The construction of masculinity by the seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church: "A South African study"

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Declaration

I Nontsokile Maria Emmanuela Khwepe, declare that this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my own original work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. Sources and borrowed ideas which were quoted in this study have been dully acknowledged. This dissertation is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Social Science in Clinical Psychology, in the School of Applied Human Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

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Abstract

Masculinity has been a topic of interest for many academic institutions in the last few decades. For the Roman Catholic Church, the topic of masculinity comes with a particular complication. Candidates for Roman Catholic priesthood are trained within hierarchical structures that are inescapably masculine, whether these are the structure of the Church itself or the structure of the lay society within which the Church exists or through which it is sustained. The study found, particularly in its discussion of seminarians and priests, that gender, power, the status of priesthood and organisational culture emerge as problematic in seminarians' construction of masculinity.

This study aimed to explore how the seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church construct masculinity and how their construction has impacted on their perception of the Roman Catholic priesthood and vice versa, with particular reference to priestly celibacy. Participants between the ages of 22 and 33 were interviewed, all of which were candidates for priesthood at the St. Joseph's Theological Institute at Cedara. The study was positioned within two theoretical frameworks: social construction theory and the gender theory of priesthood. The study employed a qualitative research methodology to broadly explore seminarians' construction of masculinity and the impact of this in their living of priestly masculinity. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data. The interviews were conducted among ten seminarians to investigate their position in relation to their construction of priestly masculinity and its challenges, while negotiating the construction of masculinity and priesthood.

The findings indicate that masculinity construction and priesthood is complex, multiple and changing. It was evident that some of the seminarians' descriptions of priestly masculinity point to an adherence to traditional and cultural practices. Their descriptions can be understood as constituting a discourse of priests drawing on dominant, hierarchical and patriarchal masculinities which Connell's (1987; 1995) hegemonic masculinity refers to as a privileged,

powerful and aggressive masculinity. On the other hand, priesthood masculinity is also constructed as patient, strong, serving, and enduring and sacrificing, which are also regarded as the characteristics of a "real man". In this regard, for some seminarians to be a man and to be a priest cannot be different from one another since masculinity is seen as a prerequisite for priesthood masculinity and vice versa.

This study calls for seminarians and priests to engage meaningfully in the transformation of gender discourses in the Catholic Church and the formation of seminarians in particular. The study calls for the authority of the Church to challenge the structurally privileged status occupied by priests in the Church. In this view, it calls on priests and seminarians to be more involved in an alternative construction of masculinity, which is more consistent with the religious values and commitment of their vocation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The construction of masculinity by seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church takes place at the intersection between gender studies and the Catholic theology of priesthood. This study attempts to explore this interface and to explore whether students training for the Catholic priesthood construct a distinctive masculinity. It further strives, on the basis of seeking an answer to this primary question, to enquire as to the nature of this distinctive seminarian/priestly masculinity, to the nature of the factors that contribute to its construction and the manner in which this unique construction of masculinity impacts the lives of the seminarians, their subsequent life as priests, their relationship with peers and lay Christians, and particularly their relationships with women. In its exploration of the factors that impinge on the masculinity constructed by seminarians, this study challenges an idea that often seems to be assumed by priests and seminarians: that the cultural advantages of being born male and the institutionalisation of this assumption in numerous religions and particularly in the Roman Catholic Church over two millennia are divinely sanctioned and are inherent in the very nature of priesthood. This study intends to show that, in addition to the assumption of male prerogative, seminary formation consciously or unconsciously promotes gender hierarchy in the images and icons displayed in places of worship, in the imagery and language used to describe God and in the theological arguments embodied in the Creed, and particularly in defining the identity of Jesus Christ. This assumption of male hegemony is also embodied in the language and symbolism of liturgy, in the focus on male predominance and leadership recounted repeatedly in Biblical texts, and even in the titles used by leaders in the Catholic Church. For these and other reasons seminarians and priests tend to perceive themselves as

representing God to lay people and especially to women who are largely treated as observers, recipients and beneficiaries of the life of the Church.

There are three dominant theoretical frameworks which can best help explore the masculinity of men as well as that of seminarians, namely psychoanalysis, sex role theory and social constructionism. The theory of psychoanalysis focuses on adult personality and on how the personality, including one's sexual orientation and sense of identity, is constructed via conflict-ridden processes of development in which the family's gender dynamics are central (Hadebe, 2010). Connell (2000) in her work "the men and the boys" described sex role theory as involving "patterns of social expectations and norms for the behaviour of men and women, which were transmitted to youth in the process of socialization" (2000, p. 7).

The key intellectual underpinning of this study is social constructionism, which takes into account the analysis of gender as a construct founded on social relations (Hadebe, 2010). Gender here is viewed in relation to a structure of power relations, sociological concerns with subcultures and issues of marginalisation and resistance as the bedrock of masculinity construction (Connell, 2000). These theoretical frameworks are related to post-structural studies of "identities in discourse and the interplay of gender with race, sexuality class and nationality" (Connell, 2000, p. 8).

To a certain extent this study employs all the mentioned frameworks and reference is made to writers of each of these related but distinct approaches. However, as the language of the introduction has shown, the dominant framework used here is that of social constructionism.

Keenan (2015) suggests that priests and seminarians tend to construct their masculine identity around ideals of "perfect celibate masculinity" (p. 67). Clearly there is some conflict and contradiction in pairing the notions of masculinity and celibacy, and this conflict underpins the study of celibate masculinity that is being constructed by seminarians. This study also intends

to explore factors and assumptions that impact on this negotiation on the part of seminarians and priests in the Catholic Church as they strive to construct a priestly identity and, particularly, a model of masculinity in which they feel integrated and whole. Since, as has already been stated, seminarians' construction of masculinity is influenced by different environments of which the cultural learning and the socio-historical contexts are primary, the seminary environment becomes an environment of growth or lack of growth for seminarians. In the case of seminarians/priests the context of the construction of masculinity is also influenced by the history and culture of ministry and the fact that the structures of the Church and of Church authority crystallised in the context of the Roman Empire and of hierarchical rule that was universally male. In the South African situation the context of the construction of masculinity by the priesthood candidates in the Roman Catholic Church is even more complex. Here construction of masculinity is affected by the stratification of society over hundreds of years, and by the different models of family and of manhood that co-existed in the confluence of peoples and cultures that made up the population. Ultimately while it is evident that multiple forms of masculinity exist, and that new forms of masculinity are constructed (Morrell, 1998), it is apparent that changes in South African perceptions of masculinity have been influenced by class, ethnicity and race politics (Reid & Walker, 2005). Likewise, in the Catholic Church there are extremely complex influences and strands that impact on the construction of masculinity, such as that of a celibate, priestly masculinity. As Morrell (2001) has stated, masculinity is a complex and confusing concept which intersects with many aspects such as gender, race and history. This study examines the cultural, historical, theological and other factors that come to bear on the seminarian preparing for priesthood, as he constructs his masculinity and how this construct is influenced by the forces that have been described above and also by the overtly hierarchical, patriarchal structure of the Church and the institutionalised subordination of women which is embedded in its functioning and self-understanding. In

addition to these background shaping influences, seminarians are educated and trained in all-male communities and normally by all-male formators and role models. It is not surprising that their construction of masculinity shows hegemonic and patriarchal tendencies and that the existence of these tendencies is often hidden from the trainee seminarians and even from the ministering priests themselves.

Seminarians/priestly construction of masculinity can be understood from Morrell's (2001, p. 7) notion that there is no one pattern of masculinity, but instead there are masculinities, and that cultural differences and "different periods of history construct gender differently." The questions about the construction of priestly masculinity have, in recent times, been raised as a concern in the Catholic Church (Aquino, 2014) and by the women's movement (Hadebe, 2010). The issue of masculine domination was also raised by Rakoczy (2004, pp. 29-35) who asserts that women had already started raising concerns about men's domination in the Church from as early as the twentieth century. Rakoczy (2004) highlighted how this protest had encouraged and motivated women to assert themselves and to defend their interest in civic society and also in the Church (Hadebe, 2010). Based on the ideas of Rakoczy (2004), Hadebe (2010) pointed out that in the Western intellectual tradition concerns about men's domination in the Church included a call for equality of treatment and opportunity, and a questioning of the sexual division of labour and more generally a critical examination of the sexual politics, oppression, and patriarchy. The questioning of male domination and the general marginalisation of women in society (but also in the Church) led to a theoretical revolution in the social sciences (Morrell, 2001). This gave rise to a spate of newfound studies, particularly masculinity studies. The concerns and issues raised in these wider studies and in the more localised studies, in relationship to society in general and in relationship to ministry in the Catholic Church, provide the context for the present study.

1.2 Rationale of the study

My interest in the subject of this research, namely seminarians' construction of masculinity, is motivated by the experience I gained while accompanying seminarians of the Catholic Church in preparation for priesthood and religious life. As a Catholic woman religious and having been a formator and teacher in religious life, I was struck by the dynamics at work in seminarians' motivation to become priests and how they understood and responded to the demands of priestly training and, above all, how they responded to the Church's demand for celibacy and, simultaneously, cultural demands of being a man. I was generally impressed by their generosity and sincerity even if, at times, they did not have a coherent overall vision of how the conflicting demands before them could be reconciled. Many were maturing in the environment of study and formation in which they found themselves. However, there were also tensions and ambiguities and the conflicting demands were sometimes met with curious responses. Tension and conflict with other seminarians were not uncommon and, very often, the stated reasons for these tensions may well not have been the real reasons. Keenan (2012) in her research argued that many of the models of life available to Catholic seminarians and priests serve to impoverish, delude and alienate them and somehow distort their understanding and construction of masculinity. My experience in working with seminarians taught me that the formation of seminarians and the clerical structure within which this takes place can indeed distort their relationship with women and with one another. Outward performance is valued and, in many cases, seminarians were aware of the disconnection between this performance and the internal convictions and drives that motivated both themselves and their fellow seminarians. Many of the students seemed to see their formation programmes as striving to enable them to accommodate and reconcile conflicting values and aspirations. They reported seeing priesthood as a call from God that lays claim to their total existence; a call which demands an authentic response. They see it as a way of life that gives a person a special identity

in Christ. This identity requires the capacity to internalise the values of the gospel and to achieve spiritual and emotional maturity (Rulla, 1989). To do this they strove to reconcile the seeming contradictions and their conflicting demands and emotions; the aspects which I wish to explore further. It is acknowledged that previous studies have been conducted on the construction of masculinity and priesthood identity elsewhere. However, no research has yet been conducted into seminarians' construction of masculinity in the South African situation. This study focuses on seminarians in their training and study as well as the conceptualisation of priesthood masculinity and the understanding of priestly identity in the contemporary South African situation.

1.3 Aim of the research

This research is aimed at exploring how seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity and the challenges they face in the process of constructing priesthood masculinity in particular.

1.4 Research questions

The questions guiding the research are as follows:

1.4.1   How do seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity?

1.4.2   How does the construction of masculinity impact on seminarians' perception of the Catholic priesthood and vice versa, with particular reference to priestly celibacy?

1.4.3   How do seminarians perceive their relationships with women, and how do they position priests in relationship to women in the Roman Catholic Church?

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This research dissertation is organised into five chapters. The first chapter introduces and presents the research topic, sketches the background and describes the study's rationale and aim. It also defines the research questions of the study.

The second chapter constitutes the literature review which explores the theoretical background of masculinity construction of seminarians/priests. The chapter begins with definitions of the various masculinity typologies, including a definition of hegemonic masculinity. Chapter three outlines and discusses the methodology of the study, namely the ways in which data are collected from the seminarians and then analysed. This discussion includes descriptions of the research design, the research site, sample selection and the data collection procedures. Chapter four presents the results of the study as well as the narrative of seminarians' understanding of their masculinity construction and performance. Finally, chapter five offers a discussion of the findings and states a conclusion to the study. It also examines the implications of the study and makes some recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and provides an overview of previous research on masculinity construction. It introduces the theoretical framework on masculinity/masculinities, hegemonic masculinity and how seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church are positioned within two epistemological frameworks when they construct their own masculinity, namely social construction theory and the gender theory of the Catholic priesthood.

The study of gender identity focuses on masculinity and femininity with their respective characteristics. Burke (1980) suggested that in investigating gender identity, one needs to take into account all the meanings that are applied to oneself on the basis of one's gender identification. Burke (1980) further argued that gender identity has an impact on how the individual ascribes meaning to the particular role he/she occupies and on the behaviour that a person enacts in that role while interacting with others. This implies that all aspects of masculinity and femininity that make the person who he/she is must be included in the study of gender. These self-meanings are a source of motivation for a person's behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2000) as a man or a woman. Gender identity describes a person as a being and refers to a system of social relations and social construction that takes into account the wide influence of social forces in relation to masculinity (Burr, 1996). This study examines the questions and construction of gender identity as constructed by the candidates for priesthood. Burke and Stets (2000) refer to gender and sex as two terms that can be clearly distinguished from each other. Each person is categorised according to her or his sex, gender and gender identity. Furthermore, Burke and Stets (2000) pointed out that the term sex describes a person as a man or as a woman,

and that this refers to the person's biological makeup. Gender identity involves all the meanings that are applied to oneself on the basis of one's gender identification (Burke and Stets, 2000).

In this chapter the researcher attempts to explore existing literature on how gender is socially constructed, particularly in the Roman Catholic context, and how masculinity is viewed in the priesthood of the Catholic Church. This chapter outlines the ways in which social constructions of being a man are understood and assimilated by the students who are training for priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church.

2.2   Theoretical framework of the study

Existing literature about masculinity affirms the plurality of masculinity. Connell (2000) indicated that masculinities and understandings of manhood are fluid over time and in different settings, and are socially constructed. Barker and Ricardo (2005) suggested that in analysing the gender of young men, it is important that one takes into account the plurality of masculinities. They argued about versions of manhood in Africa, which are constructed in traditional settings and situations such as war and being a warrior. Farming, hunting and cattle-herding are mostly defined as constituting the cultural identity of most Africans. Barker and Ricardo also pointed out that the traditional definitions of masculinity such as tribal and ethnic group practices which form part of the cultural identity of Africans must be taken into consideration when studying African masculinity. They argued that these definitions form an important understanding of how African young men, including candidates for priesthood, construct masculinity. Barker and Ricardo (2005) further highlighted the importance of new emerging versions of manhood and which are shaped by the influence of Islam and Christianity. Western influences, including the global media, also exert a great impact on young men's construction of masculinity with positive and negative results (Barker & Ricardo, 2005).

As already mentioned, the present study of masculinity construction by seminarians of the Catholic Church is positioned within two epistemological frameworks: the social construction theory and the gender theory of priesthood.

2.2.1 Social constructionism

This study is positioned within a social constructionist framework which provides an overview of existing knowledge about the masculinity of seminarians and how their construction of this masculinity impacts on their priesthood. Social constructionism aims to "identify and describe the assumptions about the nature of the world" (Willig, 2001, p. 13). Social constructionism also identifies "the various ways of constructing social realities that are available in the culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace the implications of human experience and social practice" (Willig, 2001, p. 7).

This study assumes the epistemological stance of gender as constructed in the context of the Catholic priesthood. According to Willig (2001, p. 2) "epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge and attempts to provide answers to the question: how, and what, can we know?" The epistemological position of this study is thus to provide answers (Willig, 2001) to the question concerning how seminarians construct masculinity and the challenges they face in their life of priesthood. The ontological view in this context is that reality and the construction of masculinity as well as the construction of priesthood are fluid and elusive, and only exist through people's claims. As I understand it, in the past ontology assumed that entities had an essence or determinate being of their own that was created by God and could be known by observation and judgement. Nowadays this notion is disputed and there is the prevailing theory that we can only describe entities, and that this description of ours is shaped by our individual perspective, that perhaps there are no fixed essences.

This study adopts the social constructionism approach as part of the theoretical background as it focuses on how a particular social environment or societal phenomenon can shape and change a person's knowledge and understanding of reality (Gergen, 1985). The theory of social construction informs this study to help us understand the concept of masculinity (Tlali, 2011) as it is constructed in the Roman Catholic perspective. The study, using this theoretical approach, examines the context, forces and choices that confront the seminarians or priests as they set out to shape and define who they are in general, and more specifically, as they go about constructing their masculinity.

Social constructionism holds the idea that what we know about the world and about the self (in this case, being a man (Tlali, 2011), and being a seminarian/priest, derives from communal interchange and that there are various ways of constructing social reality (Willig, 2001). Social construction theory holds that language is a shared phenomenon and is central to the community (Gergen, 1985). Furthermore, Tlali (2011, p. 11) maintains that "central to the community is a shared language and this language serves to make real the objects or events within that Community." He further argued that this assumption of community as a shared language not only unsettles our traditional beliefs and assumptions about the truth, objectivity, and knowledge beyond history and culture, but also questions the right of any particular group - scientific, religious or otherwise - to claim ultimate authority of knowledge.

In short, social construction theory exposes the knowledge people hold about their beliefs and cultures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Tlali, 2011). Furthermore, social constructionism provides a basis for the suggestion that knowledge is a construct and that opposing understandings can both be true and that truth is a construct. It implies that what is true for one community may not be true for another. It also challenges the taken for granted ways of understanding the world (Lynch, 2008). In other words, what we know and perceive about the world cannot be seen as reflecting a reality that exists out there

(Burr, 1996; Stainton & Stainton, 2004). Accordingly, our understanding is not a mirror of reality (Burr, 1996), but our perception that is constructed in our own understanding or interpretation (Stainton & Stainton, 2004). This implies that we must be cautious about taking the understanding we have constructed in our interpretation of the world as being real. Citing Gergen (1985), Lynch (2008) uses gender as an example, stating that the division between men and women cannot be seen as simply being rooted in objective observation of the differences between the groups.

This study of the masculinity construction by seminarians of the Catholic Church in South Africa was complicated by the fact that many of the seminarians who were consulted were schooled in Thomistic Philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology, where essences, truth and falsehood are taken for granted and thus the possibility that masculinity could be constructed was new to them. The constructionist perspective is widely and broadly accepted in the human sciences but not universally in the physical sciences and in general discourse.

Against this background, what is considered to be a real man is fluid and is informed by the social context, culture, beliefs and religion. There are many descriptions but no irrefutable definitions of a real man. Sociological empirical research shows evidence that in the South African situation, and in a wide variety of other situations, gender hierarchy is socially constructed and there is an unequal division of power and prestige between men and women. The social constructivist approach adopted for purposes of this study is used together with Connell's theory of gender and hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) to provide a theoretical lens through which to critically explore what is known regarding the construction of masculinity in relation to priestly and religious formation in the Roman Catholic Church.

2.2.2 Theorising gender in the Roman Catholic priesthood

The Roman Catholic Church is known for a rigid hierarchical and patriarchal structure that has interested researchers in regard to the study of gender in everyday practices. As an institution and organisation, both in theory and in practice, it espouses a structure of authority that is universally male, patriarchal and hierarchical. All ordained leaders of the Church are male. However their leadership or rule, which is traditionally seen as the prerogative of the male, is coupled with tasks like healing, celebrating, forgiving and counselling which are typical of the female/feminine role (Boys, 2004). As a male hierarchy that enacts both norms of masculinity and roles associated with femininity, the Roman Catholic Church stands as an intriguing site for a gender analysis. Boys (2004) argues that the Church is indeed a gendered organisation in which multiple masculinities are constructed.

