

Chapter 1

Introduction

Where have all the good men gone

And where are all the gods?

Where's the streetwise Hercules to fight the rising odds?

The Fairy Godmother in *Shrek 2* (2004)

The Fairy Godmother in *Shrek 2*, albeit unwittingly, poses a profound question when she plaintively sings, “Where have all the good men gone and where are all the gods?” History is full of examples of brave, heroic, god-like men who helped build civilisation and advance society. Throughout history men have built the roads, dug the mineshafts, embarked on voyages of discovery, built planes, made the laws, fought the wars, invented the machines, and discovered the medicines. Men’s inherent passion, questioning, sense of adventure, strength and action-orientation served them (and society) well. In days gone by masculinity has been synonymous with bravery, heroic acts, breaking new ground, protecting and providing. History also provides numerous examples, in the form of Jesus, Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Buddha, of men who exhibit both compassion and concern for others. The picture, however, seems to be changing. The contemporary view is that the phallus is dead and that men, far from serving society, are unreliable, reckless, lawless and dangerous (Clare, 2000). The current state of masculinity, at least in many developed countries of the world, makes Freud’s assertion of “penis envy” an unlikely reality for many modern, western women.

It would certainly seem from many reports that masculinity is in crisis, that good men are absent from society, and that a future without men is not entirely without merit (Sykes, 2003). The devaluation of masculinity has led some writers to propose that androgyny is a viable and preferable alternative to the status quo and hegemonic masculinities.

While many men are indubitably well-functioning and heroic, there are many contemporary men who are not. The head-lines in Cape Argus on the 5th of June 2004 read, "Suicide ends killing orgy". The lead story told of a man who killed himself hours after killing his girlfriend and wife. The same newspaper carried the story of a man sentenced to a 10 year prison term for fraudulently claiming to be a qualified teacher. Another story told of a man who had previously been convicted of rape and who was on trial for killing a baby and two women. Further on in the same paper was the story of a 29 year old man who after consuming alcohol caused mayhem on a South African Airways flight from Johannesburg to Cape Town when he howled like a wolf and banged on the backrest of the passenger in front of him. The editorial comment on the same day discussed allegations of corruption and ruthlessness which had been made against a male politician. There was a distinct lack of similar stories about woman in the same newspaper.

If the June the 5th edition of the Cape Argus is any reflection of South African society, then it would seem that it is men who are predominantly responsible for lawlessness, murder, suicide, fraud, corruption, rape and substance abuse in South African society. This certainly calls into question the state of the health of South Africa's men and begs the question, "Why is it men that dominate stories of social mayhem, aggression violence and lawlessness?"

The fact that men are being associated with aggression, crime and violence has lead to a devaluation of masculinity and has given birth to a surge of "masculinity in crisis" discourse. This in turn has prompted some psychologists to re-question the origins of masculinity and the roots of maleness in an attempt to explain why it is predominantly men who cause social problems. Such questions have resulted in a higher awareness and an increased acknowledgment of the importance of genetic, evolutionary, biochemical and neurological factors in shaping men's behaviour. Questions about the origin of masculinity have, however, also re-focused attention on the social construction of gender and the role of cognitive factors in influencing men's behaviour.

Writers who have given their attention to the social construction of gender and the influence of socialisation on men's behaviour, have identified a rigid set of beliefs and attitudes which they maintain define masculinity. These rigid ideas about what it means to be a man constitute hegemonic masculinity and are believed to constrict men and assign them to specific roles in society. While the gender revolution has liberated women and allowed them to play any role they choose in western society, there remains an insistence that men conform to narrow definitions of masculinity in order to be considered masculine. Hegemonic models of masculinity are thought to be, at least in part, responsible for the psycho- and socio-pathology that is being attributed to men in the masculinity in crisis discourse.

This research project is an attempt to understand how masculinity is constructed by adolescent boys in South Africa and in so doing to identify some of the beliefs and attitudes that shape men's behaviour and define gender roles in South African society. This dissertation begins by reviewing the masculinity in crisis literature and presenting empirical data to provide an indication of the extent to which masculinity is in crisis in South Africa. The dissertation then goes on to review traditional psychological theories on the origin of masculinity before presenting the evidence for the biological determinants of maleness. An integrated model is then proposed which provides a framework for understanding the masculinities as an interaction between biological factors and cognitive factors.

Framing masculinities as the interaction between biological and cognitive determinants allows one to investigate beliefs and attitudes that exists about manhood and gender roles and explain how these shape the behaviour of men within the context of evolutionary factors. This framework has been used to investigate how a group of 15 South African male adolescents conceptualise masculinity and understand gender roles. A group of 15 male adolescent males between the ages of 14 and 18 were interviewed. The qualitative data collected in the interviews was used to infer common themes, beliefs and attitudes about masculinities and gender roles in South African society. These beliefs and attitudes are described in chapter eight and provide

some insight into the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the community represented by this group of boys. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research findings and proposes strategies that could be used to encourage South African boys to achieve healthy and positive masculinities.

