

Emerging Masculinities: a qualitative analysis of the construction and practice of adolescent masculinities

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate how a sample of South African adolescent boys construct and negotiate their masculine identities from the different versions of being male available to them within their particular social and cultural contexts. This study employed a qualitative research design using the semi-structured interview protocol developed by Frosh et al.(2002). The results of this research consistently reveal that masculinity among adolescent boys is dynamic, multiple and continually being made, performed, resisted and contested. The subjects described different ways of being male, often having to negotiate a coherent masculine identity from many competing, often contradictory versions of masculinity. However hegemonic or 'hard' masculinity remains the dominant standard against which other ways of being male are evaluated. These masculinity constructions show remarkable similarities to those of the English adolescent boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, which suggests that the hegemonic ideal is particularly wide-ranging and well-entrenched in the lives of boys.

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Masculinity is no longer seen as a fixed way of being, but as a field of conflict that men have to traverse in a quest for coherence.

(Toerien & Durrheim, 2001, p. 36)

1.1 Context and rationale

There has been a recent burgeoning of research interest in the field of masculinity, set in motion by changes in contemporary forms of masculinity. These shifts have occurred in response to, inter alia, challenges to traditional forms of masculinity in the formation and maintenance of patriarchy, progressive use of feminist discourse among women and the changing roles of men and women in society and the workplace (e.g. Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1995; Frosh, 1994; Kimmel, 1990; Seidler, 1991; Segal, 1990). The implications of these changes are far-reaching, among them a corresponding 'developmental crisis' for boys who are "engaged in the process of identity construction in a context in which there are few clear models and in which the surrounding images of masculinity are complex and confused" (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002, p.1).

According to Frosh et al. (2002), boys are increasingly seen as problematic in British society with increases in delinquency and aggressive, misogynistic, anti-school behaviours both in school and social contexts. South Africa faces critical social problems, among these high incidences of violence, rape and HIV/AIDS transmission, and it has been suggested that constructions and practices of masculinity may be contributory factors (eg. Epstein, 1998b; Morrell, 2001a; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Lindegger & Durreheim (2001) assert that one of the ways in which these problems may be addressed is through the deconstruction of contemporary forms of masculinity, thus contributing to the emergence of new, more adaptive gender identities and practices. Yet how boys and men construct and practice masculinity is relatively under researched in South Africa (Morrell, 2001a). This study was conceived of as an attempt to contribute to this important area of human understanding.

1.2 Development of the research problem

Recent research has challenged traditional, essentialist perspectives of masculinity as a unitary, stable, psychobiological phenomenon intrinsic to all men. Essentialist

approaches define masculinity as intrinsic and immutable. Biological perspectives attribute masculinity to the innate, biological features of male bodies (Edley & Wetherell, 1995), while the mythopoetic movement defines masculinity as a psychic essence rooted within the Jungian collective, archetypal unconscious (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Psychoanalytic theories construct masculinity as a developmental process entailing the successful resolution of the oedipal complex, during which the male child must separate himself psychically from the mother (eg. Edley & Wetherell, 1995). Sex-role theory, evolving within the psychoanalytic paradigm, emphasizes the establishment of a stable, internal sense of male identity which occurs through identification with the father and social learning processes (eg. Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001; Pleck, 1987).

Social constructionist approaches reject these notions of a decontextualised, internal, essential masculinity and locate gender development within historical, social and cultural environments. Masculinity becomes context bound and socially constructed and gender identity thus comprises many 'masculinities' which are diverse and multiple (eg. Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987). Connell (1987) suggests that masculinities are formed actively as they are practiced within everyday contexts. Masculinity is thus performative and is not what men are but what they do (Frosh et al., 2002). Since they are constructed within continuous, dynamic interactions between men and society, masculinities are also fluid and mutable (Courtenay, 2000). It follows then that men both construct their masculinities and are constructed by the discourses available to them in society around acceptable ways of achieving maleness (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001).

Connell (1987) suggests that masculinities are relational since they are constructed in relation to, and in opposition to, other discourses and practices and that some forms of masculinity, which he terms 'hegemonic masculinity', become privileged over others. This is supported by Hollway's (1984) assertion that factors such as class and ethnicity interact with gender to produce discourses inviting subject positions in which different privileges and powers are vested. Although few males appear to meet normative definitions of masculinity, there are nonetheless advantages to men in maintaining these constructions, which tend to sustain male privilege in relation to other masculinities such as homosexual or black men, and in particular women (eg. Anderson & Accomando, 2002; Frosh et al., 2002). Toerien and Durrheim (2001) note that masculinity discourses

offer competing ways of creating a clear sense of masculine identity. Ultimately, boys and men must continually strive to make meaning of the world and achieve a unitary, coherent sense of self amidst multifarious gendered ideologies available to them, many of which contain potential contradictions and inconsistencies (Connell, 2000).

As a result of socio-cultural changes and subsequent challenges to traditional versions of masculinity, it is possible that boys are “having to forge new, more flexible masculine identities” (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 2). Schools, argues Connell (2000), are prime sites in which gender is constructed, negotiated and policed. He adds that different versions of masculinity compete for hegemony and those identified as subordinate or marginalized are derided and suppressed. Frosh et al. (2002) suggest that these practices may limit the potential for interpersonal development and may explain the tendencies of adolescent males towards conflict and violence. Problematic, school-produced masculinities may also be implicated in many of the problems facing South Africa’s youth (eg. Attwell, 2002; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a). Frosh et al. (2002) have conducted ‘boy-centered’ research in which boys are conceptualized as active subjects producing masculine identities from the range of discourses and ideologies available to them. This study explores the accounts of South African adolescents, identifying the discourses therein and noting how they produce an integrated sense of self from these different versions of being male.

1.3 Research aims

This study aims to investigate how a selection of South African schoolboys construct their masculinities from available narratives and gender ideologies and the ways in which these are performed. How do boys ‘make’ and ‘do’ gender in various contexts such as with peers, girls or parents? What are the dominant, hegemonic themes and how are they constructed and maintained? How do boys confirm or challenge this hegemony? How do they integrate the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in these versions of masculinity in order to create a coherent personal narrative with which they can make sense of their selves and their worlds? The contemporary adolescent male faces the complex developmental challenge of how to negotiate a cohesive, flexible and effective masculine self within multiple, possible identities (Frosh et al., 2002). This may be a particularly problematic task for young South African males in the context of South Africa’s socio-political history and its current, transitional nature (Morrell, 2001a). A

broad aim of this study would thus mirror that of Frosh et al. (2002, p. 6) in helping to “inform social policy on boys and young men” as it impacts on the concerns facing South African society.

1.4 Research design and methodology

A qualitative research design was used for this study comprising an in-depth, idiographic study of a selection of adolescent boys from several schools in Kwazulu Natal. The sampling was purposive in that it was ‘theory-driven’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participants were 13 to 14 years of age drawn from Grade 8 classes from eight schools in and around Pietermaritzburg. These schools were selected purposively in order to incorporate as much socio-cultural variation as possible (Patton, 1990). This permitted an exploration of the influences of race and culture as they intersect with the formation of gender identities in contemporary South African society. The data was collected by means of a single, semi-structured interview with each participant. The interview structure was informed by the protocol developed by Frosh et al. (2002). The data was recorded on audio-tape and later transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed using aspects of the “voice-centred relational method” developed by Mauthner and Doucet (1998, p. 25). This method permitted a thorough exploration of the boys’ accounts “in terms of their broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 126). This methodology necessitates repeated close readings of the text. The themes emerging from the text were noted and analysed. Psychoanalytic insights were added in order to enrich the analysis by providing some understanding of the participants’ motivations and investments in particular versions of being male (Frosh et al., 2002; Hollway, 1984).

1.5 Outline of the report

Chapter 2 provides an overview of various approaches to understanding masculinity. It comprises a brief review of the biological, psychodynamic, object relations, sex-role and social constructionist models of masculinity. Included is an overview of the findings of a study conducted into contemporary adolescent masculinity in London schools (Frosh et al., 2002). The chapter concludes with a review of recent masculinity research conducted in South Africa. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology. Chapter 4 outlines the results of this study. Chapter 5 comprises a discussion of the results and Chapter 6 contains a conclusion and recommendations.

2.1 Introduction

Since this study focuses on accounts boys give of their masculine experiences and identities, some understanding of the construct of masculinity is necessary. This chapter will explicate various approaches to the study of masculinity. An exploration of some of the themes of adolescent masculinity will follow, culminating in a review of a selection of current research into adolescent masculinity within the South African context.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to the study of masculinity

Research into masculinity has burgeoned in recent times (Edley & Wetherell, 1996) and Segal (2000) notes that it may be necessary to straddle different perspectives in order to attain a fuller understanding of the construct. Edley and Wetherell (1995) delineate five possible academic perspectives considered significant to the study of masculinity. These are the biological, psychoanalytic, social learning, social relations and cultural ideological approaches. The first three positions adopt an essentialist premise which assumes that masculinity is innate and that it has features common to all men (Elum & Elum, 1992). The latter two perspectives suggest that masculinity is constructed and practiced in social interaction and is thus mutable and multiple (Connell, 1996b). To the essentialist, therefore, men are born and to the social constructionist, men are made (Fausto-Sterling, 2000).

2.2.1 The biological imperative

The biological approach posits that there is an essential masculine nature and that it is coded within the complex physiology of the body (Connell, 1996b). This is a deterministic notion in which it is implied that masculinity and femininity are dichotomous constructs and that men and women are programmed to behave in ways congruent with their physical and genetic structure. For example, it is claimed that behaviours such as male domination, aggression and sexuality and female passivity and domestication emerge inevitably from the respective genetic coding of men and women (Dawkins, 1989; Wilson, 1975). The 'powerful forces of biology' would thus impel men to behave in ways that are consistently and characteristically 'male' (Elum & Elum, 1992).

Although extensive research has attempted to link gender to behavioural and attitudinal correlates, little empirical evidence exists to unequivocally support the biological premise (Prentky, 1985; Turner, 1994). Segal (1990) suggests that clear differences between so-called masculine and feminine traits have been exaggerated and that only a few, minor distinctions have been established. These include cognitive functions such as visual, spatial and mathematical abilities and aggressiveness. Edley and Wetherell (1995) add that of these differences only aggression appears to be more strongly equated with men. Although they concede that biology must inevitably play a role in masculine behaviour, they add that it is nonetheless an oversimplification to root masculinity solely within the dictates of body. They note that “men are the product of a complex system of factors and forces” (Edley & Wetherell, 1995, p.37).

Aggression has been the focus of many biological studies on men and masculinity. This research is based on the assumption that aggression is both innate and natural to men and that it is linked to the greater levels of testosterone in the male body (Dabbs, Frady, Carr & Besch, 1987; Eilum & Eilum, 1992). Although findings do suggest that males are more generally aggressive than females, other researchers observe that these findings are not sufficiently substantial to support a direct link between testosterone and aggressive male behaviours. Furthermore, they may not account adequately for the variations between male and female aggression (Clare, 2000; Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Turner, 1994). Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) note that the biological perspective fails to take into account that aggression is a variable, complex phenomenon and Hearn (1998) adds that it may also be linked to environmental, cultural and social learning factors.

Another area of biological research has targeted the composition and functioning of the brain. Popularized understandings of masculinity include the study by Moir and Jessel (1991) in which it is suggested that there are physiological, structural variations between the brains of men and women and that this may account for differences in their affective, cognitive and physical responses and behaviours. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) in their review of this work suggest that these findings cannot be reliably substantiated as too little is currently understood about the brain to make causal links between its functioning and the practice of gender. They add that although claims linking sex differences to brain function are unsubstantiated, they are nonetheless popular and may result in the entrenchment of gender dichotomies and inequalities in society. Segal (1990) comments

that research into the structure of the brain as a source of behavioural sex differences reveals, ultimately, how little is known about the brain and its complexity.

In reviewing literature on sex differences, Deaux (1984) and Segal (2000) conclude that the notion of a clear, biologically-based gender dichotomy is misleading since sexual behavioural differences are in fact insignificant. Segal (2000), while acknowledging the contribution of biological factors to gender differences, concludes that variations within biological gender are greater than those between them and that these differences appear to be gradually diminishing. Edley and Wetherell (1995) likewise conclude that there is poor empirical support for many of the claimed stereotypical differences between men and women. Wilson (1978), for example, presents a sociobiological viewpoint which posits that the male sex drive is a genetic predisposition which tends men towards promiscuity and the control of female sexuality, and that it provides evolutionary advantages for men by helping them win resources in competition with other men. Segal (2000) argues that gender behaviours are multi-determined and that male sexuality may also be produced in male dominated societies in which men are able to assert and confirm their masculinity through heterosexual practices. Edley and Wetherell (1995) note that sociobiological explanations of male sexual behaviour may ultimately result in the justification of male sexual coercion and violence. Connell (1995) argues that masculinity “is not a biological entity that exists prior to society; rather, masculinities are ways that societies interpret and employ male bodies” (p.211). Attwell (2002) concludes that “the picture is a complex one, and it is perhaps more realistic to view biological sex as one of a number of possible factors influencing behaviour...” (p.16).

In conclusion, biological approaches to masculinity stress the role of physiological, genetic and hormonal factors in the making of masculinity and provide only part explanation of what remains a complex, multifaceted concept. The following section will explore the psychoanalytic perspective which asserts that masculinity is developed through psychic processes, within the context of early relationships, and exists always in relation to the feminine (Frosh, 1994).

2.2.2 Psychoanalytic approaches to masculinity

Freud was the first theorist to develop a comprehensive, psychological model for the development of gender identity. Subsequent theories, such as the object relations

approach, have altered and developed Freud's original, somewhat controversial model of psychosexual development. This section will briefly review Freudian and object relations perspectives of the development of male gender identity.

2.2.2.1 The Oedipus Complex

According to Freud, resolution of the Oedipal or phallic stage is the most important process in the development of masculine identity. During the preceding oral and anal stages of psychosexual development, the infant is inherently bisexual as males and females possess both masculine and feminine elements of the powerful unconscious drives of the id (Segal, 1990). Both experience the mother as the first object on whom libidinal energy may be cathected. The male child's primary experience of comfort and satisfaction is thus feminine. During the phallic stage, this energy becomes sexualised and the child's unconscious fantasies are to "annex his mother, to keep her for himself" (Edley & Wetherell, 1995, p.42). His desire for his mother both violates the incest taboo and establishes him as a rival with his father, with the resulting fear that his father may castrate him. This anxiety is sufficiently acute to cause the boy to repress his desire for his mother and turn towards his father, with whom he begins to identify and whom he idealises. Identification with the father leads to the formation of a super-ego, through which social norms and values, as embodied by the father, are internalised or introjected, and it is thus that masculinity is transmitted from father to son (Eagle, 1998). However, studies conducted into the impact of father absence on the development of gender identity reveal inconclusive findings and many are criticised as methodologically flawed (Stevenson & Black, 1988).

According to psychoanalytic theory, in order to attain an appropriate gender identity and sexual orientation, the boy must repress unconscious conflicts. He must shift his attention away from his mother and towards his father and, ultimately, he will thereby form a masculine gender identity and his sexual energy will be directed towards other women (Eagle, 1998). Eagle (1998) warns however that, according to Freud, the development of male sexuality and identity is not a simple process. Rather, it is "a complex and difficult process of psychic construction, ineluctably marked by tension, anxiety and contradiction" (Segal, 2000, p.72). Freud foreshadows social constructionist views of masculinity as mutable and multiple by insisting that negotiation

of this phase is “fraught with pitfalls resulting in a multiplicity of outcomes” (Cameron, 2003).

Freud argues that, since masculine development necessitates turning away from and the repression of the feminine and identification with a powerful male figure, men are inevitably more active, assertive, aggressive, emotionally detached and better able to internally monitor and critique their own behaviours than women (Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Eagle, 1998). Freud viewed femininity as a ‘dark continent’ and essentially inaccessible and unknowable. His theories remain, ultimately, patriarchal and assume the unassailability of masculine authority and dominance.

2.2.2.2 Object Relations

The object relations school, while adhering to the basic tenets of classic psychoanalysis, both revised and altered them in several ways. The development of gender identity is said to begin earlier, in the pre-oedipal years, and core gender identity is then already established by the age of three. The acquisition of a masculine identity becomes a more complex, unstable and potentially perilous process than that envisaged by Freud (Edley & Wetherell, 1995). Chodorow (1978) argues that since a sense of self develops through early interactions with the mother, this relationship impacts directly on the formation of masculine identity and that the attainment of masculinity represents a struggle against the feminine.

According to Winnicott, the infant’s first sense of self is undifferentiated and it is through early interactions with the primary caregiver (usually the mother) that a sense of self as separate from other develops. The primary love object of the boy is generally feminine and he must pass through two distinct phases in the development of a masculine identity, unlike girls whose gender identification process is seamlessly female (Greenson, 1968). Since the primary identification is with the mother, the boy must first relinquish his identification with her and then re-identify with the father. Masculinity is therefore defined by what is not feminine and necessitates a repression and denial of “the early symbiotic bond with the mother” (Segal, 1990. p.79). It follows that the process of dis-identification is crucial to the formation of masculine identity and that there is more potential for error in the development the conventionally masculine than the feminine.

Edley and Wetherell (1995) explore various theoretical explanations for the impetus that drives boys to engage in the process of dis-identification with the feminine and re-identification with the masculine. The biological view argues that male infants are innately more active and aggressive than females, thus rendering them more difficult to soothe which may initiate a distancing between mother and child. Chodorow (1978) proposes that the mother's unconscious and conscious reactions to her child's gender influence the formation of gender identity. From the outset, daughters are perceived as female and therefore an extension of self. Sons are 'other' and, while the infant initially has no sense of himself as different, he is related to as though he were masculine and consequently becomes so. Internalized social and cultural stereotypes may also influence and mould the mother's behaviours and expectations accordingly. The father occupies a complex, dual role in the dis-identification process. He provides a model of independence while simultaneously rivaling the child for the mother's attention. Attachment to the mother may thus provoke a fear of punishment analogous to Freud's castration anxiety.

This emphasis on dis-identification topples the notion of male superiority in classic psychoanalytic theory and reconstructs masculinity as a struggle against the feminine, owing to the primary identification with the mother (Pollack, 1998b). Chodorow (1978) argues that men may be constantly uncertain of their gender identity and may always need to prove themselves as men. Gilmore (1990) observes in his cross-cultural studies that "the state of being a real man or true man is uncertain or precarious, a prize to be won or wrested through struggle" (p.1). Lasky (1993) notes that men may, in fact, constitute the more fragile sex.

Segal (1990), however, critiques the notion that women are 'the powerful sex' who 'give away their power to men' since this does not adequately account for the actual power and privilege held by men in society. Furthermore, this approach fails to take into account the diverse and varied nature of child rearing practices and experiences (Segal, 2000). She concludes, however, that psychoanalytic insights challenge essentialist notions of sexual identity as rooted in heterosexual desire and biology, suggesting that it is something that must be 'achieved' through a process and is therefore potentially precarious and

vulnerable (Segal, 2000). The psychoanalytic model thus paves the way towards more complex social constructionist explanations of masculinity.