The old Roman Catholic position on the issue of gender did not satisfy many scholars of moral theology and the Catholic concept of masculinity (Choi, 2012). While differences in masculinity construction are inevitable, the forces towards uniformity are formidable. Choi (2012) maintained that the Catholic Church believes in the concept of a man and a woman as created differently in sex but equal in creation and as a complement to each other. He believed, however, that this complementary model of gender was actually never equal, arguing that:

> The Church's dualism or physicalism in seeing gendered persons is harmful; literalism that fails to see the importance of "body" and "difference" is unjust and essentialists' understanding of the body is inadequate, i.e. essentially or naturally different between the sexes therefore in need of different role assignment including agapic self-sacrifice for women is inadequate and dangerous (2012, p. 17).

With regard to this concept of the Catholic gender, Choi (2012) claimed that men need to develop and appropriate what has been neglected about gender in the Catholic Church. He

argued that men need to be more fully men, not less so, stating that they are not solely defined by strong and rough characteristics but also by a tender and soft side. Hence his definition of manliness may not be considered too manly by social standards.

Catholic priesthood consists of all males whose education is subjected to one authority. They all profess one belief and take the vow of obedience to one supreme head, the Pope (Keenan, 2012). In trying to understand the seminarians and priesthood masculinity, and in trying to offer an explanation, an analysis of gender and priestly masculinity is essential. Seminarians, while training for priesthood, are required to be men and to bear masculine characteristics. They don't stop to be men just because they put on cassocks or when they become priests, there are trousers under these cassocks (Thibodeaux, 2010). The fact that priests do not stop being men when they become priests, exemplifies the existence of an implicit tension in priestly masculinity (Thibodeaux, 2010). The tension inherent in the masculinity of priests is that a priest finds himself in conflict between being "a man of the Church," and that he bears a masculinity that is dependent upon a patriarchal institution, and also that he is a man of contemporary society, and bears a masculinity tied to all things modern (Thibodeaux, 2010, p. 1). In order words, seminarians and priests construct masculinity which bears the sometimes conflicting characteristics of modern men and of priestly men. The combination of these different gender identities seems nicely packaged as a cohesive whole but is in fact far more complex than it appears. This indicates that seminarians' gender identity has evolved through a series of internal and external challenges (Thibodeaux, 2010).

Historically the Catholic Church has developed a hierarchic, bureaucratic and patriarchal structure of priesthood, which is in accordance with that which is stereotypically constructed as masculine (Boys, 2004). From this perspective, "various masculinities are embedded in relations of power, and particular forms which may be characterised as hegemonic or subordinate in relation to each other" (Collinson & Hearn, 1994, p. 6). In this complex

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relationship multiple masculinities intersect (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). In addition to this, Christian/Catholic priesthood was largely shaped by the culture and notions of masculinity found in European society. Although priesthood today is universal, the traditional paradigm of what it meant to be a priest is being challenged by different conceptions of being a man.

The theoretical assumption of masculinity as it is understood in the West and in Africa has changed over time (Hadebe, 2010) and has proven to involve the argument that masculinity is not fixed but instead is flexible and fluid over time (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 1998).

The following section reviews the construction of masculinity as outlined in the scholarly work of Connell (1987; 1995) and Morrell (1998; 2001), and as is constructed in the Catholic understanding of priesthood.

Connell (1995) and Morrell (1998) argued that studies on masculinity must critically examine the power relations in which gender is constructed. Connell's (1995) work on masculinity points out the cultural, individual and structural factors that are interdependent in human social relations. Connell uses culture to refer to "customs, ideas, and social behaviour of a particular people or group" (2001, p. 31). Furthermore, Connell suggests that when studying masculinity it is important to consider the separation of men and women's roles in different cultures (Connell, 2001).

The literature indicates that power generally plays an essential role in the construction of masculinity (Connell, 1995) as well as in priesthood masculinity (Dowling, 2002. Dowling (2002 argued that there are always power relations that refer to relationships between men and women in society as well as those in the Church. People are categorised as old and young, senior and junior, male and female (Dowling, 2002.

Furthermore, Caputo and Yount (1993, p. 4) argued that power is something which circulates: "it is never localised here and there. It is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation." All of these writers seem to agree that the construction of masculinity in any organisation is mingled with the quest for power and that this link between power and masculinity is very strong in the Catholic Church's organisational structure. Power (including power in the Church) is often depicted as something that one has or does not have. However, Foucault's (1980) theory of power emphasises that power is not a given: it cannot be exchanged, nor be recovered but rather exercised, and it only exists in action. Consequently, Foucault's question of 'what is power?' is actually secondary to the question 'how is power exercised?' (Counsins & Hussin, 1984, p. 227, cited in Dowling, 2002). Here we can argue that Foucault's idea of power captures the notion of priesthood which has a sacred power (Medley, 2001) that differentiates priests/seminarians from women, children and other men who do not qualify to be priests. In order words, power is not an attribute of individuals and is not something which is possessed. Instead it is an action that is observed and ordained to those set apart for special purposes.

Against the foregoing considerations, a study of the construction of masculinity by seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be discussed in isolation from a discussion of the exercise of power. It is difficult to distinguish between these two constructs when examining the relationships between men and women in their gender constructs and gender relations in the context of the Roman Catholic priesthood. In order to explore these considerations, I will examine three background concepts in the next sections, namely masculinity, gender, and hegemonic masculinity, all of which are embedded in the Roman Catholic understanding of the exercise of power.

2.3   Masculinity

Masculinity has been studied in many social science disciplines including the discipline of psychology, with much debate about what it is that constitutes masculinity (Langa, 2012) and how best it can be defined. Masculinity is defined as the possession of the qualities traditionally associated with men (Oxford English Dictionary, 2013). Masculinity as Morrell argues is "a socially constructed gender identity, the 'possession' of men that is relational (it cannot exist without its 'other' femininity) and that changes over time, by context, and in response to various changes in the individual as well as in wider society" (2007, p. 21). This concept defines masculinity in response to various changes in the individual as well as in wider society. Kimmel, Hearn and Connell (2005) argue that masculinity is a complex, multifaceted concept and cannot be simply treated as a one-dimensional entity. In contrast to previous thinking on masculinity, theorists argue that a spectrum of masculinities exists, with multiple ways of doing male (Connell, 1995, 2000; Whitehead, 2002).

It is generally acknowledged that sociological enquiry in the arena of masculinity has been focused on the dominant position of men relative to that of women, with much emphasis placed on the subordinated position of the women (Connell, 1995). Hadebe (2010) supported Connell (1987; 1995; 2000; 2002) and Morrell (2001), arguing that masculinity studies lack a critical examination of the power relations in which gender is constructed. Connell posited that there are cultural, individual and structural factors that are interdependent in human social relations (1987, p. 191).

Brannon and David (1976), arguing the concept of traditional masculinity, presented four traditional characteristics or norms that characterise a real man. Traditionally, real men will attempt to avoid any behaviour and traits that are considered feminine (Brannon & David, 1976), and men who practice these behaviours and traits are regarded as *un*masculine. In order to be accommodated into this concept of masculinity, it is argued that young men are compelled

to act within a rigid set of patriarchal boundaries or face a number of social sanctions (Harland, Beattie & McCready, 2005). The traditional notion of being a real man with its masculine identity compels young men to refute any behaviour construed as feminine or that which contradicts traditional masculine stereotypes (Harland et al, 2005).

The second norm of achieving status implies that men feel more masculine when they are successful and are respected for their success (Brannon & David, 1976). This relates to the idea that men are strong, hardworking and achievement-orientated and that they have the capacity to cultivate independence and self-confidence. According to Brannon and David (1976) traditional manhood implies that men should be tough and self-reliant. This concept of self-confidence seems to suggest that feelings and emotions such as vulnerability or crying in public are not only restricted but mostly denied because an expression of these feelings in men is an indication of weakness.

The fourth norm presented by Brannon and David (1976) points to the development of aggression, which prescribes that real men resort to violence or aggression to prove their masculinity. Harland et al (2005) noted this and argued that the notion of masculinity compels young men to take on the ideology of a real man and to behave aggressively, engaging in high-risk activities as a means of proving their masculinity to others.

As Brannon and David (1976) pointed out, men are under strong social pressure to live up to the idealisation of masculinity and to fulfil the demands made on the stereotypical male physical toughness, economic wellbeing and political achievement. In this notion of masculinity, women are subjected to the domination of men and are expected to be submissive to them (Flynn, 1990). Smith and White (2004) argued that women are traditionally characterised by their virtue of piety (religion), purity (virginity), submissiveness (weakness, dependence and timidity) and domesticity (home and children). Furthermore, these authors argued that men are best advised to avoid these characteristics. Van Hoven and Hopkins (2009)

argued that competition and subordination of women and other men who do not seem to embody the traditional concept of masculinity are the bedrock of masculinity constructions. Furthermore, Hopkins (1996) also stressed that:

> For a man to qualify as a man, he must possess a certain number of demonstrable characteristics that make it clear that he is not a woman, and a woman must possess characteristics demonstrating she is not a man. These characteristics are, of course, culturally relative and interculturally dynamic (p. 98).

These descriptions suggest that men inhabit rigid gender roles that are not easily contested (Lynch, 2008) and that these masculine characteristics and roles give men a particular identity which makes them different from women. While, in theory, these requirements for the demonstration of masculinity are to some extent regarded as universal, masculinity has changed over time (Connell, 1987): it is constantly being negotiated, and is not a fixed, homogenous and innate construct (Connell, 2000, 2005; Segal, 1993; Shefer, 2006).

Lewis (2007) pointed to masculinity and its relationship to power, arguing that not all men exercise power. However, Lewis (2007) agrees that all men benefit from patriarchal privilege. Connell and Messerschmitt (2005, p. 835) signalled the socially constructed power relations, arguing that this power relation operates simultaneously at both the "macro (social) and micro (individual) levels of society". Furthermore, Connell (1995, p. 107) writes in this regard: "it is often difficult to see beyond individual acts of force or oppression to a structure of power, a set of social relations with some scope or permanence." In relation to Connell and Messerschmitt's ideas, Ratele (2006 p. 3) argued that masculinities in general "cling together around points of power" resulting in the impossibility of escaping the structures imposed by social ideology.

In conclusion, masculinity studies have highlighted the link between masculinity, dominance and oppression and how these are seen as characteristics of the identity and role of men. The connection and almost identification of power and masculinity, at least in traditional

understandings, problematises masculinity and makes the construction of masculinity a complex challenge. All these factors lie on the horizon of a seminarian/priest as he engages in the construction of masculinity.

2.4 Gender and the social construction of masculinity

Connell's theory of gender, power, and masculinities has broadened the academic scope of gender studies and theorising on masculinity (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). Gender relations, gender inequalities and constructions of masculinity (Morrell, 2007) were central to Connell's (1995) theorising of gender. There is a direct relationship between gender and masculinity, where gender basically refers to the facts of being male or female and where both can express masculine attributes. In recent times there has been more interest in examining how men are constructed in relations with other men, women and children (Messerschmidt, 2005) and at their work places and in social contact settings. Lindsay's (2007, p. 141) definition of gender is that:

> Gender is a multi-dimensional concept, carrying descriptive and prescriptive elements. At its most basic, gender is a social category imposed on bodies, an understanding about what it means to be male or female. But it also signifies relationships between men and women and their relative positions in society (Lindsay, 2007, p. 141).

The positioning of masculinities in gender studies takes into account the importance of culture, class, and race and how they have contributed in the formation of gender inequality (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Demetriou 2001; Haywood & Ghaill, 2003). Connell defines gender as "a way in which social practice is ordered (1995, p. 71)." Connell also proposed that gender is "a system, a 'practical accomplishment' or a 'project' that must be worked at on a daily basis,

and is accomplished in every moment by our every action and inaction" (2003, p. 249). Gender is a social construct and forms a part of social ideology (Connell, 1987, 1992, 1995) and Connell argues that in contemporary society we need to talk about masculinities rather than masculinity (1995).

In South Africa gender continues to be seen in the inequality of relationships between men and women. Women become victims of gender violence, gender discrimination and gender inequality. Robinson (2006) argued that gender violence gives rise to the fear of attack, harassment and rape of women by men or even the members of their own family. In intimate relationships, women frequently experience violence, and this impacts negatively on their physical health and on their relationships with others (Robinson, 2006).

There are multiple configurations of masculinities which are patriarchally organised along the lines of gendered domination (Connell, 1987, 1983). Robinson (2006) also claims that gender violence can be challenged by disrupting patriarchy within social structures, within politics, and within families that make gender violence permissible.

2.5   Hegemonic masculinity: A review of Connell's work

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has focused on men, gender and social hierarchy and has exercised considerable influence on recent thinking (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity was used as a concept in contemporary society to argue the aspect of social inequality (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell & Dowsett, 1982), the experience of men's bodies (Connell, 1983) and the role of men in labour politics (1982). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) used the concept of hegemonic masculinity to explain the ideology of the oppression of women by men and the oppression men by other men.

Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a concept that has influenced gender in men and social hierarchy relations across the world. It has been central to the study of South African

masculinity and religious institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as:

> The configuration of gender practices which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problems of the legitimacy of patriarchy which guaranties (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (1995, p. 77).

This definition emphasises the impact of dominant cultural stereotypes on the social construction of masculinity as strong, powerful and aggressive (Hearn, 2013).

The concept of hegemony was derived from the work of a Marxist Italian sociologist, Antonio Gramsci, and his analysis of class relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Gramsci used the concept of hegemony to point out the power people exercise over the working class masses in the capitalist economic system (Langa, 2012). Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity seeks to identify the forms of masculinity that legitimate the subordination of women and other masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2012). The concept of hegemonic masculinity was further used to delineate multiple hierarchies in class, politics, gender privilege and power. Furthermore, Connell (1987; 1995) used the concept of hegemony to theorise gender as a form of division of power. This power is said to take on two forms; in the first form power is exercised between genders where men have power over women. In this context being a man confers power and with it certain patriarchal dividends, such as high status in society, a better income and career opportunities (Connell, 1995). In the second form power is exercised within masculine genders such as men marginalising other men. Connell argues that not all men benefit equally from hegemonic forms of masculinity and not all men are exploitative. In his approach to hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1987; 1995) argues that society shapes roles and defines norms for men in various ways. In a discussion about hegemonic masculinity Connell further argued that

hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and subordinated masculinities, implying that these other masculinities need not be clearly defined since achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives from gaining cultural recognition. Connell (1987) argued that because a feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is heterosexuality, masculinity is closely connected with the institution of marriage; and is a key form of subordinated homosexual masculinity.

Clearly, hegemonic masculinities are hierarchically arranged and are bound to compete for power and legitimacy. Hegemonic masculinities constitute relations of domination, subordination and complicity which Connell (1995) referred to as hierarchy and dynamics of masculinity. These hierarchies seem to support the hierarchy of authority which until today is much noticed in the structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Men embrace different versions of hegemonic masculinity. The Basotho men and the Xhosa practice stick fighting. This practice is also found among the Zulu men (Hadebe, 2010). Circumcision, physical appearance and work are also employed as a means to prove that men are strong and constitute ways of shaping and constructing normative ideals of masculinity (Hadebe, 2010). The next section will discuss Connell's hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity.

2.5.1   Subordination

Subordinated masculinity refers to the cultural domination of women and other forms of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Connell (2001, p. 39; 2005, p. 78) states that "the most common example of subordinate masculinity in contemporary American and European society is that of homosexual men". Ideally these men are not considered as qualified to share in the hegemonic norms and understanding of masculinity. Connell (1995) noted that gay men are stigmatised because of their orientation and are excluded from cultural and traditional norms of

masculinity. Gay men are often kept in a subordinated position by heterosexual men. Connell (1995, p. 78) argues that "homosexual men experience a wide variety of discrimination owing to their subordinated masculinity ranging from political and cultural exclusions and cultural abuse". Hadebe (2010) cited Connell (2001, p. 39; 2005, p. 78) and explained that "gay men often do not live up to the "ideal" of hegemonic masculinities and are often subjected to name calling such as *sissies* and *Nancy-boys*. Hegemonic masculinity dominates other groups and sets the constraints for and defines the subordinated group(s) (Hadebe, 2010). Wells and Polders (2006, pp. 20-35) highlight that there are two types of discrimination against gay men, namely heterosexism and homophobia. Heterosexism is reinforced in the media, religion, legal discourse, education and health care (Wells & Polders, 2006, pp. 20-35). For instance, in the Catholic Church, gay men are not accepted into priesthood because, according to the Catholic teaching, priesthood cannot be conferred to women and to persons sexually attracted to members of their own gender (Doyle & Rubino, 2003). As a result gay men are likely to conceal their status or lifestyle while in the training and formation of priesthood because of their inability to construct the Catholic priesthood. Connell (2001, p. 40) holds the view that "homophobia results in self-denial because of the fear of being ostracised and abused and men that feel they have no value deny themselves dignity and in turn are subordinated by society."

2.5.2 Marginalised masculinity

Connell argues that "marginalization is always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group" (Connell, 2005, pp. 80-81). In the South African context the domination of other races by whites can be taken as an example of marginalised masculinity. Connell (2000, p. 31) states that "ethnic groups" may share many features with hegemonic masculinity and with the marginalised and oppressed gender forms. Catholic Churches in any country which is predominantly other than Catholic might feel marginalised

because they are in the minority and hold norms different from other denominations and beliefs about masculinity different to those of the wider society. Seminarians and priests may feel marginalised by society as they adhere to values other than those of other men.

2.5.3 Complicit masculinity

Complicit masculinity refers to men who receive the benefit of patriarchy without the demands of normative standards of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Complicit masculinity brings benefits without effort (Connell, 2005). For example, men benefit from an economic system which favours men over women although they themselves may not be promoting gender discrimination. In the Catholic context, the education of theology and philosophy is preserved for males over females although females are also capable of studying these subjects. In this context, Hearn (2013) argued that hierarchical practices of masculinity are linked with class position and other social interactions including gender hierarchy in the Catholic Church. Hegemonic masculinity constitutes normative successful masculinity which is ideal for men (Morrell et al, 2012). Connell (1995) stated that men are challenged to take up one of these three positions of masculinity (subordination, marginalisation and complicity) in relation to hegemonic masculinity. While partly agreeing with Connell, Wetherill and Edley (1999) have argued that young men are likely to assume a number of parallel positions and to alternate between them. This affirms the notion that masculine identity can be understood in the plural rather than in the singular (Wetherill and Edley 1999). Furthermore masculinity is based not only on a contrast with femininity, but also through delimiting the borders of what it seems to be normal and what constitutes deviant masculinity (Connell, 1995; Barrett, 2001). Dominant masculinity for seminarians of the Catholic Church is not necessarily in relation to women as the latter are scarce in the seminary, but in relation to other men and among themselves.

In conclusion, in these forms of hegemonic masculinity Connell (2000) argued that the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity acquires the status of being dominant and one to which

men aspire. Connell emphasises that "the interplay of gender with other structures such as class and race creates further relationships between masculinities" (2001, p. 41). In the Catholic culture priests often frame masculinities through their status of being priests, through which other men are viewed as unmanly, and relying on other men and parishioners for financial assistance.

