic masculinity in different ways. For example, they focused on other hegemonic qualities such as taking control of the situation and consciously being strategic in their decisions as they aged.

This present study extended Firnhaber et al. (2018) findings across the lifespan; for example, the identity of being a provider was experienced as an important identity across the participants' entire lifespan, regardless of the different life stages and challenges experienced throughout their lifespan. The study concurred with the findings of Firnhaber et al. (2018) that there was a sense of coherence and sameness in the participants' experience of their masculinity in spite of the different life stages and challenges experienced

throughout their lifespans. Masculine identities are seen to extend across the men's lifespans in spite of challenges and changes along the way.

However, men do not always conform to the ideal hegemonic qualities, especially as they age. Their ability to claim various ideal hegemonic masculine qualities becomes tenuous. In this present research, the participants were observed to access various strategies when they did not achieve the ideal hegemonic values, thereby retaining their sense of masculinity both in specific situations and across their lifespans. The participants were seen to define themselves, using hybrid or personalised "secondary" hegemonic ideals such as being strategic and astute in how they handled situations, as opposed to being youthful and strong. They were seen to use various strategies to defend and maintain their masculine identity. The key strategies used in this study will be discussed in more detail below.

Various strategies accessed by the participants in negotiating their masculinity over their lifespans

One form of resource that men accessed were non-hegemonic masculinities when they fell short of dominant masculine ideals, for example, they negotiated hybrid masculinities which enabled them to hold onto masculine ideals they achieved while still experiencing aspects that did not conform to ideal masculine identities. They also adopted personalised masculinities which did not challenge the hegemonic hierarchy that they still benefitted from, while forming their own definitions of how they would live out dominant masculine identities and qualities.

A key strategy was that of acknowledging that they had not fulfilled an ideal hegemonic or dominant value, but justified how this did not undermine their masculinity. Both Edward and Charles were unable to choose to retire due to the lack of finances. To counter this potential loss of their masculine identities, they argued that the option of retiring was untenable. It would be a living death not to be active and have a purpose as was achieved through their work identity. This paragraph highlights various strategies used to negotiate the men's masculine identities and how the men used alternate masculine values to bolster their masculinity.

Another key strategy was that of approaching situations with stoic acceptance (Migliaccio, 2009). The participants were able to avoid difficult emotions such as loss, which are considered unmasculine, while still engaging with the difficult situation in a distanced way (Gannon et al., 2010). This tapped into another key strategy used frequently,

namely denial (Gast & Peak, 2011; Rivera-Ramos & Buki, 2011), often achieved by distancing themselves from the untenable situation of having their masculinity threatened in some form. Charles ignored the "soft" feminine emotions (Migliaccio, 2009) in response to the failure of his business that had to be suddenly closed. Instead, he focused on taking control of the situation and personally closing his business down in a stoic determined manner. He avoided feminine, "weak", unmasculine qualities of being emotional such as being devastated, tearful and overwhelmed. Instead, he focused on enacting valued hegemonic qualities such as being rational, responsible and focused on the task at hand (Ilkka et al., 2016) regardless of how difficult it was for him. This strategy enabled the men to undermine and minimise the perceived threat or challenge to their masculine identity.

Another key strategy was about changing the focus from where they perceived themselves to not be achieving an idealised hegemonic or dominant masculine value to something that presented them in a more masculine light (Coles & Vassarotti, 2012); for example, not "relinquishing" one's work identity at retirement but rather simply taking an extended "break" from work. Lamont (2015) describes these compensatory actions as "(other) elements of hegemonic masculinity [are emphasised] in order to offset the ways in which [the men] fall short" (p. 273).

Another key strategy was that of men accessing various resources which enabled them to sustain their masculine status. Bourdieu's theory of capital (Chudzikowski & Mayrhofer, 2010) is a useful theory that explains how having institutional, financial capital and physical or health capital gives a man status. Financial capital was an important resource. This often enabled the men to make the decisions to retire "on time" because they could financially do so thereby promoting their masculine status. The institutional resources of education not only gave them higher masculine status but also enabled them to access work which facilitated them achieving dominant masculine identities such as being a financial provider.