Both the biological and psychoanalytic approaches focus on the internal world of the individual in the formation and attainment of masculinity. The following approaches shift to the sociocultural environment in which the child is reared and how this impacts on the development of gender identity.

2.2.3 Sex-Role Theory

Sex-Role theory proposes that masculinity and femininity are internalised sex roles which are acquired gradually through a process of social learning or socialisation (Bandura, 1977; Pleck, 1981; 1987). This theory is rooted in the psychoanalytic model in which masculine identity emerges from a process of identification with the father (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Sex-role theorists, however, extend the determinants of identity and “the family is seen as one of many social agents influencing the boy’s emerging sense of masculinity” (Cameron, 2003, p.18). These social agents are the rules, expectations and norms underlying what it means to be masculine in society. Behaviours which confirm to the masculine ideal are learned, both within a family and beyond, through the processes of social learning and positive and negative reinforcement (Segal, 1990).

Early sex-role theorists, Terman and Miles (1936) envisaged masculinity and femininity as dualistic facets of personality which exist along a continuum. A biological male could display feminine traits, but the degree to which he conformed to the stereotypical masculine pole determined the health and appropriateness of his masculinity. Edley and Wetherell (1995) note, however, that what is considered appropriate in gender roles may differ inter-culturally. Parsons (1954) further differentiates gender roles into categories, suggesting that the male role is largely instrumental i.e. to plan and do, while the female is expressive i.e. to feel, relate and communicate. Segal (1990) comments that, although this distinction became popular, it remains somewhat vague and over generalised.

Bem (1974) challenges the dualistic perspective of Terman and Miles, arguing that femininity and masculinity are independent states and that it is both possible and healthy to be androgynous, drawing from a wide range of masculine and feminine traits.

More recent research attempts to condense male sex-role traits into clusters of norms and expectations. These include avoidance of the feminine, physical strength, material success, displayed aggression, restriction of expressed emotion and sexual prowess (David & Brannon, 1976; Mares, 1999; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974). These comprise what Pollack (1998a) refers to as a 'Boy Code' which powerfully influences how boys and men act and relate within personal and social contexts.

Although these sex-role clusters provide simple, accessible explanations for gender differences, they have been questioned for their oversimplification of a complex, multidimensional reality (Connell, 1987; Segal, 1990). Sex-role theory assumes that social expectations are consistent and universal but Eagle (1998) observes that these roles may be culturally bound to white, middle-class, Western male stereotypes. Segal (1990) comments that sex-role theory does not account for the contradictory nature of gender, or for variations in adherence to sex-role stereotypes within a given society. Connell (1995) exposes the limitations of sex-role theory in failing to address the problems of "social inequality, race, class, sexuality and power" (Attwell, 2002, p. 14). Pleck (1987) concludes that there is insufficient empirical evidence for sex-role theory. Nevertheless, as noted by Cameron (2003) these "descriptors encapsulate dominant stereotypes, which are reflected in common-sense understandings of masculinity and are internalised and lived out by individuals" (p. 21) and are likely to have relevance to the sample used in this study.

Social constructionist approaches, which will be discussed next, assert that gender is constructed and practiced within the context of social interaction. Social constructionist research thus commonly focuses on the identification and deconstruction of patterns and constructions of masculinity as they occur within specific locations (Connell, 2000).

2.2.4 Social constructionist approaches to masculinity

Social constructionist views refute assumptions that masculinity is something essential to all men, whether biological, psychological or learned, and suggest that there are multiple masculinities and that these are socially constructed (Connell, 1987; 1989; 1995; 2000; Harris, Lea & Foster, 1995; Kaminer & Dixon, 1995). Brittan (1989) suggests that "since gender does not exist outside history and culture, this means that both masculinity and femininity are continuously subject to a process of reinterpretation" (p.1). Masculinity

thus becomes bound to historical and cultural context rather than an innate, universal phenomenon. Since history and culture are marked by diversity, it follows that masculinity will be characterized likewise by multiplicity and change. Gender is thus not natural or essential but a product of the flux of historical, cultural and social forces and it is more accurate to speak of 'masculinities' than masculinity as a singular construct (Courtenay, 2000).

Connell (1987) suggests that masculinities are produced and formed actively as they are practiced within everyday contexts. Masculinity is thus achieved through performance and is not what men are but what they do and can be conceived of a 'set of practices' (Frosh et al., 2000; Kippax, Crawford & Waldby, 1994). Courtenay (2000) notes that people are not "blank slates that are written on or 'socialized'; rather, they are active participants – along with the world around them – in the construction and reconstruction of gender" (p. 6-7). As Brittan (1989) notes "every time I see myself as a man I am doing 'identity work'" (p. 36). This implies that men are active agents in the construction and reconstruction of their masculine identities (Courtenay, 2000). Giddens (1997) states that "we socially reproduce - make and remake – gender in a thousand minor actions in the course of a day" (p. 96).

Social constructionist theory emphasizes that masculinity is also fluid and mutable as it is constructed within a continuous, dynamic interaction between men and society (Courtenay, 2000). It follows that men both construct their masculinities and are constructed by the discourses available to them in society around acceptable ways of achieving maleness (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Discourses are "clusters of terms, networks of meanings of statements that provide content to masculinity" (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001, p.36). Toerien and Durrheim (2001) note that these discourses offer competing ways of creating a coherent sense of masculine identity. Within a particular context, there will be different ways of "enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using the male body" (Connell, 2000, p. 10). It follows that men must continually strive to achieve a coherent sense of self amidst these multiple constructions of masculinity containing many potential contradictions and inconsistencies (Connell, 2000).

2.2.4.1 Hegemonic masculinity

Connell (1987) suggests that masculinities are relational in that they are constructed in relation and in opposition to other masculinity practices and that some forms of masculinity, which he terms 'hegemonic masculinity', become privileged over others. Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' was based on the theory of hegemony developed by Gramsci (1971) to explain the phenomenon in which a particular cultural group takes precedence over others. Connell (1987) suggests that, while different forms of masculinity may be produced within a culture or setting, one will tend to dominate others, which become subordinate or marginalised. While different masculinities co-exist, the hegemonic versions prevail as they accord and sustain power and privilege to those who vest in them (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). This is supported by Hollway (1984) who asserts that factors such as class, race and age interact with gender to produce discourses inviting subject positions in which different privileges are invested.

Connell (1995) cautions that while a hegemonic form of masculinity will tend to exist in most settings, it is not unified and differs across time and setting. Two examples of coexisting hegemonic masculinities occurring within subcultures in the South African context, as defined by Epstein (1997), are 'The Proper English Gent' and 'Die Ware Afrikaner'. The former construct represents the English-speaking male who "values sport, discipline, a social system based on age hierarchies, loyalty to one's school/nation, homophobia, violence and the notable absence of the Black Other" (Burnard, 2002, p.17). The hegemonic Afrikaner, on the other hand, is industrious, committed to the land and the nation, respectful of history and tradition.

Connell (1995) notes that hegemonic masculinity may not be the most commonly practiced form, even within a single cultural group, as many men may oppose it or live alongside it in a state of ambivalence and tension. Moreover, few men appear to meet the normative definitions of hegemonic masculinity. The concept therefore allows for diversity and recognizes that "relations between men are as relevant as relations between men and women for the formation of gendered identities" (Attwell, 2002, p.24). It has been argued that there is considerable investment in maintaining hegemonic constructions, which tend to sustain male privilege (Anderson & Accomando, 2002; Frosh et al., 2002). Even those masculinities which may be subordinate or marginalized, such as homosexual or black masculinity, may share the privileges accorded by

hegemonic masculinity, the most obvious of these being the institutionalized dominance of men over women (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1987). Boys and young men may sanction hegemonic practices, such as differentiating themselves from gay men and dismissing women, in order to reinforce male power and protect themselves from perceived failure (Holland, Ramazanoglu & Sharpe, 1993).

Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggest that men use a number of discursive practices in order to construct themselves as masculine from the range of discourses available to them in society. They name three primary discourses in which men position themselves as 'heroic', 'normal, moderate or average' or 'unconventional'. The 'heroic' discourse conforms most closely to hegemonic or conventional notions of masculinity. Those using the 'unconventional' discourse position themselves furthest from conventional norms. The majority emphasized their average normality. They note that, while all their subjects recognized hegemonic standards of masculinity, most positioned themselves outside of conventional masculine stereotypes. Hence many men simultaneously both accept and reject the dictates of hegemony. These findings support Connell's (1995) assertion that, while hegemony is described as the ideal against which other forms of masculinity are measured, it is seldom practiced in its purest form.

2.2.4.2 Cultural Ideological Theory

The concept of masculine cultural ideology is located within the social constructionist paradigm. Pleck, Sonenstein and Ku (1993) assert that men internalize norms, beliefs and expectations of masculine behaviour from the cultures in which they are embedded. These norms represent the most commonly practiced ways of being a man in a given culture. Masculine ideology refers to the degree to which men believe that it is important to adhere to these culturally defined standards of masculinity (Pleck, Sonenstein & Ku, 1993). Masculinity is thus not a dimension of personality or biology but a cultural construction. An important distinction from Bem's (1974) masculine traits approach is that masculine ideology highlights attitudes towards the traits rather than the traits themselves. A traditional male, therefore, is one who believes that men should have the desired masculine characteristics, whether or not he espouses them (Pleck et al., 1998a).

Abreu, Goodyear and Camps (2000) refer to four of the most commonly occurring beliefs around traditional masculinity as entailing the rejection of feminine behaviours,

being the breadwinner and provider for a family, restricting display of emotions and being assertive and in control of one's world. Lindegger and Durrheim (2001) add further themes: men as possessors of an uncontrollable, 'natural' sex drive, as conquerors of the environment through metaphorical penetration, as risk-takers and as possessors of the idealized male body which is white and heterosexual - other forms (homosexual or feminine, for example) being deviations from it. Brittan (1989) defines 'masculinism' as a prominent ideology defining men and women as fundamentally different with women unquestionably subordinate and heterosexuality the norm. This ideology "justifies and naturalises male domination" (p. 4).

2.2.4.3 Critique of social constructionist approaches to masculinity

Although social constructionist theory has been acknowledged for its contributions to the understanding of masculinity, it is criticized for ignoring the struggle of individual men to negotiate a personal sense of gendered identity from the versions of being male available to them within their social and cultural environments (Seidler, 1997). Tacey (1997) criticizes the "spiritual hollowness and chronic pessimism" of social constructionist perspectives which do not adequately address the spiritual and emotional aspects of human existence (p. ix). Edley and Wetherell (1997) add that Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity does not adequately clarify the practicalities of how men negotiate a sense of self among competing versions of being male. Nor, according to Frosh et al. (2002), does social constructionism sufficiently explain "the investment that a person has in taking up one position rather than another in a different discourse" (p. 4). Segal (2000) posits that hegemonic masculinity remains a concept describing the dominion of certain groups of men over others as well as women, rather than an actual, practiced form of masculinity. Segal (2000) also warns that social constructionist approaches may in themselves generate a form of cultural reductionism, thus echoing earlier, reductionist theories. The social constructionist perspective has been criticized for failing to explore the emotional and spiritual dimensions of men's actual, lived experiences (Tacey, 1997). Finally, Mac an Ghail (1994, p.172) questions why it is that a "highly fragile construct marked by contradictions, ambivalences and contingencies" becomes fixed as an "apparently stable, unitary category"? (cited in Attwell, 2002).

This study is located within a social constructionist framework and additionally informed by psychoanalytic theory in order to give deeper meaning to the subjects' actual, lived

experiences of being young, developing males. Since this study will replicate, on a small scale, the aims of the Frosh et al. (2002) study, the following section will briefly review some of these findings.

2.3 “Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society” (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002)

Frosh et al. (2002) assert that socio-cultural phenomena, such as feminism and changes in the workplace, have challenged traditional masculinities. Consequently, boys are “having to forge new, more flexible masculinities” (p. 2). Frosh et al. (2002) refer to a ‘developmental crisis’ in which boys, engaged in the process of identity formation, are confronted by a plethora of possible, often contradictory, masculinities and few clear role models. They note that boys are “constrained by the paucity of discursive positions available to them” and that these positions are often contested (p. 51). These limitations may inhibit boys’ capacity for emotional expression and connection and may contribute to higher incidences amongst adolescent boys of violence, aggression and conflict (Connell, 1996b; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mills & Lingard, 1997b; Paechter, 1998; Salisbury & Jackson, 1996; Scully, 2001). Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) conclude that a “gap in our current understanding of boys and masculinities is of complex notions of what it means to ‘do boy’ in specific contexts” (p.84).

Connell (1995; 2000) notes that schools are prime sites for the transmission and formation of young masculinities, yet there has been surprisingly little research done internationally into the school context. The study conducted by Frosh et al. (2002) into 11 to 14 year old boys from 12 secondary schools in London aims to address this gap. A small selection of girls were also interviewed in order to attain a broader understanding of gendered identities. Some of the major themes emerging from this work are summarized below.

2.3.1 Hegemonic masculinity

Hegemonic forms of masculinity were apparent which influenced how boys judged themselves and others as adequately ‘masculine’. These attributes appeared to determine factors such as degree of popularity and comprised such attributes as ‘hardness’, sporting prowess, indifference to schoolwork and swearing. Some boys were judged to be more masculine than others and this intersected with factors such as race and social class.

Constructions of masculinity served to regulate social interaction and were vigorously policed by the boys themselves. Heterosexuality was assumed and boys seen as transgressing gender norms were seen to be feminine or gay. Considerable homophobia existed and this was policed through teasing and ‘cussing’. All the boys clearly defined a hegemonic version of masculinity and deemed it the most desirable, yet most positioned themselves outside of it while simultaneously constructing themselves as appropriately masculine. These findings illustrate the ways in which boys negotiate a coherent sense of their masculine selves from the many, often contradictory, discourses available to them.

2.3.2 Boys in relation to girls

Boys defined themselves in relation to and other than girls and were careful to avoid behaving in ways which may be construed as feminine. The boys commonly “posed gendered oppositions involving denigration and idealization of femininity” (p. 11). Boys described themselves as physically tough, active and restricted in expressed emotionality and the capacity to establish emotional closeness. Boys depicted girls as more mature, serious about schoolwork and possessing the skills for emotional intimacy. These oppositions were constructed as a positive feature of heterosexual desire thus ‘eroticising’ gender differences. It was rare for a boy to construct girls as ‘friends’ yet, paradoxically, most positioned girls as people with whom one could talk freely about personal issues without fear of ridicule. Boys were anticipated to ‘act different’ when in the company of a girlfriend although the majority of boys did not have one.

2.3.3 Girls on the subject of boys

Girls also constructed themselves in opposition to masculinity, describing boys as immature, irresponsible about schoolwork and irritating. These constructions were qualified with the explanation that boys may be vulnerable to peer pressure and are ‘not bad’ when on their own. Girls were also inclined to eroticise gender differences. Most affirmed hegemonic versions of masculinity by asserting that they would prefer a ‘popular’ to a ‘nice’ boy as a boyfriend.

2.3.4 Sport

Sport, in particular football, was a major theme in boys’ constructions of masculinities, even in those who express disinterest or active antipathy towards it. Prowess in sport was

seen to enhance 'maleness' and those proficient in it to occupy an important position in school hierarchy.

2.3.5 Parents and parenting

Boys attributed considerable importance to parental relationships and tended to construct these in gendered ways. Mothers were seen as more emotionally accessible and sensitive to their needs and most fathers were seen as 'jokey' and more distant and detached. Many boys expressed a wish that their fathers were more available and able to respond appropriately to their needs. Most boys concurred that jokes about mothers were unacceptable and tended to be construed as sufficient provocation for a fight. Most boys envisaged themselves as fathers in the future although some employed idealized constructions of fatherhood which did not accord with their own experience of fathering.

2.3.6 Education

Most boys constructed academic success as incompatible with hegemonic maleness, which necessitated a casual attitude towards school and schoolwork. Many boys accorded high status to those who opposed the structures of teacher authority and school regulations, 'for a laugh' while academic conscientiousness was feminised. However, some boys were ambivalent towards hegemonic prescriptions, expressing anxiety about passing exams and criticizing boys who neglected schoolwork and obsessed about football.

Teachers, on the whole, were not considered to be favourable role models. Many boys expressed resentment at what was perceived as the favouritism towards girls and it was noted that black boys were constructed by teachers as more rowdy and were more often punished.

2.3.7 Style

Many of the boys expressed a concern about appearance, stressing the value of looking fit and muscular and wearing stylish clothes. Designer clothes were, on the whole, seen as crucial to popularity. However, a too keen interest in appearance was constructed as feminine and they were all uncomfortable when asked to comment on other boys' looks. African Caribbean boys were seen to have the highest status in terms of style.

2.3.8 Race and social class

Race and social class featured prominently within the masculinity constructions of these boys. Boys of African Caribbean descent were seen as epitomizing hegemonic masculine characteristics while boys of African or Asian descent were seen as less popular. There was a preoccupation with social class with a tendency towards mutual dislike and distrust between the classes. State-school boys tended to construct themselves as 'harder' and private-school boys as 'wimpish' and 'snobbish'. Private-school boys were inclined to construct themselves as superior, more privileged and possessing a better work ethic than state-school boys.

2.3.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, Frosh et al. (2002) argue for the multiplicity of masculinities and explore how their subjects negotiate and integrate a sense of their masculine selves from the versions of being male available to them in their social and cultural contexts. They base their study on social constructionist theories of identity formation while drawing on psychoanalytic theory to provide a richer "account of the investment that a person has in taking up one position rather than another in a different discourse" (Hollway, 1984, p. 223). Through the use of an analytic framework, they explore the emotional and psychic investments boys have in assuming various subject positions, both conscious and unconscious. Individual psychological processes are accessed by examining, inter alia, contradictions, silences and gaps in the narratives as well as the countertransference responses of the interviewers. The analytic framework, argue Frosh et al. (2002), permits a richer understanding of the boys' narratives through "a focus on emotionally laden material, on absences as well as presences in the 'texts', as a way of documenting both the conscious positions taken up by boys in the period of early adolescence, and their less clearly articulated wishes and anxieties" (p. 5).

There is a relative paucity of research in South Africa in the area of masculinity (Attwell, 2002; Morrell, 2001b). The following section will review contemporary research in the South African context, to which this study hopes to contribute its findings.

2.4 The South African context

This section will begin with an overview of some findings in the field of masculinity in general before focusing in more depth on adolescent masculinities and the school as a

site of the production of young masculinities. Morrell (2001b) observes that researchers in South Africa have focused primarily on women's subordinate positioning in relation to men, leaving schools and emerging masculinities under researched. He has made significant contributions to masculinity research both in general and within the school context (Morrell, 1994; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; 2001a; 2001b).