Chapter 2

Men – a population at risk

What is it that increases your chances of ending up in remedial classes at school, in trouble with the police in adolescence and in jail in your twenties? What is it that makes you much more likely to inject heroine, abuse alcohol, betray your spouse and desert your children? What is it that increases threefold your risk of killing yourself and tenfold your chances of killing someone else? The answer – being male.

(Clare, 2000, p10)

Introduction

Writers across the globe are suggesting that masculinity is in a state of crisis. The poor status of men's health, the high incidence of antisocial behaviour among men, the emotional illiteracy of men, and their inability to maintain intimate relationships is offered as evidence that men are in real trouble. This chapter reviews some of the literature that claims that contemporary western man is the weaker sex. Empirical evidence is also presented in this chapter as an indication of the state of masculinity in South Africa.

The status of men's health

Reports from Australia indicate that men have higher mortality rates than women, that they suffer from more serious and chronic illnesses than women and that they have higher death rates than women for all major diseases (Woods, 2003). The picture does not appear to be that different for American men. With the exception of Alzheimer's disease, all 15 of America's most common diseases claim the lives of more men than women (Cowley, 2003). It

would seem that men have never lived as long as women but the male-female longevity gap has expanded from just one year in the 1920s to five years today (Cowley, 2003). Not only are men more prone than women to being the fatal victims of disease but they are also at greater risk of being murdered and killed in accidents. This claim is supported by reports that American men are twice as likely as women to die in accidents and homicides (Cowley, 2003).

It is not only in developed countries that the status of men's health is comparatively poorer than that of women. The results of the South African Demographic and Health Survey (1998) indicate that there are also significant differences in injury rates between men and women in this country. In 1998 the incidence of intentional injuries in men was 381 per 100 000 while for women in the same period it was 175 per 100 000. The incidence of unintentional injury for men in 1998 was 1 373 per 100 000 while for women it was 631 per 100 000. These statistics suggest that South African men are 2,2 times more likely than women to need medical attention as a result of intentional injuries and 2,1 times as likely than women to incur unintentional injuries.

Barker (in Cleaver 2002) cites studies that show that in Latin America and the Caribbean, the health burden of men is 26% higher than it is for women. Evidence from other less developed countries also indicates that gendered social roles place men at greater risk for some diseases. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, boys, by virtue of their gendered positions, are at greater risk than girls for contracting schistosomiasis (Michelson in Cleaver, 2002). In South Asia, men, by virtue of the gendered work environment, are at greater risk for exposure to poisonous pesticides (Jackson in Cleaver, 2002). The belief that one's masculinity is linked to one's virility, has lead to reports that men may also be at greater risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Cleaver, 2002).

It has been suggested that attitudes and beliefs about masculinity give rise to certain behaviours (for example, risk-taking and the reluctance to ask for help) that are inherently male and which contribute to an increased risk of injury and

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disease (Gernov, 1998; Gribich, 1996). Contemporary beliefs about masculinity and gender roles appear to compromise men's health in two significant ways. Firstly, hegemonic masculinity equates being manly with adopting a range of hazardous behaviours like taking part in violent and aggressive acts; indulging in risk taking behaviours; using alcohol, cigarettes and drugs; and the pursuit of multiple sexual partners. Secondly, hegemonic masculinity simultaneously encourages men to view pro-health behaviours and help-seeking as a sign of weakness, vulnerability and fear.

Suicide among men

Evidence suggests that men are at greater risk than women for suicide. During 1994, in New South Wales, 82% of individuals who died as a result of suicides or self-inflicted injuries were males (Woods, 2002). Writers in Australia are now suggesting that male gender should be considered a risk factor in suicide assessment. Statistics reported in the USA indicate that American men are 4 to 6 times more likely to kill themselves than women (Miller, 2003). Statistics released by Statistics South Africa and the Department of Health confirm that this trend is not dissimilar in South Africa.

Although accurate data on national suicide rates in South Africa are not available, the provisional results from the ongoing study by the Violence and Injury Mortality Surveillance Initiative, conducted in a sampling of mortuaries in five South African Provinces, and data from the preliminary National Non-natural Mortality Surveillance System (NMSS) indicate that in 1999, 79.2% of suicides in South Africa were male (Statistical Notes, 2000). Figure 2.1 shows preliminary data on deaths due to suicide by age and gender from the NMSS for the first quarter of 1999. The data in figure 2.1 show a clear correlation with the previous and the currently ongoing studies, with the rate of male suicide in South Africa significantly higher than that for women.