2.6   Masculinity in South Africa

The body of research on constructions of masculinity has grown in South Africa (Morrell, 2007) and many of the contributors have adopted the concept of hegemonic masculinity to respectively address issues related to gender activism and health intervention (Morrell, 2001). South Africa has historically been a country predominantly ruled by men, with the power and authority held by men (Morrell, 2001, p. 18). South African men have exercised power in the public and political spheres of the country, although most of the political power was firstly held by the colonisers, then by the white males of the Apartheid era. Nevertheless, both black and white men held power when it came to their families, as they were the ones who earned money and who made the decisions (Morrell, 2001).

Morrell et al (2012) used the concept of hegemonic masculinity to argue the South African context and to explain the dynamics of male power. Morrell et al (2012) argued that patriarchy, dominance and violence constitute not only the construction of gender in South African society, but also perpetuate violence towards women, children and other forms of masculinity. Moreover, Jewkes and Morrell (2010) pointed out that South African manhood, particularly among certain black people, has adopted the masculinity of toughness and strength as a way to show how strong they are as men.

Morrell (2001) described three different existing constructions of masculinity in South Africa. Firstly he pointed out that "there is the masculinity that was constructed during apartheid that

is represented in the political and economic dominance of the white ruling class" (Morrell, 2001, p. 12). In this dominant masculinity, other non-white races were marginalised and white men (particularly Afrikaner men) held privileged positions and controlled the economy and the country. At this time the construction of masculinity was intertwined with inequality, injustice and discrimination against women and non-white groups (Morrell et al, 2012).

Secondly there is "African, rurally based masculinity that resided in and was perpetuated through indigenous institutions such as chieftaincy, communal land tenure, and customary law" (Morrell, 2001, p. 12). In the context of African masculinity, the cultivation of land, hunting, cattle raiding, and war among many African ethnic groups were male activities and were seen to be the proof and test of a man's masculinity (Tlali, 2011). Many African cultural groups in Africa and South Africa still practice initiation rituals where young boys are initiated and guided through the transition between childhood and adulthood (Barker & Riccardo, 2005). Kometsi (2004) conducted a study where he explored the practice of circumcision in the South African context. He stated that circumcision constitutes the site where boys are transformed into real men. Kometsi (2004) argued that by undergoing circumcision some men desire to test one's sexual and masculine performance.

Thirdly, Morrell (2001) argued that South Africa has been and still is a predominantly male dominated, patriarchal society. During the Apartheid era, political power was held by male colonisers; in African tradition and family, norms are prescribed by men, the power of dominance over women was held by men and in many families the father is the power holder and the breadwinner. There is also a review of research conducted in South Africa where masculinity is described as being constructed of an "assertive heterosexuality, control of economic decision within and outside the home, political authority, cultural ascendancy, and support for male promiscuity" (Ratele, 2006, p. 51). Morrell (2001) argued that one cannot simply imply that all South African men are aggressive, dominate women and other men, and

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are homophobic, as this would be to adopt an essentialist perspective of masculinity construction.

2.7   Young men and masculinity: Developmental issues

Developing from one stage of life to another can be very difficult not only for children but for adults as well. At a stage young people are challenged to make important decisions about their future education, career and life in order to form their identity.

Identity can be understood as the individual's sense of who he/she is, created as a unique human being with a sense of him- or herself as an independent person and occupying a specific place in society (Plug, Louw, Gouws & Meyer, 1998). Men and women are not born biologically masculine or feminine. Their identities are learned through institutions such as the family, church, peer groups and school.

Erikson (1963; 1968) formulated psychosocial stages of development from which identity is formed and developed as a requirement for successful adolescence. Erikson's psychosocial stage theory of identity is the most widely researched and discussed theory (Davies & Eagle, 2007) especially in relation to adolescent development. Erikson's stages involve the negotiation of several sub-tasks which, if successfully accomplished, ultimately lead to the individual knowing who he/she is and what he/she wants from life (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998). Failure to accomplish these sub-tasks leads to identity confusion which is characterised as the failure to integrate the various roles previously assumed by the adolescent and the consequent clash of contradictory values, leaving the individual confused, uncertain and anxious (Louw et al, 1998). Such role confusion often results in one's identity which is shaped by a series of immature decisions about one's identity. Davies and Eagle (2007) argued that social environments such as the family, peer groups and society in general have an impact on how young men develop their identity. Furthermore, the adolescent's task of forming an

identity is made no easier by the requirement that it be a gendered identity (Woodhead, 2007), i.e. be masculine or feminine, and it is during this stage that the individual's gender-role identity becomes clearly defined (Bem, 1974; Karniol, Grosz & Schorr, 2003).

According to Morrell et al (2012), young men establish a viable masculine identity in relation to other young men and women. Joseph and Lindegger (2007) stated that in forming masculine identity, hegemonic masculinity is seen as a beacon by which the development of young men takes place. Young men (as well as seminarians of the Catholic Church) were "positioned in relation to this gendered hierarchy, which privileged them to be powerful, successful, envied, and desirable, or marginalized, stigmatized" (Morrell et al, 2012, p. 23). Lindegger and Maxwell (2007) argue that individual boys, in the process of socialisation and development especially during adolescence, take up particular positions in relation to the dominant hegemonic standards, with some boys submitting more than others to the pressure of conforming to these hegemonic standards.

Furthermore, Barker and Riccardo (2005) pointed out that gender analysis in boys and young men in Sub-Saharan Africa must take into account the plurality of masculinity. These authors argued that versions of manhood in Africa and South Africa in particular differ in context, are fluid over time and are historically constructed. In Africa and South Africa, numerous masculinities are constructed. There is urban, rural and township masculinity, all of which are changing over time (Barker & Riccardo, 2005). Young men mostly alternate between these pluralities of masculine identity. In order to reassert itself, hegemonic masculinity uses power, domination and control to enhance its identities (Ghaill, 1999; Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Beattie, 2004) and young men are expected to identify with the dominant standard of masculinity. Herek (2000) maintained that heterosexuality is associated with the normative male gender role that disapproves homosexuality.

Drawing from the literature reviewed here I can conclude that the construction of being a real man or a sense of masculinity is a product of the interplay between traditional or hegemonic definitions of masculinity. The seminarian constructs his masculinity in the shadow of all of these forces, values and practices.

2.8   Conclusion about masculinity

In conclusion, the review of literature suggested that masculinity cannot be conceptualised as a single and unitary construct if we are to understand the construction of gendered identity in young men as well as men in general. The literature review has pointed out that gender and masculinity theories can be explored in different aspects of social construction. The concept of masculinity implies that any behaviour associated with women and which makes men appear unmanly is to be avoided. The review has also highlighted the relation of dominance, subordination, complacency and marginalisation (Connell, 1995) amongst men. The literature points to the fact that masculinity is fluid and diverse and can be studied as masculinities rather than masculinity (Morrell, 2001). The following section sees the researcher reviewing religious vocation and formation into priesthood/religious life to understanding masculine subjectivities in the Roman Catholic Church, and exploring how the Catholic Church influences the construction of masculinity in young men who enter and train for priesthood.

2.9   Formation for priesthood/religious life

The Roman Catholic Church has enjoyed a certain status in society (Saarinen, 2014), but whilst the Roman Catholic Priest's masculinity has been relatively well-researched in the modern day through surveys and interviews, studies of seminarians are virtually non-existent despite the road to priesthood being deemed important (Saarinen, 2014). Seminarians are intensely trained and set on a lengthy path that expects them to become exemplary Christians of high intellectual

capacity. They are expected to be obedient males who lead a disciplined, celibate life, as well as loyal subjects to authority, and approachable 'fathers' to their parishioners. In other words, a seminarian is taking part in the process of 'becoming' a priest. Keenan (2012) emphasised the importance of the formation of training of priests pointing out that becoming a man in the seminary is almost a by-product of becoming a priest.

Priestly formation and religious life in the Roman Catholic Church is conducted in an only male institute, and aims to form and train young men to be mature men who will become committed priests in the service of the people (Rossetti, 1996). Seminarians are expected to welcome their masculinity and maleness, to embrace it and express it in a balanced way (Rossetti, 1996). Furthermore, candidates for priesthood are introduced and formed into a safe environment where young men can train and be themselves without interference from the outside world (Rossetti, 2005). However, Keenan's research found that the priests' formation houses often become environments that impact negatively on the vocational, psychological and identity development of seminarians and on how they construct their masculinity and their perception of priesthood (Keenan, 2012).

Taking into consideration the South African context, young men often enter seminary formation only after completing their secondary education and then move into an exclusively male environment (Dowling, 2002; Keenan, 2012). At this tender age one wonders whether some of these young men are exposed to appropriate modelling of relationships with a broad range of people and also whether they develop a healthy understanding of their sexuality and masculinity (Dowling, 2002; Keenan, 2012). The training of priests takes about eight to ten years. Keenan argued that in this formation context young men do not know any other way of life except the institutional way of training them into the Roman Catholic hierarchical structure and teaching them the importance of priestly masculinity.

Furthermore, Doyle and Rubino (2003) argue that the Catholic Church has a very particular culture in that it is hierarchical, authoritarian and patriarchal in its structure, and exclusively male in this hierarchy. For Doyle and Rubino (2003) the priesthood is positioned to this culture and seminarians are trained within this culture which associates masculinity with the power of the ordained priesthood. In this context, seminarians are trained and formed into a socialisation of gender within the Catholic Church (Keenan, 2012). Keenan (2012) further argued that the significance of gender, power and organisational culture have often emerged as problematic in seminarians' construction of masculinity. Inadequate training and lack of competent formators are major concerns in the training of seminarians.

Dowling (2002) highlights issues that problematise the formation of seminarians into a mature and authentic masculinity, arguing that some developmental issues such as sexual knowledge and emotional growth are largely a no-go area, frequently denying sexuality. Dowling (2002) was concerned that in most formation environments of seminarians there is little formal training in cultivating a healthy understanding of sexuality, relationship and masculinity. Relationships with women are looked upon with suspicion and are feared, and close relationships among seminarians are discouraged because of the fear of any latent homosexuality. Such fear tends to promote a sense of remoteness, with the result that power is exercised more in control and domination than in mutual interaction (Dowling, 2002). Furthermore, Keenan (2012) argued that priesthood is characterised by clothing, through having a title and through an expected way of acting which seminarians identify with and which contributes to seminarians' idea of the perfect priesthood and masculine identity they are trying to construct.

Keenan states in her analysis that, in formation, seminarians learn to fear topics that are related to manhood, including sexuality, limitations and expression of their emotions; they avoid everything that is related to the non-priestly components of their lives. In this environment seminarians adapt to leading emotionally isolated and lonely lives while on the surface they

present the picture of a perfect celibate priestly masculinity. Furthermore, for Keenan (2012) maleness is emphasised as a necessary condition for seminarians and priests, yet seminary education is lacking in the formation and construction of masculine identity as gender and male domination are not discussed during training. Keenan (2012) argued that the formation of seminarians as it is constructed keeps the men relationally immature, yet on the other side ordination and the profession of vows sets them apart as being superior to other men, women and children. Keenan's view was that these young men, who are living so closely with others like them, do not consider that there is any conflict with being and becoming a manly man of God. The enclosed nature of the formation environment and the inadequacy of the training hold the danger of locking seminarians into the experience of a closed system in which they become inward-locking rather than being enriched through wider associations. Keenan's (2012) research challenges the culture and the inadequacy of priestly education as well as absence of discussions about masculinity construction.

Furthermore, Rossetti (1996) warned that when a priest is not mature as a man, he runs the risk of repressing his masculinity and becoming indecisive, feeling guilty and apologising for his maleness. He may become aggressive, power-hungry and domineering. Rossetti further argued that to become a mature man means being comfortable with one's masculine identity, not needing to hide it or exaggerate it. Rossetti (2005) strongly suggested that priests/seminarians ought to be psychologically and spiritually mature as men, but at the same time they should not use their masculinity as a weapon of oppression and to marginalise others.

2.9.1 Theology of gender and masculinity

The theology of gender and masculinity can be best understood from the background of the creation story presented in the first two chapters of the Bible (Gen. 1 and 2). The theology of gender and sexuality in the creation account tells us that both a man and a woman were created by God in his own image (Gen. 1:26-28).

The story of Genesis 2 gives us the first basis for the interpretation in the Bible that woman is inferior to man (Koenig-Visagie, 2012). Hofstede (1998, p. 197) stated that this passage of the creation story gives clear priority to the male partner and defines a woman as a "help mate" (i.e. appropriate) for him. It justifies a society in which there is male dominance in that, since man was created before woman, he is dominant or has superiority over what was created later in time (Choi, 2012).

Choi (2012) pointed out that the prevailing view of gender in the West is a result, in part, of a dualistic anthropology developed in ancient Greece and Rome, from which the current Roman Catholic model of gender has its origin. Gender in the Roman Catholic Church is highly influenced by the cultural context of Judeo-Greek and Roman traditions in which women were treated as "slaves" (Küng, 2001, p. 2). Accordingly the dominant gender discourse is based on the Roman patriarchal tradition (Küng, 2001; Po-Chia Hisa, 1998) which recognises the authority of priests over women and other men. This discourse constructs men and seminarians/priests as being superior to women. Therefore, women including Catholic women religious are perceived as being subordinate to priests in contrast to upholding the theological theory and practice of equality of persons (Okure, 2010; Tobin, 1985).

Brown and Bohn (1989, p. 42) spoke of a "theological underpinning for the position of patriarchy". Patriarchy is rooted in family life and is theologically regarded as a cornerstone for Christological doctrine in regard to father and son imagery. In this context patriarchy is accepted as the norm for divine power in the Catholic Church (Brown & Bohn, 1989).

Furthermore, Christians believe that the Church is "a family of God" (Tlali, 2011, pp. 187-188). The Catholic teaching regards Jesus Christ (a man) as a bridegroom and regards the Church (all congregants) as Christ's bride. Using this metaphor in a male-dominated society such as that of South Africa, one risks the perpetuation of a dominant patriarchy. The metaphor of a family of God, defined by the Synod of African Bishops by Pope John Paul II (1994 pp.

251-252) leaves much to be desired. Tlali (2011) argued against this metaphor, stating that in most African contexts, the family, whether traditional or contemporary, is still hierarchical and patriarchal in its nature. First, the father is positioned at the top of the hierarchy and is much feared by those on the lower ranks (Tlali, 2011), i.e. the women and children. The way in which authority is exercised in many South African families is mostly controlling; therefore, there is a danger of encouraging patriarchy in the running of the family. For these reasons, Sarpong (1996 points out that if the image of the Church as the family of God is not carefully handled, it risks negating what they are intending to affirm theologically.

Furthermore, Dowling (2002) argued that the implicit structure of relationships in patriarchal families and problems with theological doctrines are based on the social structures of patriarchal society. Ranson (1997, p. 2) also maintains that patriarchal language about God also constitutes an element in understanding the way in which power has been abused in Church settings. Furthermore, the practice of calling priests "father" also has an influence on the view of patriarchal understanding in the Church. The view that patriarchy is God-ordained assigns all authority and power of control to men, including the control of women, of other men, and of children.

Ruether (1983) argued that the theological understanding of the equal creation of man and woman and the structure of Christian masculinity is ambiguous and expresses what might be called a "case of projection" as regard to the relationship between men and women. Ruether (1983) described a model of Catholic gender as:

> …a model that casts women and men as polar opposites, each bearing unique characteristics from which the other sex is excluded. In this view male predetermines the qualities each should cultivate and the roles each can play. Apart from naiveté about its own social conditioning, its reliance on stereotypes, and the denial of the wholeness of human experience that it mandates this position

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functions as a smokescreen for the subordination of women since by its definition women are always relegated to the private, passive realm (p. 94).

Ruether (1983) further argued that although women are created equal in God's image, they are positioned to the lower self and represent this in their physical and sexual nature. A woman is an "inferior mix and as such by nature non normative and under subjugation" (Ruether, 1983, p. 94). Ruether argues that the conception of relationship between male and female is a projection of females as an incarnation of lower human nature. Although the Bible asserts that women are created in the image of God, patriarchy has limited women's ability to be recognised as equal members of the Church (Ruether, 1983).

Priests' maleness in the Catholic Church is underscored by their identification with Christ as a priest, master and head (Congregation for the Clergy, 3.31.1994). This master-headship constitutes the masculine ideal of priesthood and the identification with *persona Christi[1]*. "Women historically have been unable to affect the salvation of humanity in certain gendered ways" (Fischer, 2013, p. 12) because they have been excluded in dialogue with church leadership regarding issues of faith and morals (Fischer, 2013). Doyle and Rubino (2003) argued that the Catholic priests enjoy the privilege of being superior to the laity and to Catholic women, religious and they feel entitled to be seen as special and respected. In view of their gendered positions in the Church, women argue that certain discourses have been used to keep them in the background as a group that can only be heard but not seen (Schneiders, 2011; Okure, 2010). However, in the Roman Catholic Church women perform virtually all the ministries in parishes except the sacramental ones. In this view of female participation in the

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[1]*Persona Christi* indicates that by ordination the Priest takes on the person of Christ. He is identified with Christ.

Catholic Church, Schneiders (2000) argues that the impression is created that somehow the essential ministerial needs of the Church are being met.

2.9.2 Vocation to the priesthood: An introduction

The vocation to priesthood/religious life can be traced back from the view and understanding of Christian vocation, which is defined by Rulla as:

> ...the call of God to the human person so that the latter might co-operate as a partner in the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 36:26) which God willed to establish between Himself and man (1986, p. 11).

Rulla further elaborated that:

> Every Christian is called to be a witness to a love that is self-transcendent and centred on God, in other words to take as the focus of his or her life the self-transcendent virtues which were revealed and lived by Christ. The essence of Christian vocation is to be transformed in Christ, so that one internalises his virtues to the point of being able to say it is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me (Rulla, 1989, p. 11, quoting Galatians 2:20).

These quotations describe priestly and religious vocation as an "invitation or call from God and that this vocation lays a claim on the whole existence of an individual" (Rulla, 1971, 20-26). Vocation to priestly/religious life is a call to enter a new reality (Cencini, 2006) where seminarians search for meaning in life and many of them believe that God has a purpose for them. Medley (2001) affirms this by indicating that the vocation to priesthood is regarded as a particularised form of masculinity possessed of special power and status. Priestly vocation is also described in the Bible in the following way: 'you are a priest forever in the order of Melchisedech (Hebrews 7:17). Men who are ordained to the priesthood are "those who receive

the sacrament of Holy Orders" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1535). They are consecrated for life in Christ's name to feed the Church by the word and grace of God (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1535).

In regard to the problems surrounding this vocation, Rulla (1986) argued that limitations and weaknesses inherent in human life have a negative impact on this vocation. He used the theory of self-transcendence, arguing that a human person, although limited by human weaknesses, has the capacity to go beyond his/her personal limitations and move towards God. This ability for self-transcendence is the core of the vocation from which seminarians draw their identity. This view is supported by Egonof (2003) who states that this capacity inherent in the human person for God-centeredness and self-transcendence, is the basis for the divine call and also for the person's sense of who he is. In order words seminarian/priestly masculinity is not a perfect masculinity but one which has limitations that can be transcended for the better. Rulla's theory of self-transcendence places much emphasis on the unconscious life of the individual as being problematic to the vocational life but fails to consider the impact of masculinity construction and traditional culture on seminarians' vocation.