Morrell (2001b) notes that South Africa's sociopolitical history has significantly impacted on formations of masculinity. Epstein (1998a) acknowledges that South African masculinities have been influenced by the country's history of British occupation, the formalized racism of Apartheid and resistance. She adds that the formation of gendered identities within these structures were consequently "solidified in ways that were not only violent, but were structured through racism, misogyny, homosociality and homophobia, while race and class were, and continue to be, linked and gendered" (p. 55). This history of institutionalized race and class segregation and inequity has led to a marked complexity and diversity in gender constructions. Morrell (1994, p. 33) asserts that "there is no one, typical, South African man" and Epstein (1998a) supports this with the observation that there are no 'monolithic' versions of racialised masculinities within particular ethnic groups, but rather a "range of ways of being a man or woman" (p. 52). Epstein (1998a) points out that, within the context of contemporary South African transition and change, "different discourses become relevant, or even possible" (p. 51) and adds that there may be power shifts between hegemonic and formally marginalized discourses.

Historically, hegemonic masculinity was defined by white, middle-class, heterosexual men who "enjoyed the privileges of unquestioned power and domination in this country for decades – not only over women of all races, but over men of other races and classes as well" (Lemon, 1995, p. 65). Consequently, different versions of hegemonic discourse may have arisen within black and white cultures (Morrell, 1998b). Morrell (1998b; 2001b) has, however, identified areas of commonality within these discourses, including dominance over women, compulsory heterosexuality and the importance of physical toughness and endurance. Although violence is a common construct in that men are seen as 'naturally' violent, for black men violence has also been constructed as a valid way of dealing with power inequalities and resolving problems (Morrell, 2001b). Recent research has identified three common discourses utilized by present day South African

men, these being “men as victims of the advancement of women, men as naturally violent and competitive, and men as victims (equally with women) of policies such as structural adjustment” (Morrell, 2001a, p. 25).

Within South African schools, Morrell (1994) delineated parallels between white, private, single-sex boarding schools and British public schools and suggests that these may have been instrumental in shaping equivalent, white masculinities in South Africa. These schools, along with many white, state-schools (Epstein, 1998a), construct hierarchies with the aim of ‘toughening up’ boys and these are maintained by age, the prefect system and academic and sporting prowess, particularly in rugby. Epstein (1998a) suggests that these discourses produce constructions of competitiveness, homophobia and violence and, according to Morrell (1994), restrict the emergence of alternative masculinities. Subsequent changes in educational policy (South African Schools Act, 1996) have prohibited corporal punishment and discrimination on the grounds of sex or race. However, Deacon, Morrell and Prinsloo (1999) note that many of the former school structures remain intact, including patriarchal forms of authority influenced by colonialism, apartheid and traditional African culture. Morrell (2001b) observes that boys of all races construct discipline as the use of force by an authoritarian figure on a subordinate. Deacon et al. (1999) conclude “the laws of the land, it appears, are far in advance of the people in whose name they were passed” (p. 165).

Attwell’s (2002) study locates in a broad cross-section of South African schools and explores the masculinity constructions of teachers involved in the education of adolescent boys. She notes that little research has been conducted in historically black schools. Common themes emerge across schools in Attwell’s (2002) work, including definitions of masculinity as assumed heterosexuality, the antithesis of femininity, homophobia, responsibility, dominance and superiority over women and material success. Wood and Jewkes (1998; 2001) confirm that heterosexual success and masculine dominance are important facets of masculinity among adolescent males and young men. According to Attwell (2002), contemporary adolescent boys are constructed by their teachers as displaced, or ‘lost’ as a consequence of sociopolitical change. Popular adolescent masculinity is conceptualized as predominantly ‘macho’ and includes such practices as risk taking, heterosexual success and rule-breaking. Teacher concerns commonly focus on the need to manage and control adolescent sexuality, aggression,

violence and risk-taking behaviours. Attwell (2002) recognizes a diversity and complexity in these constructions of masculinity. Morrell's (2001b) concern is that, in general, male teachers espouse restricted, hegemonic versions of masculinity and do not "generate alternative, more democratic and gentler masculine identities" (p. 50). South African research supports the findings of Frosh et al. and others in its observations that adolescent masculinities are complex, multiple, mutable and often marked by contradiction and conflict.

2.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to three essentialist views of masculinity, the biological, psychoanalytic and social learning approaches, followed by an overview of social constructionist approaches. The first three models conceive of masculinity as something stable, unitary and intrinsic to all men, whether biological, psychological or learned from the environment. Social constructionist approaches reconceptualise masculinity as multiple, mutable, contextualised and socially constructed. This was followed by a brief review of the primary findings of the study conducted by Frosh et al. (2002), since the present study is in part informed by this work. Frosh et al. locate their study primarily within the social constructionist paradigm, drawing on psychoanalytic insights to give greater depth and meaning to their subjects' accounts of themselves. The review concludes with a discussion of research conducted into masculinities in the South African context and ends with an overview of some of the research conducted specifically into adolescent masculinities, since these are the focus of this study. This research recognizes the particular importance of sociopolitical and cultural context in the formation of South African masculinities and explores some of the themes of a South Africa in transition.

In conclusion, social change and shifts in gender roles and practices have generated an increasing body of research into the field of masculinity (eg. Connell, 1995; Frosh, 1994; Kimmel, 1990; Seidler, 1991; Segal, 1990). Frosh et al. (2002) suggest that boys may consequently be facing a developmental crisis in which current understandings and practices of masculinity are complex and confusing for them. Frosh et al. (2002) suggest that the social construction of boys as troublesome and unmanageable may be one of the contributory factors in the increase of problematic behaviours among British adolescents. However, there appears to be insufficient research into how adolescent boys construct

and practice their masculine identities (Frosh et al., 2002). In South Africa, researchers posit that the constructions and practices of masculinity may be contributory factors in the critical social problems faced by the country, such as high incidences of violence, rape and HIV/AIDS transmission (eg. Epstein, 1998b; Morrell, 2001a; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Lindegger and Durrheim (2001) assert that one of the ways in which these problems may be addressed is through the exploration of contemporary forms of masculinity, thus contributing to the emergence of new, more adaptive gender identities and practices. It would appear, however, that research into this critical area of human understanding is as yet meager in South Africa (Morrell, 2001a). This study thus aims to contribute to the understanding of South African adolescent masculinity.

The following chapter will delineate the methodology used in this study.

3.1 Research rationale

A broad rationale for this study is the paucity of research into understandings of the perceptions and constructions of adolescent masculinities in South Africa (Morrell, 2001a). As explicated in the introduction, the formation and practice of young masculinities appear to be 'in crisis' owing to changes in social structures (Frosh et al., 2002; Kimmel, 1987). Boys and young men engaged in the process of gender identity development may be particularly vulnerable within the context of South Africa's socio-political history and current, transitional state (Morrell, 2001a). It is suggested by Frosh et al. (2002) that the production of a coherent, integrated, effective sense of gendered self is fraught with complexity and is achieved through an ongoing process of negotiation, construction and reconstruction. South Africa's young men appear to have few clear role models and contemporary, available forms of masculinity are multiple, contradictory, inconsistent and at times ineffective (Attwell, 2002; Morrell, 2001a). These practices may inhibit the potential for interpersonal development and may also be implicated in the problems of crime, conflict and violence which face South Africa's youth (Attwell, 2002; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a). Exploration of current versions of masculinity, may contribute towards the emergence of new, more flexible and cohesive ways of being male (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001).

3.2 Research aims

As with Frosh et al.(2002), this study aimed to investigate the constructions and practices of adolescent masculinities. The Frosh et al. (2002) work augmented research into the field of masculinity in Britain through their investigation of a sample of adolescents from London schools. This study aimed to enhance understandings of the ways in which South African boys 'make' and 'do' their gendered identities, while exploring the parallels and differences which may exist between British and South African adolescent masculinities. The research was 'boy-centred' in that it aimed to understand the subjective, lived experience of the participants, the accounts providing access to the ways in which boys 'achieve' and 'perform' their masculinities (Brod, 1987; Frosh et al., 2002; Wetherell & Edley, 1999)

The research questions included: How do boys make and do gender within their various contexts? Are there commonalities and differences across the individual accounts? Is there a dominant, hegemonic theme and how is it constructed and maintained? How do boys challenge or confirm this hegemony? How do they integrate the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in these versions of masculinity in order to create a coherent personal narrative? What are some of the insecurities and anxieties underlying these negotiations and how are they dealt with?

3.3 Research design

A qualitative research design was used comprising an in-depth ideographic study of a selection of boys from several schools in Kwazulu Natal. Since the study aimed to explore, describe and understand individual and social phenomena through the analysis and interpretation of linguistic constructions, as evident in the boys' subjective accounts of themselves, a qualitative design was considered to be the most appropriate (Patton, 1990; Silverman, 2000). Girls were included in order to avoid what Mac an Ghail (1996) call the 'over-gendering' of boys.

Qualitative methodology is the focus of increasing attention by researchers (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990), but there is "no agreed doctrine underlying all qualitative social research" (Silverman, 2000, p. 8). Most qualitative research aims to generate, rather than test, hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, in Silverman, 2000). Kvale (1996) argues, however, that although there are no standard rules or methodological guidelines, conventional quantitative criteria of validity, reliability and generalisability may be reconceptualised within the qualitative paradigm. He refutes criticisms of the potential complexity this development brings to research by asserting that the world of human reality is likewise boundlessly complex, and that qualitative interpretations of validity, reliability and generalisability may more accurately reflect the human and social phenomena they investigate. Reason and Rowan (1981) assert that the qualitative paradigm permits the exploration of the multiple realities of researcher, participant and socio-cultural framework, thus providing a research methodology appropriate to postmodern, social constructionist views of reality. Silverman (2000) adds that it is nonetheless always important to recognize the contested nature of qualitative research.

Kvale (1996), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Silverman (2000) stress that rigorous high standards of methodological precision are essential in the production of qualitative work if it is to have integrity, accuracy and meaning, and thorough checking, theorizing and questioning of data and interpretations may improve validity. In addition, data should be analysed independently by others to check for comparability and consistency, thus reducing interpreter bias (Patton, 1990). A clear, precise explication of methods and procedures is vital to the transferability of findings to other, comparable situations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Reflexivity, in which the researcher's personal assumptions, values and biases are explored, further improves the degree of objectivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Reason and Rowan (1981) emphasize that 'unaware projection' and 'consensus collusion', in which researcher subjectivity may influence outcome, may be reduced through careful self-reflexivity. This includes self-knowledge, conscious, repeated checking of themes, interpretations and knowledge claims and the eliciting of challenges and critiques from colleagues or supervisors.

3.4 Sample

Owing to the qualitative design of this study, it was not possible to use randomized sampling which means that the findings cannot be effectively generalized to other populations of South African boys (Kerlinger, 1986). A purposive approach was adopted since a deliberate effort was made to select subjects from particular sectors. (Patton, 1990). The attributes of interest in the selection of participants included race, gender and school attended. This was also a convenience sample since it comprised a group who were "readily available to participate in a study" (Henry, 1998, p. 105).

The participants comprised a heterogeneous selection of subjects aged 13 to 14 years who were drawn from Grade 8 classes from seven schools in and around Pietermaritzburg. Black and White subjects were included in order to explore the intersection of race with the gendered identities of South African adolescents. The subjects were drawn from a selection of schools in order to explore variations across school context. These included historically White, independent, single sex schools (boys and girls) and historically Black, state co-educational schools. As noted by Frosh et al. (2002), the inclusion of girls' narratives on masculinity permitted comparison between boys' and girls' versions of masculinity thereby facilitating a broader understanding of

masculinity performances, and “ to avoid erroneously thinking that issues that preoccupy both boys and girls are only of interest to boys” (p. 7).

The sample comprised the following:

four White boys from three single-sex, independent, historically White schools;
three Black boys from two co-educational, state, historically Black schools;
two Black girls from one co-educational, state, historically Black school;
two White girls from two single-sex, independent, historically White schools.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected using the semi-structured interview protocol developed by Frosh et al. (2002) (See Appendix I and Appendix II). This protocol was utilized as a guideline and served to promote discussion and reflection around the feelings, thoughts and beliefs generated by the questions. The interviews lasted 45 minutes to one hour and were “interviewee centred” (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 8). The style of the interview was informal and a sympathetic, non-judgmental and affirming atmosphere was created in which participants were encouraged to talk freely about themselves. This method of interviewing is termed a ‘clinical style’ by Hollway and Jefferson, 1995, in Frosh et al., 2002). The interviewer played a largely facilitative role, encouraging participants to reflect on and develop their responses.

3.6 Procedure

Since the subjects used in this study were minors, it would have been necessary to obtain consent from both parents/guardians and school governmental bodies if the research was to be conducted on the school grounds. It was anticipated that the latter exercise would be lengthy and would not be possible to achieve within the time constraints of this study. Therefore data was gathered during the school holidays during which only parental/guardian consent was necessary and there was direct access to the participants in their homes. The parents/guardians of each of the participants were known personally to me and were contacted, by telephone or in person, and a brief overview given of the aims and procedures of the study. Opportunities were provided for the parents/guardians to ask questions regarding the study, as well as to voice any possible concerns. The parents/guardians were asked to approach the child with the

above explanation of the study and to ask if he/she was willing to partake in the research. The principles of autonomy and confidentiality were explained to the parents/guardians and participants as follows:

- ❖ that the participants were participating on a voluntary basis and were not to be coerced by parent, guardian or researcher
- ❖ that participants and parents/guardians had been informed of the nature and scope of the study
- ❖ that participants had been informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions from parents, guardians or researcher
- ❖ that confidentiality would be maintained for the participant at all times

A telephone number was provided in order to allow parents/guardians or prospective participants to contact the researcher for further information, though this was not used. After an agreed period, the parent/guardian was contacted again and, if consent had been obtained, a time and venue agreed in which the interview would take place. All parents/guardians approached gave their consent and all targeted participants agreed to take part in the study. All participants were visited and interviewed in their homes. Before beginning the interview, the above principles were reiterated. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour. With the informed consent of the parents/guardians and participants, the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts formed the textual data which was analysed and interpreted.

3.7 Data analysis

According to Mauthner and Doucet (1998), competent data analysis is crucial to the success of qualitative research and is consequently the area most vulnerable to criticism. In response to the scarcity of clearly articulated qualitative research analysis methodology, they developed an analytical procedure which they call the 'voice-centred relational method'. Although this text was analysed for themes rather than 'voices', the methodology outlined by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) was used to guide the analysis. They recommend multiple readings of the text, followed by the development of detailed case summaries of each individual transcript and finally an overall thematic analysis.

The process of Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) multiple readings involved the following steps:

1. reading for an overall sense of the interview and for the researcher's response to the data
2. reading for recurrent themes, ideas and images, as well as contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the text, and general tone
3. reading for themes identified in the review of the literature

Key themes were identified on each reading of the text and noted in the transcript margins. Each individual interview was subsequently summarized into a comprehensive case summary. The thematic content of each case summary was used to formulate an overall thematic analysis (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). This process included an investigation into common themes of hegemony and its alternatives, as well as how boys negotiate a coherent sense of themselves within and between different versions of being male. The analysis was then displayed on one sheet to create a concise visual representation of the commonalities and contrasts across the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This display was used to facilitate the writing of an 'analytic text', which Miles and Huberman (1994) define as "the act of writing text as you ruminate over the meaning of a display" (p. 101). They note that this process aids in the identification and analysis of themes and patterns in the text. It was thus possible to identify similarities and differences in the constructions of masculinity both within and across the interviews. Cross-analysis by independent analysts was used to check the interviewer's responses to the data as well as the identification and analysis of themes at each stage of the process. The independent analysts comprised an Intern Psychologist and a Clinical Psychologist, both of whom had research experience in the field of masculinity studies.

Following the analytic procedures used by Frosh et al.(2002), the thematic analysis was augmented through an exploration of "the emotional and psychic investments of particular boys in the kinds of subject positions available to them in various contexts" (p.4). Inferences about these subject positions were made from the text itself through an examination and interpretation of the gaps, silences, contradictions and inconsistencies. This part of the analysis was informed by a psychoanalytic perspective. The interview was conceptualized as a relationship in which both interviewer and interviewee were

active in the construction of meaning. Significant in this co-construction is the fact that the interviewer is a white woman, much the same age as the participants' maternal figures, and this would have impacted on the responses of both interviewer and interviewee. After each interview, the interviewer's subjective impressions and feelings were recorded with the intention of tracking and understanding the emotional underlay to the participants' responses. It was noted, for example, whether the interview had been experienced as easy or difficult, whether the participant was liked or not, as well as unexpected, surprising, contradictory or strong responses, reactions or feelings in both interviewer and interviewee. Countertransference reactions were explored, or the sense that particular unconscious feelings and thoughts may have been projected onto the interviewer by the participant, and given possible interpretations (Frosh et al., 2002). These observations and interpretations are presented at the end of the Findings section.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Since the participants of this study were minors, and therefore a vulnerable population, it was necessary to take special measures to assure their protection. This included a process of informed consent involving parent/guardian and participant. The aims, nature and duration of the research were explained, as well as potential risks and implications for the participant. The researcher was careful not to use inaccessible, theoretical, academic language in order to facilitate understanding, while not sacrificing essential meanings. Parents/guardians and participants were accorded ample time in which to reflect before making a decision. Special care was taken to explain the precise nature and implications of their volunteer status to the participants. They were assured that they could withdraw at any time with no consequences to themselves. Opportunities were provided for all parties to voice concerns or ask for clarification. Since all participants were known to the interviewer, the principles of confidentiality were considered to be of particular importance. These were explained in detail to both parents/guardians and participants. Finally, consent was obtained from the parents/guardians for the participation of the minors under their care.

This study was guided by the principles of non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. It was concluded that harm to the participants, in the unlikely event that it occurred, would not have been in any way intentional. Although most of the questions required personal reflection and response, they were non-threatening and non-invasive in nature and did

not directly probe into areas of potential sensitivity in South African society, such as race and race relations. In the event of emotional disturbance resulting from the interview questions, parents/guardians were briefed beforehand and counseling facilities recommended. Although direct benefits to the participants were minimal, it was considered that the research may have broader social benefits by playing a role in addressing the critical problems facing this country (Campbell, 1992; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a). These benefits were explained to the participants and some follow-up measures comprising a brief overview of the results of their contributions once the study is completed.

Finally, sensitivity around racial classification and terminology in the South African context was considered. South African society has inherited from its apartheid history a legacy of racial segregation. These socially constructed edifices are embedded within the fabric of its society, although apartheid laws are long abolished (Epstein, 1998a). The power of language is such that it constructs and reifies social structures and practices, thus rendering change slow and difficult. However, it was considered of importance within the context of this study to note commonalities and contrasts in masculinities across these historically defined racial divisions, so a terminology of race outlined by Morrell (2001a) was used, these being White and Black.