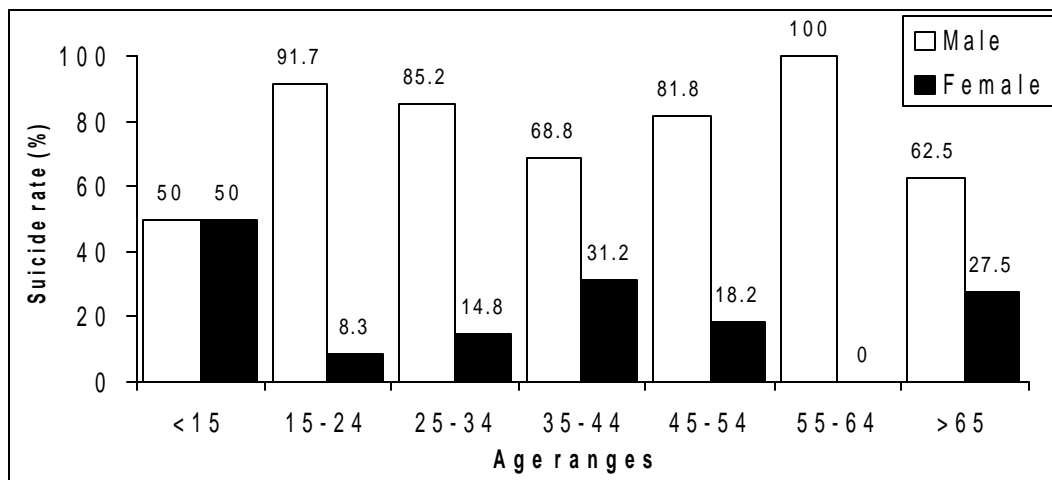


Figure 2.1: Suicide rates in South Africa during the first quarter of 1999, by age and gender (Source: Statistical Notes, 2000).

Psychopathology in men

An article entitled, *The Weaker Sex*, which appeared in the April 6th, 2003, edition of the *Sunday Times*, reports that disorders such as autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders are predominantly male phenomena (Anthony, 2003).

When it comes to the incidence of anxiety disorders, men once again seem to be leading the pack. Professor Dan Stein, Director of the Medical Research Council Unit on Anxiety Disorders at the University of Stellenbosch, is quoted in the *Sunday Times*, 6th April 2003, as saying that in several studies of the onset of Obsessive Compulsive Disorders in childhood and early adolescence, the number of boys diagnosed with this anxiety disorder outweighs the number of girls.

Substance use and other addictive disorders also appear to be more prevalent in men. Clare (2000) reports that illicit drug use, alcohol misuse, gambling and substance abuse disorders are all overwhelming male phenomena. The incidence of alcohol abuse in males is reported to be 10% while being only 5% in females (Kaplan and Sadock, 2001). In the same vein,

the incidence of alcohol dependence in men is 10% while being between 3% and 5% in women (Kaplan and Sadock, 2001). This trend is confirmed in South Africa by statistics reported in the South African Demographic and Health Survey (1998). According to this survey 28% of South African males 15 years and older are dependant on alcohol compared to only 10% of females aged 15 and older. South African men's more frequent use of other harmful substances is also suggested by the South African Demographic and Health Survey (1998) report that 42% of South African men smoke compared to 11% of South African women.

Antisocial behaviour as a male phenomenon

Throughout the developed and developing world, antisocial behaviour is essentially male. Men are predominantly responsible for violence and the sexual abuse of children (Clare, 2000). In America, men make up 94% of the prison inmate population (Cowley, 2003). "The courts and prisons bulge with men. When it comes to aggression, delinquent behaviour, risk taking and social mayhem, men win gold." (Clare, 2000, p 3). The picture in South Africa is similar with 97,5% of the prison population consisting of male inmates. By contrast female prisoners are a small minority, making up only 2,5% of the total prison population in South Africa (Oppler, 1998).

The high incidence of rape in South Africa is also indicative of men's capacity for antisocial behaviour. In 1994, the incidence of rape in South Africa was reported to be 149,5 per 100 000. It is believed that these figures understate the actual incidence of rape since in the same year, police estimated that reported rapes constituted only 2,8% of all rapes (Levi, 2004). The incidence of rape in South Africa has not declined since the early 1990s. According to South African Police Services statistics, 51 249 rapes were reported to the police in 1999. Rape Crisis South Africa believes that in reality the figure is 20 times higher which means that there are 1 086 200 rapes per year in South Africa, which is 2 976 rapes per day, or one rape every 23 seconds (Rape Crisis, 2001). If these estimates are true then the incidence of rape in South

Africa is the highest for any country in the world that collects statistics of violence against women (Levi, 2004). Among the explanations for the high incidence of rape in South Africa are the fact that we live in a male dominated, patriarchal society and that men equate their position in society with one of power and authority (Robertson, 2004).

A graphic example of South African men's desire to assert themselves through violent and sexual acts is the practice of "jackrolling" (Vogelman and Lewis, 2004). Gangs, in black townships, coined the word "jackroll" to describe the forced abduction and rape of women. The act of jackrolling is characterised by: the fact that its perpetrators are armed young men who are members of roving gangs; the women are raped in the open as publicly as possible; and because of the status associated with the rape, the men make no attempt to conceal their identity. Most incidences of jackrolling occur in shebeens, picnic spots, schools, nightclubs, and in the streets. Jackrolling is seen as the sport of the tough. It has sadly become a male fashion, in South African townships, a popular form of male behaviour that earns one the status of being tough and manly (Russell, 1991). A frequent feature of jackrolling (although it also occurs in other forms of rape) is forcing the victim's husband or boyfriend to watch the offence. This practice highlights the power-play, male domination (of women and other men), and assertion of masculinity that underlies the act of rape (Vogelman and Lewis, 2004).