Costello (2002) emphasises that it is important for seminarians to develop their priestly identity and to identify with the values of Christ, particularly the values of chastity, poverty and obedience, which are the core of the priestly vocation. When they fall from grace, it is a much bigger drop for them than for ministers from other religious traditions who are not bound by such vows (Plante & Daniels, 2004).

Fearthergill (2010) emphasises the importance not only of theology and spirituality in the vocation to priesthood, but also that of developmental milestones and psychological functioning in evaluating candidates for the seminary. He suggested that those who assist in the discernment of priestly and religious vocation should consider an applicant's achievement of developmental milestones and the quality of their development both physically and

psychologically. This will include a seminarian's capacity to be flexible and accommodating so that he can work collaboratively with others, that an applicant should show interest and involvement with interpersonal relationships, and that he must attain the capacity for intimacy in which one confides easily to another person and is comfortable with emotionally close relationships.

Medley (2001) argued that priestly power possessed through the rite of ordination distinguished clergymen from vowed brothers without the powers of priesthood in both the religious rituals (institution) and daily functioning of each group (Medley, 2001). Furthermore, Medley presented the implication of a sacramental ordination circumscribed to men alone with particular emphasis on the complexities surrounding the embodiment of priests.

After a long period of study and preparation, men are initiated into a sacramental priesthood through ceremonial rituals of ordination. Elevation to Orders endows the man with priesthood and thereafter he is said to eternally possess priesthood through sacred power that characterises priestly vocation.

Priests by virtue of ordination are given the power to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, the power to forgive sins and the power to bless. These are regarded as the indelible character of the priesthood and are believed to be impressed upon the priest's soul. In this view an ordained man shall be forever a "priest according to the order of Melchisedech" (Medley, 2001, p. 214). This power constructs and underpins individuals' understanding of their vocation as an especially Catholic identity.

2.9.3 Formation for priesthood / religious life in young men: Psychological research

As psychology began to emerge as a science, the Catholic Church recognised its relevance in evaluating priestly vocation (Rulla, 1986). The Second Vatican Council has formed a

relationship between psychology and the Catholic Church (Kugelmann, 2011), hence psychologists are beginning to focus attention on the Catholic Church as a research subject (Kloos & Moore, 2000; McMinn, 2003; Weaver, Samford, Kline, Lucas, Larson & Koenig, 1994; Keenan, 2012). The Catholic Church duly acknowledges the importance of using psychological research and tools in preparing seminarians for priesthood. This interest was soon followed by several scholarly works of authors who explored the formation of priests in the Roman Catholic Church. These were authors such as: Rulla (1971; 1986; 1989); Rulla, Imoda and Ridick (1988); Cencini and Manenti (1992); Costello (2002); and Keenan (2012).

Rulla et al (1988) conducted research into the American seminarians, on the motivation of candidates for the priestly/ religious life and why young people are entering and leaving the vocation. Their findings pointed to conscious and unconscious consistencies and inconsistencies as factors contributing to problems in the vocation to priesthood.

Keenan's (2012) research presented some key insight into the problems faced by the Church on the behaviour of some priests. Keenan (2012) described what she called "perfect celibate clerical masculinity" (p. 245), which she found to be a strong element constructed and valued by many priests. In this model Keenan (2012) argued that the identity of a priest / religious brother is based on the priestly or religious role, and gender or maleness is taken as merely a secondary consideration.

Keenan (2012) studied the psychological life of priests with sexual problems, and argued that at a psychological level, priests who attempt to construct a perfect celibate masculinity tend to intellectualise their emotions. Keenan argued that the process of "parentification" within the family and the care giver's role can have an impact on the development of a child. Mehl (1990) suggested that many candidates for priesthood have traumatic family histories including physical and sexual abuse as well as addiction.

Sperry (2010a) argued that the status of a priest and Catholicism fosters narcissistic entitlement, emotional immaturity, an authoritarian style of ministerial leadership, a rigid hierarchical worldview and identification of holiness and grace in the Church with the clerical state.

Keenan (2012, p. 245) in her research suggested that the "many models of life available to Catholic priests serve to impoverish, delude and alienate many priests." While this research does not focus on the sexual abuse of children, it addresses gender in the context of clerical masculinity which is essential to understanding the Roman Catholic Church and its organisational structure, which is doubly masculine (Boys, 2004). It is doubly masculine in that, firstly, the Catholic Church recognises the biological masculinity of its priests, and secondly, it also recognises the gendered and social masculinity of its men as priests (Boys, 2004), from which masculinity is constructed in the priesthood. At the most basic level of decision making and the exercise of authority, the Roman Catholic Church comprises exclusively of men (Boys, 2004).

2.9.4   Priesthood, religious life and masculinity

Much of the literature today draws attention to the masculinity of the priesthood and the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church with its leadership still largely based on a celibate, male clerical system (Dowling, 2001). As there are multiple masculinities, there are also multiple clerical masculinities (Boys, 2004). It is particularly the priest's manliness, their construction of masculinity, and their perception and position of gender that is the focus of this research. Neal (2005) argued that contemporary male gender roles have impacted on priests'/seminarians' construction of masculinity. Studies on the masculinity of seminarians are fewer and have found that masculinity and power play an essential role in the priesthood and of the Catholic Church.

Keenan's (2012) view of the theory of gender points to the patriarchal structure within which priests operate and which tends to distort their relationship with women and with one another. Within a traditional Christian analysis of gendered performance and relationship, the leadership of men and their authority over women and children is affirmed as the correct gendered performance. The correct female and child performance is respectively one of submission and obedience (Cere, 2004; Monroe, 2001).

In trying to understand the priesthood masculinity Keenan (2012) used the gender order suggested by Connell (1995) to indicate that clerical masculinity and celibate masculinity fall in a marginalised position in relation to other masculinities in the dominant hierarchy of masculinities. The gender order which comprises heterosexual and sexual active, which is in the hegemonic position (particularly in the marriage position) is not permitted in clerical masculinity (Keenan, 2012) and subordinates the celibate masculinity. She also indicated that homosexual masculinity which is subordinated in the dominant hegemonic position is also subordinated in priesthood masculinity (2012). Borrowing Connell's (2001) ideas, Keenan emphasised that "masculinities constructed in ways that realise the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this" (2012, p. 40). One can conclude that heterosexual and inactive masculinity, which is complicit, relates in some ways to priesthood masculinity.

Canon Law 1024 states that only men are validly ordained within the Roman Catholic Church. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the reasoning behind this law is that the Lord Jesus chose men to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognises herself to be bound by this choice

made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1577).

Priests and seminarians are challenged to construct gender equality and alternative masculinity which will promote growth in today's society. On the other hand, the measure with which most seminarians and priests resist this challenge suggests that masculinity and manhood, as constructed in today's world, are in crisis. The concept of clericalism or priesthood, and their thinking about themselves, is challenged and is being questioned by this gender consciousness, which in turn becomes a threat in the Catholic conception of masculinity. It demands alternative masculinities which recognise women as equal partners and recognises their dignity and humanity. On this basis then it is conceptualised that if the model that Catholics have for masculinity and its related gender role is problematic (Choi, 2012), then there is need for reconstruction of that model of masculinity.

The Catholic Church is characterised by ministerial hierarchy involving only men (Lumen Gentium, 1964). "Priestly ordination (for both diocesan and religious order) which hands on the office entrusted by Christ to his Apostles of teaching, sanctifying and governing the faithful, has in the Catholic Church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone" (Ordinatio Sacerdotalis, 1975, p. 559). These qualities position these men as high priests chosen from among men and appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God" (Hebrews 5:1). In other words, priests of the Roman Catholic Church hold the all-important position of power in priesthood (Doyle & Rubino, 2003) and the Lay[2] Catholics and other denominations hold them in high esteem.

According to Boys (2004) the masculinity of the priest in the Catholic Church is essential to understanding how priests are positioned as men and as priests. In other words, their biological

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[2] Lay Catholics here refers to all non-ordained Catholics. Religious women and as well as men Religious who are not ordained are also called Lay Catholics.

sex and gendered position as well as their ordination privilege them with power over others. Given the dominant hegemony where men have more legitimate power at their disposal than women (Dowling, 2002), priests/seminarians may lack awareness of how their position and actions disadvantage women. Given the strong belief that men are, in general, culturally and sociologically conditioned to have more power than women (Dowling, 2001), hegemonic masculinity is important for priesthood and the Church since its power does not have to be imposed through force or violence but has become respected by the members of the Church and society (Dowling, 2002 p. 25).

Neal (2005) noted the stereotypical view of priests' problematic masculinity. He argued that their life and celibacy vow causes society to believe that priests have social and psychological problems. The society believes that either priests are not sufficiently driven sexually and therefore do not qualify to be considered truly masculine. Some people believe that priests are indeed sexually driven, perhaps even too much, but to the wrong objects (men or children), and therefore do not qualify to be considered truly masculine. Furthermore, there is also the belief that they might indeed be sexually driven to the right objects (adult women), and therefore may be masculine but do not qualify to be considered true priests. These misconceptions about priesthood are often problematic in the relationship between priests and certain members of society.

In conclusion, this section contributes to the view of priesthood / religious life as understood in the context of the Catholic priesthood and the challenges seminarians and priests face when constructing masculinity. Priests and seminarians are challenged to construct masculinity that is more accommodating of other genders.

2.9.5   Research on priesthood / religious life

Since the Vatican II researchers have begun to focus their attention on the Catholic Church as a research subject, although the theorising of priesthood and religious life has not only been problematic but also an obstacle to the progress of research in this area (Kloos & Moore, 2000; McMinn, 2003; Weaver et al, 1994).

Research studies investigating the motivations for and problems around priesthood formation have been conducted by Luigi Rulla (1986). He has used depth psychology to explore the complex factors that motivate a person to become a priest or to abandon priesthood / religious life, and to understand the interrelation of the psyche and of spiritual values (Champoux, 1977). Rulla (1986) employed the theory of theocentric self-transcendence to highlight the capacity of the human person to internalise religious and vocational values and the ability to transcend oneself toward the ultimate goal. According to Rulla (1986) the vocation to priesthood is the central ideal that seminarians hold, but that these ideals may be inconsistent with who or what the person actually is. In their research Rulla et al (1988) identified the existence of consistencies and inconsistencies raised by unconscious processes which impact positively or negatively on the behaviours of priests and religious life, which in turn limit the freedom of the person's self-transcendence (Rulla, 1986). Rulla's aim was to determine the personality characteristics of seminarians entering Catholic vocational training as well as the factors which motivate them to enter, to persevere or to leave priestly vocation (Rulla, 1989). However, Rulla's work did not take into account the potential importance of masculinity as an integral part of priestly identity and how social, cultural, racial and political factors may intersect with religious ideals in constructing a masculine identity as seminarian.

Keenan's (2012) research involved exploring narratives which emerged from in-depth interviews with priests who had abused minors. Keenan's findings point to other specific experiences in childhood and adolescence that may have constrained these men in how they

constructed their masculinity and their evolving sense of gendered self (2012, p. 144). Keenan (2012) constructed what she called the dominant or hegemonic model of priesthood, which she referred to as "perfect celibate clerical masculinity" (p. 245). She argued that:

> This model sees the identity of the priest/religious as based on priestly or religious role and gender or maleness as merely a secondary consideration… the individual is a priest or religious brother first and only secondly is he a man… masculinity is based on purity and chastity. Celibacy is seen as a gift from God for which the individual must pray. Sex and sexual expression is construed as a set of "acts". Sexual desire and emotional intimacy are seen as a threat to the celibate commitment. Intimacy with men is also construed as a threat in particular because of the underlying 'Church policy on homosexuality… clergy are seen as set apart and set above… human perfection is the aim in serving God, and failing to achieve perfection is interpreted as personal failure and must be covered up.

The methods used in forming and training seminarians for priesthood are demanding and are difficult for priests to escape. Her analytical work suggested that priesthood emerges from the group of men who have built their clerical masculine identity on a notion of perfect celibacy. Keenan (2015) suggested that there is a need to move from individualistic perspectives of priesthood to a more relational perspective of priestly masculinity which incorporates cultural, theological and organisational factors in an attempt to explain and understand the life and problems of priests in all its dimensions.

2.9.6   Challenges to the psychological evaluation of seminarians

In the last fifty years the Church has faced challenges which have called for more careful attention in the crisis of masculinity and psychological dimensions in evaluating and educating

seminarians in their vocation to priesthood / religious life. Issues pertaining to the role of clerical culture, which contain a sense of privilege, entitlement, separateness and status, and the inability of some priests to be faithful to the vow of celibacy, have called for careful psychological attention (Feathergill, 2010). In addition to these dimensions, the crisis of child sexual abuse by clergy of the Catholic Church has also disabled and destabilised the pastoral mission of the Church.

Feathergill (2010) argues that not only does the psychological evaluation screen for mental health issues among candidates for priesthood, but the psychologist must also address a variety of questions and evaluate all aspects of the life of seminarians, including their vocational suitability. The evaluation becomes controversial in the sense that the personal and private realms of applicants must be examined, including issues such as their sexual history (Doyle & Rubino, 2003). Sperry (2010) identified clericalism, or what was known as the downside of clerical culture, which fosters narcissistic entitlement, emotional immaturity, an authoritarian style of ministerial leadership, a rigid hierarchical worldview and identification of holiness and grace in the Church with the clerical state. For the vocation and education of the seminarians, McElvany (2012) citing Keenan (2012) points out that a theoretical system of masculinity is needed to aid understanding of how priests and the religious negotiate and integrate their emotional, spiritual, sexual, as well as social aspects into their priesthood. McElvany (2012) in reviewing Keenan's work, argues that priests and the religious find other ways of managing the conflicting demands on their identity, e.g. through sexual relationships with other adults, often in the context of an emotionally abusive relationship. Sexual abuse within the Catholic Church is seen as a breakdown of relationships within the gendered context of power relations, organisational culture, theological deliberation and social conditions.

If the seminary training, the dysfunctional power culture, and the secrecy surrounding sexuality and masculinity pervade the daily lives of the ordained, why then is the problem not even more prominent?

There have been challenges in conducting psychological assessments of seminary applicants (Feathergill, 2010, p. 6). Sperry (2010) argues that we must remember that the role of psychologists in the assessment and screening of candidates for priesthood is descriptive and not capable of predicting future behaviour. Given the extent of clerical problems, one area in need of re-evaluation is formation in sexuality and celibacy.

2.10 Conclusion and link to this research

The review of literature concerning the construction of masculinity by seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church describes a certain masculinity which favours hegemonic masculinity. However, seminarians are also challenged in their masculinity to construct a masculinity which calls for identification with the masculinity of Christ. The review points out that masculinity is a complex phenomenon that can only be studied in its plurality.

The review has indicated that gender impacts not only on the life of young men and women but also the vocation of seminarians in the Catholic Church for it reminds us that both religion and gender are centrally implicated in unequal distributions of power, and that their interplays serve and seek to reinforce existing distributions of power or to change them. This approach draws attention to the importance of power in the study of masculinity as constructed in the Catholic Church and in society at large (Woodhead, 2007). However, to date little attention has been given to the investigation of issues of masculinity in the Roman Catholic seminarians. It is this gap that constitutes the focus of the present study.

The issues discussed in the chapter are, in varying ways, relevant to the manner in which South African seminarians construct their masculinity. It is not possible to analyse all the factors

impinging on this construction into a coherent and cohesive argument. Some of the factors that need to be considered are parallel to each other. This chapter strove to provide a background panorama of positions, discussions and arguments that each in its own way has relevance to the topic under investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study employed qualitative research methodology to investigate the construction of masculinity by seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church and the implications for living of this priesthood masculinity.

In this chapter I state the research aim, research questions, as well as discuss the research design and methodology. Furthermore, I also discuss the sampling procedures, the participants and the method of data collection and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of research quality and ethical considerations.

3.2 Aim of the research

This study aims to explore how seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity and the challenges they face in the process of constructing priesthood masculinity.

The questions of this research are:

1. How do seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church construct masculinity?

2. How does the construction of masculinity impact on their perception of the Catholic priesthood, and vice versa, with particular reference to priestly celibacy?

3. How do seminarians perceive their relationships with women, and how do they position priests in relationship to women in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa?

Given the aim of the study and these research questions, and bearing in mind that the concept of masculinity is a phenomenon that has not been fully researched and explored among candidates for priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa, the researcher adopted the qualitative research stance as a methodological approach to explore understandings of seminarians' masculinity as men and as students for priesthood. This study used the social constructiovist framework and a qualitative methodology approach to investigate the masculinity of seminarians and respond to the research questions stated above.

In this study the researcher was especially interested in exploring and understanding the ways in which seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church construct masculinity and the challenges they face in the process of constructing priesthood masculinity. The qualitative mode of inquiry was thus deemed a suitable methodology for this research because it is more concerned with idiographic accounts that provide context-specific and particular descriptions (Whitley, 2002). This mode differs from quantitative research methodology which assumes a nomothetic approach with the aim of arriving at universal laws and patterns. Qualitative research basically stresses the processes and meanings that people make out of their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and allows for an unstructured or semi-structured inquiry where the possibility of the researcher imposing her own meaning on the area of investigation is minimised and the participants' accounts of their experiences can come to the fore (Lynch, 2008).

3.3 Research design

Research methods have become ways of "approaching a question…" but first we need to identify our goal and be able to justify our choice of the research methods (Willig, 2001, p. 2).

Research aims to do an in-depth exploration (Silverman, 2005; Patton, 1990) of the research participants. This research study seeks to understand the challenges seminarians face in the process of constructing priesthood masculinity. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher to explore how seminarians developed meaning and constructed their masculine identity in everyday life whilst training for priesthood. Qualitative research methods allow researchers to perform deep and detailed explorations of the particular problems or issues experienced by the participants (Durrheim, 2006). Working from the qualitative perspective, one needs to take participants' accounts seriously; making sense of and understanding what participants tell the researcher so that the researcher can use the participant's story and their experiences (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). These requirements have guided this research in order to enhance and clarify the aim and to respond to the research questions.

This qualitative research design is interpretive in nature, based on the assumption that the participants' construction of masculinity is structured by the context (world and institution) in which they live and how they individually create meaning out of their experience of being men and training to be priests of the Catholic Church. My choice of the interpretive approach made it possible for participants to explore their subjective experience in regard to who they are (as men) and who they are becoming (as priests). The interpretive nature of this research focused on capturing the in-depth wealth of experiences the participants presented (Riessman, 2008; Ulin, Robinson, Tolley & McNeill, 2002). On grounds of this the participants' stories are considered to be master narratives used for understanding and exploring how they define and manage their experiences towards making sense of who they are (Riessman, 2008). In other words, the participants are in the best position to voice their conception of masculinity and priesthood construction, including the position from which their masculinity is constructed.

The interpretive process I used involved interviewing and transcribing data into text, identifying and sorting out the themes, contradictions, conflicts as well as oppositions, and

drawing conclusions about what was observed. In this process the field notes journal proved to be useful as Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 15) argued that "the interpretive practice of making sense of one's finding is both artful and political." In the same way the field notes were used as working interpretive documents representing my initial attempts at data interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

3.4 The study sample

The study focused on seminarians at St. Joseph's Theological Institute in South Africa as members of the research sample. Seminarians are male students who study and are formed to be priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

The researcher used purposive sampling as a means of selecting participants who will yield an accurate representative sample for the study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This was based on the knowledge that the students for priesthood meet the characteristics of the construction of masculinity in the context of the Catholic Church. Purposive sampling was regarded as appropriate as it allowed the researcher to recruit participants whose characteristics make them likely to be information-rich cases (Sullivan, Gibson & Riley, 2012). The seminarians for formation in the Roman Catholic Church must all be single and male, they must study for priesthood in the Catholic Church for a period of at least seven to ten years, and they must live in a community of males and supposedly be capable of leading celibate lives. Their formators are all males and most of their teachers and lecturers are males. In this context, participants in this study were deemed likely to generate useful data about seminarians' construction of masculinity and the challenges they face in constructing priesthood masculinity. The strength of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for the in-depth study (Patton, 2006). "Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a

great deal about issues of importance to the purpose of the research" (Sullivan et al, 2012, p. 169).