3.9 Reflexivity

The viewpoint of the researcher is an important consideration, particularly in qualitative research where the data is filtered through the subjective framework of the researcher (Silverman, 2000). Furthermore, the social constructionist perspective holds that research is a relational process which in itself represents an intervention in the participants' lives that may invoke change and learning. The researcher is thus obliged to manage the research process by making situated judgments using self-reflexivity to question one's own position and intra-subjective assumptions and beliefs (Reason & Rowan, 1981). The management of one's own 'self consciousness' and emotions thus facilitates a clearer, less biased understanding of the stories of the participants (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994). All these factors were taken into account during the process of this research. In addition, discussions with colleagues and supervisor helped to maintain an awareness of personal subjectivity and possible bias and prejudice.

4.1 Identification of quotation sources

Verbatim quotations from transcribed interviews are used in this chapter. Quotations can be sourced from individual accounts according to the race and gender of each subject and the type of school attended, in accordance with the following key:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Four White boys from three single-sex schools (Independent, historically White schools) | SW1-i; SW1-ii; SW2-i; SW3-i |
| Three Black boys from two co-educational schools (State, historically Black schools) | CB1-i; CB1-ii; CB2-i |
| Two Black girls from one co-educational school (State, historically Black school) | CB-iii; CB-iv; |
| Two White girls from two single-sex schools (Independent, historically White schools) | SG1-i; SG2-i |

4.2 Introduction

The results of this research consistently reveal that masculinity among adolescent boys is a dynamic, complex process, continually being made and performed. The boys described many different ways of being male, often articulating then shifting between several, contradictory, versions within a few sentences. Thus they define and construct themselves as male from the many varied, often conflicting, discourses of masculinity available to them within their particular socio-cultural contexts (Toerien and Durrheim, 2001).

The thematic analysis was conducted on transcribed interviews and was guided by the research questions. The findings are thus set out accordingly. Firstly, the boys' accounts are examined for common constructions of 'dominant' or hegemonic forms of masculinity, against which boys measure their subjective sense of being acceptably male. This is followed by a description of how they challenge the hegemonic ideal and how they use alternative constructions to position themselves within and alongside it. The inevitable contradictions and conflicts emerging in this process are explored, along with

numerous ways in which the subjects nonetheless manage to negotiate a coherent sense of self. These processes and practices are accompanied by insecurities and anxieties, in many cases compounded by interviewer bias, and these are interpreted within a psychodynamic framework. In conclusion, communalities and contrasts across individual interview sites are noted.

4.3 The multiple voices of masculinity

4.3.1 Real boy: the ideal

A prevailing or 'dominant' voice of masculinity is articulated throughout the boys' accounts. This version of masculinity, which Connell (1995) terms 'hegemonic', appears to be actively constructed and practiced through social interactions. It is drawn from the cultural and ideological resources available to the boys within their particular contexts, including the classroom and the environments in which they live. It is a powerful voice and constitutes an ideal to which most boys aspire, though seldom meet, and which influences the degree to which the boys view themselves and others as adequately masculine. The characteristics of this ideal are notably similar across sites and are associated with physical size, toughness, sporting prowess, emotional restrictedness, a casual approach to academic work and being different from girls. This section concentrates on general themes across the accounts which depict how boys construct, confirm and maintain this prevailing, hegemonic masculine voice, even while challenging its dictates or positioning themselves alongside it. It concludes with a section on the girls' descriptions of how they perceive conventional masculine practices.

4.3.1.1 The media

When asked what kind of media productions they would produce in order to attract the interest of boys of a similar age to themselves, a strategy based on Frosh et al.'s (2002) study, most replied that they would use themes such as action, adventure, sport and war. The consensus seems to be that "...guys really enjoy action and a lot of fighting and stuff like that" (SW2-i). These themes, which necessitate the display of physical prowess, endurance, toughness and skill, were commonly constructed as "...boyish kind of things" (SW1-i) and therefore appropriate for a male audience. Some subjects differentiate within these themes, for example one would make a film with "...soldiers with guns, lots of bombs" (CB2-i), while another answers "No, not war movies - Jackie Chan movies - action" (CB1-ii). Manly qualities are expanded to include such concepts as adherence to a

patriotic ideal, fortitude and heroism both in battle and in overcoming personal setbacks. One subject, for example, would chose to make a documentary on "...soldiers in war and most especially Douglas Bader as he had no legs and he crashed in a Bulldog before the war and his legs had to be amputated and he became one of the greatest pilots in World War II even though everyone said he wasn't allowed to fly - I mean, he never gave up – the oke spent three years trying to get into the airforce before they let him in" (SW-i).

4.3.1.2 Sport

Prowess in sport is constructed across all sites as a pivotal aspect of hegemonic masculinity. There is a marked difference between racial groups, however, in that Black boys refer solely to soccer and White boys to rugby and cricket as appropriate foci of the hegemonic ideal. Boys from both racial groups who are successful sportsmen affirm this quality as a valued part of their masculine identities. Sport in general constitutes a meeting ground for many boys wherein they are able to produce their masculinities in a relatively uncontested way. It serves, therefore, as an acceptable masculine activity and is a major topic of conversation: "We talk about sport a lot – what teams are winning – rugby mostly" (SW1-ii); "They talk about soccer a lot. If there is a group of boys we talk about ball, you see" (CB1-ii). Those boys in the sample who dislike sport or who are unable to play tend to be critical of these constructions but nonetheless confirm their dominance. One of the subjects, for example, who is physically disabled and cannot play sport notes that "...most of the boys – there are the tough boys - and you find that every afternoon they are doing exercise for the body muscles – all that stuff – and they are playing soccer. African boys – they like soccer too much" (CB1-i). Boys who are not involved with sport can find themselves alienated by dominating masculine voices who "...are kind of loud – always talking A-team, A-team cricket, A-team rugby, A-team everything" (SW1-i). Sporting prowess is also strongly correlated with popularity. An able player notes "... if you're good at sport you know everyone" (SW1-ii) while an onlooker constructs the "popular crowd" as "... those who might be really good at rugby and they want to say, sort of, look how good I am at rugby and they get the attention" (SW3-i). Among Black boys, media sporting personalities commonly constitute an ideal to which boys aspire because "... they see the players on television and they say they like to be someone playing like that" (CB1-ii), thereby entrenching sport as a key theme in hegemonic masculinity.

4.3.1.3 Popularity

Hegemonic masculinity is clearly recognized when boys are asked to describe what it means to be popular, although there are many, complex, multi-layered meanings to popularity. Popular boys are "... usually quite handsome and they get along with everyone and they have the in-stuff – mostly they are usually quite big", although "... they can be small like this dude in my grade – he can dance very well" (SW1-ii) or they are "... good at things, in sport, in class" (SW1-i). A boy with small stature or nondescript looks may nonetheless win masculine acceptance if he displays exceptional skill in other areas. One subject defines popular as physical toughness and dominance: "The other children are afraid of them" (CB2-1), while another attempts to differentiate between tough and popular, for example "... one guy starts talking and then all of them keep quiet then you know he's popular - popular means you get a lot of people listening - or he's the macho guy" (SW2-i). Popularity defined as funny or having an attractive personality is nonetheless subordinate to and policed by hegemonic productions: "Guys will pay a lot of attention to them when they speak ... but then the macho guys think 'wo – you are totally out of our league – you are going nowhere when you get older'" (SW2-i). Commonly, hegemonic attributes such as bigness, good looks and sporting prowess are useful entrées into the world of popularity, but the relationship between these concepts is complex and they do not always overlap. The possession of popularity-enhancing attributes such as 'a sense of humour', 'leadership qualities', being 'good at things' or simply being 'nice to hang around with', may represent attempts to broaden the narrow band of hegemony.

Extremes of the classic hegemonic attributes can become problematic for popularity, resulting in distancing of these boys from mainline masculine activity. Physical toughness spilling into dominance and aggression becomes bullying, for example, and bigness beyond accepted norms may invite mockery and teasing. Black boys tend to interweave constructs of popularity with susceptibility to peer pressure which is construed as potentially destructive. Hence the necessity of having "good boys" as friends and avoiding those who are "bad" as "... they are going to force you to do those things, those bad things" (CB1-ii) such as smoking and drug and alcohol abuse. Hegemonic norms are maintained by these boys through aspects such as physical toughness, interest or prowess in sport. Ultimately, however, the hegemonic voice seems to dominate within constructs of popularity across sites. The accounts reveal that

masculinities are perceived by all subjects as relative with some boys being “tougher” and others being “... more feeble, more sensitive and shy” (SW1-ii). The former, constructed as more masculine, in the main occupy sought-after positions in the in-groups with the latter tending to be outsiders and, at the extreme, ‘losers’.

4.3.1.4 School

Within the school environment, boys in all accounts depict teachers as having a different approach to boys than girls. Boys are constructed as rougher and more difficult to handle with teachers tending to blame boys for disturbances in class and handing out harsher punishments: “They (girls) never got punished for anything even though they were the main trouble causers often” (SW3-i). Some boys express resentment at teacher discrimination and attribute it to the availability of emotional expressiveness possessed by girls which enables them to protest and explain their way out of punishments, whereas boys must bear what comes their way in silence and fortitude “... we maybe complained a little bit but mostly we didn’t and then we forgot about it later on” (SW2-i). Resistance to authority in the form of cheek, or ‘chirping’, the teacher constitutes acceptable masculine behaviour, thus earning approval from classmates and boosting popularity: “...it’s cool not to work and the teachers don’t like it and aren’t too keen on them - but maybe that’s part of it – they like to rile the teachers and that’s what makes them popular” (SW2-i). Hegemonic constructions in historically White schools require a casual approach to academic work since “goody-goods” who “do everything the teacher asks are definitely not cool” (SW1-ii). Therefore boys striving to reproduce popular versions of masculinity have to take care to conceal their efforts if they are to sustain their positions: “... if someone’s popular they don’t work – even if they want to work they don’t because then they won’t be popular” (SW2-i). This construction is less evident in the accounts from the historically Black schools. Appearing to be less studious than girls is still an important part of masculinity but education is valued as a necessary means to future success. Although the Black subjects in this study come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, all expressed ambitions towards social and economic advancement, which may have made them more resistant to the anti-swot dictates of hegemony:

“They are interested to be a thing in their life – they like to be educated”
(CB1-ii).

4.3.1.5 Emotions

Common to all accounts are hegemonic notions of masculinity which the boys themselves see as restricting their capacity to express emotion. Girls are constructed as both more emotional than boys and as having greater access to emotional expressiveness. While boys do not deny the existence of their emotions, they are nonetheless obliged not to display them: "... when boys have got problems, emotions and things, they won't show it, they'll probably hide it, and a girl will just cry" (SW1-ii). Girls are constructed as more empathic, authentic communicators both among themselves and with boys. In order to meet the dictates of adolescent masculinity, boys are unable to share 'personal stuff' with each other for fear of mockery and derision. Emotions thus exist largely within the domain of the feminine and their expression is clearly 'not masculine'. Displays of emotional vulnerability are strictly policed since their display risks derision, mockery or accusations of being 'weak', girlish or gay, with the result that emotional responses are restricted in most contexts. Problems are shared, if at all, with a girl or parents:

"Yes, the girls they talk more easily because they are having a lot of different friends and then you are having okay friends and then you are having good friends. But if you are a boy you find you are not having proper friends. For instance sometimes you find you only have one friend which you can talk your worries with. And girls, they are honest. And boys, they talk soccer and they laugh you sometimes" (CB1-i)

4.3.1.6 Masculinity as 'not-girl'

All accounts dichotomize masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is produced as 'not-girl' and girls are studious, emotional, good communicators and listeners and not interested in classic male pursuits such as war, action and contact sports: "With boys I'd probably do paintball and things like that. With the girls we'd probably go out to the movies or lunch or something" (SW2-i). Those boys at single sex schools who have had limited contact with girls tend to rely particularly heavily on feminine stereotypes in their constructions of what they consider to be 'girl'. A real boy cannot exhibit any of these properties or he risks being called nerd, wimp, girl or gay. The differences in girls are both denigrated and eroticised and boys who exhibit girl characteristics face being exiled from the masculine enclave and heterosexuality is assumed. English-speaking boys who

fit the bill are ‘dudes’ and girls are ‘chicks’. The interviewer was unable, possibly owing to language difficulties, to establish whether there are equivalents in Zulu culture. Tough girls have stereotypical masculine attributes such as strong bodies, short hair, an interest in sport and less overt emotionality than their more feminine counterparts. Most boys express a preference for male company and note that girls are a common topic of conversation, in which they primarily feature as objects of sexual interest. Most note that practices change when girls are present. These include a shift in conversational style and the display of distinctive sexualised behaviours. Boys “...watch what (you) say more around girls” whereas when only boys are present the “... conversation just goes along” (SW1-ii). They compete for feminine attention through strutting, posing and pushing each other around: “... like before a social, everyone starts to fight – they all start fighting and shoving each other around – macho sort of thing” (SW2-i). Implicit in these activities is the notion that the more macho, or hegemonic male, the boy, the better his chances of winning the girl.

4.3.1.7 Violence

Violence is commonly seen as an appropriate masculine response to provocation and an acceptable approach to conflict resolution. What actually constitutes provocation differs across the racial groups in this study. White boys accept that physical aggression is a befitting response to teasing, especially if it comprises insults about one’s mother or accusations of being gay: “Yes, they do get violent when people start irritating them and don’t stop. They’ll probably smack the guy” (SW1-ii). Black boys perceive theft of one’s belongings as sufficient provocation for a violent response: “... maybe when, like, someone’s pencil gets lost and you see the same one when someone is using it and you think that’s the one that you lost and you start hitting each other” (CB2-i). Another Black subject suggests violence is understandable as a response to socio-economic disadvantage, or to a lack of exposure to traditional family values. Displays of physical aggression may be one of the practices through which boys in socio-economically deprived positions lay claim to hegemony:

“Do boys get violent?”

“Yes, yes, they get. The criminals. And boys too because most of the boys they are coming from the location and they lack wealth. They lack wealth too much.

And even the families they are coming from are not as strict as like I come from” (CB1-i).

4.3.1.8 Race

Responses to questions exploring racialised constructions and their intersection with the hegemonic voice are varied and, on the whole, marked by awkwardness, anxiety and contradiction. These will be examined in more detail in the section exploring how boys negotiate the contradictions and limitations of hegemonic masculinity. All Black interviewees are Zulu speakers. They voice pride in their racial group and express no inclination to change: “It’s fine to be an African” (CB1-i). They make no reference to White masculinity. There are many, complex reasons why this may be so, including the race and gender of the interviewer. The boys interviewed for this study will have had limited interracial experience and may thus rely on socially constructed stereotypes and beliefs regarding white masculinity and its dominance during the Apartheid era and the consequent marginalisation of Black masculinities. Since White masculinity represents the former oppressor and the interviewer is both White and female, these constructions may have been withheld. The Black boys described themselves as “African” and referred to other African groups when comparing masculinities. These groups such as Sotho and Xhosa, even Zimbabwean, are described as having different languages and customs but “...Zulu boys, they are the more tougher” (CB2-i). To the Zulu-speaking adolescent, just being Zulu and male seems to satisfy many of the requirements of proper masculinity.

White boys from the single sex, historically white schools do not give detailed descriptions of Black masculinities, thus rendering them virtually unseen. This may result from a lack of actual experience of boys from other racial groups. Interracial mixing, on the whole, appears to be limited:

“Do you think boys from other racial groups are treated differently?”

“Yes, definitely. Say there’s a White guy and a Black guy and another White guy comes along then the White guy will go with the other White guy and the Black guy will be left alone.” (SW2-i)

Most of the White boys strive to avoid using language which may have racist connotations and labour over politically correct responses. For example, most attempt to

avoid the use of words like 'White' or 'Black' and appear to be more comfortable using terms such as 'culture', possibly because it may be understood to lack racist connotations. White masculinities are constructed as dominant within the context of historically White schools:

“Are some races given preference over others in your school?”

“Ja, White, definitely, probably, ja, White” (SW1-ii)

Black boys are not seen to possess desirable hegemonic traits. Rather, they can “put up with a lot”, “have been through harder times”, “don’t pick fights like the other boys” and are “a lot more caring” (SW1-ii; SW2-i; SW2-ii). Black masculinities become more visible if accompanied by traits such as exceptional sporting ability or popularity-enhancing skills such as humour, or if they “...don’t go on too much about having been oppressed” (SW2-ii). These answers may be fuelled by constructions of post-apartheid guilt, the threat of new, emerging, competitive Black masculinities or the desire to make socially acceptable responses. Some subjects intersperse political correctness with descriptions which imply racist practices: “They (Blacks) probably have it harder to get around without, you know, being teased or whatever” (SW1-ii) and “I don’t want to be exactly that (Black) where you are getting tuned all the time” (SW2-i). In some cases, racist practices which actively denigrate Black masculinities may even serve to boost hegemonic status: “...those guys that don’t like other races, they are tougher” (SW2-i). Most White boys seem to sense that, despite efforts to maintain the status quo, masculinity constructions are in flux with significant challenges to White male superiority. Consequently, these boys may be struggling with feelings of displacement in the new South Africa: “...being Black in the new South Africa you could get more jobs and a better living” (SW1-i).

4.3.1.9 Girls on the subject of boys

Gendered dichotomies likewise exist in the girls’ accounts of what it means to be boy: “They are opposite to a girl” (SG1-i). As with the boys, these differences are eroticised. Boys are more physical, play sport and “...like action and stuff” (SG2-i). These accounts also utilise hegemonic constructions in their perceptions of what it means to be ‘real boy’. They differentiate between ‘cool guys’ who are harder, better at sport, popular and more stylish and the ‘losers’ who are smaller, quieter and lack the cool attributes: “...the

cool guys they wear nice clothes, smart, and they are always clean” (CB-iv). Black girls confirm the constructions voiced by the Black boys which add a socio-economic dimension to hegemony: “..some of them don’t have fathers or they have got no parents and they are very poor - they take drugs and drink alcohol – they have no respect for us and they don’t respect the teachers” (CB-iv). All girls interviewed describe themselves as more mature than boys who “... care more about what everyone thinks of them – they would probably go more against their morals and stuff, just to be cool” (SG-i). Girls thus recognise the dominance of hegemonic masculine discourse, while describing it as potentially problematic, since boys must continually strive towards it, even at the possible cost to personal integrity. Boys are also described as having fewer resources for emotional expressiveness: “They can’t talk to each other about personal stuff, they’ll be mocked” (SG2-i). Masculinity is thus seen as a relatively lonely, competitive, aggressive place with girls having the benefit of intimacy, sharing, empathy and group support. Girls are seen as being able to be conscientious while boys “...don’t give a damn about work” (CB-iii). Girls confirm that it is an insult to masculine identity to be called gay or girl: “...sometimes they say something like ‘can you borrow me something?’ and they say ‘no I can’t because you are a girl – go back to the girls’” (CB-iv). Black girls at co-educational, historically Black schools add a dimension of sexual aggression to their descriptions of hegemonic boys, of whom they are afraid, since these boys only approach girls with sexual intent and “...don’t have the respect for girls” (CB-iv). These boys are also more prone to violence “... they more rough than the other boys – more violence” (CB-iv). All girls interviewed construct tomboys as girls who are ‘more boy’ and, while many had fantasies of being a boy when younger, most are content to be girl. Girls perceive boys as having the capacity to be physically tough and unafraid as well as, unlike girls, being able to enjoy sexual freedom without being labelled licentious. Femininity is therefore constructed as a fairly constricted world physically but richer and freer in the context of emotions and communication:

“Would you like to be a boy?”