Some men were unable to let go of hegemonic ideals that often defined them as men throughout their lifespans, regardless of potential costs. Rigidly holding onto masculine expectations of not seeking medical assistance regardless of the potential life-threatening consequences even throughout their lifespans provides an example. Instead of doing activities that were not consistent with dominant / hegemonic masculinity, such as seeking medical help, they stuck to the hegemonic ideals rigidly by not seeking help regardless of

the cost. However, they were able to access medical intervention through the actions of their wives. These men relied on their wives to be the mediators regarding medical intervention. The wives facilitated their husbands accessing medical assistance and thereby potentially saving their lives. This is in response to the men's not being able to navigate their vulnerabilities in spite of the anticipated outcomes.

Literature refers to women as being the "brokers" of men's health in which they facilitate the men's ability to access medical help (Gast & Peak, 2011; McVittie & McKinlay, 2010). But in the present study we see that women are also "brokers" of men's masculinity in the way they allow men to avoid active help seeking (and thus maintain their masculinity) and also (eventually) get help. This research supports the current literature which refers to the fact that those with rigid attitudes regarding masculinity ideals will have poorer outcomes in situations that threaten a man's masculine identity (Sherman, 2009).

Glendenning et al. (2017) speak of how the need to utilise negotiation strategies highlights how powerful the concept of hegemonic masculinity is. The men avoided being viewed in non-hegemonic, subordinated positions at all costs. Of course, South Africa is a context with particularly powerful and orthodox norms for masculinity, particularly for men in older generations (Morrell, 2005). It is both possible and likely that different social developmental norms exist in different cultures (and generations). This could explain the substantive differences between the results of the present study and the speculation of Spector-Mersel (2006). Although these norms in different cultures are globalised, variations across the world are anticipated (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Quayle et al. (2018) refer to a positive aspect of hegemonic gender theory that proposes that these power structures can change.

Theoretical implications

These results support the general argument made by Spector-Mersel (2006) that the passage of time is an essential and universal aspect of masculinity across the lifespan, despite being invisible in much of the theoretical literature. The passage of time is an overarching organising principle in retrospective accounts in each of the core themes spoken about by this sample of men. Masculine identities are seen to change and evolve across men's lifespans, as do the demands and pressures on men. However, Spector-Mersel (2006) hypothesises that hegemonic ideals are truncated at middle age, resulting in older men being viewed as genderless and transparent. This present research, in contrast, shows that

masculinity remains important to older men, even though they have experienced declining resources and physical strength and vigour that distance them from the pinnacle of hegemonic masculinity, that is, being young, virile, productive and independent.

Although these men did not fulfil hegemonic ideals such as being young and virile, they did not present themselves as being invisible or genderless as proposed by Spector-Mersel (2006). In spite of not fulfilling the key hegemonic ideals, the participants did not define themselves in non-hegemonic ways. They did not often name the concept of ageing. The silence is potent in the omission. It suggests how unmasculine the concept of ageing is, even though it is inevitable. This appears to highlight the intense pressure on men to try and defend themselves from the risk of being perceived as failed men in later years.

Despite this natural fact of ageing, men are never released from the grip of dominant/hegemonic masculinities and therefore need to renegotiate their position over time. This supports the claim of Foweraker and Cutcher (2015) that masculinity remains important for the identity of older men resulting in their striving to achieve masculine identities. This present study highlighted how the participants used secondary hegemonic or dominant masculine ideals to achieve this, adopting hybrid or personalised masculinities. This supports the suggestion made by Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) that ageing men access masculine forms that are both different and new when not rigidly conforming to hegemonic or dominant masculine ideals. While the passage of time is a universal feature of masculine identity, it is virtually absent in theoretical accounts of masculinity. It is also evident that the framework for masculinity subscribed to by these men does not easily accommodate the process of ageing.

In the present study, masculine identities were found to extend across the participants' lifespans throughout the various life transitions, developmental stages and growing old. This is in line with the study of Firnhaber et al. (2018), who only studied transitions involving going to university and leaving, where the participants worked to show that their masculine identities remained consistent despite changing circumstances. In the present study, participants also generally narrated identities that followed familiar consistent trajectories throughout their lives despite change. For example, some work identities were seen to evolve from being, for example, an entry level teacher and then progressing to when they retired as school principal or CEO of their organisation.

By identifying the ways in which men negotiate their masculinity through the use of various strategies, the dynamic manner in which men experience and protect their own masculinity, within specific scenarios and across their lifespans, is evident. The above discussion clearly goes beyond Spector-Mersel (2006) proposal that masculinity is truncated at middle age, by showing that older men can continue to position themselves as masculine despite being robbed by age of core characteristics that previously defined their masculinity.