This study was restricted to South African Roman Catholic students for priesthood because it was specifically interested in how seminarians/students for priesthood in South Africa construct masculinity in the context of priesthood, and the impact this has on their perception of the Catholic priesthood with particular reference to priestly celibacy. It was purposive because seminarians were able to give an account of how they perceive their relationships with women and how they position priesthood in relationship to women in the Roman Catholic Church. This generated useful data for this research. Because St. Joseph's is an international theological institute, the sample was drawn from seminarians of different religious congregations existing in South Africa, e.g. diocesans, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Missionaries of Africa, Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries, Third Order Franciscans, and various others in the different provinces of South Africa. One participant is of Polish origin but has South African citizenship. The intention of sampling in this way was to draw participation from different formation backgrounds in order to ensure that a representative variety of information about seminarians' masculinity and priesthood was collected.

The St. Joseph's Theological Institute is 25 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg where the researcher was living and studying, therefore it was easy and relatively inexpensive to travel to Cedara. The institute caters predominately for male students and the lecturers are also predominantly male. There are a few women students in Theology and Development Studies. However, this research study focused only on male students who are training to become priests.

3.4.1 Demographic table of participants

Race categories	Study level	Total no.	Age
White	4th year Theology	1	33
Black	Philosophy & Theology 1st – 4th year	7	22 – 31
Indian	4th year Theology	1	32
Coloured	3rd year Theology	1	29

3.4.2 Participants

As seen above one participant was white, one Indian, one coloured and the rest were Africans. Some of the African participants came from Tswana, Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa tribes. All participants were Theology students except one philosophy student who was also training for priesthood. It was anticipated that data collected from different religious congregations, different ethnical backgrounds and different dioceses would enrich the findings on the basis that they present a diversity of experiences of perception of masculinity and priesthood. The language of participation was English and participants were willing and had the verbal ability to provide rich descriptions of how they construct masculinity and their vocation to priesthood.

3.4.3 Procedure

Participants were recruited through St. Joseph's Theological Institute of which the President of the Institute and the Dean of Studies were the gatekeepers. The first step in the data collection process was to gain informed consent from the President and Dean of Studies (Appendix D). As put by Sullivan et al (2012, p. 44): "people who control your access to potential participants

are called 'gatekeeper". However, the researcher could not conduct the interviews and proceed with this study before obtaining ethical clearance.

In order for this study to be conducted the researcher obtained Ethical Clearance to proceed from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix E). Since participants of the study were being formed and trained for priesthood and living under the guidance of their formators/superiors, permission to approach the seminarians was also initially obtained from the formators. Informed consent was obtained from the participants themselves (Appendix C).

3.5 Data collection methods

It was anticipated that the interview format would generate data regarding seminarians' understanding of themselves as men and as priests, and that the ways in which they construct masculinity would respond to the research aim and research questions.

The researcher conducted face-to-face in-depth individual interviews, drawing on questions obtained from the interview schedule (Appendix A). The in-depth semi-structured interview (Riessman, 2008; Silverman, 2005) focused on various aspects of masculinity and priesthood and obtained the necessary information and answers to the research questions concerning seminarians' construction of masculinity, meaning that perceptions of the Catholic priesthood with regard to priesthood and celibacy could be explored. Individual interviewing is identified as the most common method of data collection allowing for an exploration of issues that may be too difficult or complex to explore through quantitative methods (Schurink, 1998). In-depth interviews provide the richest source of data relating to how participants make sense of their own life experience (Parker, 1995; Schurink, 1998) as they prepare themselves for priesthood. Individual in-depth interviews also provided insights into the challenges that seminarians face when negotiating multiple voices of masculine identity and how they understand these challenges and their experience of training for priesthood.

3.6 Data analysis methods

The study used thematic analysis, which enabled the researcher to focus on the meaning, themes and assumptions behind the participants' version of their story (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and the language, words and phrases they used in their constructions. This allows for careful consideration and to be clear and concise when analysing the data (Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2001). Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 83) suggest that thematic analysis can be used to "provide a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme or group of themes, within the data." Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that a theme encapsulates the important aspects of data and reflects the same degree of shared and/or common meaning across the collected data. Using thematic analysis the researcher identifies, analyses and reports patterns/themes and ideas/views generated from the data with the aim of interpreting and deconstructing the meaning participants make (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) provide six guidelines for analysing data and these phases of thematic analysis are: i) familiarising yourself with your data, ii) generating initial codes, iii) searching for themes, iv) reviewing the themes, v) defining and naming themes, and vi) producing the report.

3.6.1   Familiarising myself with the data

Collecting the data by myself was helpful as it was a means to engaging myself in the analysis. Before developing the themes, I read and reread the data collected to familiarise and immerse myself in it. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 16) state that "it is vital that you immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content." Familiarising myself in the data was taxing as it involved repeated reading of the data. However, this helped me to search for meanings and patterns as they emerged in the data.

Reading through the entire data set before starting to code was ideal. It shaped ideas and identified possible theme patterns which shaped the research.

Terre Blanche et al (2006) argued that familiarising oneself with the data is essential in the data analysis process as it ensures the researcher's knowledge of her data and also ensures that she knows well enough what information was found across the transcripts and what was said by particular participants. As I was interviewing participants, there were some initial thoughts and interests that emerged (these I wrote down in my notebook). The researcher uploaded the interviews from the digital recorder to the computer and labelled them using pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality. I then transcribed all the interview narratives into written form verbatim as "a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology" (Bird, 2005, p. 227). In order to familiarise myself with the content of the data I repeatedly read the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and recorded new information in my notebook.

3.6.2   Generating initial codes

In the next step the researcher developed specific codes or categories that guided what data should be included and/or discarded from the analysis. The aim of this initial coding was to keep the research as focused as possible (Davies and Eagle (2007) and to organise the data extracts into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005). While generating initial codes attention was paid to specific phrases and discourses (Jefferson, 2004; Denzin, 1995; Edwards & Potter, 1999) of participants in regard to their construction of masculinity. Each research question was given codes which stretched across all the data to ensure that I do lose any relevant information (Bryman, 2001). I collated all the codes into a long list which enabled me to search for themes. On a separate sheet I listed the emerging themes and looked for connections between them. The whole process was done manually as I did not use any computerised programme.

3.6.3   Searching for themes

After generating the initial codes the researcher sorted out all the relevant codes into themes and matched them with related data extracts. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 10) point out that "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." As coding is time consuming and tiring, it is important to focus on what counts as a pattern/theme, or to note carefully what "size" a theme needs to be? The process was then repeated for all of the individual transcriptions with a list of themes which were ordered coherently (Langa, 2012). From this, major themes and sub-themes were identified.

3.6.4   Reviewing the themes

A review of the themes enabled me to survey all the themes across each participant's data and relate them to the research aim and questions and the entire data set against the extracts to ensure that there is a coherent pattern correlating them to each other (Patton, 1990). Some of the themes that did not match were reworked and refined to reflect accuracy of meaning among the data set as a whole based on the theoretical assumptions.

3.6.5   Defining and naming themes

Defining the themes is an important part of the researcher's work. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes can be defined and refined by identifying the essence of each theme. As it is essential to give a detailed description of each theme, I compiled an analysis and identified which particular themes are important (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage I focused on the

research questions that each theme sought to capture. In order not to over-labour the themes, some themes were further subdivided.

3.6.6   Producing the report

After working out all the themes and doing the coding the researcher proceeded with the final analysis and the compilation of the report. At this stage the researcher dealt with the data analysis by introducing the ideas, views, ideologies and positions that inform the theme. Also, I presented data extracts to support the report and in each case attention was paid to the language employed in the extract to communicate meanings and ideas.

3.7 Researcher reflexivity

Qualitative data analysis underlines the importance of a researcher's reflexivity. Reflexivity is the researcher's critical self-awareness. It is a process by which a researcher evaluates herself, listens to participants' feelings and observes their behaviour (Ulin et al, 2002). Personal and professional information about the researcher and experience, training and perspective enhance the credibility of the research (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) argued that such information may affect data collection, analysis and interpretation, and also helps readers to better interpret the research. According to Patton (2002, p. 566) "the essence of such a step is that the researcher is the instrument in the qualitative inquiry". This researcher reflexivity guides the researcher to present relevant information about herself and the instrument of this qualitative inquiry.

Masculinity construction by Catholic seminarians has interested and challenged me for some time. It has called for the evaluation of my own values, experiences, interest and commitment to my faith and religious ideologies which I share with seminarians and priests in the Catholic

Church. As a Catholic woman religious, with experience of religious life for more than 25 years, I have an insider perspective which has both merits and demerits (Patton, 2002). My interest in how seminarians construct masculinity is informed by my general interest in gender, and how it is constructed in the Catholic Church. The notion of masculinities and femininities pervades many areas of social life and often determines what actions are available for men and women. Through personal experience I began to gain an awareness of certain narrow and seemingly rigid constructions of masculinity to which men and in particular priests often feel compelled to conform. Through my work in the Church I have gained knowledge and understanding of contextual relationships within priestly formation, the working relationship of priests and women in pastoral experiences, and the position of power that priests hold in the South African church and society. In this case I have the advantage of contextual experiences of relationship dynamics in religious life and priesthood where power relations conveyed through the hierarchical structure of the Church has privileged seminarians and priests in many ways. I have also witnessed and experienced the Church's gender position of women as inferior which often causes women difficulty in defining who they are and who they ought to be (Eze, 2012). Moreover, I was known to participants and have been a teacher and formator, and have accompanied seminarians and young priests in their spiritual and personal growth. It was important for me to be aware of how my identity will affect and influence my choice of the topic and my interaction with seminarians. In this regard it was important for me to be aware of my "own countertransference" (Langa, 2012, p. 124) when interviewing seminarians.

My own concern was mainly that participants would be reluctant to share their experiences of formation and priesthood with somebody who, in addition to other perceived differences, is not a priest. A question that kept surfacing when preparing for the interviews was 'how will participants trust me as a researcher?' In this regard it was useful to establish rapport with

participants before the interviews began by communicating with them and explaining the nature of the study.

As mentioned earlier, I conducted interviews with ten participants. I also recorded my impression of the interview processes in my journal, stating whether the interviews were easy or difficult, and whether there were unexpected aspects which arose during the interviews. The participants did not have any objection about the interview being recorded. I also used a journal to write down my field notes and my personal reflections immediately after interviewing each participant.

3.8 Storing data

The data collected for this research were safely locked in a cabinet at the researcher's home. They were accessible only to me and on my password-protected personal computer.

3.9 Research quality

Davers (1999) emphasised that when conducting research, whether it be qualitative or quantitative, and the researcher must establish and maintain the quality of the research. The quality of qualitative research rests on how a researcher persuades the audiences and ensures that the findings of an inquiry are "worth paying the attention to and worth taking the account of" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). In order to address these challenges and enhance the credibility of this study and its conclusions (Schram, 2005, p. 173), the researcher followed the fundamental criteria presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985) of trustworthiness expressed through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.9.1 Credibility of the findings

The credibility of the research involves whether the findings are plausible. The findings must convince the reader that the researcher has presented a "true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny" (Shenton, 2004, p. 63). For this to be realised the researcher must consider the issue of credibility. Credibility focuses on the confidence of the researcher about her research, and points to the truth of the findings, including an accurate understanding of the context. In other words the findings must be consistent in terms of the explanations they give and the narrative data must be sufficiently rich to support the specific findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To ensure the credibility of the study I first conducted the interviews to collect data from seminarians from different congregations and in different stages of their theology and philosophy courses. The data collected from these contexts ensured that multiple perspectives were engaged, some being complementary to and others portraying dissonance in the positions/voices between the different groups. After transcribing the interviews I offered each participant (seminarian) a transcribed e-copy of his interview to confirm whether it accurately represented his opinions or stories and no participant refuted the information contained in the transcribed text. This also allowed me to clarify certain issues arising from the interview which needed clarification. I used verbatim extracts to allow participants' own voices to become transparent in the findings. I provided background information of the participants when using their excerpts which I elicited during the interviews. Such information helped to convey the actual situation and thus added credibility to the findings.

3.9.2 Transferability (Is the result applicable or relevant to other contexts?)

At the heart of the issue of transferability is the question "how might my inquiry contribute to an understanding of similar issues in other settings" (Schram, 2005 p. 59)? The idea in this is to render the findings of the study transferable to other contexts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My response to this is that I have provided an accurate account of a sample population which reflect the subjects being studied, the key issues in the research problem, and the context in which seminarians are positioned. I am thus of the opinion that transferability is possible when similar contexts are selected for study. This particular study was focused on Roman Catholic seminarians in South Africa and a diverse sample was drawn to ensure that multiple perspectives were included in the findings. Thus the findings generated satisfied the conceptual requirement of qualitative research (Ulin et al, 2002).

3.9.3 Dependability (Do the data have the same meaning asserted by the researcher?)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) established a link between credibility and dependability, noting that "there can be no credibility without dependability" (p. 316). From this perspective, in order to ensure dependability I evaluated my research question to find whether or not the research questions are clear and logical in reference to the proposed research design. I also evaluated the data I reported on to say what I meant them to say and to determine whether a reader can depend on the meaning I ascribe to the data presented in the study. In response I will say my research questions are clear and that I maintained the focus on exploring how seminarians construct masculinity, which I regularly discussed with my supervisor in the process of developing the research design and method. Therefore, dependability is used as a criterion for judging the trustworthiness of research and to ask whether the researcher systematically followed the step-by-step process of research (Patton, 2002, p. 546). I followed an acceptable

qualitative and narrative inquiry research procedure which fits the contextual nature of my study. This included selecting participants, using interview guides, conducting and recording the in-depth interviews, as well as transcribing, coding, analysing and reporting the interviews. The steps that I took have also proven successful in previous studies similar to mine (Brock, 2007, 2010; Eze, 2012). This systematic process confirms the reliability, transferability and validity of my study.

3.9.4 Confirmability (What is the extent of the researcher's bias, interest or neutrality?)

To ensure the confirmability of my study I asked myself whether the findings were grounded in data and themes, and whether the categories and inferences could be logically derived from the data. Irrespective of my interest, uncertainty and bias, I asked myself whether others can confirm my findings. Confirmability as a criterion focuses on the degree to which the researcher's bias, interest or motivation influences the result of the study. Moreover, confirmability involves ensuring whether the results of the study reflect the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than a reflection of the researcher's preferences and motivation (Shenton, 2004). I kept an audit trail record (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of all communication and transitions regarding this study. These include the raw data: uncoded transcripts, recordings, field observation notes, participants' letters of consent, interview guides and a write-up of the procedures and research experiences including a methodological reflection. These documents are there to prove the research is focused and grounded in data obtained from the participants. In addition my personal journal notes serve as evidence of self-reflexivity that has helped me check the level of interference of my personal interests and values. Reflexivity has enhanced the confirmability of the study (Ulin et al, 2002) because it has helped me to distinguish my personal interest and values from those of the study participants.

3.10   Ethical considerations

Due to working with human subjects, ethical concerns were taken into consideration as far as possible. As argued by Babbie and Mouton (2006), interaction with people and their environment often calls for a perusal of ethical issues. The first essential step was to seek ethical clearance and this was granted by the Social Science Research Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix E). Secondly the President and Dean of Studies at the St. Joseph's Theological Institute granted me the necessary permission to conduct the study and a letter of permission was also obtained (Appendix D). The ethical requirements regarding participation in a research project demand that participation is free. The current research did not foresee any risk for participants but certain ethical considerations were still adhered to in order to protect participants' wellbeing and interests. Participants were ensured confidentiality (to ensure these pseudonyms were allocated to the participants and all identifying particulars were erased). I also obtained specific permission from participants to record interviews and this constituted an important aspect of the study. A consent form (Appendix C) which described the purpose of the study was provided to participants and also detailed what their participation would involve. Participants were informed that participation is voluntary and that they had the right to discontinue participation at any point in the research if they felt uncomfortable. In order to ensure that participants understood the details in the consent form the researcher went through the form together with participants before commencing the interview sessions. As all the participants were of the required legal age to give their own consent, informed consent was obtained prior to commencement of the interviews. The uploaded interviews were protected through the use of passwords and the transcribed interviews were appropriately labelled and always kept in a secure place where the researcher was the only one person with access. The researcher will delete the digital interviews and shred the transcripts after the study has been completed according to the requirements of the University. After the data transcriptions had

been completed the researcher offered each participant a transcribed copy of his interview to confirm whether it accurately represented his opinions and stories shared. It is the intention of the researcher to provide a copy of this research to St. Joseph's Theological Institute. Again as a public document, copies of this research will be sent to the library of the University of KwaZulu-Natal when the research is completed and has been approved by the University.

3.11   Conclusion

This study sought to understand how seminarians of the Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity and the impact this has on the conception of their priesthood. In this chapter the researcher has presented how the research was conducted. I started the chapter by stating that this was a qualitative empirical research investigation aimed at exploring and understanding the work of seminarians' masculinity construction in the Catholic Church. I then proceeded to make known my methodology, narrative inquiry, and the reasons for these choices. The researcher also presented the methods used to recruit participants, as well as to collect and analyse the data. Finally the criteria and strategies used to ensure that the study is methodologically and ethically sound were outlined and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces and presents the themes derived from the thematic analysis of the data. The chapter intends to present the findings of the analysis based on the research aim and on the research questions participants responded to.

The research questions which informed the analysis are:

4.1.1   How do seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church construct masculinity?

4.1.2   How does the construction of masculinity impact on seminarians' perception of the Catholic priesthood and vice versa, with particular reference to priestly celibacy?

4.1.3   How do seminarians position priests in relation to women in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa?

The results in this chapter identify the emerging themes around masculinity and priesthood with regard to how seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct their masculinity. This chapter also seeks to discuss the findings on how the construction of masculinity impacts on seminarians' perception of the Catholic priesthood with particular reference to the challenges of priestly celibacy. It also evaluates how seminarians perceive their relationship with women and how they position priests in relation to women in the Catholic Church. This chapter reports on the positive aspects of priesthood as well as the challenges the seminarians face in the process of constructing priesthood masculinity, focusing on their understanding and interpretation while reporting on their experiences of masculinity and how this has impacted on their priesthood.

4.2   How do seminarians of the Catholic Church construct masculinity?

The construction of masculinity by seminarians will be presented firstly under the discourse of

the construction of a "real man" as derived from various themes and then under the impact this

has on the Roman Catholic priesthood. In defining the construction of a supposed "real man",

participants gave different opinions of what a "real man" must be and how he should behave.

4.2.1   Seminarians' construction of a real man

According to participants some cultural and priesthood characteristics constitute what a real

man is in terms of masculinity construction. The following extracts describe and explain what

a real man is and how he should behave.