Although there are no definitive statistics, estimates suggest that one in four women in South Africa are the victims of domestic violence at the hands of men. Other estimates range from one in three to one in five (Levi, 2004). One reason that it is so difficult to obtain accurate figures on domestic violence in South Africa is that traditional gender roles dictate that it would be disloyal for a woman to report her husband to the police. Another reason for women's reluctance to report incidents of domestic violence may be the stress and shame they are exposed to when they do report such incidents to the police. While there may be a lack of certainty of the extent to which South African women are the victims of domestic violence, it seems true to say that a

significant proportion of South Africa's women suffer in their homes at the hands of men.

Men in the work place

Men do not appear to be doing much better in the work place. A report in *The Economist* (28th September, 1996) entitled, *What is the matter with men?* indicates that in all the developing countries of the world the number of unemployed men is steadily increasing. This report also claims that the fastest growing employment opportunities are all in female dominated sectors of the economy but the five sectors declining fastest are male dominated. This trend is supported by statistics which indicate that in the USA the service sector, where women make up 60% of the employees, has increased by 200% since the 1970s while the manufacturing sector, where men hold 70% of the jobs, has decreased in size by 14% (Conlin, 2003). In Germany, between 1991 and 1995, twice as many men as women joined the ranks of the unemployed (Clare, 2000). In the same period women gained 210 000 jobs while men lost 400 000 (Clare, 2000).

In spite of the decline in employment opportunities in traditionally "male" careers, men still show a reluctance to do "women's work"; their beliefs about the role of men and what constitutes men's work seems to put them at risk for becoming unemployed. Traditionally men have embarked on voyages of discovery, built empires, waged wars, made laws, built railroads and dug mine shafts. Now they are being required to listen, collaborate, negotiate, express their emotions, communicate and manipulate data – skills that do not appear to come naturally to many men. The sexual revolution in the work place would seem to have left men disempowered in comparison to the position of prominence that was once theirs by virtue of their genetic endowment of physical strength.

Men and relationships

Men are not doing well in the relationship arena either. Evidence suggests that many men are unable to form and maintain intimate relationships, have a fear of intimacy, are poor at expressing emotions, and have a propensity towards angry and/or violent outbursts (Horne and Kiselica, 1999). Their strong desire to maintain control and avoid showing signs of weakness and vulnerability lead men to hide their emotions and adopt an attitude of, “I don’t want to talk about it” (Real, 1997) which has a negative effect on their ability to sustain healthy relationships.

Male academic under-achievement

Boys, more so than girls, are prone to learning, attention and behavioural difficulties that impede their ability to make academic progress. West (2002) points out that compared with girls, boys in Australia are: nine times more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficits and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders; three times more likely to be diagnosed with a Learning Disorder as a result of reading difficulties; five times more likely to have Developmental Language Delay Disorders; and four times more likely to display symptoms of a Conduct Disorder or Oppositional Defiant Disorder. In addition, reports from the USA, UK and Australia indicate that boys are showing more signs of school resistance, have higher school drop-out rates, achieve lower academic results and have higher failure rates than girls.

Christina Hoff Sommers, writing in, *The War Against Boys* makes the point that the feminisation of American schools and curricula has seriously disadvantaged boys, turning schools in to “boy-bashing laboratories” that are trying to engender androgyny (in Conlin, 2003). Schools favour those who can pay attention, sit still, follow rules and express themselves verbally – all areas in which boys appear to have more difficulty than girls. Authors like Gurian (1997; 2001) and Pollack (1998; 2000) would have us believe that schools are

currently not very boy-friendly and that this contributes to boys' academic underachievement.

As brain imaging techniques advance and our understanding of neuro-physiological functioning improves, we are learning that boys' and girls' brains function differently (Gurian, 2001; Moir and Jessel, 1999). There is now evidence to suggest that boys and girls learn differently because of genetically determined structural and functional differences in their central nervous systems. Gurian (2001) makes the claim that 99.9% of teachers are unaware of these differences and the implications of these differences for educating boys. Gurian (2001) asserts that most teachers were taught that gender is a function of society. Subsequently teachers fail to consider boys' biological and neurological needs when designing and implementing learning programmes, classroom practices, procedures and policies within schools. It would thus seem that as a direct result of the way schools function, girls are set up to outperform boys academically. It is also significant that teaching is increasingly an exclusively female occupation (see table 2.2). The reality that schools are staffed and managed largely by women may bias the content of curricula, teaching methodology, and the models of adult behaviour that school children are exposed to. This feminisation of schools may be a noteworthy contributor to boys' academic under-achievement.

Boys' poor academic achievements are not confined to schools. While traditionally, universities were male dominated, this no longer seems to be the case. In an article entitled, *The New Gender Gap* (Conlin, 2003) it is reported that women are outnumbering men at American universities, are earning 57% of all BA degrees, and 58% of all Master's degrees. The US Education Department has predicted that in the USA by the year 2010, 142 women will earn BA degrees for every 100 men. The female-to-male ratio is 60-40 at the University of North Carolina, Boston University and New York University. It has been reported that some universities in the USA have had to adopt affirmative action programmes for boys in order to maintain their gender ratios at 50-50 (Conlin, 2003). In Europe the trend is not dissimilar. In the EU, 20% more women are graduating than men (Clare, 2000).