By conducting retrospective analysis across the lifespan, this present research provided a more comprehensive picture of masculine identities. For example, instead of focusing on a single masculine identity at a specific time, it allowed for a developmental approach in which many masculine identities experienced concurrently over the lifespan were evident, for example, the identities of worker, provider, husband and father occurring simultaneously. It also indicated how these masculine identities changed over time. Participants were seen to construct their masculine identities across their lifespans according to specific periods in their lives. This supports the findings by Idris et al. (2019) in which they describe how their male participants' familial relationships were seen to extend across their lifespans but to change across the different phases with specific responsibilities and roles. Specifically Idris et al. (2019) refer to the progression from being a son to a husband, then to a father and finally a grandfather. This supports the other proposal of Spector-Mersel (2006) that not only do various hegemonic masculinities exist across time but also that they "are tied to specific phases of the life course" (p. 71). However, the results of the present study are not consistent with Spector-Mersel (2006) proposal that masculinity scripts are truncated at middle age. Instead, men's experience of their masculinity extends over their entire lifespans, and they may continue to grapple with producing their masculine identities in relation to dominant/hegemonic standards well into old age.

The impact of social developmental norms on a man's experience of his masculinity across his lifespan

The reference to development extends Spector-Mersel (2006) time perspective theory to include dynamic changes in a person's life experience across the lifespan (McLeod, 2017). Social norms refer to the pressure men experience to conform to the cultural norms of achieving various life events within a certain period of time. They are not enforced by law but instead by social norms and pressure consisting of social standards and rules that constrain and guide social behaviour (Dempsey et al., 2018).

A key aspect of the perspective of Spector-Mersel (2006) is the "social clock", where certain life events are associated with set times. This would indicate whether the individual was "on time" and "off time". In this present study, the participants' accounts of masculinity were oriented to the lifespan social clock, and to accounting for achieving various milestones of masculinity on schedule (or not). In the participants' accounts, pressure was evident for men who failed to achieve social developmental norms "on time". This was particularly evident in the discussion of retirement earlier in this chapter. Men were seen to negotiate their hegemonic status by retiring "before time", "on time" or "off time". However, the meaning of being "off-time" depended on whether it was by choice or circumstance. Volitional early retirement signalled access to economic capital and positive retirement, whereas forced redundancy signalled the opposite, and retirement in such circumstances was dehumanising (vegetating).

The present analysis shows that older men still orient to presenting their lives in masculine terms, and that the life-course "clock" is an important feature of their accounts. It seems likely that appropriate (and culturally specific) social developmental norms are an unacknowledged background to *all* research on masculinity and an important avenue for future research.

Limitations

There are several methodological limitations to the study design such as the small sample size, even though in-depth research was chosen over breadth as the method of analysis. The findings cannot be claimed to be generalisable. However, generalisability is more of a concern for quantitative research; while qualitative research is concerned with *transferability*. By providing detailed descriptions of the specific context, participants, circumstances and setting of the study, the reader is able to discern whether this study could be applied to other contexts and participants. The value of this small sample for understanding men in a particular time and place for example a small town of primarily white people in South Africa.

The sample was primarily white and people of medium to high socioeconomic status. This research cannot be applied to black South African men from a township or another country such as Australian men. This meant many South African men were excluded as they were subordinated historically as a result of apartheid. However, it was useful to gain a deeper understanding of this particular subgroup of South African men.

Concern may be raised by the fact that the interviewer is a female clinical psychologist. However, during the data collection was this issue was only raised by one participant. He referred to the researcher's profession. He disclosed in the second interview that he had agreed to participate in the research in lieu of accessing psychological services. This issue was discussed carefully with him, even though this matter had been clarified in the letter of information. He understood why he needed to be referred to another health professional for ethical reasons. Many participants expressed pleasure and gratitude at having the opportunity to share their life stories. Some shared personal experiences they either had never spoken about or had spoken to only a handful of people. This appears to be a vote of confidence in the fact that the researcher being female and a clinical psychologist were not issues.