> "For me a real man should be the person who is responsible, who can go a little
> bit ahead to see what is going to happen to foresee things" (Br. Olorato, fourth
> year Theology).
> "..a real man is someone with a strong character, someone who is respectful, a-
> ja, who respects women, who respects children who respects other men in
> society. So men in a sense they are regarded as role models to their kids and
> they are regarded as fathers of household who are responsible for their families.
> Real men are people who look after their families, who respect their families
> and love their families" (Br. Realeboga, fourth year Theology).

From the above extracts, responsibility, respect and strong character define a real man. For

seminarians, a real man is responsible, not only for himself but also for his family and

household. His respect is also extended to other men in society. Participants emphasised that a

real man portraying these characteristics becomes a role model to his children. However, for

these characteristics to be realised a real man must develop a strong character which will enable

him to recognise his role as a father of his household. In other words, the construction of a real

man also entails the psychological aspect of developing a strong character that will enable men

to take responsibility in their lives and families. The values of a real man in this context does

not differ much from the construction of a priest, as priests are also required to be responsible

and respect others, including women and children. The following extracts go further in describing a real man by emphasising the traditional construction of being a real man.

"Being a man is being in control of the family" (Br. Sebusiso, fourth year Theology).

"A real man is the head of the family, he makes the decisions and provide for the family. A man is a protector, a provider, and a leader." (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

"We define ourselves by being strong and standing our grounds and defending our family and defend ourselves."(Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

"Seminarians remain men when they study for priesthood, sexually they remain men, physically they remain men, what they inherited from the society and the expectation of the society is that they remain men" (Br. Olorato, fourth year Theology).

From these extracts it is evident that the participants referred to real men as being strong, powerful, wise and authoritative decision makers. The extracts define the physical characteristics of being a real man. Additionally, men are regarded as the representatives of their families and should provide for their wellbeing. Participants indicated that a real man is identified by leadership qualities such as respect, physical and psychological strength, and the ability to protect a family. The characteristics of a real man in an African family are emphasised in the following extracts:

"As I said we are built to be who we are by the society. A lot is expected of me in the family since I am a first born; I have to continue the name of a family. I am from a family of four children, my parents are still alive, we are all still alive the six of us. It was expected that I continue the name of the family; I should look after the family. So I started working in 1997 for part time, but when I finished I went to join the Oblates because my younger sister could not get into marriage before me" (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology). "for us as Africans we believe that a son should get married and bring children in the family and to extend the surname of the family, and since I am the only son at home, they thought that maybe they will receive a daughter in law, but now? So men in the family are to extend the family" (Br. Abel, second year Theology).

From this extract it is clear that marriage and family life form a central part of being a real man. A real man plays the role of father in the family. He takes up the role of headship and is thus obliged to keep the family name alive and to extend the family. Masculinity for participants is basically culturally and socially perceived as an embodiment of maleness in a family. Man's position as masculine is found in the family building and is extended to the son so that he continues the legacy of the father. The two extracts exclude the role of a daughter who also forms part of the family unit and a mother who gives birth to a son. The extracts indicate that the construction of a son as a man privileges the male gender.

4.2.2 Physical toughness and being strong

Participants regard bodily exercises as an essential aspect of being a real man. The idealised physical masculinity described in the text is constructed as attained through practices such as sports and physical exercises, and is regarded as the display of toughness and fitness. Seminarians constructed their masculinity through an emphasis on the physical strength of the male body as they are required to be physically healthy and strong in order to qualify for priesthood. The texts below suggest that manhood is rooted in toughness and physical strength and thus characterised as distinct from other masculinities that would display weak characteristics. The ways in which participants construct masculinity was reflected in the importance given to sports, physical toughness, and responsibilities towards their bodies.

> "To be responsible, be strong both physically and in character as you see me Sister, I am physically fit (he smiles)" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

> "For me being strong and tough is very important. As you know Sister that we have to be physically healthy and strong. Priesthood can be challenging and is not a child's play. For us we have sports every time and again to keep ourselves fit and sound" (Br. Edward, second year Philosophy).

> "My manhood is defined by my physical appearance and by my actions as a man; I have to show that I am a man, by being a responsible person, being powerful and being a protector" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

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As you look at me, I look strong, I grew up doing marshalling, I do weight lifting, I play football, that is how I wanted to appear in society; strong person" (Br. Mokwena, a fourth year Theology).

These participants supported the views of other seminarians. They also emphasise the importance of physical appearance which characterises the physical strength of a seminarian as a man. The physical health is achieved by taking part in sport such as football, weight lifting and walking. From these extracts, masculinity and health depend on bodily performance and the male body becomes vulnerable to illness or physical injury when the performance of masculinity cannot be sustained. For some participants, physical appearance and presence (body building through marshalling, and weight lifting) can be a powerful social tool in demonstrating the strength of a man. In other words, seminarians are expected to be physically strong and healthy in order to qualify for priesthood and thus as real men. Some seminarians concluded by pointing out that *"this is how I want to appear to the society, a strong person, a strong man."* This view of appearing good, healthy and strong is also informed by the expectations of the society as well as of priesthood; how men must appear. In other words, men are socially positioned as both physically and psychologically strong. Participants noted that strength of body and character is also a defining feature of masculinity. Thus for seminarians and priests to qualify as real men and as priests, they must be physically strong and healthy.

4.2.3 Emotional control and invulnerability

Some participants reported the meaning men give to their emotional and gendered lives, Brother Omolemo, a first year Theology student, described the emotional control of traditional men according to these features:

> "A man is not supposed to cry and that sometimes you should not share your problems, especially with women. As a man you should not share with anyone, you try to work on your own because you are a man."

For this participant being a real man means identifying and encouraging practices such as emotional control. This is common in many cultures, particularly African cultures, where men are restricted from sharing painful emotions or from crying. This construction of masculinity is coined in the narrative of Brother Leslie who could not express his painful feelings of being abandoned by his father because his culture requires of men to be strong. According to the notion of being a real man, the expression of feelings is deemed a sign of weakness and is regarded as a women's thing. This perception of being tough denies men the opportunity to express feelings, e.g. in children's relationship with their fathers or in showing feelings of vulnerability:

> "My father left me as a baby like I was told, I never knew him. He never wanted to be part of my life but it is Ok, I must remain strong and not show that I am weak, sometimes I wish he was part of me but I cannot express this pain because I am a man" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

This participant expressed the painful emotions of wishing to connect with his father, and described how painful it has been for him because he could not express his feelings openly on account of society's perception that men are not supposed to cry and must remain strong.

> "I think that a seminarian is fully in control of oneself. In another way that he governs himself, he controls himself; he channels himself in every aspect of life" (Br. Sibusiso, fFourth year Theology).

Participants felt that they must be tough and should make little or no mention of feelings. For seminarians, real men must have self-control, govern their lives, be self-reliant and be powerful. This does not allow for men to cry or to reveal their feelings, which are associated with weakness. Being able to contain one's emotions is seen as a feature of masculinity and is regarded as being part of a real man. Participants believe that public displays of emotion such

as crying and vulnerability in men are regarded by others as inadequate or weak. The inhibition of emotional expression was identified as a characteristic of masculinity which linked emotional control with power and strength. From these discourses it can be said that hegemonic masculinity has a profound impact on seminarians' construction of their own masculinity.

4.2.4 Masculinity and sexuality

For some participants sexual and emotional characteristics are essential for the construction of their masculinity. Participants argued that biological and psychological aspects of a man are important for masculinity construction. Participants emphasised that seminarians are real men with masculine characteristics.

> "When you become a seminarian you come to priesthood as a man. You are fully man and you come with all your manhood. Sexually I am a man biologically, my sexual feelings are alive, and they are not dead. I carry myself as a man. I am a man also in character and have characteristics of a man" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

> "Seminarians remain men, sexually they remain men. Physically they remain man, what they inherited from the society and the expectation of the society is that they remain men, but they try to live out the religious value as full as they can. They integrate many things with the life. The fact that they deal with people also influences their being. So they grow in a way that they become different" (Br. Olorato, fourth year Theology).

> "For me being a man is being able to channel my manhood, to respond to my manhood, like being able to respond to a woman. In this context being a man is being in control. In my family I am identified as a superior and I am identified as being a man, being a head of women" (Br. Sebusiso, fourth year Theology).

> "I am a man and I cannot differentiate or separate my manhood. As a seminarian I think is one of the requirements in the Church that for you to be a seminarian/priest you need to be a man" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

From the extracts above it is apparent that masculinity is socially constructed and understood in relation to the biological aspects of being a man. For the participants, human sexuality is at the core of one's being and gender identity. Participants showed that priesthood and

masculinity do not exist apart from each other. Only men can become priests in the Catholic Church. From the narratives, a priest or a seminarian must have a certain number of demonstrable characteristics that make it clear that he is not a woman. This implies that being a man is at the core of masculinity of the priesthood, and that priests are expected to demonstrate the characteristics of being men as well as being priests.

4.2.5   Cultural influence on seminarians

Cultural issues emerged where participants referred to the influence of culture in their construction of masculinity and priesthood.

> "in my culture, to settle an argument in Sesotho we say "Kgang ya monna e kgaolwa ka letlaka" (The phrase means that if men cannot find a way of resolving their problems or issues, they have to resort to physical fighting in order to resolve the problem), (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

> "Culturally we define ourselves with being strong and standing our grounds and defending our family. Being well in playing 'sticks' (playing with sticks is a Basotho way of teaching boys and young men to fight using sticks). I am coming from the Basotho cultural background we play 'sticks', you are a real man, you can stand your ground, you can defend yourself, and you can defend your animals and your family" (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

> "First of all, there is this issue of initiation, as a man I have to go to initiation school. You come back you come to society and the society expects something from you as a man. Now it somehow builds you to become a better person in the society" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

The extracts above show that certain practices, especially in the African culture, are important for the socialisation of boys into manhood. These serve as the preparatory stage for becoming a real man. Skills demonstrated in fighting with sticks, the ability to defend, hunting and circumcision are signs of the transition from boyhood to manhood. Brother Mokwena referred to the phrase included above when he explained the Basotho way of expressing one's capacity to strike and defend oneself at the same time. This is a powerful fighting skill that is practised

by men only, meaning that if you cannot argue anymore you resort to a physical fight to settle the matter. This understanding of seminarians that men employ force as a means of conflict resolution characterises hegemonic masculinity. The implication here is that hegemonic masculinity is strongly apparent in traditional life and protects men's practice of their manhood, thus seminarian masculinity is also characterised by hegemonic masculinity. These practices are considered important and are regarded as powerful tools for enhancing masculine qualities together with claims of power. Masculinity in this context develops in the product of cultural practices and cultural tradition. Some seminarians pointed out that their idea of masculinity is constructed by the culture within which they are socialised. In other words, their priesthood is influenced by traditional constructions of masculinity. In this view cultural and priestly values seem to influence each other.

4.3 How has the construction of masculinity impacted on seminarians' perception of the Catholic priesthood?

In this section themes of masculinity in relation to the priesthood emerge. Participants showed that their definition of masculinity goes well with that of priesthood, while in other instances they defined the masculinity of the priesthood as being distinct from that of other men. The extracts below point out the emerging themes defining seminarians as masculine men:

> "For me as a seminarian, as someone who is going to be a priest in the future… I am not going to have my own family or a family of mine. My family will be the Church and the people of God. So as a man in that family it means I will be someone who is somehow seen as a protector of the family at the same time a provider. In this sense, as a provider who will provide not for their physical needs but their spiritual needs so to say" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

According to the participants, the masculinity of priests, just like with other men, involves leadership, respect and spiritual fatherhood, indicating that like other men they also take decisions and assume responsibility for the Christian community.

> "For me to be a seminarian or a priest you remain a man, you go to priesthood
> and train in the seminary as a man (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

For some seminarians, being a man and being a priest cannot be separated since masculinity is a prerequisite for priesthood and vice versa. The extracts below indicate the participants' idea of priesthood masculinity:

> "I am a man and I cannot differentiate or separate my manhood. As a
> seminarian I think it is one of the requirements in the Church that for you to
> be a seminarian/priest you need to be a man" (Br. Lesego, third year
> Theology).

> "So as a man in that family it means I will be someone who is somehow seen
> as a protector of the family at the same time a provider. In this sense, as a
> provider who will provide not for their physical needs but their spiritual needs
> so to say" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

For seminarians, in order to become a priest, the candidate must first understand himself as a man and possess qualities that are assigned to men. The above extract indicates that participants regard themselves as members of the family of God; they are providers and shepherds who are able to take care of the flock of God. Commitment to priesthood and identifying themselves with the roles of men is therefore a primary aspect of their priesthood masculine identity. Priests, like traditional hegemonic men, are positioned as possessing authority through the family of the Church as leaders, as powerful, and as respected. The authority and power of a priest is exercised over others. Priests are constructed as men in the family of God, in that they are providers, protectors and shepherds of their community.

Participants constructed the priesthood in relation to their commitment, their free choice and the holiness of a priest. According to seminarians, priesthood possesses characteristics that imply certain obligations for them, e.g. respecting others, being responsible, being authentic, being committed and being holy. Seminarians see these qualities as the ideals of priesthood which they are obliged to strive for and which the society expects from them. Seminarians' understanding of priesthood / religious life is also focused on the values and norms of religious life which they construct in relation to priesthood masculinity. Other values and ideals which

the seminarians presented as their own understanding of priesthood / religious life include the priesthood of Christ, men of God, service to the people of God, love, commitment, being spiritual fathers, shepherds of the flock and the example of the manhood of Christ.

> "There is that conviction from us that we are called by God as ministers in the Church. So as people who are in the process and who are preparing for this great task, there is a lot that is expected from us" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

> "There's a… a… certain concern that… seminarians are holy people, but most of the time people just see seminarians as being detached from themselves, and they expect them to be perfect" (Br. Olorato, fourth year Theology).

> "You know, as a seminarian or someone who will be a future priest or something or be a teacher of morality we are expected to be someone with good example, yes, to take a leadership role" (Br. Realeboga, fourth year Theology).

The seminarians see the quality of holiness as what they are called to strive for but also which detaches them from being like other men, because they are expected to be good examples and good leaders. According to the participants, society sees a Catholic priest not only as a dispenser of the sacraments, a teacher, and a leader of the faithful, but also as a model displaying virtues of love, chastity, service and piety, which presupposes a life of prayer and service to the people of God. According to the seminarians the values and demands of priesthood / seminary life, e.g. prayer life, genuineness in their relationships with people, commitment, service and celibacy, position them to construct a masculinity that is different from that of other men. By means of these values and ideals they are set apart for the special service of God. Their lives are no longer theirs but Christ's (Eilers, 1999, p. 14); indeed it is Christ who lives in them (cf. Galatians 2:20).

> "I would say first of all I have to be a man before I can become a seminarian because I can't become a seminarian before I become a man. Being a seminarian I am on a way of becoming a priest and becoming a priest, I will be looking after a certain flock, meaning that I have to be responsible, a man

who is always accompanied by responsibility" (Br. Abel, first year Theology).

In addition, Brother Leslie indicated how training and learning have changed his way of thinking about masculinity and being a man. He must first be a man before he can be a seminarian/priest, learn responsibility and that his behaviour must be accompanied with responsibility.

> "I continue to be a man but my way of life changes in a certain way. Because of our studies, our concept of being a man who is aggressive, or abusive changes. I learn now to be a man who looks after people especially the poor and needy, I am now a spiritual father and a servant of others. Being a seminarian I cannot get married, I am not supposed to be involved in sexual relationships; I cannot go out time and again partying and drinking. I must look at who I am and what are my values" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

The extract suggests that being a seminarian/priest does not mean that you are no longer a man, although certain characteristics of traditional masculinity change when one becomes a seminarian: their studies channel them towards change and transformation. For some seminarians, men who are aggressive and abusive display qualities which are not deemed the qualities of a real man. Through the education of priesthood they adopt a non-hegemonic masculinity of caring for others, being a servant of others and being spiritual fathers. They described these ideals essentially as the calling of a man and of a priest. These factors do not conflict with the values of priesthood but rather reinforce them (values of respect are important for priesthood). The findings from the interviews suggest that these young men are making more informed choices about what aspects of the patriarchal male to keep and which to discard. At the same time the interviews highlighted the difference between masculinity as constructed by traditional norms and by non-traditional norms, and that seminarians construct some aspects of both. Brother Sebusiso, a fourth year Theology student, made a distinction between what masculinity might mean to him in terms of his priesthood and what society expects of

seminarians as men. For him, "*being a man who is a priest is to acknowledge one's strengths and limitations and to be able to transcend these limitations*" to be a transformed man. This participant links his understanding of a real man to a construction of masculinity that is neither perfect nor completely imperfect, and that the masculinity of seminarians comprises both the positive and negative characteristics of being a man.

Although all participants are unmarried by virtue of their vocation, they clearly portray the positive aspects of being a man in relation to family life. Their priestly identity and opinions are gained from the influence of their parents, especially their father's role. Some participants described the values of care, responsibility, respect and love as being characteristics of a real man and that these are required characteristics of priesthood masculinity. These suggest the discourse of non-traditional masculinity which seminarians argue make them different from other traditional men who aspire to power and domination. For some participants being a man and being a priest can be integrated, and being a priest can transform their perception of masculinity.

Seminarians pointed to the fact that "*being a priest will always influence the kind of man one is.*" A seminarian made a comparison of the masculinity of men in society and the masculinity of men in the Church (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology), stating that "*being a priest affects the kind of a man one is*". From this it can be seen that he symbolically differentiated being a "real man" from being a "priest": for him being a real man and a priest is like differentiating between "an ox and a bull". A bull symbolises the strength of a man and implies power and aggression as a form of maleness. The symbol of a bull could apply to the masculinity of men and the exercise of power they have over women and a form of masculine domination over others. On the other hand, priests are not physically castrated. The celibate masculinity is symbolically described as an ox, referring to the masculinity of a priest which is less aggressive and bears characteristics of understanding, caring, responsibility and commitment. Oxen and

bulls are both male; however, the aggression of an ox is diminished through castration. Whilst an ox symbolises patience, strength, service, endurance and sacrifice, seminarians associate the masculinity of the priesthood with these characteristics, in contrast with non-clerical masculinity. Thus the narratives of a bull and an ox indicate that seminarians referred to the masculinity of the priesthood as being different from other forms of masculinity. Some participants suggested that priesthood in some respects robs them of the traditional way of being men. According to seminarians priesthood has characteristics that involve obligation, being respected, being committed and striving to become holy. Seminarians see these qualities as the ideals of priesthood which they are obliged to adhere to and which society expects of them.

4.3.1   Celibacy and masculinity

Participants see the vow of celibacy as central to the identity of seminarians and priestly vocation. The vow of celibacy is not centred only on sexuality but entails all aspects of life.

> "I don't think celibacy is centred around sexuality only. There are many things which celibacy entails. My sexuality is a gift from God, I also appreciate that; how do I control it. Celibacy is also a gift from God how do I appreciate it, how do I control it, how do I integrate it to my sexuality, because sexuality has been there, celibacy is something that I encountered in the Catholic Church. So how do I integrate it to live my life simply in the Catholic Church" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

> "A man must have a partner, have children and have a family; also a man cannot live without a woman. Although this is a challenge, I have learned that it is possible to be a celibate because it is a choice that one makes (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

These seminarians understand celibacy as well as sexuality as gifts from God, and that one must acknowledge and appreciate this gift. A seminarian understands that while sexuality has been part of the human person, celibacy was constructed by the Roman Catholic Church. The

seminarian also speaks of elements of control and integration, indicating that sexual activities can be controlled by integration into the life of celibacy so as to live his life simply. In other words, while sexuality is basically a biological construction, celibacy is socially constructed. For seminarians, celibacy is an act of renunciation of marriage and sexual activity, but a masculinity that is respectful and caring, the masculinity of sharing with everyone and their identity as priests.