“Sometimes it’s good. If you want to pee you can’t fall down, you just stand. It’s easier and you don’t have to be scared. If I a boy – they have many girlfriends. It’s not good for a girl – she’s a bad one. Also boys are stronger than us.” (CB-iii)

4.3.2 Other ways of being boy

While all accounts reveal a consensus on what constitutes the powerful, central voice of the 'real boy', they are nonetheless complex, multi-layered and dense with uncertainty and insecurity. Boys possessing more of the 'ideal' masculine attributes position themselves more firmly within the hegemonic world and appear to experience themselves as more comfortably 'male' than those who lack hegemonic traits. However, even these boys do not claim to be 'ideally male' and their accounts express other ways of being male, many of which are marked by inconsistencies and contradictions. Those boys who position themselves outside of hegemony by critiquing or subverting it, are nonetheless at pains to define their alternative constructions as 'properly' masculine. The multiplicity and complexity of these positions, and the rapidity with which boys shift between them, confirm that masculinity is never fixed but must continually be achieved and maintained. Some of the negotiations through which interviewees achieve a cohesive sense of themselves from the complexity of available versions of masculinity are examined in the following section.

This section aims to describe some of the alternative constructions used by the boys in their efforts to achieve acceptable masculinity. Rather than exploring general themes across the data, this section will deal with individual accounts by turn in order to give a sense of the diversity in these accounts. The accounts will be ranked according to the degree to which each boy positions himself within the hegemonic realm, beginning with those who are 'most hegemonic' through to a boy who is barred from many positions in popular masculinity owing to physical disability. An interesting observation is the relative abundance of alternative constructions in the accounts of those boys who position themselves outside of the hegemonic ideal, as compared to those who more completely espouse it.

SW1-ii is the epitome of cool. He possesses many of the classic attributes of hegemonic masculinity in that he is tall, heavily built, attractive-looking, an exceptional sportsman (including captaincy of both cricket and rugby A-teams), a leader (Head boy of his Junior school) as well as enjoying popularity among his peers. He has experienced considerable dominance and control within his social context, prefers the company of males, participates in practices that are considered acceptably male within his socio-cultural context, and defines himself exclusively as 'not girl'. On the whole, he is accustomed to

success in the arena of hegemonic masculinity as well as non-hegemonic positions such as success at schoolwork, which he tends to make less visible by downplaying it. The area in which he feels himself to be deficient is material wealth, or having rich parents who are “high up in the ladder” and who “...can pay for their sons to get into the A-teams”. He uses this construction to reinforce his hegemony since these boys are “treated differently ‘cos their parents can fork out”, whereas he has earned his place legitimately in the masculine world. He is perhaps unaware of the ongoing struggle of many boys to achieve proper masculinity, yet seems to be aware of the potential limitations in having a too narrow hegemonic identity. He describes the In- and Out-group phenomenon yet is careful not to place himself in either: “I’m just everywhere – I just go with my friends”. He attempts to give his identity more depth by constructing himself as politically aware: “I love to read the ‘Madame and Eve’ books – I think it relates to what is going on in South Africa”. There is a notable paucity in his descriptions of what it means to be non-hegemonic with ‘losers’ defined as “loners” and the ‘unpopular’ as “small”. Extreme manifestations of hegemonic practices in the form of physical aggression and dominance are defended through their reconstruction as harmless, well-intentioned teasing:

“It’s not really bullying. Sometimes they’re just joking with the guys and it gets taken the wrong way. Ja. They are just looking to irritate someone. That’s all. It’s not a big problem in our class”.

SW2-i also fits into the hegemonic elite, largely through his sporting prowess. However, he seems insecure within its parameters and uses numerous and varied alternative constructions which position him alongside, as well as within it. He describes himself as “clever” and “...a caring sort of person, especially towards younger people” and aspires toward leadership. He avoids possible negative implications of hegemonic characteristics by including qualifying features. For example, action and war are acceptable male practices but only if they take the form of a game and no-one actually dies: “I like action and war – killing – not, not – killing, but in a fun sort of way – there’s no blood or anything – just, like, fun stuff”. He expresses ambivalence towards hegemonic practices which are critiqued as an “act” as boys who don’t “act so tough” usually do better at school. Macho practices are thus seen as a pretence which has to be maintained with considerable effort and some cost. There is some indication that he feels resentful of the power and pervasiveness of this ideology as a force governing what boys must do to

achieve acceptability among their peers. He agrees that tough guys play rugby and are consequently popular, but attempts to expand popularity to mean "...everyone listens to you". 'Losers' are people who have no friends but he tries to give this construction credence: "They may be a better person than the one who thinks he's macho" and they might be "...good at other things". His cleverness may be a source of potential alienation and he attempts to construct this quality as acceptably male by arguing that academic achievement is something to be desired and all boys, if they were honest and not 'pretending' would want to do well in schoolwork. Meanwhile, the boys who try too hard to be macho run the risk of being "big-headed", arrogant and opinionated and he shifts himself away from these dangers by constructing himself as considerate and polite.

CB2-i claims hegemonic masculinity through his interests and activities and he likes "...action, soldiers with guns – lots of bombs". Boys are different to girls as they "...have more sports" and "if you kill someone they (girls) don't like it". But his small, slight stature, despite his manifest skill in soccer, leaves him at the mercy of bullying and teasing from larger boys who, when he is playing soccer, "...come and take the ball". Defensively, he attempts to restrict this brand of hegemonic power through the tactic of humour: "Sometimes we joke about someone – he's big so they tease him about it". He constructs himself, on the other hand, as someone who attempts to interrupt or prevent outbreaks of fighting and aggression through negotiation, rather than provoking or maintaining them: "I try to stop them fighting – some other guys say you musn't". Thus despite his physical shortcomings in the arena of physical confrontation, his courage and resourcefulness in intervening to prevent violence allow him to sustain a sense of himself as acceptably male. Popularity is expanded to include intelligence and conscientiousness so boys who work hard and do well academically can also be cool and 'losers' are constructed as having a lackadaisical approach to schoolwork. These alternative constructions serve to fill the gap in the hegemonic ideal created by his smallness.

Soccer skills and physical size guarantee CB1-ii's foothold in popular masculinity: "We play soccer – it's the best thing to me. It's a part of my life. I like to be on TV. I like to be a star soccer player". He clearly establishes the importance of soccer in his identity as a male, but constructs himself primarily as a "good boy" and a "good friend". As with the previous Black subject, he is ambivalent towards the norms of mainline hegemony, associating them with tough, aggressive "bad boys". He rejects all things bloody and

violent but secures his masculinity through an interest in action, fighting and displays of physical courage. He constructs himself as a dominant male, a leader and a motivator of others to stay away from the dangers of drugs and “bad things”. He notes that this position is continually contested by other boys: “They like to be the boss of other boys. They saw that I am old in this school so the other boys that are coming to our school they see that I am have many years in the school and they don’t know nothing to this school but they like to try to be the boss”. Hegemonic limitations around emotional expressiveness are wrestled with. Here is a good listener whom other boys can trust with their problems: “They talk to me about the problems in their heart”. Friends are important but not at the cost of socially undesirable or morally dubious behaviours: “...good friends is that one that do everything well, you see, like the bad friend is that one that are smoking, doing very bad things. We don’t stay with them because they are going to force us to do those things”. ‘Bad’ behaviours are attributed to social problems to which boys from poor or disturbed homes may be more susceptible. The apparent indifference of these disadvantaged boys to social norms and laws, however, is also constructed as a form of toughness that affords them hegemonic status. These constructions are more apparent in the accounts of Black boys who must then grapple with subsequent problems constructing themselves as simultaneously ‘hard’ and ‘good’ while avoiding the problems of ‘badness’ associated with hegemony.

Macho masculinity, according to SW1-i, is mindless whereas he is interested in facts, general knowledge and “...strategy games which involve thinking”. As a physically immature, quiet loner, he possesses few of the popular attributes of masculinity. Despite these ‘deficits’ he struggles to find ways of positioning himself as close as possible to traditional masculinity. For example, he uses those attributes he does have to their best advantage. He presents himself as emotionally contained and inexpressive, possibly as a way of assuring his maleness. He expresses an interest in sport, depicting his interest in golf as superior to traditional male sports such as rugby and cricket as it “...takes more skill”. This clearly illustrates the competitive nature of masculine practices which must always be contested and proved in relation to other practices. Popularity is constructed as something “...everyone thinks is cool”. He attempts to critique popular masculinity by describing it as something ‘everyone’ must agree is desirable. Popularity is thus something to be acquired only when sufficient people concur regarding its composition. This observation permits this subject the possibility that, although his own masculinity

may not fit the consensus, it may nonetheless be valid. He may also be protecting himself against unpopularity status by describing a 'loser' as someone who is too markedly different from the norm: "Nobody liked him because of his appearance. He had bad acne and he was just...he had a funny accent. Everybody picked on him because he was different". He critiques the size criterion of hegemony by declaring that 'big boys' are usually 'bullies' and therefore undesirable, while courtesy, politeness and "...getting good grades" should matter more. This subject's positioning is difficult to define as, despite his difficulties with acquiring hegemonic status, he appears nonetheless to strive towards it and his alternatives are not confidently asserted.

The identity created by SW3-i comprises mostly alternative constructions. Although he clearly delineates hegemony, he does it through actively denigrating most 'macho' practices, thus placing himself almost entirely outside of its parameters. He observes what "...other guys" do which he "...doesn't really find interesting". His interests are masculine but not "...totally arb ones" such as "...any junk about a war, not as much gore as possible sort of thing". Thus he condemns hegemonic interests as mindlessly violent and bloody, while maintaining his masculinity through taking an historical or strategic slant on masculine, warlike themes. He likes "to read anything" and produces himself as a mature, thinking self who displays discrimination, intelligence and judgement in his identification with masculine activities. Again, the competitive nature of masculinity is apparent with this subject clearly positioning himself as outside of but 'better' than hegemonic male. His descriptions of gender differences are fraught with contradiction as, although he professes not to differentiate between boys and girls and "...just likes decent people", he is also contemptuous of girls who are "pathetic" as their approach to conflict is to "...scream, shout, blame someone then run off". Popular boys are derided as "show-offs" whose masculinity has to be on display for the purpose of impressing others and they "...lie like there's no tomorrow". He sees himself as an observer who is secure enough not to need to participate in these antics in order to prove himself a man. He justifies his own position which is "...not in the popular crowd but also not like some people who people just can't stand". He positions himself outside of the notion that casualness towards academic work boosts masculinity and popularity since passing grades by definition must be part of the mission statement of every boy at school. He thus exposes the underbelly of hegemonic dictates around 'not working' since academic failure remains ultimately humiliating and risks status loss: "...those guys who

pretend that marks are not important – they're the ones who at the end of term are quickly checking out the marks list". Academic prowess is seen as important and those who pretend that it isn't are stupid, get picked on by the teachers and are punished. Cleverness, he adds, gives one an edge as a defense against teasing because a sharp tongue can keep the bullies at bay and even "...make them scared to try again in case they look dumb". He attempts to define himself as confident and at ease with who he is, unlike those macho guys who have to keep proving something to themselves and everyone around them.

A marked limp and physical frailty bar CB1-i from most hegemonic activities. As a consequence he has developed a number of relatively stable, sophisticated alternative positions. He presents himself as a skilled person, despite his physical disability: "...like myself, I've got my skill and the soccer is not my skill". He has a variety of alternative interests such as music and academics, and describes himself as a socially and politically aware "motivator" of his peers who may have problems with drug-use, HIV or racism. His identification figure is Mark Shuttleworth whom he sees as "successful", success in any field being a sufficient indicator of masculine achievement: "...I can't include myself with people who are not successful because I don't want to go backwards. I want to go forwards. I want to be like a successful person". As with the previous subject, he does not include himself among the failures of masculinity. He directly challenges hegemonic notions around emotionality, describing boys as the more emotional and vulnerable sex, especially where girls are concerned: "...boys they do have more emotions, for instance you find when they spend time with girls they drape all over them; all that stuff". His inability to comply with the physical demands of hegemonic practices means he has few male friends and he spends most of his time at school with girls: "I am spending most of my time with girls. At school I don't have too much friends but I've got too much best friends with girls". He redefines women as the more powerful sex who not susceptible to peer pressure and nor, by association, is he: "...it is better to spend time with them because they don't force you to do things which is bad, for instance peer pressure". As with the other Black subjects in this study, he is careful to differentiate between 'good' masculinity and the problematic aspects of hegemony espoused by tough, 'bad' boys. He sees himself as having a strong, independent, moral 'self' who is not swayed by male 'weakness', or the need to be approved of. This need for approval he sees as the core of susceptibility to peer pressure which is characteristic of most hegemonic practices. He

stresses the importance of talking about problems "...because if you are the boy and you don't talk with other people about problems then you commit suicide". He creates a place for himself in the world of men as an empathic, caring listener to whom others will turn in times of trouble:

"I'm a good person to other friends because I'm always telling them the right thing - when someone has got the problem which is very, very serious then they will talk to me".

4.3.3 Contradictions, conflicts and negotiations

Although all boys voice the hegemonic theme, none felt they consistently possessed the ideal. Even those who see themselves as possessing many of the attributes of 'popular' masculinity position themselves outside of it periodically. This has resulted in what Wetherell (1998) calls 'troubled subject positions' in that all accounts strive towards and diverge from the ideal, resulting in conflict and contradiction. These discrepancies are negotiated and resolved in order to maintain a coherent narrative of the masculine self. It would appear that conflict and contradiction occur more frequently where boys attempt to position themselves in divergent or competing masculinities. This process seems at times to engender anxiety, confusion and insecurity in the boys. These phenomena will be explored in the following section, which includes some psychodynamic interpretations. This section examines some of the common strategies used by boys in order to achieve a coherent sense of their masculine identities from the varied themes available to them.

4.3.3.1 Macho masculinity as an act

Hegemonic masculinity is dismissed by some subjects as a pretence which has to be continually performed and maintained. Those boys who strive towards hegemony are seen as having to continually produce masculinities which are seen as an act performed with the aim of convincing others of its dominance and authenticity. These may be at the expense of achieving in other areas:

"...tough guys – I think they've got the bottom end because I think the tough guys they are actually battling because if I look higher up in the school the guys that don't try and act so macho and stuff are the guys that are actually doing really well at school and in sports. But the other guys – the guys that are toughest tend to

play rugby and not do too well at school but the guys that are less – um – they also play rugby but others play hockey. I don't know if that makes any difference but it seems to, ja" (SW2-i).

'Doing well' according to this account is not about pretending to be 'macho' and 'tough', but actually achieving in the arenas of sport or academics. The 'tough guys' are 'battling' while those who are not preoccupied with the 'tough guy' pretence are those who are able to 'do really well at school and in sports'. Masculinity, according to this subject, may thus be earned through hard work and genuine achievement, rather than through pretence and performance. It follows therefore that even if one is not 'tough', one can still be acceptably male. Ultimately, however, this account returns to the seemingly irrefutable contention that being a rugby player still makes a difference because by default it is evidence of toughness and therefore hegemony. It appears that, although accounts such as this attempt to reduce the power of hegemony through describing it as an 'act' and therefore something performed and artificial, at the same time there is a contradictory assumption that it is something actual that many boys strive towards and yet they remain vulnerable to its dictates.

Hegemony is policed by those who are committed to sustaining its dominance: "...some guys will say you suck up to the teachers and that's why the teachers like you" (SW1-i). Masculine identity gained through academic prowess is defended by constructing hegemony, paradoxically, as potentially fragile since "...the macho guys are not doing so well" and marks are a major source of "...stress and pressure" and it is "...cool to do well, in the end" (SW2-i). These constructions are used by boys at private, single-sex, historically White schools who try to assert a 'better' masculinity through educational achievement and condescension towards macho guys who pretend: "...some guys say losers don't play sport or they do their work too overenthusiastically in their minds and they think that they are losers but what actually comes out of them is a better person than the one who thinks he's macho" (SW3-i).

There is some awareness that masculinity in general is performative and as such may not be an essential, unassailable reality. Rather it is understood by some to be a set of expectations or prescriptions which boys are compelled to fulfill if they are to be accepted as male. In the following extract, the subject notes that if teachers and parents

expect boys to be tough and treat them as if they were so, they have little choice but to be tough:

“I think parents and stuff think you’re a lot tougher than girls. Like, at school, girls used to be treated less harshly, they never got detention even if they did the same stuff as us. And we’ve got to, like, just take it. And my sister and me, if we have an argument, I’d be blamed automatically because I’m a boy” (SW3-i).

According to this extract, both parents and teachers expect boys to be ‘tougher’ and more problematic than girls and therefore both deserving of and able to sustain harsher treatment which boys must ‘just take’. Masculinity constructions such as these, according to Frosh et al. (2002), may in part be responsible for producing boys’ problematic behaviours.

4.3.3.2 Being above hegemonic masculinity

Some boys position themselves outside of hegemony and attempt to undermine its potency through deriding macho practices and claiming to be superior to them. This was achieved through strategies such as condemning hegemony as an act (discussed above), claiming a particular skill or quality such as having a good sense of humour, belittling the hegemonic attributes the subject lacks, or taking on a judiciary role in order to intervene in or prevent conflict between boys. Conflicts and contradictions remain, however, as even in subverting the hegemonic ideal, these accounts continue to reproduce its powerful influence over how boys practice and evaluate their masculinities.

Some of the Black subjects who find themselves outside of the parameters of the macho ideal describe some hegemonic behaviours as dangerous or destructive and define themselves as ‘motivators’ of their peers towards ‘better’ behaviours: “...I like to be those people, when bad things are happening, those people come together and say this is not a good thing” (CB1-ii). This takes the form of encouraging boys to stay away from the alleged dangers of ‘tough boy’ masculinity, such as substance-abuse and casual sex: “I like to motivate the boys, especially in drugs, all that stuff. I don’t like that. And they are playing with girls, all that stuff. So they have to be innocent boys, like pastors” (CB1-i). Another takes on the role of mediating, rather than practicing, physical aggression: “...I try to stop them (fighting)” (CB2-i). A White subject depicts hegemonic practices as

characterized by ruthless self-interest but sees himself as "...quite a caring sort of person towards others and especially younger people" (SW2-i). If particular hegemonic qualities are lacking, their supremacy may be toppled through dismissal or ridicule. The physically disabled subject, who cannot play sport, dismisses soccer as something "African boys ... like too much" (CB1-i). He, on the other hand, uses his time more productively by valuing schoolwork and academic success. Another subject diminishes the power of sporting excellence through admiring David Beckham because "...he's just so balanced and everyone knows his name" but not as a player, "...he's not so good, compared to the other players he's not good, in my opinion" (SW1-i). Competitive macho performances, designed to enhance good looks and attract female attention, are parodied and feminized: "...look at my hair, is it okay?" (SW3-i).