It is not only in developed countries that females dominate attendance in schools and universities. A study of the impact of labour migration revealed that in Lesotho, boys' potential to be labour migrants causes their parents to prioritise spending on the education of girls, resulting in higher female school attendance rates and literacy rates (Cleaver, 2002). This exclusion from education disadvantages boys in the community when opportunities for migrant labour fail.

The Human Sciences Research Council reports that there are distinct gender differences in University enrolment and graduation rates in South Africa. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 summarise university enrolments and graduation rates in 2000 by CESM (Classification of Educational Study Matter) group and gender. The data in this table indicates clearly that not only are more South African women enrolled at universities than men but that more South African women are being awarded degrees. This trend is consistent across English and Afrikaans universities as well as across previously historically disadvantaged universities and previously historically advantaged universities.

CESM Group	Men		Women		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Science, Engineering & Technology	45452	53	40430	47	85881	100
Humanities & Social Sciences	59278	41	85189	59	144467	100
Business, Commerce & Management Science	44124	54	37282	46	81405	100
Education	27996	31	62378	69	90374	100
Total University Enrolments	176849	44	225278	56	402127	100

Table 2.1: University headcount enrolments by CESM (Classification of Educational Study Matter) group and gender, 2000. Source: Department of Education (DoE) HEMIS database 2000.

CESM Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Science, Engineering & Technology	7927	51	7535	49	15459	100
Humanities & Social Sciences	8771	37	14805	63	23576	100
Business, Commerce & Management Science	6841	55	5552	45	12394	100
Education	4029	26	11580	74	15606	100
Total University Graduations	27,561	41	39,467	59	67,028	100

Table 2.2: University graduations by CESM (Classification of Educational Study Matter) group and gender, 2000. Source: Department of Education (DoE) HEMIS database 2000.

Men and the spread of HIV

In Africa the spread of HIV is a heterosexual and a homosexual phenomenon that puts all sexually active adults at risk of infection. Within this context, the role of men in the spread of the disease has been highlighted. Targeting of men as being primarily responsible for the spread of HIV has lead some commentators to conclude that, “Without men there would be no AIDS epidemic.” (Foreman in Cleaver, 2002, p 209). These sentiments are echoed in the statement by a male official of UNAIDs that, “The HIV epidemic is driven by men.” (quoted in Cleaver, 2002, p 211). It thus appears that the transmission of HIV in Africa has become gendered and the dominant form of masculinity is in no small part responsible for the pandemic.

Whose voice is being heard?

The evidence would seem to suggest that masculinity is in a state of crisis and that perhaps men and women have traded positions of fortune in the past 100 years. Not only are men portrayed as being on the receiving end of hardship but men are also being blamed for the role they play in initiating social mayhem. Men are thus being assigned the dual role of victim and perpetrator while it is being said that the hegemonic form of masculinity is failing to serve men or their society. While the evidence seems difficult to refute, it is worth asking the question, “Who is asserting that masculinity is in a state of crisis?”

Among those writing about the “crisis” in masculinity are psychologists and psychiatrists who work with men and who have a vested interest in identifying, treating and profiting from men’s pathology. Likewise, among those reporting that men are in real trouble are supporters of men’s movements who have their own agenda in portraying all men as injured and in need of healing. This crisis is being given coverage by the popular press whose primary motive is to sell newspapers, books and magazines and who consequently may be guilty of sensationalising and thus exaggerating the issues. It is important when considering reports about the crisis in masculinity to take account of who is reporting this crisis and to be critical about how balanced the reporting is.

Are men really worse off than women?

It would be interesting to know how many men consider themselves to be in trouble and how many men would affirm the statement that masculinity is in a state of crisis. It is noteworthy that in spite of this apparent crisis in masculinity, there are still many well-functioning men in our society. It is still men who appear to occupy many of the positions of power and influence in commerce, industry and world politics. It is notable that 90% of the world’s billionaires are men, men still dominate the highest paid jobs in America, and men occupy 71% of the places in MBA programmes in the USA (Conlin, 2003). Given the many examples of high functioning, healthy men in society, it

is hard to believe that all men are in trouble and that there is an all-inclusive crisis in masculinity.

In discussing the status of men, one cannot ignore that it is women who make up approximately 70% of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world (Cleaver, 2002). In economic terms, men are privileged by comparison with women. Men enjoy higher wages than women, have higher labour force participation rates and benefit from the unequal structure of control and ownership of property (Cleaver, 2002). In comparison with women, men enjoy a greater degree of control over their bodies and benefit from sexual privileges. Women's vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections (especially HIV) as a result of gendered power relationships and women's inability to negotiate safe sex, is well established (Cleaver, 2002). Consequently women now make up more than half of the 36.1 million adults infected with HIV world-wide (Bhattacharjee in Cleaver, 2002).