This was a retrospective study. This may have raised some concern in various ways. One issue may be a concern that what was recalled was not accurate or was subject to memory bias. However, the focus was not on the accuracy and truthfulness of the accounts, but on attaining a deeper understanding of the men's narrated experiences of their masculinity across their life journey as men and how they produced masculinity in their retrospective accounts. This study was interested in how the men presented their accounts as men. In this sense, their actual life stories are less important than the stories they chose to tell. Possibly the bias of presenting themselves primarily as hegemonic men exemplifies the pressure men have on them to present as masculine and not as weak, possibly confused, struggling men in various critical turning points or life transitions.

Another limitation that could be raised is that the interview was not structured, thereby not allowing for consistent topics to be dealt with by all the participants. However, in this study, depth was favoured over breadth, meaning that individual narratives needed to be explored in detail. Although a semi-structured interview format was used, the depth of the interviews resulted in limited consistency across interviews. The focus of this research was on the men's experience of being a man over their lifespans. Very little research has been conducted in this area. There was no precedent set on what the men would consider important to raise as they reviewed their lives retrospectively as men. It was therefore important that the men were given the space to refer to what was noteworthy to them along their lifespans as men and what impacted their masculine identities.

There appeared to be meaningful omissions in the men's retrospective accounts as seen by their emphasis on masculine experiences and identities. There was a gap in many of the participants' narratives about non-hegemonic experiences such as the emotions evoked in the potential trepidation of starting work, becoming a father or leaving work. The researcher was aware of playing a role in creating this bias by virtue of the interviews focusing on their retrospective accounts "as men". It was wondered if this resulted in accounts about alternate ways of being a man being edited out because they were not "manly" enough. Yet this bias was useful for this study because in itself, especially with the gaps of "unmanly" stories, it highlights the pressure men endure to present, act and live out being men.

Another limitation is that of having a sample that is not culturally represented in South Africa. Ageing is a universal experience. The question raised is whether there are other cultures which negotiate the ageing process in a way that enhances a man's masculinity. Are there other cultures where things of value can continue to be accumulated and not lost as the men age? Are there cultures where ageing is not at odds with masculinity, that allow men to age more gracefully?

The data was analysed using TA informed by IPA which gave a rich understanding of how the men experienced their journey as men across their lifespans. This may be considered a limitation in that social processes and realities were overlooked. Instead, these phenomena could be understood at the level of discourse and language rather than taking what the participants said at face value. Another approach that would have provided a very different focus would be for example using discourse analysis, to focus more on what happens outside the person.

Recommendations

The present study has only identified a small set of the possible strategies that can be utilised to produce masculinity across lifespan narratives. Additional research would be needed to explore these further. An understanding of the strategies utilised by men, not only in specific periods of transition or developmental stages but also over their lifespans, may enable strategies to be developed that more effectively counteract destructive thinking and behaviour, such as the need to deny seeking medical intervention in time.

It is suggested that future research should take into consideration the men's experiences of their masculine identities across the lifespan so as to develop more holistic

understandings of how men negotiate their masculinity at various life stages. The present research suggests that culturally-specific social developmental norms will form an unspoken backdrop to all narrations of masculinity, which make particular versions of masculinity socially intelligible.

A developmental understanding of masculine identities enables policies and assistance, such as health care, to be adapted to the specific needs of men according to their developmental stage. Gast and Peak (2011) concur when they state "(f)ew health education and health promotion programs take masculine gender scripts into consideration in program planning, but masculine gender scripts may add depth to the program planning process" (p. 320). Gannon et al. (2010) give an example in referring to the impact of prostate cancer, where men no longer meet the hegemonic ideal due to the side effects. They call for a sensitivity of the staff as to how this will most likely challenge the men's masculine identity, leaving them vulnerable. They argue:

> (a)n important clinical implication of these findings is that health care professionals working with these men should assist them to challenge the dominant discourses of masculinity both before and after surgery. Approaches to doing this include introducing alternative discourses of masculinity related to sexuality, caring and emotional expression […] It is important, too, to recognise that medical discourses are powerful and can influence the way men construct masculinity. By prescribing medication, such as Viagra, and physical aids (p. 263).

This present research has given insight into how men narrate masculinity across the lifespan, and also continue to negotiate their masculinity into old age. Spector-Mersel (2006) argues that ageing men become invisible and de-gendered because of their increasing distance from masculine ideals. Sandberg (2011) disagrees, arguing that older men do not become genderless people; instead, her findings showed that her participants' experience of sexuality continued into old age. She described "how things are different, but yet the same" (p. 250). The masculine identity of sexuality had been important to her participants not only when they were young but continued into their older years, albeit in a different way compared to when they were younger. The present study supports Sandberg (2011) findings, showing that men engage with masculinity at all life-stages, and that accounts are sensitive to social developmental norms.