4.3.3.3 Problematic popularity

All boys struggle with conflicting notions of what it means to be popular. Hegemonic masculinity intersects with popularity in that being 'hard' facilitates the recognition by other boys that an acceptable level of masculinity has been achieved which safeguards against 'loser' status. However, maintaining both hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions is a complex process and even subtle shifts could jeopardize security. For example, success at rugby may boost popularity but crowing about it, or 'boasting', is undesirable and could make the subject vulnerable to teasing and a subsequent loss of hegemonic status. All accounts contain descriptions of attributes that are non-hegemonic but nonetheless increase popularity. Attributes which make popularity more accessible to those in non-hegemonic positions include possessing an exceptional skill, a sense of humour, a likeable disposition or merely the capacity to belong in a group. Many accounts attempt to depict academic prowess as an acceptable masculine activity. However, the hegemonic refrain persists and on the whole conscientiousness is a threat to both popularity and hegemonic status. Occasionally a boy is able to be overtly clever without threat to his popularity. For example if he simultaneously owns a sporting skill he may be able to redeem his hegemonic positioning:

"...there's one guy who's like really a teacher's pet and he doesn't get teased because he's really good at sport, rugby and hockey, and he's still popular" (SW3-i) or he "...doesn't boast about it" (SW2-i).

In a rearguard action, many boys in non-hegemonic positions affirm their masculine identities by constructing unpopularity as a series of activities which are mutable, rather than properties which are fixed such as size and looks. This strategy provides the subject with a sense that the qualities defining the unpopular are within his control, thereby ensuring that he is able to avert invalidation of his masculinity by hegemonic standards. 'Losers' include constructions such as "dirty and unhygienic", "bad mannered", "speaking funny", being "quiet" or simply being "different" from the prevailing norm (SW1-i; SW3-i; CB1-i). One subject negotiates both value and stability in his non-hegemonic status by positioning himself outside of the peer pressure mechanism. Hence he absolves himself from continually having to prove himself to others. Instead, he identifies with girls whom he "...can trust" and adult men because "...they can't tell you the lies, they can't put you in the wrong ways" (CB1-i).

Ultimately, negotiation is hard to achieve since some tenets of popularity and 'hard' masculinity are mutually exclusive, so a measure of conflict remains. For White boys, being popular includes being approachable, democratic and 'nice', whereas being macho necessitates physical toughness as demonstrated through dominance over and control of other boys, at the potential cost of intimacy and connection. For some, resolution is found through positioning the self outside of both in- and out-groups: "I'm not really the popular or unpopular. I'm really in the middle, on the line, sort of" (SW3-i) and "I'm just everywhere" (SW1-ii). For Black boys 'hard boys' and 'bad boys' are closely aligned and they must find ways of being 'good' without relinquishing both hard and popularity status. These boys construct moral fortitude and leadership as qualities which may enhance their masculine identities. They are thus able to present themselves as both tough and good and aim to be examples of exemplary behaviour to the 'hard, bad boys' whom they can lead into 'good ways'.

4.3.3.4 Performing in different contexts

Most accounts describe a strategy in which conflict between contradictory masculine constructs is resolved through splitting them off from one another and performing them discretely in different locations. The subject is able to create a unified sense of self by presenting these performances as different aspects of the self which emerge according to circumstance and context.

This theme emerges clearly when boys are grappling with the problems of communication and emotionality. Those boys who have relationships with their fathers are likely to perform traditional masculine activities with them and communication tends to be restricted to sport, jokes and banter. Boys who have relationships with their mothers are more likely to share domestic activities with them and to communicate with them on a more intimate level about issues such as girls and emotions:

“I go shopping with my Mom and I help her out if she needs some help with groceries and stuff. And if I’ve got a problem, ja, I’ll talk to her. With my Dad we, like, I’ve watched two or three rugby games with him on TV and I’ve also been to one or two at King’s park and we like to do sporty things together and if there’s anything to do with sport like shopping and stuff I go with my Father” (SW2-i).

Most boys describe sharing happy moments with friends and sad ones, if at all, with a female, who is described as empathic and trustworthy. Others prefer to remain silent: “...no, I don’t think I would share it (stress) with anyone” (SW3-i). Silence, on balance, is the safest bet if masculinity is to be maintained. This practice gives rise to a common conflict since all boys state that talking about problems helps: “...yes, it helps, I can talk to somebody because I don’t want to get stressed” (CB1-i). In theory, they agree that showing feelings and sharing problems has value but in practice all are constrained since these behaviours render one vulnerable to attack from boys policing hegemony: “...then they can say don’t be a girl or they can say they don’t give a damn – just forget about it” (CB-iii). In a male environment, masculinity is best asserted if conversation is limited to acceptable masculine topics with no display of emotion or vulnerability.

A further contradiction is that most boys present themselves as people in whom they would like their peers to confide: “...they can tell me their secrets and I can give the good advice” (CB1-ii). One subject ranks problems with only those that are “genuine” meriting airing: “...if someone came and let loose with worry, genuine stuff, I don’t think I would mind that” (SW3-i). Others remain uneasy, possibly aware that this construction shifts them into girl territory: “Ja, um, um, some of my friends talk to me about stuff, sometimes”(SW1-ii). Some resolution is attained through confirming that “...problems, emotions and things” (SW3-i) are part of the self but their disclosure is restricted to ‘less

masculine' and therefore less threatening contexts such as with a parent, girl or "...really close friend" (SW1-ii).

4.3.3.5 It's okay to be gay

Many accounts, particularly those from historically White, single sex schools, reveal that one of the most serious insults to one's masculinity is to be called gay and retributive violence is condoned in its defense. Yet although homophobia remains a cornerstone of hegemonic constructions, many boys present conflicting views. Some confirm hegemonic attitudes by constructing homosexuality as being 'like girls' or 'other than' male: "...they are people that mix with girls as friends" (SW1-i) or "...people who are deformed" (SW3-i). Others, while accepting that to be called gay threatens a masculine identity, nonetheless depict contradictory views: "...they are no different to others" (SW1-ii), or "...they are not a thing to joke about" (CB2-i), and "...you'll find that they are right because you'll find that the most of people who are gay are those who are successful" (CB1-i). Most of the Black subjects do not express homophobic views. A subject in a single sex, historically White boarding schools presents a more complex picture in which boys stretch the boundaries of male sexual identity by taking on pseudo gay identity, ostensibly to make others laugh:

"Guys play around and I don't think it's such a good idea. They act, like, stupidly. They don't mean to be gay but they are trying to put out the word that 'I'm trying to be gay but I'm not'. It happens in the dorm and guys sometimes find it funny and other times they don't" (SW2-i).

Although these practices may appear homoerotic, paradoxically their purpose may be to confirm heterosexuality through presenting the self as a male who is sufficiently secure in his sexual identity to "...just play around" with alternative versions (SW2-i). Another possible resolution to contradictory notions around homosexuality may exist if gay insults are not taken "...too insultingly unless they really mean it" (SW2-i). It is possible that boys feel able to challenge homophobia within the context of an individual interview, whereas in the presence of peers it is used as a strategy in which heterosexuality and thus masculinity may be publicly affirmed.

4.3.3.6 Race

All boys responded awkwardly to questions around race and their accounts are marked by avoidance, contradiction and racist stereotypes and constructions. In response to the question: “What is your racial group?” most subjects are initially silent and, after prompting, reconstruct ‘race’ as ‘culture’: “Racial group – like for instance the culture?” (CB1-i). Others reply to this question avoiding the terms ‘White’ or ‘Black’: “Ja, um, English, ja, English and Scottish” (SW3-i). The terms race, White and Black appear to be loaded with racist connotations for these boys and ‘culture’ seems to be a more politically correct substitute. It might be argued that although Apartheid as a legal and political mechanism no longer exists in South Africa, as a socially constructed reality versions of it continue to be reproduced through the discourses of a generation too young to have had actual experience of it.

All accounts give a standard, politically-correct, affirmative response to the question “Do you mix with boys from other racial groups?”, thereby protecting subjects from being labelled racist: “...when I’m walking with Black guys there’s no difference...there’s no reason that I musn’t talk to them when I’ve got White friends” (SW2-i). Most accounts voice tolerance of other cultures: “I like it when they show us what they do in their cultures” (CB2-i) and “...I enjoy mixing with the Black guys because they have got a lot of things that you can learn in terms of what they do at home” (SW2-i). Although all schools in this study differ in terms of their historical composition, all are currently multiracial bar one, which has only Black pupils. The accounts from the latter school do not describe racial practices towards Whites. They refer to racial practices only when discussing other African cultures: “...sometimes they can be treated differently, those boys from Zimbabwe” (CB1). Other White subjects describe overtly racist practices but protect their own identities by projecting them onto ‘other boys’ who “...say that all Blacks steal and can’t really be trusted...if a Black guy does it then next time he’ll always get the blame” (SW3-i). These ‘other boys’ “...treat other races very badly” and “...denigrate them completely” (SW2-i). Notions of dominant masculinities appear to shift according to context, with White boys from White-dominated schools constructing themselves as dominant and privileged within their school context and the opposite occurring in the schools where Blacks are in the majority. Some boys attempt resolution to these conflicts through constructing racially-based teasing as “...not harsh...usually they are just joking with the guy and not picking on him” (SW1-ii) or keeping a distance

from other races in order to lessen conflict: "...one sticks to their own race" (SW1-i) and "...we stay with our own people" (CB1-ii).

In conclusion, racial practices and constructions used by the subjects of this study seem to be in a state of flux. Both racial groups voice the perception that their socio-economic positions in post-Apartheid South Africa are insecure. White boys feel displaced as Black masculinities become privileged over White: "...it might be a problem getting a job if you are White" (SW1-ii). Yet the Black subjects in this study, who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, also construct their futures as uncertain. They are constrained by limited finance: "I need money for the education... so I must have enough money for that" (CB2-ii) and poorly-equipped schools:

"The main problem is we don't have computer (at school) to increase our technology or to achieve our technology. And then you will find we don't have a laboratory so when we are doing physical science we get bored because we don't have experiments" (CB1-i).

4.3.4 Subjectivity and positioning

The interviewer's impressions and emotional responses to each individual interview were noted during and after the interview. These serve as the basis of this section which aims to explore some of the anxieties, insecurities and defenses used by these subjects as they assembled their masculinities both within their socio-cultural context and the context of the interview. Since each interview was in itself a co-creation of text and meaning, factors such as the age, gender and race of the interviewer would have influenced how the boys constructed their identities and negotiated their positioning within and between different discourses available to them. Likewise, the subjective responses of both boys and girls and the interviewer would have been affected by the mechanisms of transference and countertransference. Owing to my age, which would correspond roughly to that of the subjects' mothers, some spontaneity and depth may have been lost in discussions around issues considered male territory such as sexuality and sexually- or mother-oriented teasing. On the other hand, if the transferences were positive, the boys' feelings, anxieties and insecurities may have been more evident than if the interviewer had been male. Countertransferences were, on the whole, largely maternal with feelings of warmth, interest, concern and empathy. Most boys, after an initial awkwardness,

expressed themselves fluently, clearly and enthusiastically. On the whole, the girls' accounts were likewise lively and openly expressed and countertransferences were also empathic and affectionate.

Commonalities and variations across the interviews are noted, as well as surprising or particularly strong responses. The most commonly used defenses seemed to be denial and projection and these appear in response to material which was experienced as anxiety provoking. All subjects periodically coped with questions they experienced as uncomfortable by remaining silent, answering indirectly or refusing to give an answer: "I can't tell you" (SW1-i). Non-verbal cues gave further evidence of discomfort. Eyes dropped or slid away, bodies shifted uneasily. This was particularly evident when dealing with issues around sexuality, race and the communication and expression of feelings. Even with prompting some subjects denied that they talk, think or tease each other about girls. Others are ill at ease, embarrassed:

"What do boys talk about mostly when they are together?"

"Everything. Sport. Movies. Everything. The conversation just goes along"

"What about girls?"

"Not really. Um, ja, um, maybe, um, ja"

(SW1-ii)

Some boys affirmed that being teased about mothers is sufficiently offensive to provoke a fight and others deny that it even occurs, perhaps owing to their transferences around the interviewer. White boys, in particular, are pervasively sensitive to being judged racist and racist practices are projected by describing what 'other boys' do: "...ja, other guys, there's a lot of verbal abuse, I don't know why, it's not good, they just can't stand having Black guys around" (SW2-i). The responses of Black subjects to questions dealing with race may have been curtailed owing to customs demanding respect and politeness in the presence of an adult. Their reticence around White masculinities may also have resulted from a need to avoid topics considered potentially delicate or offensive. Many boys of both races also use projection to explore their ambivalences and anxieties around masculinity by describing what 'other boys' do or feel in particular contexts. Some accounts express an underlying sense of helplessness, sadness and anger at constraints placed on them by the restrictions of the hegemonic ideal. They seem lonely, with few

opportunities for authentic emotional connection with other boys since masculinities are continually policed, usually through teasing: "... so if I've got the problems I can't share with people who will laugh at them at the end of the day" (CB1-i). The continually contested nature of masculinity likewise makes it difficult for boys to connect with each other. Teasing is constructed as 'joking' by some, but all allude to its underlay of hostility and it is often also described as 'harsh'. Many boys express ambivalence about teasing – it's okay if you are an observer but not so if you are the focus of an attack.

Counterattacks may be delivered through exposure of the foibles, pretences and posturing of hegemonic masculinity but, ultimately, all recognize its power and remain vulnerable to it.

In general, the more exclusively a boy positioned himself within a particular discourse, the less the evidence of anxiety and conflict in his constructions. Two accounts depict subject positioning that appears to be more stable than those in which there is a struggle to negotiate coherent identities from alternative versions of being male. These subjects position themselves, respectively, as almost entirely hegemonic and non-hegemonic (SW1-ii; CB1-i). The latter subject uses various strategies to confirm his masculinity despite a disability which exiles him from the hegemonic position. He disdains boy interests such as obsession with soccer and confidently rearranges the masculinity landscape to incorporate 'his skills' which include maturity, seriousness and emotional resilience. Paradoxically, he frequently defines hegemony through describing what he is not. There was a considerable underlay of suppressed anxiety in this interview and the countertransferences were those of an anxious, protective mother. He emphatically denies the existence of bullying, for example, which may mean he has been so badly bullied himself he is unwilling to recall it, or that he is so far outside of hard boy discourse that he has been left alone and feels essentially alienated from masculine practices. He is intensely concerned with what he sees as the dangers of suicide if problems are not shared and may have contemplated it himself. Ultimately, in order to maintain a sense of personal value, this subject may be obliged to reinforce his identity and protect himself against the pain of rejection from the 'hard' male domain through outright denial of the power of the hegemonic ideal.

The subject (SW1-ii) who fits most snugly into dominant hegemonic constructions was also the most resistant to the interview. It was characterized by brief, staccato answers,

avoidance of eye contact and a studied casualness. He openly expressed his desire to bring the interview a close by yawning repeatedly and overtly watching a rugby match on a nearby television. Although his self-constructions have the appearance of an almost seamless cohesiveness, it is possible that in his easy occupation of the hegemonic position, he has denied its flaws and his own hidden, insecurities as a male. He consistently uses denial and notably shallow, stereotypical constructions to deal with potentially anxiety-provoking topics such as girls, of whom he has had almost no experience, and race. The interview questions themselves may have posed challenges by stimulating him to think about other ways of being male and exposing his possible ignorance of the struggle faced by less gifted boys than himself to achieve acceptable masculinity. This may be illustrated in his benign constructions of losers as “shy” and bullies as “jokers”. The interviewer’s countertransferences towards this subject comprised a surprisingly intense irritability with what may have been part smug chauvinism, part adolescent insecurity.

The majority of subjects lack available father figures and there is a sense of poignancy and loss in their longing for a father figure who is involved in their lives: “I would like him to have more time for me” (SW2-i) and “I wish him to support me in the thing which I need but he don’t do that, he don’t care” (CB1-i). Mostly they look for substitutes with whom they can identify in the form of other adult men such as media personalities, teachers, uncles or friend’s fathers “I like Noah’s father. He is strict and sometimes he listens to you” (CB2-i). Two of the Black subjects will be ‘traffic cops’ in their fantasies of the future. This is in keeping with their commonly articulated sense of morality and the desire to maintain social order. They may also be attracted to the power vested in the role of the policeman in society as well as the opportunities it provides for masculine affirmation. The White subjects, in this study from relatively materially privileged backgrounds, aspire to professions which are acceptably masculine such as accountancy and engineering. With the approach of adulthood, all boys anticipate increasing independence while shrinking from the responsibility, which they perceive to be theirs, of providing financially for families. In the final analysis, although all accounts are characterized by anxiety, confusion and contradiction, they are nonetheless vested in maintaining their positioning within the multiplicity of available masculine discourses.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

Although there has been increasing research interest in the field of masculinity, relatively little has been done in South Africa. There is, however, an increasing need to explore and understand masculinities in South Africa, particularly in view of claims that masculinity constructions may underlie some of the problems facing this society such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, violence and the high rate of rape (Loclerc-Madlala, 1997; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a; Wood & Jewkes, 1998). Political and social shifts in the past decade have caused traditional masculine ideologies to be challenged and changed, and boys and men face feelings of displacement and uncertainty regarding their place in society. Although adolescent boys are commonly perceived as problematic (Frosh et al., 2002), not much research has been done in South Africa into how boys develop their masculine identities. This study aimed to explore how a sample of adolescent boys construct and negotiate their masculine identities from the ways of being male available to them within their contexts. Do South African adolescents have a dominant hegemony and how do boys position themselves in relation to it? Do hegemonic standards intersect with race and class? What alternative, non-hegemonic constructs are available to them and how do they negotiate a coherent narrative of self from these competing, often conflicting ways of being male? What are some of the psychological processes underlying boys' jostling for position in the various discourses of masculinity accessible to them?

This chapter will first summarize the salient points of this study. Findings will then be interpreted in terms of the literature including gaps, anomalies and surprising results. Limitations of the study will be considered and an outline of recommendations for future research. The report will be closed with some concluding comments.

5.2 Summary of findings

In accordance with social constructionist theory which (in combination with psychoanalytic insights) informed the analysis of this data, masculinities were shown to

be diverse and multiple. (Brittan, 1989; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987). Boys described a variety of ways in which it is possible to assert masculinity and these were achieved and performed within their everyday contexts and in relation to others (Connell, 1987). Their identities emerged as fluid, mutable and multi-determined within different contexts, and boys both construct and are constructed by the masculinity discourses available to them (Courtenay, 2000; Frosh, 1994; Toerien & Durrheim, 2001). Although most subjects were aware that there are a variety of ways in which to 'do' masculinity, all defined hegemonic or 'hard' masculinity as the dominant standard against which other ways of being male are evaluated. Although the masculinity practices were resisted by most confirming the findings of Frosh et al (2002), the hegemonic ideal dominates and its pervasiveness, according to Wetherell and Edley (1999), may be explained by the power and privilege which is accorded those who vest in hegemonic positioning.