> "The vow of celibacy affects me as a person because it channels my sexuality towards the love that I have to share with everyone" (Br. Sebusiso, fourth year Theology).

According to some seminarians, celibacy is a choice, a commitment not to marry and a prerequisite for priesthood. Seminarians' celibacy is a way of becoming a responsible man and to learn self-control.

> "Celibacy for me is good especially for me as a young man who is aspiring to become a Catholic Priest. Why, because it somehow turns me to become a responsible man. Not just a responsible man but to become a responsible man who is able to control himself when it comes to sexual urges because I vowed this celibacy. This means that I am not going to get married, not at all unless I leave the Catholic priesthood" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

Participants view celibacy as part of their life and that men must have the ability to show self-control, abstinence and commitment to what one is called to. They argue that commitment to celibacy transcends sexual activities and gives them a new identity of priesthood. This extract points out that, according to participants, celibacy sets priests apart from all other men. Seminarians supported the masculinity of celibacy as a choice that a man can make. They argued that it is possible for a man to choose a celibate life for a purpose. Discussions on this issue were dominated by the capacity a man has to freely choose the masculinity they want to construct.

However, seminarians acknowledged the challenges they face in constructing priesthood masculinity and that celibacy cannot be reduced to sex.

"If we focus on the issue of sexuality, it means now we reduce celibacy only to sex, but now it is more, there is more to what we are talking about like sexuality. It does affect my sexuality somehow because as I said at the beginning, as a man I have feelings but now you come to the Catholic Church there is this issue of celibacy; how do you respond to celibacy, do you say ok now since there is this issue of celibacy, is it going to affect my sexuality. It is not going to affect my sexuality at all" (Br. Realeboga, fourth year Theology).

Some seminarians mentioned the challenges which the vow of celibacy imposes on them as men. The extract below suggests the challenge it imposes on them when dealing with their emotions.

"The vow of celibacy changes my perception of seeing life, my way of thinking. Certain things are natural things. Feelings are natural… there is nothing that you can do and you do not suppress them. You cannot also ignore them; they are there, so this is the kind of thing that challenges a person. That is where the vow of chastity or celibacy comes in, we turn it into the love and service to everyone. That is why personally I channel it… like before I came to this interview I told you that I have to mow the grass, because today is Friday. Someone can tell you that I want to go out for shopping. So we have different way of dealing with it but it is quite challenging" (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

For this participant thinking about sexual feelings and sexual activity is a natural way of being a man and sexual feelings are natural. However, his view of masculinity and understanding must be in agreement with his practice of celibacy, because celibacy is a potential choice that a man can make. For him the need to prove himself is not limited only to sexual activity, but that sexual feelings can also be channelled into activities such as leisure, sports and manual work.

"I don't know but I imagine that people who are not celibate look for a woman, then they marry and they kind of try to live with this woman, though they might feel attracted to many women but me I know that I am not attached to any woman I don't have a relationship with any woman which lasts. I can have few friends but I know that tomorrow I will be somebody else. So this growth does not continue the same way, is like I remain a teenager for a long time" (Br. Sibusiso, fourth year Theology).

This extract suggests a construction of masculinity where it is believed that having multiple partners is normal and necessary and that the practice of having multiple partners serves to define manhood. What also emerges in this extract is that seminarians, like other men, can also feel attracted to women, but are inhibited by their preparation to priesthood, celibate love and by the discipline of priestly life. If a priest has a romantic and sexual relationship with a woman, he must abandon her friendship and terminate any close contact with her.

> "Some of us just went to seminary without being explained thoroughly what celibacy means, because you are just told that you don't get married. Ok then since I am not getting married I can go out and get many girlfriends because I am not getting married. So I think the most important thing is that we need to be workshopped (to be educated). I think we need to be told and to understand exactly what is this thing I am taking and what is this thing I am following, because at the end of the day it will be like for me it is really a burden because I am not told. I was told that we don't get married but I was not told that we are not supposed to be involved or to have girlfriends. This is a burden; I think to be workshopped and to be told can make a difference" (Br. Abel, first year Theology).

This seminarian sees lack of education about sexuality and celibacy as problematic in seminarians' relationships with women. The seminarians feel that at times they fall into sexual relationships with women because of not being informed and being insufficiently prepared for the vow of celibacy.

4.4 How do seminarians position priests in relation to women in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa?

Responses to the question on how seminarians position priests in relation to women are presented under three sub-headings: (a) Seminarians' perception of their relationship with women; (b) The position of priests in relation to women; and (c) The role women play in the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.

4.4.1 How do seminarians perceive their relationship with women?

What became evident from the interviews is that seminarians reported different views on how they relate to women. They reported a positive but rather limited way of relating and interacting with women.

> "They say we men must respect women, care for them and submit to women, I think these are very important but it does not mean that we should submit to women's domination" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

> "Myself I see that the relationship with women is very important but it is different than it used to be before I was a seminarian. We have more limited contact with women than other men" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

> "If a lady can be too much competent..., it really becomes a challenge even to me personally, that no, no, she cannot talk like this. The problem is not what she says but the problem is how I was brought up. Although I would not express it but in my heart I will feel that I don't like it at all. But that is how we are taught that no a female figure cannot rise a tone (voice) above a man. That builds us to be who we are, to real men, yes." (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

Seminarians agree that relationships with women are important, although their cultural identity affects the kind of men they are. Seminarians argue that in their training they are taught to be gender sensitive, and they see their training in this regard as a Western mentality which is in contrast to the traditional African way of being a man and exercising their masculinity. They feel restricted in their relationships with women and feel constraint in their expression of feelings towards women.

> "most of the time when I try to invite one of the sisters or two of the sisters I will never be alone, I always call one of my brothers and also with the sister there is never one. There are always more of them" (Br. Omolemo, first year Theology).

According to the interview data, participants perceive seminarians' relationship with women as limited, restricted and as conditioned by many factors such as their status, celibacy and priesthood requirements. Some seminarians see the changes in society's positioning of women

as a threat to their manhood. They argued that some women are highly educated and hold top professional positions in society. These pose a threat to their masculinity in that some women are more educated than men.

> "Myself I see that the relationship with women is very important but it is different than it used to be before I was a seminarian. We have more limited contact with women than other men" (Br. Olorato, fourth year Theology).

> "In our institute here, we will be told to be gender sensitive; I find that a European mentality in the sense that as the Basotho we know our place, it is very clear. A man has to look after the family (men are the breadwinner), they control the family. So now you come here to the priesthood, it is different. So that is why I say our culture builds us to be like that". (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology).

> "Like as a man I have feelings maybe I will need a lady in my life I would need to go around and sleep with women. As a priest I am not expected to do that. So it is my responsibility to respond to this vocation with clear mind that even though I am a man, there are certain things that I cannot do as a man or as a priest in the Catholic Church" (Br. Lesego, third year Theology).

Some seminarians argued that priests may express fatherly love or the more general love of a shepherd but they should always establish boundaries in relation to women. They maintained that real men in the priesthood are also attracted to women and that they can be vulnerable, but maturity is required in their relationship with women. Seminarians indicated that priests must be able to have a respecting, healthy heterosexual relationship that is built on the values of chastity and celibacy. However, some seminarians resist the idea of gender equality and argued that it does not reflect the construction of traditional masculinity.

> "Now men are supposed to be weak and be submissive and dominated by women. Really sister I hate that. You see a man cooking for his wife, being controlled and dominated by women. For me this is not being a real man" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

> The participant also said:

> "I mean even St. Paul talks about women respecting their men and men loving their wives. Jesus had women friends, he associated with women, but he remained a man. He never changed his manhood for women. He respected them but he remained a man and fully man".

The discourse of fear of competition and ambivalence in relationships with women also emerged. Participants reported feeling that men's superiority is challenged by women's academic studies, women's competitiveness and competency. Seminarians also argued that women's professions and competency invite them to be recognised in leadership. Women's involvement in the leadership of the Catholic Church is significant, it challenges the dominance and power held by priests and by the male authority of the Church. The position women hold in society allows them to participate in the Church's activities and leadership. This position of women tends to become a threat to men and to seminarians as well.

> "Well for me I would say that as a priest you will always work with women and it's always good to have a healthy relationship with the people that you are working with because most of the time it is something that we see in parishes; people who come to Church are mostly women, men don't come to Church. So mostly you will find yourself in a situation whereby you are working mostly with women. It is always good for you as a priest to have that healthy kind of relationship with women" (Br. Realeboga, fourth year Theology).

The participant in this extract emphasises the importance of relationships that enhance a healthy working atmosphere.

> "It should be a relationship that is based on respect. Because I have seen whereby… there are certain situations whereby priests have not been relating well to women and in that it causes division and confusion in a set up" (Br. Omolemo, first year Theology).

Seminarians acknowledge the fact that while some priests seem able to effectively assimilate and internalise the ideals of the priestly vocation and ministry, in the service of the Church and his people, others experience considerable difficulty in attaining a stable sense of priestly identity, which often holds negative consequences for the individual and those to whom he ministers. For participants the inability to relate well is not unmasculine.

4.4.2　Position of priests in relation to women

Seminarians claimed that one cannot become a seminarian or a priest before one becomes a man and this is essential for the gender relationship of priests and for the Roman Catholic priesthood.

> "Many priests have a good and healthy relationship with women. There are some priests who do not tolerate working with women, and there is sometimes tension between the two. There are women who are very controlling and will go as far as controlling the lives of priests and this becomes a problem. There are priests who take advantage of the vulnerability of women, we see and hear about the scandal of priests in the media, I mean we cannot deny this, it is a reality. Sometimes these allegations are false but others are true. But generally the relationship is good. I mean for some of us, women and mothers have played a good role in bringing us up when our fathers were not available. Personally I was brought up by a woman and she played an important role in my life. She was a Christian and taught me Christian and Catholic values. In the Catholic Church we take the motherhood of Mary and her benevolent heart. That is good for us; it has helped us to value women" (Br. Leslie, fourth year Theology).

And another brother:

> "Mm… We have more limited contact with women than other men. We have also personal but… more limited than it used to be before being a seminarian. For me I see there is a need to grow in this area among ourselves as individuals and as community".

> "… Many of the women that I know are sisters, religious sisters so even when sometimes not directly I try to send the message that I am attracted to her or spending more time with one woman than the other, it is not in a way like lay people that they can invite woman whom they feel attracted to or they can invite a woman for date and most of the time when I try to invite one of the sisters or two of the sisters I will never be alone, I always call one of my brothers and also with the sister there is never one. There are always more of them" (Br. Omolemo, fourth year Theology).

Participants agreed that women are still marginalised in the Church and are mistreated by priests. The narrative suggests that the participants distanced themselves from marginalisation as this does not embrace the cultural and moral values of the Church. It does not promote the

respect of a priest and the dignity of human persons. Some participants pointed out that some men cling onto their cultural roots and control their families.

4.4.3   The role women play in the Catholic Church

Although the ordination of women is not part of this research, the issue of women ordination emerged in the extracts. Seminarians acknowledged the participation and contribution of women as leaders in the Church and they agreed that greater involvement is still needed in order to recognise and promote women's role. In their narratives, participants affirmed the significant role of women in the ministry of the Church.

> "The Church is built up on two pillars; which is the tradition and scripture. So the tradition is totally against the… what we call the feminist's stand or the values and the virtues that women are claiming (ordination of women). The fight is with the traditional stand of the Church. If you go to the council or if you go to the documents or also to the doctrines, all of them are mostly being challenged by the so called the feminist or the women request and questions. The Church now has opened to all the questions that women are raising that of their equality… women are welcomed to serve as ministers. They have not yet… a… raised up to that level of priesthood" (Br. Sebusiso, fourth year Theology).

Participants raised their concerns about how the issue of the ordination of women is handled and the sensitivity around the topic about women's involvement in the leadership of the Church. Some participants argued that the Church has already involved women in its leadership. Seminarians stated that recently women have been allowed to take part in the leadership of the Church and other participants said that although women cannot be ordained to be priests, their participation in the ministry of the Church is needed. All participants acknowledge the fact that in South Africa, women constitute 95% of Church attendance and men only 5%.

The other brother said:

> Well priests cannot stay away from women, for example in our Church 95% are women, and 5% are men. Obviously you cannot run away and stick with that 5%. This shows that the ones who are holding the church are women and are the ones I will be working with them but now you cannot stay away from them (Br. Realeboga, fourth year Theology).

More lay women are employed in high academic positions and in colleges and seminaries as directresses of religious education and catechesis. One participant based his argument on the structure of the Catholic Church to explain the participation of women in church leadership.

4.5   Conclusion

In presenting the data, the researcher intended to offer an analysis of how seminarians of the Catholic Church construct masculinity and how this has impacted on their conception of the Roman Catholic priesthood. The chapter showed how seminarians' masculinity can be better understood at social, cultural and institutional (Church) level and that priesthood is socially constructed. The analysis has suggested that more change to the traditional view of masculinity and seminarians' perception of their relationship with women in the Catholic Church is both needed and possible. The findings also suggest the need for more education on the intersection between the vow of celibacy and masculinity.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings of this study, and endeavours to understand how masculinity is constructed by seminarians of the Catholic Church and how this has impacted on their perception of the Roman Catholic priesthood. The study was informed by the research questions below:

5.1.1 How do seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity?

5.1.2 How does the construction of masculinity impact on seminarians' perception of the Catholic priesthood and vice versa, with particular reference to priestly celibacy?

5.1.3 How do seminarians position priests in relations to women in the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa?

Social constructionism was used as a theoretical perspective to address these research questions.

5.2 How do seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity?

Hegemonic masculinity is often described as privileged, powerful and aggressive masculinity (Connell, 1987, 1995), and seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa, construct their masculinity as one variety of a traditional hegemonic masculinity. One's masculinity was constructed in terms of what defines being a "real man". The participants' narratives about the position held by priests and seminarians in the Church reflect dominant

masculinity. For participants, masculinity implies power and status, reliability in crisis, responsibility in the family, confidence, aggression and the expression of sexuality. These qualities characterise the construction of a "real man" and how men must behave. Masculinity involves the ability to face hardships that come their way. The implication of this is that men, generally, as well as priests and seminarians cannot position themselves as vulnerable or as needing support. This is reflected in literature about normative masculinity, where masculinity is described in reference to toughness, independence and invulnerability (Courtenay, 2000). From the findings, such invulnerability was specifically constructed in relation to how men as well as priests and seminarians perceive themselves in relation to women, where the seminarians spoke of the unacceptability of a man being controlled by a woman. In general, the findings would suggest that, in the Catholic Church, priests must always maintain the positions of shepherds, leaders and "headmen".

Hegemonic masculinity is centred on maintaining power and dominance over other social groups, being compulsively heterosexual and subjugating femininity and homosexuality. These characteristics are seen as the "bedrock" of hegemonic masculinity (Donaldson, 1993 p. 645), and are endorsed by seminarians. The findings indicate that, for these men, being in dominant positions attests to real manhood. Priesthood privileges masculine domination, but repudiates physical aggression. The findings revealed that while in a family setting, power is exercised over women and the children, and in priesthood and religious life the corresponding power is exercised over women and parishioners.

Furthermore, in African cultures the construction of masculine identity by seminarians and priests goes along with cultural rituals and traditions. The practice of stick fighting among the Basotho as a display of fighting ability, protecting yourself, your family and your animals, and the Xhosa and Tswana practice of circumcision as proof of endurance and resilience, shapes the members of these communities as they consider what it is to be a real man. According to

the findings of some participants, circumcision is practised as a traditional rite. It initiates a boy into cultural maturity and manhood, thus changing them from boyhood to manhood. Some participants prided themselves on the fact that they were given the opportunity to undergo initiation school before entering the Catholic formation for priesthood, and they regarded themselves as real men because of this experience. In the process of circumcision adolescents are subjected to physical pain and suffering intended to make them strong, this bearing some effects on their psyche. Although these practices are not highly recognised in the Catholic Church for seminarians, participants regarded the practice as initiating boys into manhood and making them into "real men." The narratives of the participants point to Connell's (1995, p. 78) view that "hegemony relates to cultural dominance in society as a whole." Participants' construction of culture and priesthood is in relation to what Connell noted as being "fixed in a string of prescriptions, templates, or models of behaviour appropriate to one sex or the other" (Connell, 1987, p. 191). The seminarians' account of cultural experiences points to Connell's (2003, p. 255) suggestion that "in society people select and define which ideas about gender should regulate social behaviour." This indicates that the ideas about gender in society may pressurise seminarians to conform to the ideals of traditional constructions of masculinity. This suggests that some specific traditional cultural practices, norms and language uses that emerge are incorporated into the construction of seminarians' masculinity.

The idealised masculinity described in the interviews incorporated the assumption that anything that is regarded as feminine, such as public displays of emotion and crying, must be rejected. The participants constructed men, including seminarians, as concealing their painful experiences without ever sharing these experiences with anyone, especially not with women. The inhibition of emotional expression was identified as a traditional characteristic of masculinity; the notion that men must strive for success and be respected for their success is

accepted by participants as their construction of masculinity is supported by Brannon and David's (1976) research on the norms of being a man.

Some participants revealed the possible conflict between traditional constructions of masculinity and priestly masculinity, where values such as marriage and having a sexual partner are not permitted in the priesthood.

As Hadebe (2010) pointed out, in the African traditional society a woman is not allowed to debate or argue with a man because men are placed at the head of the family through their cultural position. In the Roman Catholic Church women play a very minor role in the leadership of the Church. Participants in this study struggled with the idea of equal power between men and women in the Church. They stated that women have their own position and roles that they play in society and which involve respect towards men. However, they acknowledged that the Catholic Church is still lagging behind in the recognition of women in the leadership of the Church. Although participants enjoy the privilege of being men in society and in the Church, they acknowledged the idea that "at some very basic level all human beings have equal worth and importance, and are equally worthy of concern" which suggests that a woman can now challenge the male status" (Barker et al, 2003, p. 23). The implication here is that since seminarians adhere to hegemonic standards, recognising women as equal to men will suggest that the priesthood is limited in its enjoyment of the respect, dignity and authority afforded to them by culture. Seminarians feel challenged and forced to rethink their position in the Church by constructing a form of masculinity that is accommodating of these changes.