It is recommended that this is taken into account with regard to interventions with (older) men that could potentially challenge the men's masculinity; for example, receiving medical intervention or support. Seeking medical assistance is contrary to hegemonic ideals, but is increasingly necessary from middle-age and beyond. It is therefore recommended that those planning such interventions aim to access other masculine qualities, for example, having choices; being able to take control in some area of the intervention; and being able to be more independent in certain aspects. Often strategies help the men to justify not fulfilling one aspect of ideal masculine identity by fulfilling other valued masculine criteria.

It is recommended that further lifespan research should look at the masculinity of ageing men with different races, socioeconomic status, life experience and/or cultures. The present research has provided rich insights into masculinity across the lifespan with older men discussing their masculinity retrospectively across their life, but there are many more insights that could be gained from repeating similar studies across contexts and, perhaps, more successfully engaging men who have managed to produce masculinity counter-culturally.

While the unstructured interviews were valuable, it is recommended that a more structured interview be utilised in future research, in which more focus be directed at specific issues, for example, the men's work identity. This may facilitate the men to not only discuss masculine experiences but also critical turning points in which their masculinity was potentially threatened or situations in which they acted in a traditionally unmasculine manner for example, being emotional at the birth of their child or being ambivalent re changing jobs.

In conclusion

The passage of time is a universal feature in masculinity and yet it is not evident in the theoretical accounts of masculinity, especially with much of the research being cross-sectional. The present study shows that masculine identities are dynamic, evolve over the lifespan and are sensitive to the "social clock", or normative social developmental expectations about what men should do and achieve at different life stages. Men continue to express the sense of being pressured to achieve masculine developmental social expectations on time, even in later life stages. This challenges the theory of Spector-Mersel (2006), who argues that hegemonic expectations and ideals are being truncated at middle-age and older men are de-gendered, in spite of the fact that growing old is a normal

developmental stage across the lifespan. The present study goes beyond Spector-Mersel's (2006) work by showing how men continue to narrate themselves as masculine even in older age, and by exploring the substantial challenges involved in doing so. However, it should be noted that the differences in findings may simply represent different local norms of masculinity, for example, in Israel, where Spector-Mersel's research was located, and in South Africa. Indeed, exploring local differences in lifespan masculinity norms is an important avenue for future research.

In the present study, while men notably avoided discussing the inevitability of old age when recounting (in social interaction) their life journey as men retrospectively, they demonstrated that masculinity is still important to ageing men in spite of their increasing distance from hegemonic ideals. They utilised various coping strategies to defend and promote their masculinity like stoic acceptance; denial; undermining the credibility of those putting pressure on them; focusing on other hegemonic ideals to protect their sense of masculinity; relying on their wives to bridge the gap, such as accessing medical intervention while the men were able to continue to undermine the severity of the "unmasculine" health issues; and actively taking control of difficult situations that might threaten their hegemonic status. The present study shows, then, how men continue to narrate their masculinity even as age renders them increasingly distant from the standards of conventional masculinity.

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APPENDICES

1.Turnitin

2. Ethical clearance certificate

3. Ethical recertification certificate (2019)

4. Ethical recertification certificate (2020)

5. Letter to colleagues

6. Recruitment: Letter to participants

7. Letter to chairpersons of retirement village / accommodation / bowling club requesting permission to put up advertisement

8. Advertisement

9. Information sheet and consent form

10. Interview guide

11. Examples of codes and themes from the thematic analysis

1. Turnitin

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2. Ethical clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

4 May 2016

Ms Andrea Zank (nee Enslin) 992238456
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Zank

Protocol reference number: HSS/0825/015D
Project Title: Older men's experiences of changing masculinity identity across the lifespan: A discursive analysis of retrospective narrative accounts of life transitions

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 2 July 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanitities & Social Scinces Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Professor Graham Lindegger
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D Wassennar
Cc School Administrator: Ms Nondumiso Khanyile
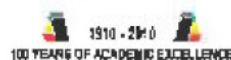
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609   Email: ximosp@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood   ■ Howard College   ■ Medical School   ■ Pietermaritzburg   ■ Westville

3. Ethical recertification certificate (2019)

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

27 May 2019

Ms Andrea Zank (nee Enslin) 992238456
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Zank,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0825/015D
Project Title: Older men's experiences of changing masculinity identity across the lifespan: A discursive analysis of retrospective narrative accounts of life transitions

Approval Notification – Recertification Application

Your request for Recertification dated 29 April 2019 was received.