It is also not as if women are without their share of social and psychological problems. The high incidence of depression among women, the fact that they are overwhelmingly the victims of rape, and their tendency to starve themselves into perfection are well documented. While the issues facing women might not be as newsworthy as young men killing each other and themselves, they are not less of a crisis. Women as the victims of violence, is also an issue that cannot be ignored. Violence against women takes many different forms, "emotional, physical, sexual abuse, incest, dating and courtship violence, rape, forced early marriage, domestic violence and economic exploitation, including child pornography and commercial sexual exploitation." (Cleaver, 2002, p 171). It is estimated that in most countries, between 25% and 50% of women have been physically assaulted at least once by an intimate partner (Warrior in Cleaver, 2002).

Given the problems that women continue to face, it is not easy to frame all men as victims. Nor is it conceivable that all men occupy a weaker position than women, as some writers would have us believe.

Conclusion

While the statistics quoted in the masculinity in crisis discourse make it hard to deny that some men are in trouble, this is not the same as saying all men are in trouble. In considering the crisis in masculinity, perhaps a more sensible conclusion would be that some men are at risk rather than a wholesale devaluing of masculinity. It may thus be more meaningful to ask, “Which men are in trouble?” and, “Why are they in trouble?”

If we accept, as is implied by the statistics, that some men, by virtue of their maleness, are at significant risk for certain psychological and social pathology, then it follows that certain behaviours that are inherently male put them at risk. Understanding men’s predisposition to these psychological and social problems requires an understanding of the origin of maleness and masculine behaviour and begs the question, “What makes men act the way they do?”

Much of the behaviour we consider “masculine” is in no small part the result of evolutionary, genetic and biochemical factors. The behaviour of men, however, is also influenced by psychological and social factors including the way boys are socialised into manhood. In particular the way boys form an understanding of what it means to be a man, their beliefs about masculinity and how they are taught and permitted to express their emotions has a profound effect on their behaviour as men. It is subsequently argued that some men’s understanding of what it means to be a man and their beliefs about masculinity put them at risk and gives rise to much of the pathology that is currently being associated with men.

Chapter 3

Traditional psychological theories of masculinity

*What are little boys made of?
Snips and snails, and puppy dogs tails
That's what little boys are made of!
What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice and all things nice
That's what little girls are made of!*

(Nursery Rhyme. Circa early 19th century. Author unknown)

Introduction

The concepts “masculine” and “feminine” as Freud observed, “are among the most confusing that occur in science” (in Connell, 1995, p 3). Although the concepts of “masculinity” and “masculine behaviour” are frequently used in everyday speech and academic writings, definitions of the terms are remarkably hard to formulate and definitive answers about their origins are even more elusive. Speculation about the origin of masculinity is not new in the field of psychology. This question has been on the agenda since the birth of modern psychology at the start of the 20th century. This chapter outlines the conventional psychological theories on the origins of masculinity following a brief discussion of the confusion in the use of terminology in this area.

Gender, sex and sexual orientation

Confusion exists around the inconsistent use of the terms “gender” and “sex” as categories for classification. Some writers differentiate sex from gender on the assumption that sex is a biological phenomenon and that gender is a psychological, social and cultural reality (Cleaver, 2002). But this distinction is not consistently adhered to and some writers use the terms synonymously.

The use of the term “sexual orientation” adds further complication. The extent to which the term sexual orientation overlaps with and is related to the concept of “gender identity” is unclear. For some psychological theorists sexual orientation is an integral part of gender role formation and as such the concepts are dealt with concurrently. Other theorists differentiate sexual orientation from one’s gender role and ascribe different aetiological factors to their development. This lack of clarity and consistency in the use of these terms necessitates a degree of caution when reading psychological theories of masculinity.

Freud’s theory of masculinity

The first account of masculinity in the field of psychology was indirectly proposed by Freud at the start of the 20th century (Connell, 1995). Freud’s psychoanalytic personality theory was established as an outgrowth of psychiatry and as such took place within the context of a medical scientific model of thinking (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1990; Starr, 2001). Freud’s approach to human behaviour falls within the school of depth psychology and as such emphasises the role of “deep”, unconscious aspects of the personality (Meyer et al, 1990). The psychoanalytic approach to masculinity, thus, has its roots in both depth psychology and the clinical practice of healing. This psychoanalytic link to medicine highlights psychoanalytic theory’s intention to normalise human behaviour and underlines its desire to socially control; two elements that are clearly apparent in Freud’s theory of masculinity (Connell, 1995).

Freud contends that all human behaviour and thoughts are the result of unconscious factors within the psyche, which has a fixed structure consisting of the id, ego and superego (Meyer et al, 1990; Starr, 2001). Freud’s theory assumes that all human action is motivated by psychic energy in the form of drives, some of which clash with society’s norms and are thus repressed (Meyer et al, 1990; Starr, 2001). Furthermore, Freud proposed that the way a child learns to cope with the conflict between forbidden drives and societal

norms, has a definite influence on its behaviour in adult life (Starr, 2001). Within Freud's theory, masculinity is thus conceptualised as resulting from intra-psychic forces within the structure of the id, ego and superego. Masculinity is seen as the behavioural consequence of an inherent and on-going conflict between inner drives, originating in the id, and the internal representations, within the superego, of society's expectations of men.