The hegemonic ideal was defined in these accounts as being physically tough, sporty, emotionally inexpressive, having masculine interests and being other than girl, gay or nerd. A hierarchy of masculinity was presented with some boys being more hegemonic than others. Rugby ranked as the ideal sport for White boys and soccer for Blacks with sporting prowess in both racial groups representing a pivotal aspect of hegemonic masculinity. According to the White subjects, hegemony also necessitated a casual approach to schoolwork with overt displays of conscientiousness risking derision or exclusion by other boys. From the hegemonic perspective, academic success was condoned only if it coexisted with a notable hegemonic attribute such as sporting prowess. Although the Black subjects tended to feminise studiousness with boys playing soccer during school breaks while girls studied in the classrooms, they nonetheless articulated the importance of education to social and material advancement. It is possible that these discrepancies between the accounts of Black and White boys on the approach to schoolwork are a result of sampling bias and owe more to their differing socio-economic status than racial grouping. The Black boys in this study, who have lower socio-economic status than the White boys, face poor employment prospects with education offering a pathway to a more secure financial future. These results may also reflect Morrell's (2001a) view that the historically uneven distribution of power accorded

privilege and status to White masculinities, which may continue to be reflected in the thinking of the subjects in this study.

Whereas hegemony was presented as the ideal, no subjects claimed to fully meet its normative definitions. Some subjects positioned themselves outside of the macho stereotype while others simultaneously adopted and opposed hegemonic standards and practices (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Many boys challenged and critiqued hegemony using various strategies. These included the subversion of hegemony by belittling hegemonic practices and claiming to be superior to them, or describing hegemony as an act or performance which was artificial. Contradictions and conflicts were common in the accounts and boys attempted to negotiate these by various means. For example, many subjects attempted to maintain parallel positioning in contradictory versions of masculinity through allowing these differing versions to emerge in different contexts. Hegemonic activities, for example, may be practiced publicly and alternative versions in more private contexts such as with parents, girls or close friends. Although alternative versions of masculinity were commonly enacted, boys were nonetheless careful to present themselves as neither feminine nor gay but 'acceptably' male.

Although some aspects of masculinity transcend the different racial and cultural backgrounds and contexts of these boys (for example hegemony as physical toughness, emotional inexpressiveness and heterosexuality), there do appear to be some clear distinctions between Black and White masculinities. Frosh et al. (2002) and Morrell (2001a) point out that care should be taken in interpreting these as specifically racial differences as other factors such as class and socio-economic status intersect significantly with the production of masculinities. White subjects in this study tended to produce alternative masculinities as 'softer' versions of the hegemonic, or 'new man' discourse (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001). These versions include attributes such as being clever, caring or possessing particular, non-hegemonic skills. Black subjects in this sample tended to distance themselves from those aspects of hard line hegemony which they associated with 'bad boys', who are from deprived backgrounds and who engage in behaviours such as crime and substance-abuse. Alternative masculinities thus included

being materially successful, the capacity to resist peer pressure 'to do bad things' and being 'good'. Good boys espouse morality and clean living, motivate others to this end and strive to maintain social and moral order. These boys were nonetheless careful to assert their masculinity through claiming hegemonic attributes such as sporting prowess, leadership or popularity. All subjects were thus actively engaged in an ongoing process of negotiating and achieving a cohesive, acceptably masculine self within their particular socio-cultural contexts (Frosh et al., 2002).

The girls' accounts of what it means to be 'real boy' affirm the predominance of hegemonic notions of masculinity. The 'cool guys' were described as those who are physically tough, good-looking, sporty, popular among their peers and heterosexual. As with the boys, girls dichotomise gender with boys being 'opposite' to girls and gender differences were likewise eroticised. Girls described themselves as being 'naturally' studious and having a more 'mature' approach to schoolwork. Boys were seen as having restricted opportunities for emotional expressiveness and masculinity was presented as a somewhat lonely, competitive, aggressive place with girls having the benefit of intimacy, communication and group support. While recognizing the dominance of the hegemonic ideal, girls simultaneously depicted it as potentially problematic for boys since boys were seen as continually having to strive towards it, even at the potential cost of personal integrity. Similarly, there are distinctions in the accounts of Black and White girls. White girls tend to see alternative versions of masculinity as 'softer' or more effeminate. Girls at the co-educational, historically Black school support the accounts of the Black boys in this study by portraying these ultra tough boys as 'bad boys' who have disadvantaged backgrounds and who tend to be involved in crime and substance-abuse. They feel sexually threatened by these boys who 'lack respect' for girls and approach them only with sexual intent.

Some interpretations were made regarding the subjectivity of the boys' experience in order to enrich the analysis as it has been suggested that social constructionist theory alone does not adequately explain how boys negotiate space for themselves among various competing forms of masculinity and within which they construct their identities

(Frosh et al., 2002; Tacey, 1997). Using a more psychoanalytic framework parallel to the work of Frosh et al. (2002), it was possible to access the subjective realities of individual subjects through noting emotionally laden material such as emphases, silences, evasions and inconsistencies. It was thus possible to understand some of their less conscious, unarticulated experiences (Frosh et al., 2002). For example, areas such as race, sexuality and emotionality tended to engender outright denial, contradiction or projection onto what 'other boys' do. These responses are indicative of the levels of insecurity and anxiety underlying these aspects of identity construction. Since the hegemonic ideal was recognized by most as unattainable, even undesirable, and since non-hegemonic positioning risks derision or alienation, the construction of an identity which is acceptably masculine to both self and others was characterized by ambivalence and tension. The subjective impressions and countertransferences of the interviewer were noted and interpreted as important complementary sources of information. It was noted, for example, when subjects appeared to be strongly motivated by the need to appear inoffensive or socially acceptable, such as when discussing racial issues. Countertransferences were, on the whole, positive and affectionate although some were surprisingly contradictory. For example, one subject engendered strong dislike and irritation in the interviewer although he constructed himself as likeable and 'good'. He was, however, experienced as somewhat smug, insensitive and narrow in his apparent lack of awareness of the struggle of many boys to achieve acceptable masculine identities.

5.3 Hegemony and its alternatives

This research supports the findings of Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) in that it confirms hegemony as a dominant and persuasive form of masculinity in the lives of adolescent boys as they strive to construct 'appropriately' masculine identities. Although no subjects construct themselves as totally espousing the hegemonic ideal, they recognize it as the standard against which all masculinities are evaluated and it remains "...a powerful ideal that regulates boys' behaviours" (Frosh et al., 2002, p.76). A minority had some awareness of the performative and contextual nature of masculinities but all subjects appeared to construct the hegemonic ideal as a natural, innate set of rules and

behaviours to which boys must aspire in order to achieve 'proper' masculinity. As suggested by Morrell (1998b), a number of commonalities exist between White and Black versions of hegemony including the use of violence as a fitting masculine response in various contexts and heterosexuality is assumed throughout to be the norm. In accordance with the findings of Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002), all subjects in this study describe acceptable masculine interests and activities as those which necessitate the display of physical prowess, endurance, toughness and skill such as war, adventure, action and sport. Competence in sport is constructed across all sites as a pivotal aspect of hegemonic masculinity and one in which masculinity may be reproduced relatively uncontested, although Blacks identify soccer and Whites rugby as ideal hegemonic sporting activities. Both groups in this study dichotomise gender with masculinity practices produced in opposition to girl who is gentle, physically soft, emotional and communicative. The feminine is denigrated, idealised and eroticised and assumptions regarding male superiority were implicit in the 'subtext' of the data (Hearn, 1998).

Research reveals that White and Black constructions of hegemony also differ in several aspects (Attwell, 2002; Morrell, 1998b). The Black boys in this study are all from disadvantaged backgrounds and attend historically Black, co-educational schools. As with the White subjects, their responses need to be interpreted with caution as they are likely to have been influenced by the need to give socially desirable responses. These subjects define hegemonic practices by projecting them on to 'bad boys' whose activities are unquestionably masculine but are problematic since they are ultimately destructive to self and society. The boys in this sample were, however, careful to assert their own masculinity through various means such as claiming hegemonic attributes such as sporting prowess, leadership qualities or popularity. The 'bad boys' are depicted as tough, violent, prone to 'bad things' such as substance abuse, and are likely to be involved in criminal activity. They are also disrespectful of authority and seek to dominate other boys and sexually harass women. Black girls in this study inferred that they felt threatened by these tough, 'bad boys' who approached them only with sexual intent. Attwell (2002) observes that teachers in Black township schools note that their pupils "...were perceived to define their masculinity primarily in terms of sexual success,

control over girls and capacity for violence” (p.89). The boys in this study from the historically Black schools did not utilise homophobic constructions to police or structure hegemony which may reflect what Attwell (2002) refers to as a “...culture of silence and denial rather than an absence of homophobia or concerns regarding homosexuality” (p.101) in African culture.

The teachers in Attwell’s (2002) study attribute these problematic behaviours among male adolescents to factors such as a lack of family stability and support, poverty and limited options for self-empowerment and advancement. There are claims that these ‘oppositional’ forms of masculinity develop from the experience of displacement and disempowerment resulting from social and material disadvantage (Attwell, 2002; Xaba, 2001). Thus the assertion of hegemony and social power occurs through socially problematic avenues such as physical aggression and sexual conquest (Attwell, 2002; Campbell, 1992; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). These notions and practices of hegemony are comparable to those of working class boys in Britain and Australia whose opportunities for self-definition and success through education and career are likewise limited (Connell, 1989; Frosh et al., 2002). Morrell (2001a) adds that expectations of a better standard of living were fostered after the end of the Apartheid government which, in conjunction with continuing high levels of poverty, may have led to an increase in violence. It has been suggested, however, that it is in the constructions of masculinity that physical aggression and violence are produced as outlets for frustration resulting from social, economic or political stress or deprivation (Epstein, 1998a; Hearn, 1998; Morrell, 2001b).

Boys in South Africa may feel culturally and socially displaced within a society which is in transition. White boys seem to be caught between ‘new man’ discourse (Toerien & Durrheim, 2001) and more traditional, macho versions of masculinity. Black boys, on the other hand, seem to be in transition between traditional, African practices and norms and more Western ideology, for example as outlined in the constitution in the country (Attwell, 2002). There was some awareness in this study of the problems of cultural transition and displacement with one subject citing problematic behaviours as resulting

from a loss of traditions such as 'respect' and 'manners', and considering himself fortunate to be embedded in a family structure that still espouses these practices. Black boys in this study identify peer pressure as a powerful phenomenon in which boys must prove themselves as men in relation to their peers. This pressure seems to be unproblematic only in the arena of sport, outside of which they identify it as the imperative to 'bad things' such as drinking, drug-abuse, dropping out of school and engaging in high-risk sexual behaviours. They are careful to resist these problematic manifestations of masculinity by describing themselves as 'good boys' who are hardworking and moral and who can establish workable masculinities through addressing social problems in more adaptive ways such as working hard at school, intervening and arbitrating in conflict and motivating others to do 'good things'.

In the context of the historically White, single-sex schools from which some boys in this study came, White masculinities appear to be similarly beset by confusion and conflict. Unlike the Black versions of hegemony in this study, however, White boys do not utilize the 'bad boy' constructions. This may be because, owing to sample limitations, the White subjects happen to be from materially advantaged backgrounds and do not have to grapple with the kinds of social problems faced by their less privileged contemporaries. These White boys instead measure their masculinities against the standards of stereotypical 'macho' masculinity characterized by competitiveness, physical toughness, sporting prowess, restricted emotional expression, a casual approach to schoolwork, homophobia and not being girl (Connell, 1987; Frosh et al., 2002; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Morrell (1994) refers to this as 'rugged masculinity' which is masculinity defined in opposition to femininity. However, the majority of boys in this study, like those in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) research undertaking, struggle to find a space in which they can construct masculine identities which are differentiated from the hegemonic. Alternative versions of being male are constructed as 'softer' forms of masculinity and include attributes such as being clever, caring, possessing non-hegemonic skills or simply being sufficiently self-possessed and confident not to have to keep proving macho status to others.

Coherent masculine identities are continually negotiated between discourses characterized by contradiction and conflict. The casual approach to schoolwork demanded by the hegemonic ideal, for example, conflicts with the necessity to pass grades at school since failure risks considerable loss of hegemonic status. Strategies which enable boys to negotiate alternative, non-hegemonic positioning echo those of the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) work. These include dismissing hegemony as an act and therefore artificial and subverting it through being superior to it. Parallel positioning in both hegemonic and non-hegemonic camps is made possible through producing different masculinities in particular contexts. The latter strategy may explain the predominance of hegemony which is produced in public where it can be vigorously policed and maintained, unlike other forms which may be practiced in other, more private, contexts (Burnard, 2001). For example, boys expressed greater ease with sharing their emotions with mothers or close, trusted friends and were restricted to hegemonic practices when with peers such as joking or keeping to 'safe', approved topics such as sport.

A common finding was that these alternative versions are persistently measured against the hegemonic ideal (Frosh et al., 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994). According to the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, masculinity becomes polarized with only two options available – masculinity according to hegemonic standards on one end and the feminine or gay on the other. Boys who attempt to construct more complex, authentic identities consequently risk being termed not-male or girlish, thereby rendering them vulnerable to policing in the form of practices such as teasing and even exclusion. Violence is condoned by these boys as a fitting response to provocation in the form of significant injury to one's masculine status by being called girl or gay, or insults directed at mothers. Homophobia thus provides boys with a strategy with which to publicly assert their heterosexuality and hence their masculine identities (Epstein, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002). It is not surprising then that the boys in this study vigilantly monitor their non-hegemonic positions and practices, which are continually at risk of being termed 'feminine', and take great care to justify them as appropriately masculine. Boys espousing both harder and softer forms of masculinity struggle with feelings of isolation, and sometimes resentment,

resulting from prohibitions on the expression of feelings or exposure of vulnerabilities. Although hegemony may not be the most commonly practiced form of masculinity, and most boys in this study are positioned alongside or in opposition to it in a state of tension and ambivalence, it nonetheless remains the ultimate standard of 'proper' masculinity (Attwell, 2002; Connell, 1995; Frosh et al., 2002).

Although a significant body of research indicates that gender identities intersect with race, class and sexuality, most of this literature focuses on White, Western, middle-class, heterosexual masculinities (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Rogoff & van Leer, 1993; Sewell, 1997). Morrell (2001a) points out that its applicability in South Africa may have limited value as other variables need to be taken into account such as the historical, state-produced race differentials of the Apartheid era, which continue to impact on the production of masculinities in contemporary South Africa. Morrell (2001a) and Epstein (1998a) thus caution against the construction of distinct, 'monolithic' versions of Black and White masculinity and assert the importance of "...bearing in mind that it is not simply 'race' which impacts on men's perceptions of themselves as men, but rather the interplay of a wide range of historical, social and economic factors with race" (Attwell, 2002, p. 92). These factors need to be borne in mind in the interpretation of the masculinities produced by the boys in this study since, owing to sampling bias, the White boys have considerably higher socio-economic status than those who are Black and consequently face fewer constraints regarding educational opportunities and future professional status, all of which impact on the production of their masculinities.

5.4 Relationships

Findings on how boys experience relationships with peers, parents and girls are remarkably similar to those of Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002). Peer relationships are central to the experience of adolescent boys but the peer interactions of many were limited by the narrowness of hegemonic dictates. Possessing the attributes of conventional masculinity seems to be a virtual guarantee of gaining the acceptance and admiration of other boys and is closely aligned with popularity status. However, hegemonic masculinity had problematic aspects for both the Black and White subjects in

this study. Black boys had to maintain a distance from their peers who espoused the ‘bad boy’ aspects of hard masculinity. For White boys, adhering too closely to macho practices was understood by many to be at the potential cost of emotional closeness with others and even the authentic actualisation of self, since being seen to be macho took precedence over other activities. Those boys without hegemonic attributes, who were small, bookish, or not physically hard, were at a marked disadvantage in their peer relationships and are often “...friendless, the butt of jokes, bullying and homophobic insults, and unable to share their experiences and anxieties with others” (Frosh et al., 2002, p.260). All accounts express some ambivalence about teasing which too often blurs into bullying. It is ‘harsh’ to be at the brunt of it and no one, even those espousing popular forms of masculinity, seemed to be invulnerable or inviolable. Most boys in this study attempted to broaden the popularity band using constructions such as being liked by other boys, funny, part of a group or skilled in areas other than the hegemonic. Within the context of the interview, most boys were articulate and insightful and acknowledge the value of close, supportive relationships, although they were perceived as difficult to achieve in the context of peer relationships owing to the policing of emotional expressiveness and displays of vulnerability.

Relationships with parents were important to these subjects although, as with those of the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, hegemonic constraints on emotionality imposed limitations on father/son relationships with fathers experienced as distant or emotionally detached. Relationships with fathers, if present, tended to be characterized by joking and banter and legitimate masculine practices such as watching or playing sport. More emotional closeness was experienced with mothers or sisters with whom they were able to communicate softer, more emotional sides of themselves. Relationships with fathers seem to be of pivotal importance to boys in the formation of their masculine identities (Burnard, 2002; Frosh et al., 2002). Burnard (2002) notes that the men in his study searched, as adolescents, for ‘accomplished male role models’, usually in the form of a father, with whom they could identify and develop their masculine identities. Many boys, as do those in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, yearn for fathers who are connected to them on a more intimate level and those who have no contact with their

fathers express a deep sense of loss and sadness. This seems to be compounded by a sense of alienation from peers and other males, which seems to permeate all interviews, with whom masculinity must always be achieved, proved and defended.

As with the boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, most of boys had limited interactions with girls who were stereotyped as all things not masculine and these differences were both denigrated and eroticised. Boys professed to prefer the company of other boys with whom they can be themselves and have fun and conversation 'just goes along', an inherent paradox considering the prohibitions around emotional disclosure. Boys were seen to act differently when girls were around with boys having to restrict what they do and say. Gender imbalances were thus maintained with girls constructed as not tough enough to handle boy conversation and practices. Although most boys did not have experience of romantic relationships with girls, having one was constructed as a significant boost to masculine status. Redman (1996) notes that having a relationship "...seemed to involve the boys in asserting a form of masculinity that was in competition with other more laddish forms" (p.11). Girls also use hegemonic constructions in their definitions of 'real boy' while constructing them as potentially problematic since they "...always need to be proved or asserted and so reinforce and obscure the anxieties and tensions which underlie them" (Mac an Ghail, 1994, in Frosh et al. 2002). In keeping with a study by Thomson, McGrellis, Holland, Henderson and Sharpe (1998, in Frosh et al. 2002), girls see themselves as stronger and more mature than boys because they are able to express feelings and sustain authentic, intimate connection with others. These practices thus render them less vulnerable than boys to the pressure to conform to peer expectations around being 'cool', often at the expense of personal integrity and development. Interestingly, the Black, physically disabled boy in this study, who is entirely exiled from the hegemonic domain, aligns himself with girls and makes use of these constructions to position himself as superior to hegemony.