This letter confirms that you have been granted Recertification Approval for a period of one year from the date of this letter. This approval is based strictly on the research protocol submitted and approved in 2015.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years
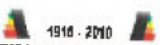
Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Graham Lindegger
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
Cc School Administrator: Ms Priya Konan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
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4. Ethical recertification certificate (2020)

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

24 November 2020

Ms Andrea Zank (nee Enslin) 992238456
School of Applied Human Sciences
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Zank,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0825/015D
Project Title: Older men's experiences of changing masculinity identity across the lifespan: A discursive analysis of retrospective narrative accounts of life transitions

Approval Notification – Recertification Application

Your request for Recertification dated 28 September 2020 was received.

This letter confirms that you have been granted Recertification Approval for a period of one year from the date of this letter. This approval is based strictly on the research protocol submitted and approved in 2015/6.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

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

All research conducted during the COVID 19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

████████

Professor Dipane J Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

INSPIRING GREATNESS

5. Letter to colleagues

[Date letter sent]

Dear (Name of colleague)

RE: ASSISTANCE REQUESTED TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS FOR MY STUDY: *A Life Journey of Being A Man*

My name is Andrea Zank. I am a registered Clinical Psychologist and a PhD student at UKZN (Pietermaritzburg). I am interested in talking to men over 60 years of age about their experience of what it has been like to be a man from when they were young to the present. Areas of particular focus would be the highlights and challenges experienced along the way. I am particularly interested in recruiting participants who have negotiated alternate, atypical or contested masculinity.

Taking part of this research would involve meeting a few times for about an hour each. The interviews would be informal conversations. In the unlikely event that talking about their life as a man causes them harm or distress, they will be encouraged to return to you to speak about this or be provided with other professional support resources if required.

If you know of any men who would be suitable for this study, please consider inviting them to participate? I have attached a letter of invitation for you to give to these men.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me on XXX XXX XXXX (landline) / XXX XXX XXXX (mobile number) / XXXX@gmail.com (email address).

Thank you

Andrea Zank

6. Recruitment: Letter to participants

[Date letter sent]

Dear Potential Participant

RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY: *A Life Journey of Being a Man*

My name is Andrea Zank. I am a PhD student at UKZN (Pietermaritzburg). I am interested in talking to men over 60 years of age about their experience of what it has been like to be a man from when they were young to the present. Areas of particular focus would be the highlights and challenges experienced along the way. Taking part of this research would involve meeting a few times for about an hour each. The interviews would be informal conversations.

If you would like to know more and or are interested in participating in this study, please contact me by either: smsing me on XXX XXX XXXX (mobile number) / leaving a message on XXX XXX XXXX (landline) and I will call you back, or emailing me on XXX@gmail.com (email address still to be obtained).

Thank you

Andrea Zank

7. Letter to chairpersons of retirement village / accommodation / bowling club requesting permission to put up advertisement

[Date letter sent]

To [Manager of Retirement village / accommodation / bowling club]

Name of Institution

Dear (Name of person)

My name is Andrea Zank. I am a PhD student at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg). I would like to invite your residents / members (whichever is relevant) to participate in my study: *A life journey of being a man*.

I am interested in talking to men over 60 years of age about their experience of what it has been like to be a man from when they were young to the present. Areas of particular focus would be the highlights and challenges experienced along the way.

Would you kindly consider placing the attached advertisement on your communal noticeboard?

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me on XXX XXX XXXX (landline) / XXX XXX XXXX (mobile number) / XXXX@gmail.com (email address).

Thank you

Andrea Zank

8. Advertisement

Are you a man aged 60 years or older?

Researcher looking for men 60 years and older to take part in a study on "*A Life Journey of Being a Man*"

To take part in this study you will be interviewed by me, Andrea Zank, about your experiences of being a man throughout your life. This will help us understand how men's experience of being a man stays the same and or changes throughout their lifetime.