While participants endorsed hegemonic versions of masculinity, they also identified with characteristics of being men and seminarians, which in some respect differs from that of traditional hegemonic masculinity. They reported that comparisons of the masculinity of men in the society and men in the Church are important because "*being a priest affects the kind of*

a man one is" (Br. Mokwena, fourth year Theology). As seen from this quote, the participant symbolically differentiates being a "real man" from being a "priest", as is also seen in him saying *"being a real man and being a priest is like differentiating between 'an ox and a bull'"*. A bull in this context symbolises the strength of a man which implies power and aggression that are constructed in the masculine identity. The symbolic discourse of a bull applies to the exercising of the power that men have and a masculinity that seeks to dominate others. On the other hand, an ox is a castrated bull. While seminarians and priests are not physically and psychologically castrated, celibate masculinity is symbolically described along the same lines as an ox (a castrated bull), used for ploughing or pulling heavy loads (South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary), referring to the celibate masculinity of a priest who is less aggressive and demonstrates characteristics of understanding, caring, responsibility and commitment. An ox and a bull are both male. This supports the idea that some qualities of men and of priests support the idea of a non-hegemonic masculinity that is gentler and displays characteristics that are generally related to feminine masculinity. Thus, priestly masculinity is based on the freely taken decision by an individual. Biblically an ox symbolises patience, strength, service, endurance and sacrifice. Seminarians associate the masculinity of the priesthood with these characteristics, in contrast with non-clerical masculinity.

Thus the bull and ox discourse indicates that seminarians refer to the masculinity of the priesthood as being different from other forms of masculinity. Some participants went as far as suggesting that priesthood in some respects, especially concerning married life, robs them of their traditional way of being men.

5.3 How does the construction of masculinity relate to construction of the Catholic priesthood?

Although some participants in this study felt priesthood conceives of a Christian and not a hegemonic way of being a man and being masculine, their description of how they construct masculinity and its impact on their conception of Catholic priesthood was unmistakably hegemonic. It emerged from the narratives that seminarians, in their attempt to describe themselves as masculine and as real men, attempted to avoid behaviours and traits that are considered feminine. They instead opted for characteristics such as being unemotional, controlling and able to hold and maintain positions of authority. In fact many of the qualities that they reported as required for the behaviour of mature seminarians, are indeed associated with hegemonic masculinity.

According to the findings, this view of hegemonic masculinity is comprised of several social expectations (Donaldson, 1993), such as physical exercises and toughness, very limited contact with women, and subordination of women as their housemaids. This construction of masculinity is supported by Connell's (1995) view of dominant masculinities.

A seminarian or a priest, like other men, constructs and accepts the norms of achieving status through being a provider, a protector, a leader, a spiritual father, a progenitor and a guardian of people. In keeping with these traditional hegemonic masculinities, seminarians and priests are positioned to exercise authority in the Church. For some seminarians being a man and being a priest cannot be differentiated since masculinity is seen as a prerequisite for priesthood and vice versa. Participants felt that seminarians and priests share with other men the need to defend their manliness and the ability to defend themselves. This implies that being a traditional hegemonic man and being a priest are not entirely different.

The participants' narratives also pointed to the ability of the priests to enact the fatherhood masculinity which characterises the ideals of a leader. Priests, like traditional hegemonic men, possess authority through the family of the Church as leaders, powerful and respected. The

power and authority of priests is exercised over others, particularly women (especially nuns, children and parishioners). Priests are constructed as "family men", being providers, protectors and shepherds of their community. Thus, their dual conception as men in the sense of husbands/fathers, and men as priests/seminarians is constructed in terms of patriarchal masculinity which oft holds the potential of them dominating and subordinating other men and women. Both a priest as father, as well as a father of a family, assume positions of authority in order to direct and lead. However, the seminarians in this context did not reflect on the implications of these findings, namely that women and the non-ordained are positioned as being unable to take decisions.

Although the participants suggested that priests identify with many elements that are consistent with the construction of a traditional hegemonic masculinity, they also argued that priesthood masculinity is in some ways in conflict with certain traditional masculine ideals. This was especially so regarding sexuality as it related to the vow of celibacy preventing priests from typical hegemonic features such as being a family man, having children, and having sexual relationships. In addition, the fact that seminarians are subjected to obedience to other men (superiors, formators and bishops) is not typically hegemonic. The life of obedience to an authority is rather an expression of Connell's (2001) concept of subordinated masculinity, where the power relations amongst seminarians and their superiors and other priests produces subordinated masculinities. Some participants recognised that in some respects priesthood was a complementary masculinity rather than being a purely hegemonic form of masculinity, but they also claim that the masculinity of the priesthood is positively different from that of other men. This was especially clear regarding the vow of celibacy, e.g. in the possibility that it offers the ability to extend love to everybody and to show self-control and commitment to the life with Christ rather than one other human person. Recognising that celibacy is central to priests'

and seminarians' identity, participants accept it as a gift and a choice that one can exercise and that celibacy relates to priests' masculinity.

On the other hand some participants spoke of the challenges of celibacy and priesthood, especially concerning their ability to realise a hegemonic masculinity. They referred to celibacy as limiting their contact with women and a resulting inability to express their natural feelings and inclinations.

5.4 How seminarians perceive their relationship with women and how they position priests in relationships to women?

From the findings it emerged that celibate masculinity places limits on the contact between priests/seminarians and women, leading to strong feelings of restriction on the part of seminarians in their relationship with women. The subject of women and their relation to seminarians as well as priests remained a problematic and controversial theme across the narrative. For some participants, while women had played a positive role in their upbringing, it emerged that in priesthood this relationship became a source of temptation for seminarians and priests; something to be avoided. Views of seminarians' relationships with women reflected the hallmarks of hegemonic masculinity and a patriarchal paradigm that positions seminarians and priests as leaders and in control of women, with women being reduced to a complementary position of fellowship in the Church. From the findings it emerged that traditional African culture and the Roman Catholic Church in some ways mirror one another in their patriarchal structures. Participants in this study acknowledged that women in the Roman Catholic Church have historically been unable to play a major role in the Church, have never been in dialogue with church leadership regarding issues on faith and morals, and have never been allowed into the gateway of the priestly position and Episcopate, the clerical priesthood. This view of women is perpetuated by the male hierarchical and patriarchal

structure in the Catholic Church as one participant argued that *"although the Church accommodates and recognises the importance of women in the Church, attitudes toward women are quite patriarchal"*.

The findings show that some participants recognised the important role women play in the Church. They also acknowledge that women are seen as more innately religious than men. The participants believed that women play a most important role in the growth of the Church and are in the majority in attendance in Church. Some of the participants in this research clearly indicated that women are qualified and are quite capable of holding leadership positions in the Church. However, they reiterated that the gendered inequality and the privileging of men in the Church, mirrored in secular society's structures of hegemonic masculinity, need to be challenged.

Many participants recognised that women comprise 80% of attendance populations and role activity in the Church, and yet have little voice in the Church. They find it difficult to integrate the traditional and progressive understandings of masculinity which they see adopted in society. This might be understood as part of their struggle to preserve the privileged position of men in the Church. The participants in the study did not support the use of violence against women and children but embraced the cultural values of respect and dignity of human persons. The findings also revealed a measure of participants clinging to their cultural practices of masculinity which support patriarchy and earn them respect through living a masculinity of dominance. Participants seem to agree with Morrell's (1998) notion of the plurality of masculinity. They appeal to the Church's authority to challenge these traditional positions, emphasising a more non-hegemonic and Christian masculinity, and acknowledging what Connell (1995) stated in that masculinity is sometimes fluid and is also changing.

Morrell's (1998) study challenges the homogenous masculinity of men as well as that of priesthood. His study and the finding of this research contest the Catholic's doctrine of

naturalising masculinity. The findings of this research also suggest that masculinity should be constructed as a collective and constructive gender identity, and not as a natural characteristic. Against this background the findings call for the possibility of alternative and more accommodating ways of being men and being priests. Nothwehr (1998) suggested that the Church should discover different ideas of gender that are much more mutual, rather than hierarchal or complementary, within the Catholic tradition itself. The findings indicate that the model of traditional hegemonic masculinity for seminarians/priests ignores the vulnerable, soft, and gentle characteristics of masculinity. However, participants acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth not only embodied both of these components but also personified qualities beyond these, including mutual components (Choi, 2012). For seminarians, a mature and authentic masculinity must be comprehensive and must include both male and female characteristics. The findings show a need for seminarians to reflect on their construction of masculinity and its implications, especially for women. There is a need for seminarians to construct masculinity in a way that allows for collaborative engagement of men and women in the Church, towards a common purpose. Priests and seminarians need to accommodate women in building a Church in which both genders participate as equals and influence each other rather than one dominating the other. This study intends to challenge the dominant priestly masculinities which young men might pursue because of the privilege it entails. However, the relational turn also constitutes a major threat to hegemonic masculinity.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. The study was intended to explore the ways in which seminarians of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa construct masculinity and the relationship between their construction and their perception of the Roman Catholic

priesthood. Gender issues and the seminarians' relationships and the role these relationships play in the Catholic Church were also explored.

The results and discussions indicate that constructions of masculinity and priesthood by seminarians of the Catholic Church are complex, multiple and changing. The literature review indicated, particularly in discussions about seminarians and priests, that the significance of gender, power, priesthood status and organisational culture emerged as problematic in seminarians' construction of masculinity (Keenan, 2012). Furthermore, some of the seminarians' descriptions of priestly masculinity drew on certain traditional practices. These descriptions were seen as constituting a discourse of priests drawing on dominant, hierarchical and patriarchal masculinities which are often referred to by Connell's (1987; 1995) hegemonic masculinity as a privileged, powerful and aggressive masculinity. On the other hand, priesthood masculinity is also constructed as patient, strong, serving, and enduring and sacrificing, which are also characteristics of a "real man." In this regard, for some seminarians being a man and being a priest cannot be different since masculinity is seen as a prerequisite for priesthood masculinity and vice versa. This implies that being a traditional hegemonic man and being a priest are not completely different.

The findings indicate that priesthood has adopted characteristics which are related to hegemonic forms of masculinity such as authority and power, which characterises the ideals of patriarchy and its dominance of others, particularly women (including nuns, children and parishioners). The findings also show that seminarians draw on fatherhood discourse as part of their construction of masculinity, seen especially in the idea of priests as "family men". Priests, like traditional hegemonic men, are positioned as possessing authority through the family of the Church. Like all fathers they regard themselves as providers, protectors and shepherds. Thus both men as husbands/fathers and men as priests/seminarians are constructed in terms of

a patriarchal masculinity which legitimates domination and subordination but also service and protection. Both a priest and a father assume a position of authority in order to direct and lead.

It also emerged from the findings that while celibacy and obedience are defining of seminarian and priesthood masculinity, these vows were articulated not only as self-evident virtues, but also as problematic as far as they conflict with the hegemonic standard of masculinity, and denied seminarians the freedom to exercise their traditional ideals of being a "real man." Celibacy and obedience as the ideals of male priesthood in many ways contrast with hegemonic ideals (which emphasise independence and autonomy), whereas celibacy denies seminarians and priests the opportunity to marry. On the other hand seminarians view celibacy as a choice of live that one desires and decide upon.

5.6 Implications of the findings

It is evident from the findings of this research that there is a need for seminarians and priests to rethink masculinity in a way that encourages them to collaborate and engage with women in attaining a common purpose. The ways in which seminarians understand themselves as men and as priests points out that there is a need to build a Church in which both women and men participate as equals who can influence each other rather than one dominating the other.

For participants, masculinity implies power and status, reliability in crisis, responsibility in the family, confidence, aggression and the expression of sexuality. These qualities characterise the construction of a "real man" and how men should behave. Masculinity involves the ability to face hardships that come their way. The implication of this is that men, including priests and seminarians, do not position themselves as vulnerable or as needing support. The dominant constructions of masculinity in the Catholic Church which are informed by hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal standards may have negative outcomes in relationships with

women and children. The implication here is that seminarians' masculinity is constructed through hierarchical and social influences, which may have a negative impact on how they see women and children and thus underrate the credibility of gender equality. The training and formation of young men into priesthood should take note that masculinity for young men is constructed through competing sets of ideals and discourses and can be promoted by hierarchal and patriarchal standards. For this reason, the training of seminarians should be committed to exploring how they construct masculinity and how their construction impacts on their perception of the Catholic priesthood with particular reference to priestly celibacy, and also how seminarians position priests in relation to women in the Roman Catholic Church.

The findings of this research also indicate that seminarians and priests identify with many elements of a traditional hegemonic masculinity which favours them. Participants also believe that priesthood masculinity is sometimes in conflict with certain traditional masculine ideals. This was especially true with regard to sexuality as it related to the vow of celibacy which prevents priests from typical hegemonic features such as being a family man, having children, and having sexual relationships.

The fact that seminarians recognised that women played a positive role in their upbringing and in the life of the Church, can be used to challenge the idea that women are positioned as inferior and as sources of temptation for priests and seminarians and are thus to be avoided. There is a need for the male-dominated church to cultivate more respect for women and to grow the involvement of women in building a more collaborative church. The findings also point to the need to challenge the hegemonic views of priests' relationships with women, which reduces them to a subjugated position in the Church.

Participants believed that women by far are in the majority when it comes to church attendance. Some of the participants clearly indicated that women are qualified and are quite capable of

holding leadership positions in the Church. Although this view is still a very sensitive issue in the Catholic Church, a space for constructive discussion should be encouraged to challenge the gendered inequality and the privileging of men in the Church, which mirrors the structures of hegemonic masculinity in secular society.

5.7 The limitations of the study

This study aimed to explore and enhance understanding of how seminarians of the Catholic Church construct masculinity and the impact this has on their conception of their priesthood. Any study has a variety of factors that limit its scope and depth, but a central factor may be found in the researcher him- or herself. While bias has been minimised in this study I cannot claim to be totally gender neutral nor overlook the possibility that my own construction of gender may have influenced the findings of the study. The obvious limitations of this study concern my reliance on self-reported data from only ten participants. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalised to all seminarians. Another limitation is that the sample was drawn from only one house of study, meaning that the findings cannot be generalised to all seminarians in South Africa. Qualitative research involves in-depth investigations of relatively small samples. This can give confidence to the study and even single cases can suffice (Patton, 2006; Silverman, 2005), yielding good results. The essence of a qualitative research study is not only to study a few sites or individuals but also to collect extensive details about each site or individual studied (Charmaz, 2006; Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Attempts were made to get information-rich cases and to ensure that the sample was varied. Although only one site was used (seminary), participation was invited from different congregations and from temporary professed, final professed and different stages of theological study.

As already mentioned, the study of masculinities is relatively new in the South African Roman Catholic Church. I have relied more on the Western literature because of the scarcity of local literature on the training of seminarians in the Catholic Church. Because of a paucity of other sources of literature, I primarily made use of Western literature. For me this was an indication of potential failing on my side to take into account the diverse cultural and historical context of South Africa, and thereby failing to take into account the effects of different cultural understandings in the construction of masculinity.

5.8 Suggestions for future research

The findings of this study advanced three questions that require future research, first, how can seminarians and priests engage meaningfully in the transformation of gender in the Catholic Church and the formation of seminarians while they occupy a structurally privileged status within seminaries and formation houses? Second, how can priests and seminarians be involved in alternative constructions of masculinity, ones that are more consistent with religious values and commitment? The third question concerns what future research and seminarian formators can do to reframe the masculinity of our young men and their perception of the religious life. This will help them particularly to know that it is not *un*manly to communicate and reflect on their emotions. I believe the Church and particularly those who work in the formation and training of priests should take a much more active role in fostering a sense of masculinity that is resolute, understanding, courageous and empathetic.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

The interview questions will be based on the following areas:

- What does society expect of seminarians today?
- What defines being a real man?
- What does it mean for you to be a man and seminarian?
- Are seminarians different to other men? If so, how?
- How do you feel about being a man who is a seminarian?
- Does being a priest affect the kind of man one is?
- How do you perceive the relationship between priests and women in the pastoral ministry? What should it be? Should priests relate to women in a way that is different to how other men relate to women?
- Does one's cultural identity affect the kind of man you are?
- Does culture affect the kind of men priests are or should be?
- How does the vow of celibacy affect your sexuality?
- What kind of seminary programme is helpful in forming young men into priests?
- What are the limitations in the Catholic Church as regards involvement of women in the leadership of the Church?
- Who are the significant others, especially men, who have motivated you to want to be a priest? How did they influence you?
- What do families expect of their son who is a seminarian?

APPENDIX B: Invitation to participate in the study

P/Bag X01 Scottsville

PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209

South Africa

Phone: +27 33 2605335

Fax: +27 33 2605809

Date: 06 March 2013

RE: Consent to participate in the research study

Dear Seminarians

I am Sr. Emmanuela Nontsokile Maria Khwepe, a Master's student in Clinical Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting research as part of my Master's degree studies. The purpose of the research is to investigate how seminarians of the Catholic Church (particularly in South Africa) construct masculinity, and the links with their ideas of priesthood.

My supervisor in this research is Professor Graham Lindegger of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

You are invited to participate in this study and it is restricted to the Seminarians of the Catholic Church and will be conducted at St. Joseph's Theological Institute in South Africa.

If you agree to participate you will be required to take part in the interview which will last for approximately one hour. With your permission, the interview will be recorded in order that it can be accurately transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis.

Participation in this study is voluntary and appointments for interviews will be held at a time that suits you. Every care will be taken to ensure that the study will cause no harm to you. Your identity and your interview data will remain confidential throughout the study.

If you feel uncomfortable during the interview or if you would like to change your mind, you are free to withdraw from participating in the interview.

If you have any question about the research or anything that has been written in this letter, please contact either the researcher, Sr. Maria Emmanuela Khwepe, or the supervisor (Professor G. Lindegger).

Sr. Maria Emmanuela Khwepe

Cell: 073 404 8452

E-mail: emmanuelakhwepe@gmail.com

Supervisor's contact details

Supervisor: Professor Graham Lindegger

Cell: 082 718 4054

E-mail: lindegger@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent:

Dear Seminarian, if you do wish to participate in the study please sign this form, bearing in mind that signing the form does not mean that you have to do anything which you do not wish to do. You are still free to leave the study whenever you want to.

Name of participant: _____

I (_____) agree to participate in an interview conducted by sister Nontsokile Maria Emmanuela Khwepe for research. I also agree to the interview being audio recorded for the purpose of obtaining a precise transcription of the data collected and to ensure accurate analysis of data. I am aware of the confidentiality of my identity and the protection of my information provided in the interview.

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: ETHICS APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

19 November 2013

Sr Emmanuela NM Khwepe (212558486)
School of Applied Human Sciences - Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0717/013M
Project title: Seminarians' construction of masculinity

Dear Sr Khwepe,

Expedited Approval

In response to your application, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

_____
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor Graham Lindegger
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor D McCracken
cc School Administrator: Mr Sbonelo Duma

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO DO THE INTERVIEW AT ST. JOSEPH'S THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

St Joseph's Theological Institute - Cedara

(Company number 2003/009125/08 PBO number 930007111)

Registered with the Department of Education as a Private Higher Education Institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Registration Certificate number 2003/HE08/003)

✉ Private Bag 6004,
Hilton, 3245
Republic of South Africa

☎ Telephone: +27 08 353 8940
Facsimile: +27 86 514 6593
E-Mail: dean@sjti.ac.za

Office of the Dean

12 March, 2012

Permission to do Interviews at St. Joseph's Theological Institute (SJTI)

Sr. Emmanuela Khwepe has requested permission to carry out interviews at St. Joseph's Theological Institute (SJTI), Cedara, KwaZulu-Natal, as part of her research on the construction of masculinities in seminaries.

I am happy to confirm that having considered her request and the value of such research to knowledge production, **permission has been granted**.

Sr. Khwepe is, therefore, authorised to carry out such interviews at St. Joseph's as determined by the university's Ethics Committee.

Sincerely,

Rev. Fr. Raymond M. Mwangala, OMI
Academic Dean