5.5 Education

Research in many countries indicates that the school performances of boys are declining with girls tending to achieve better educational qualifications (Epstein et al., 1998; Frosh

et al. 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994). A number of explanations have been posited including teachers' constructions of boys who are 'implicitly' active and rebellious (Cohen, 1998, in Frosh et al., 2002), the impact on boys of the changing roles of men and women in society and the workplace (e.g. Connell, 1995; Frosh, 1994; Kimmel, 1987; Segal, 1990) and an incompatibility between the production of boys' masculinities and schoolwork (Frosh et al., 2002). Bleach (1999, in Frosh et al., 2002) cautions that the complex and multi-determined nature of the relationship between masculinities and school should be borne in mind when seeking to understand contemporary problems faced by boys within the context of education.

This study supports the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) assertion that boys "...faced contradictions in negotiating both masculine identities and schoolwork" (p.197). Boys in the historically White schools, in particular, were vulnerable to the constructions of hegemonic or popular masculinity, according to which resistance to schoolwork and teachers is mandatory. Being seen to work hard and achieve academically places a boy at risk of teasing and ostracism. Boys striving to reproduce popular versions of masculinity thus have to take care to conceal their efforts if they are to sustain their positions. This construction was less evident in accounts from historically Black schools where, although appearing to be less studious than girls is an important part of sustaining hegemonic practice, education is valued as the primary route to socio-economic advancement. In both school contexts however, resisting teacher authority in the form of cheek or 'chirping' constitutes acceptable macho behaviour, earning approval from classmates and boosting popularity.

Sewell (1997) and Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) note that boys report that many teachers are discriminatory in their treatment of girls, whom they tend to favour, and Black boys whom they pick on and treat unfairly. In the current study, teachers were seen by boys to discriminate along the lines of gender but not race. Boys were blamed for disturbances in class and given harsher punishments than girls. One subject attributed this to the availability of emotional expressiveness to girls, which allows them to protest and explain their way out of punishments which boys must just bear in fortitude and silence.

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) comment that if teachers construct boys as immature, unruly and troublesome, they are more likely to produce these behaviours and especially in class where masculinities are co-created within the group context. Within individual interviews, boys were sensitive, thoughtful and articulate, as observed in this study. In all accounts boys stated that teachers do not, in their management of classroom activity, differentiate between boys of different races. Many South African teachers may in fact be sensitive to race issues and may thus endeavour not to reproduce racist practices, although this finding requires more in-depth exploration, since all boys in this study were awkward when discussing race, tending to give politically correct responses.

These boys fantasized about careers considered appropriately masculine and in which they would be able to earn and achieve status. This gave rise to a contradiction of which most were aware, in that it is difficult to reconcile the possible, negative consequences of the 'anti-swot culture' with long-term vocational ambition (Frosh et al., 2002). As with boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, many boys were cynical about whether any of them actually achieved the hegemonic ideal and expressed weariness of the ongoing effort required to negotiate the conflict between academic prowess and hegemony. Negotiating a space in which masculinity and scholastic endeavour can co-exist is achieved in various ways. These included being sufficiently endowed in other hegemonic attributes to offset the dangers of academic success, downplaying this success or being difficult in class. Academic prowess was reconstructed by some as sufficiently important to merit status as a competitive masculinity since macho boys, if they were not 'pretending', would also strive to do well at schoolwork since failing grades risks both potential loss of hegemonic positioning and future career status.

“The complexity of the negotiations boys make in order to be able to survive at school demonstrates that debates on boys and education have to take note of the difficulties posed by canonical narratives of masculinities within school cultures” (Frosh et al., 2002).

5.6 Social class and race

For the British boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, social class is an important and influential factor in the creation of their masculine identities, with boys from different social classes expressing mutual suspicion and dislike. Social class thus intersects significantly with masculinity in the creation of these boys' gendered identities. However, social class appears not to be a concept with which the South African boys in this study can identify. All expressed incomprehension when asked what social class they belonged to and either avoided answering or reconstructed social class in a way which made sense to them and answered accordingly. These reconstructions included race, ethnicity, culture, popularity and socio-economic status.

Race was prominent in the thinking of the boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study and there was "...ample evidence of a pool of racialised experiences and of racialised thinking in their individual interviews" (p.16). On the contrary, in the present study, there was a conspicuous paucity of articulated racialised constructions in these accounts. Boys were on the whole unwilling to explore their own understandings of race and responded to questions by remaining silent, denying the existence of racist practices or projecting them instead onto what 'other boys' think or do. They tended to imbue words such as 'White', 'Black' and 'race' with racist overtones and preferred the use of 'culture' to describe perceived racial differences. Most constructions were contradictory and fraught with an underlay of anxiety, ambivalence and conflict. Girls portrayed a similar reluctance to explore questions around race, either responding evasively or not at all. Race has long been a highly sensitive issue in South Africa which could explain the pervasive awkwardness and anxiety experienced by these subjects when discussing it.

White boys were particularly uncomfortable talking in terms which might be interpreted as racist. Attwell (2002) notes that, while White men may acknowledge that socio-political change is both desirable and inevitable, there may be unconscious resistance to the loss of the power and privilege which was conferred on middle-class, heterosexual White men during the apartheid era. The White boys constructed Black masculinities as non-hegemonic, producing them as 'tough' only in that they 'have been through more',

alluding to past injustices of the apartheid era. Anderson and Accomado (2002) note that this 'invisibility' of Black masculinities may emerge from the tendency in literature to universalise masculinity as White, middle class and heterosexual. The invisibility of Black masculinities observed in the current project was also described by the teachers in the historically White schools represented in the Attwell (2002) study. She concludes that the hegemony of White heterosexual masculinity may be thus preserved in these sites, as appears to be the case in this study.

Black boys did not refer to White masculinities at all, referring to other Black African groups when comparing masculinities. The boys interviewed for this study will have had little actual contact with White boys in any context and may consequently have been reliant on socially constructed stereotypes and beliefs regarding White masculinity. These would have been influenced by the dominance of White masculinity during the apartheid era and the consequent suppression and marginalisation of Black masculinities. Since the interviewer is both White and female, their expression may have been restricted by a desire to avoid expressing material they feared may have been potentially sensitive or offensive. The relative superficiality of responses to questions dealing with race may also have been influenced by the desire of all subjects to present socially acceptable, politically correct answers. Both racial groups, however, expressed feelings of displacement and uncertainty regarding the future. The Black boys feel constrained by lack of finance and limited opportunity for future employment and advancement. The White boys in this study articulate an awareness of shifts away from the supremacy of White masculine entitlement and many are concerned that being white in egalitarian South Africa may impact negatively on future employment opportunities.

As noted by Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002), it is important to remember that 'White' and 'Black' are not separate versions of masculinity with their own, pre-existing, racially-based characteristics. 'Whiteness' and 'blackness' do not of themselves produce specific, discrete masculinities. Rather, diverse cultures both produce and are produced by the forms of masculinity which emerge in them (Frosh et al., 2002). It is within these social contexts that masculinities are continually being made, performed and maintained.

Therefore, in the South African context, racialised cultural practices are among the many elements which intersect with the construction of boys' gendered identities, a process which remains complex, multi-layered and dynamic. It is interesting to note that the boys themselves may be shifting out of narrow, racist perceptions of masculinity into a broader understanding through their insistence on the use of the word 'culture' in the place of 'white' or 'black'. It may also be that the use of the term 'culture' served as a defense against anxiety produced by the use of the word 'race'.

“There is not some global essence of ‘whiteness’ or ‘blackness’ giving rise to particular forms of masculinity; rather, racialised differences are taken up in many different ways to inform and generate a highly variegated structure of identity” (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 146).

5.7 Limitations of the study

In considering the limitations of this study, several concerns can be raised about the sample. While it was varied, it was not representative of the diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups of South Africa. Furthermore, since all subjects volunteered to take part in the study, the results may be biased towards adolescents who are compliant and conformist, whereas troubled or non-conformist adolescents may have produced different versions. The results cannot therefore be generalised to all South African adolescents and further research is indicated with subjects from a wider range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. A comparative study, for example, of Black masculinities in different types of schools would be valuable, as well as of White Afrikaaner masculinities (Attwell, 2002). The small size of the sample likewise restricts its generalisability. There were, however, remarkable similarities in the themes of masculinity which emerged across all sites when compared to existing research (eg. Attwell, 2002; Frosh et al., 2002; Morrell, 1994).

Boys and girls from three types of school participated in this study. These schools comprised historically White, single-sex schools for boys, historically White, single-sex schools for girls and historically Black, co-educational schools. As noted by Attwell

(2002), the schools themselves cannot be assumed to represent all schools of a similar type although the accounts within the context of each type of school were notably similar. Adolescents drawn from a wider variety of schools would have permitted a broader observation of ways in which South African adolescent boys construct and negotiate their masculine identities.

It needs to be noted that since the interview itself is a context in which meanings are actively co-constructed, the age, class, race and sex of both interviewee and interviewer would have affected the interview process and outcome (Hearn, 1998). Social constructionist perspectives hold that the interview itself represents an intervention which may provoke change and learning (Silverman, 2000). These accounts are inevitably located within ideological contexts and among their multiple voices would be those which conform to particular cultural norms and values, and which reflect the desire to give socially desirable responses. Research using methodology which avoids the social desirability variable, such as the study of direct discourses and practices within school settings, would add other facets to the study of adolescent masculinities (Attwell, 2002).

The viewpoint of the researcher is an important consideration, particularly in qualitative research where data is shaped, directed and interpreted through the subjective framework of the interviewer (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Silverman, 2000). The interviewee response would likewise be influenced by what he/she believed the interviewer wished to hear. Although the interview and its interpretation is thus unavoidably influenced, the process is managed through a continual, conscious checking and self-reflexivity in order to reduce subjective bias as far as possible (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

5.8 Conclusions

The original aims of this study included the examination of the accounts of a sample of adolescent boys and girls with the purpose of establishing whether a dominant, hegemonic version of masculinity exists against which boys evaluate their own and the masculinities of others. The data was further explored for alternative, non-hegemonic versions of being male. Finally, the difficulties, conflicts and contradictions experienced

by boys were explored as they attempted to negotiate a coherent sense of a masculine self from the competing, often contradictory, masculinity discourses available to them in their social, cultural and school contexts. Accounts from girls were examined to explore how girls perceive and describe adolescent boy practices.

Although most subjects were aware that there are a variety of ways in which to 'do' masculinity, all defined hegemonic masculinity as the dominant standard against which all other ways of being male are evaluated. The hegemonic ideal was defined as being physically tough, popular, sporty, emotionally inexpressive, having masculine interests and being other than girl, gay or nerd. A hierarchy of masculinity was produced with some boys being more hegemonic than others. These constructions are remarkably similar to those of the English adolescent boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) study, which suggests that hegemonic or 'hard' modes of masculinity are particularly wide-ranging and well-entrenched in the lives of boys.

Views of adolescent boys as problematic both in society and education suggests that research into the ways they both produce, and are produced by, masculinity discourses is especially urgent (Frosh et al., 2002). In South Africa it has been argued that masculinity constructions may impact on some of its most critical problems such as the notably high rates of violence, rape and HIV/AIDS prevalence and incidence (Attwell, 2002; Epstein, 2002; Leclerc-Madlala, 1997; Morrell, 2001a; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Connell (2000) argues that schools are prime sites in which gender is constructed, negotiated and policed and it follows that research into school-produced masculinities may contribute towards the emergence of new, more adaptive gender identities and practices (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001).

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) suggest various ways of encouraging boys to recognise and confront narrow, constraining, hegemonic modes of masculinity and to validate a wider range of acceptable practices. School policy could, for example, be broadened to include the provision of what they call 'discussion spaces'. These would comprise small groups of boys managed by committed, interested adult males in which

participants are encouraged to co-create fuller and more adaptive versions of being male. Since so many boys in the Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman study (2002), as well as those in this study, voice a wish for more emotional access to their fathers, who themselves are embedded within the constraints of masculinity discourses, they add that bringing fathers or male identification figures into these groups may facilitate the construction of new masculinities. They also suggest that the tendency of schools to direct boys into activities understood to be conventionally male such as sports may reinforce hegemonic ideology and practices and makes the construction of alternatives more difficult, and school policies need to be aware of this in order to facilitate change.

Frosh et al. (2002) conclude:

“...simply questioning boys’ experiences – and also without embodying sexism, racism and homophobia in teaching and other adult practices – will never be enough on its own, but at least it is something which could be done, and could make a difference to boys” (Frosh et al., 2002, p.265).

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7. APPENDIX 1

Protocol for interviews with boys (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 274)

Details

Do you live with your parent/s, guardian/s?

Do you have brother/s or sister/s? How old are they? Your age?

What jobs do your parent/s, guardian/s do?

Which school do you go to?

General self-description

Could you tell me three things you think are important about yourself?

Media

What are your favourite TV programs? What do you like about them? Do you talk about them?

With whom?

If you were making a TV program for boys of your age, what would you include in it?

Do you watch films/videos? What kind do you like? Why?

Do you play computer games? What kinds?

What do you like about them?

Do you read comics or magazines? What stories or articles do you like most? If you could design a comic or magazine for boys of your age, what things would you put in it?

Do you read books? What do you read and why?

Identificatory figures

Are there some people you admire? Are there some people you wouldn't like to be like?

Relationships and attitudes to girls

Do you tend to spend most of your time with boys or girls?

What difference does it make being with girls?

Do you have friends who are girls? Do you do the same things with girls as with boys who are friends? Is there a difference between girls who are friends and girl friends?

Do you think girls are more emotional than boys? How do they show it?

Are there tough girls?

Do you think everyone is treated fairly at school? Do teachers prefer girls? How do you know?
Have you ever thought girls have it easier than boys?
What kinds of names do girls and boys get called? For what?

Defining characteristics of boys

If you were to describe boys to someone from another planet who had never experienced boys before, what would you say?
What difference does it make being a boy?

Ethnicity

What ethnic (racial) group do you belong to?
Do you see boys as belonging to a different ethnic (racial) group to you? How would you describe their background? Do you go around with boys from these backgrounds? Why/ why not? Do you do the same things with them as with boys from your background?
Can you imagine having a girlfriend from a different group?
Do you think boys are treated differently because of where their parents come from? Is your ethnic (racial) background important to you? What difference does it make being a boy from this background? Are you pleased you are from this background? Have you ever thought you would not like to be?
Are there things you dislike from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds? Are there things you admire about boys from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

Relations with boys

I wonder if you could tell me how you get on with other boys, for instance at school or with friends you see outside?
What do you and your friends like doing together?
What kinds of things do you talk about?
Are there different kinds of boys?
What kinds of boys do you mix with?
Are some boys popular? How do they get to be popular?
Do teachers prefer some boys to other boys? What makes you think so?
Do some boys get picked on by other boys? For doing what?
Does anyone have a girlfriend yet in your class? What difference does it make having a girlfriend?

Are you happy about the class you are in at school? Would you like to be in another class?

Tell me the kind of things you and your friends find funny? (Do boys and girls laugh at the same things?)

Are there things you only talk about with your boy friends?

Social class

Do you feel you belong to a particular class?

Do you see some boys as belonging to a different social class than you?

Relations with adults

Generally speaking, how do you get on with adults?

Are there adult men/women who are important in your life?

Do you talk about and do some things with you mother/stepmother and not with your father/stepfather? What?

Do you talk about and do some things with your father/stepfather and not with your mother/stepmother? What?

Are there things you talk about with your friends and not with your parent/s or stepparent/s?

Are there things you talk about with your parent/s or stepparent/s and not with your friends?

Emotions

Can you think back to a time when you felt really happy? Did you talk to anyone about how you felt? Who?

Can you think of a time when you felt worried or under pressure? Did you talk to anyone about how you felt? Who?

Do other people sometimes tell you about their worries? If so, who?

What do you think are some of the things which boys get most anxious about?

Do you think it's alright for boys to talk about their worries or do they have to keep quiet about them? If so, why?

Do some boys you know ever get violent? Why? What about you? Do you ever get violent? If so, what about? What do you do?

Change and future orientation

What are the things you're most looking forward to when you get older? What are the things you're least looking forward to when you get older?

What do you imagine you'll be doing when you get to your parents/stepparents age? What kind of person do you think you'll be? What job/s do you want/expect to get?

Do you want to be single, married, live with another person? Would you like to have children?

How do you think you have changed in the last few years?

How do you imagine it will change in the next few years?

8. APPENDIX II

Protocol for interview with girls (Frosh et al., 2002, p. 277)

Family

Do you live with your parent/s or guardian/s? What do they do? Do you have brothers/sisters? How do you get on with them? How do you and your brothers/sisters get on with you parents? Is you mum/dad they same or different with you and your brothers/sisters? Would you have liked to have a brother/sister? Do your brothers/sisters do more or less work around the house than you? Do you do similar or different things with your mum and dad?

Definitions of a boy

I wonder if you could describe a boy or say what a boys is to someone who had never experienced boys before, say to someone from another planet?

Relations with boys

Do you mix much with boys? If not, why not? If so, when do you mix? What sorts of things do you do with boys and girls – similar or different? What is it like being with boys – is it similar or different to being with girls? Are you different or similar with boys and girls? Are there things you can say to a girls that you can't say to a boy, or things you can say to a boy that you can't say to a girl? Do you like being in a single-sex/ mixed school or would you prefer to be in the other kind? Do you have boys as friends? If not why not? If so how did you get friendly with them? What do you like about them? Are the boys you're friendly with like other boys or different?

Differences between boys

Are all boys much the same or can you say there are different kinds of boys? If so how do boys differ? What kinds of boys do you like or dislike?

Ethnicity (race)

Are boys from different races different or much the same? Are there any things you like or dislike about boys from different races?

Comparing boys and girls

Some people say boys and girls are similar, and some say they are different. What do you think? If they are different, how are they? Some people say that boys are more mature than girls and some that girls are more mature. What do you think? Do you do things which boys or girls tend to do?

Development

Have boys of your age changed much from what they were like a few years ago or are they much the same? If they have changed, how? What about girls? Have they changed? Have you changed? Do girls now relate to boys differently than they used to in primary or just the same? Do the mix more or less or the same?

Boyfriends

Do you have a boyfriend? If so what is he like? What is it like having a boyfriend? Do you imagine having a boyfriend in the future? Why/ why not? What would you like him to be like? (looks, age, race, character)

Boys relations with teachers

Do teachers treat boys and girls the same or differently? Are teachers easier on girls than on boys or boys than on girls?

Good and bad things about being a boy

What are the good or bad things about being a boy?

Identity as a girl

I was wondering whether you preferred being a girl than a boy or if you ever wished you were a boy.

Reflections on the interview

How did you find the interview? Do you think this interview would have been different if I had been a man?