If you would like to know more and / or are interested in taking part of this study please contact me by either:
- smsing me on XXX XXX XXXX / leaving a message
    on XXX XXX XXXX and I will call you back, or
- email me on XXXXXXXXXX @gmail.com

9. Information sheet and consent form

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

A life journey of being a man

Date: [Date ethical approval granted]

Dear Sir

Thank you for responding to the flyer on the noticeboards or to the request to consider participating from your therapist / friend. My name is Andrea Zank. I am a registered Clinical Psychologist and a PhD student at UKZN (Pietermaritzburg). I am interested in talking to men over 60 years of age about their experience of what it has been like to be a man from when they were young to the present. Areas of particular focus would be the highlights and challenges experienced along the way. I wish to recruit about five participants from (towns in KwaZulu-Natal) and then five more participants who fulfil other specific criteria who may be located anywhere in the country.

Taking part of this research would involve meeting a few times for about an hour each. The interviews will be informal conversations. If you agree, the interviews need to be recorded for research purposes. Your privacy will be protected throughout the research process. If you choose to participate, you will be allocated a pseudonym to be protected from being identified. This will also be applied to any person/s and other potential identifiers mentioned throughout the interviews. The consent forms will be kept separately from the transcripts.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. No financial costs are expected to be incurred by you if you wish to participate. There will be no remuneration received for participating in the study.

During the interviews, you will be asked to talk about your life particularly those events impacting on your experience of being a man. If you feel that the questions are too intrusive you should feel free not to answer them and you are, of course, free to stop the interview and/or withdraw from the research at any time. In the unlikely event that talking about your life as a man causes harm or distress; please let me know so that professional support resources can be provided if required. The study will provide no direct benefits to

the participants. However, this research hopes to get a better understanding of how men's experience of being a man stays the same and / or changes over their lifetime.

For the second interview, you will be invited to bring photographs / memorabilia that represent significant events in your life that has impacted on being a man. With your permission I would like to take photographs of these purely to use as a reference while transcribing and analysing the interview data. Only I, and possibly my supervisors, will have access to my photographs. These photographs would be archived with the transcripts until at least five years after publication. They will not appear in the thesis or any publications about the planned work.

The interviews will be transcribed. The tapes and transcripts will only be accessed by me, and at times, my supervisors. This research is being supervised by Professor Graham Lindegger (Professor Emeritus at UKZN) and Dr Michael Quayle (a lecturer at Limerick University, Ireland, and a research associate at UKZN). Anonymised segments of the interview may be referred to or quoted in the final document. This document will be bound and then stored in one of the university libraries and will be available online. The research data will be kept for a period of at least five years in a secure password protected and locked location. It will be disposed of by being shredded.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSS/0825/015D).

In the event of any problems, or concerns you may contact the researcher or one of the supervisors or the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (see contact details below).

CONTACT DETAILS:

RESEARCHER:
Andrea Zank
Tel: XXX XXX XXXX

SUPERVISORS:
Professor Graham Lindegger   Dr Michael Quayle
Cell: XXX XXX XXXX   Tel: XXX XX XXX XXX
Email: XXXXX   Email: XXX

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Consent

I _____ (Name and surname) have been informed about the study entitled *A life journey of being a man* by Andrea Zank.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any negative repercussions.

I have been informed about being provided with emotional support / professional support resources should I experience harm or distress as a result of the interviews.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at XXX XXX XXXX or (email address).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview   YES / NO
Use of my photographs / memorabilia for research purposes   YES / NO

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

10. Interview guide

<div align="center">

A life journey of being a man
INTERVIEW GUIDE
(A list of topics to be covered and kind of questions to be asked)

</div>

Opening Question
What has it been like living life as a man?

Do you consider yourself to have been a man's man? What do you mean when you say yes/no?

Were you always a man's man/or not a man's man, or did you go through phases of feeling like this?

Life History
Introduction to this section:
I am interested in your life story particularly what is it like to be a man, including the highs and lows, when you were a boy, a teenager, in your twenties / thirties / forties/ fifties and older.

For each age period I will ask you:

- If any **high points** of being a man come to mind. A particular incident would involve a scene of great joy, perhaps pride, and would positively impact on you being a man.
- If any **low points** come to mind. This would refer to an incident that was the worst incident in that period as a man. This time may have stirred up shame, disappointment, judgement from others – especially those closest to you, a sense of failure.
- Perhaps you might have experienced a **turning point** in this season of life that impacted on your experience of being a man.
- In this period of life, there might have been an incident that was a real **challenge** for you as a man.