Although it does not seem that Freud wrote any systematic discussion of masculinity, it is one of the reoccurring themes in his writing (Connell, 1995). Freud's ideas about masculinity developed along with his theory of personality, in three stages.

In the initial stage of the development of his personality theory, Freud defined the idea of continuity between normal and neurotic behaviour, the concepts of repression and unconsciousness, and the methodology of inferring unconscious mental processes from dreams, jokes, slips of the tongue and symptoms (Meyer et al, 1990). At the time of formulating these concepts, Freud's proposition was that gender and sexuality were not fixed by nature but rather constructed through a long conflict-ridden process (Connell, 1995). Freud believed that the formation of gender and sexual identity was profoundly inter-linked with the Oedipus complex; the psychosexual conflict of the middle childhood years which is characterised by a desire for one parent and a hatred of the other. In boys this Oedipal conflict is preceded by castration anxiety and competition with the father (Meyer et al, 1990; Starr, 2001). These ideas were documented in 1909 in two case studies, namely *Little Hans* and *Rat Man* (Connell, 1995; Starr, 2001).

Freud proposed the inherent bi-sexuality of both men and women (Starr, 2001). Within this theoretical framework, Freud argued that homosexuality is not simply a gender switch and acknowledged that one's sexual orientation is separate from one's gender role. He observed that a "large proportion of male inverts retain the mental quality of masculinity." (Connell, 1995, p 9). Given this observation, Freud hypothesised that humans are constitutionally bisexual and that masculine and feminine currents exist in everyone. Freud's early

writings on masculinity imply that the characteristic of adult masculinity emerges as the result of a process of complex and precarious construction (Connell, 1995).

The second stage in Freud's analysis of masculinity coincided with his construction of the architectural approach to gender. These ideas are discussed in his *Wolf Man* case study, published during the 1st World War. In this study Freud identified a pre-Oedipal, narcissistic masculinity that underpins castration anxiety (Starr, 2001). In the *Wolf Man* case study, Freud traces the interplay between this archaic emotion, the boy's desire for the father, his relationship with the servants, his identification with women, and jealousy of his mother (Connell, 1995). The *Wolf Man* study highlights the "tensions within masculine character and its vicissitudes through the course of life." (Connell, 1995, p 9).

The third stage in Freud's development of a theory of masculinity occurred with his account of the structure of personality (Connell, 1995). In the years after the 1st World War, Freud proposed the concept of the super-ego as the unconscious ego state that develops in response to the internalisation and introjection of society's rules and norms (Meyer et al, 1990; Starr, 2001). The super-ego is that part of the personality that judges, censors, controls and limits (Meyer et al, 1990). According to Freud the super-ego emerges in the aftermath of the Oedipal complex and consists of the parents' prohibitions (Meyer et al, 1990). Freud came to see the super-ego as having a gendered quality being essentially a product of the child's relation with the father (Connell, 1995). Freud later went on to propose that the super-ego has a sociological dimension and acts as the mechanism whereby culture obtains mastery over an individual's innate drives and desires (Meyer et al, 1990; Starr, 2001).

Critics of Freud's work point out that most of his concepts are so widely and vaguely defined that it is impossible to subject his theory to rigorous scientific testing (Llebert and Spiegler, 1982 in Meyer et al, 1990). Take for example, the idea that all individuals have both masculine and feminine forces within

their psyche. This hypothesis, as logical as it may sound within Freud's theoretical framework, is virtually impossible to verify with traditional scientific models of experimentation. This inability to subject Freud's theory to scientific analysis, in spite of Freud's unwavering insistence that he was a scientist, makes it difficult to evaluate, verify or improve the tenants of the theory (Starr, 2001). Furthermore, psychoanalytic theory is a theoretical framework which makes it possible to interpret and explain past behaviour but virtually impossible to predict consistently and accurately future actions (Meyer et al, 1990). The concept of reaction formations, for example, dictates that an individual can adopt a particular behaviour or its opposite as an ego defence mechanism. Thus when used for *ex post facto* explanations of behaviour, the theory seems plausible and accurate but its inability to consistently predict future paths of action makes the theory seem vague and imprecise. The extent to which this criticism is valid is open to debate since some philosophers hold the opinion that a model's inability to accurately predict human behaviour only highlights the complexity of this phenomenon and does not necessarily render the entire model defunct. It does, nonetheless, seem true that the distinct lack of scientific evidence supporting Freudian theory invites criticism and scepticism from many non-Freudians.

Although Freud's theory of masculinity remains unscientific, speculative, incomplete and unsubstantiated, it does have some profound and enduring implications. Among these implications is the idea that masculinity does not exist in a pure, innate state but that its development is a complex and fragile process that occurs in response to internal psychosexual forces, the formation of the gendered super-ego, and internalisation of the rules of the father figure (Connell, 1995). It is also significant the Freud proposed the coexistence of feminine forces within all men and the essential bisexual nature of all individuals.