Entrance into the world / childhood / young adulthood / adulthood / young old / old old:

I don't expect you to remember, but can you imagine when your mother was pregnant. Did your parents want a boy? What were their expectations? What would have happened if you had happened to be a girl? Particularly, what do you guess your father's response / attitude / reaction would have been?

Was being a boy at school and at home an issue when you were in school? Were you treated differently? Were there clear expectations of what boys were to do? Can you think of an incident / two that stands out? Perhaps when you complied and the consequences. Perhaps there was an incident when you challenged the expectations of being a boy.

Do any significant events stick out in your mind re the expectations of being a man when you were a <u>teenager</u>?

How did you decide what to do when you <u>were leaving school</u>? Do you think you would have had different choices available to you if you had been a girl? What would have happened if you had followed girl activities?

How has being a man affected your relationships? Do any significant relationships/events come to mind that made you feel like a man's man? Did you ever find being a man gave you permission to do things? And did being a man restrict you in how you engaged in relationships?

(girlfriends / boyfriends / husband/ divorcee/ widower)

(children / grandchildren / grandfather)

How did <u>work</u> impact on your life experience as a man?

(progression / stagnation/ fired / retired / retrenched)

Do you feel being a man influenced what type <u>of hobbies / sport interests</u> you had? Would it have made a difference if you had chosen interests more traditionally considered effeminate? How did your friends engage with you as men?

How has <u>getting on in life</u> impacted on your experience of being a man? How?

Do you do the same manly things as you used to do? Do people treat you differently?

Request for photographs / memorabilia:

I would like you to bring photographs depicting some of these significant events for the second interview. Photographs when you were small, a young man, an adult, older years. If you do not have photographs that represent significant moments, then bring something that makes you think of that event.

Photographs / Memorabilia:

What made you choose this? How does it reflect your experience as a man?

What was happening at this time? What would have happened if you had chosen not to do that particular activity? Would there have been repercussions with your family / friends / work / career?

How did it differ from before?

What were the goals you were aiming to achieve as a man at that time?

End of interview:

Throughout this interview we have discussed what it has been like to live life as a man. I was wondering:

- How has doing this interview impacted on you?
- Has it made you more aware of some things? What?
- Are there any thoughts you would like to share that have not been discussed?
- ***Would you like to be given feedback on the study once it is completed? If so, would you like the feedback to be posted or emailed? (get contacts details from the participant)***

11. Examples of codes and themes from the thematic analysis

Data	Codes	Subtheme	Theme
Excerpt 4.1 **Henry**: I courted my wife and we decided to get married […] So that was also a major decision. A responsibility […] The responsibility. I didn't shirk it. I didn't want to. But I realised it was a responsibility. You are now deciding if you going to take somebody under your wing and you going to be that person's protector and provider. If you if you take the oath that you quote or the minister reads out and says that you take so and so and will provide until death does us do part etcetera etcetera. **Excerpt 4.5** **Austen**: And when we both started teaching when I joined her the next year, we made the decision to live on her salary. And to save	Responsibility in providing over lifespan	**Providing: an essential masculine identity across the lifespan**	Providing

mine. So, we did that for two years. Then we had our first child. And then at the end of our career – and that savings that we made has seen us through all the thick and thin bits right through the time, we have managed to put our children through university as a result of it […] And then when my youngest child finished his engineering degree we went back to living on my wife's salary and saving mine. So that is how we sorted of planned for retirement. Because my wife gets no pension. (Interview 1)	Providing - For children in general and their education - For wife and self, throughout life until retirement		
Excerpt 4.6 **Darcy**: Making sure she's got a nice home. Making sure I am bringing in sufficient funds to cover the needs even though my wife went out and worked because	Materialism indicates providing for his wife	**Providing: a focus on material provision and being the sole provider**	

she wanted to. It was still driven from my side to be able to cover the costs and have sufficient left over to go on holidays and the like […] She's got what she wants. She's never short of anything […] financially. (Interview 1)			
Excerpt 4.7			
George: I think […] it's his primary responsibility to be make sure that there is a steady income, there's food on the table etc. etc. […] The mother might also be working as well. (Interview 1)	Food, safe place to stay, finances indicate he is providing for his family		