Between the 1930s and 1960s, psychoanalytic thinking about masculinity moved away from Freud's idea that the development of masculinity is fragile and develops in response to the clash between social order and desire. In this period, writers stressed the concepts of mental health, gender orthodoxy,

conventional heterosexuality, and marriage (Connell, 1995; Meyer et al, 1990). Thus the course towards adult heterosexuality in men, which Freud had framed as a complex and precarious construction, was increasingly seen as an unproblematic natural developmental path, any deviation from which was framed as pathological (Connell, 1995).

Jung's writings on masculinity

According to Jung, the human being is a complex biological organism whose totality contains opposing forces which can drive or attract him into action, consciously or unconsciously (Meyer et al, 1990; Stevens, 2001). Within this model, all individuals contain the same internal forces; thus no individual is totally good or totally bad and likewise no one is completely male or completely female. Jung further proposed that while one force dominates an individual at a conscious level, its counterpart dominates at the unconscious level. The individual thus strives, through their actions to integrate these internal opposing forces and hence create an harmonious, integrated self (Meyer et al, 1990). Optimal functioning is the result of obtaining balance between these opposing internal forces and integration of all parts of the self.

In his theory of personality, Carl Jung distinguished between two components of the personality; the “persona” and the “anima” (in men) or “animus” (in women) (Meyer et al, 1990; Stevens, 2001). Jung proposed that the persona is formed in response to social interactions with the environment while the anima is that part of the self formed in the unconscious male psyche, out of repressed elements (Meyer et al, 1990; Stevens, 2001). Jung argued that these elements of the personality tend to be opposites and that the opposition is a gendered one (Connell, 1995).

Like Freud, Jung proposed the presence of feminine forces within all men. For Jung, the persona possesses not only physiological traits of both sexes (in that both oestrogen and testosterone are present in all men) but also the psychological traits of both sexes (Meyer et al, 1990). Jung maintained that

the anima, as the representation of the female archetype, characterised by feelings and emotions, is present at an unconscious level within all males. By contrast the animus is the male archetype, representing logic and rationality, which is present in every woman. Describing these ideas, Jung wrote:

“Every man carries within him the eternal image of women, not the image of this or that particular women, but a definite feminine image. The image is . . . an imprint or ‘archetype’ of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit as it were of all the impressions ever made by women. . . . Since this image is unconscious, it is always unconsciously projected onto the beloved, and is one of the chief reasons for passionate attraction or aversion.”

(Jung in Meyer et al, 1990. pp 80 - 81)

Within Jung’s account of masculinity, a man’s persona and anima have a supplementary relationship. The persona is the conscious masculine mask he adopts and represents to others while his unconscious anima contains the feminine qualities lacking in his persona (Meyer et al, 1990; Stevens, 2001). Jung’s theory assumes that a man with a hyper-masculine persona will have a very feminine unconscious anima. Jung maintained that the conscious persona and the unconscious anima (in men) combine with persona experience to form a complex which plays a very important part in his masculinity, understanding of the opposite sex, and choice of a partner (Meyer et al, 1990).

Jung’s theory acknowledges that masculine and feminine forces exist within all individuals but Jung’s account of these forces does not focus on the repression of femininity (as in Freud’s theory) but rather on the balance between the masculine persona and the feminine anima. Jung also believed that the feminine interior of a masculine man is shaped by his life-history and inherited archetypal images of women. The polarity between feminine and

masculine forces within men, Jung believed, is rooted in timeless truths about the human psyche (Connell, 1995).

If one adopts Jung's idea that feminine and masculine forces are inherited universal psychic structures, then one would expect a high degree of similarity to exist in concepts of masculinity between cultures and an enduring consistency in these concepts over time. This conclusion that models of masculinity are congruent and consistent over time and space is questionable since current thinking is that masculinity is a dynamic concept that changes within cultures over time and differs between cultures in any given time. Furthermore, Jung's model implies that there is no possibility of changing the constitution of masculine and feminine polarity within men; the best one could hope for would be a change in the balance between these forces. These criticisms of Jung's ideas would seem to discredit his interesting but speculative theory of the origin of masculinity.

Among the criticisms of Jung's work is the claim that he adopted an unscientific approach to the study of personality. He obtained data for his theory from sources such as alchemy, religion, mysticism, and occultism (Meyer et al, 1990; Stevens, 2001). Critics have also called Jung's ideas, "unclear, incomprehensible and contradictory" (Meyer et al, 1990. p 95).

Although Jung's ideas are speculative in the extreme and appear impossible to verify in a traditional scientific sense, they have endured and still continue to be popular both within the field of psychology and among the lay public. One of the reasons for the continued interest in Jung's ideas is the fact that his view of the nature of man is one of the few psychological theories that acknowledges the spiritual dimension of humanity and man's religious struggles (Meyer et al, 1990). Contemporary writers like Robert Bly (1990), in his book *Iron John*, propose a model of masculinity that is based on the idea that one's maleness stems from internal archetypes of masculine energy. This Jungian idea of "getting in touch with" and "unleashing" your inner "wild-man" continues to be popular in contemporary men's movements.

Adler's theory of masculinity

Adler's theory of personality ascribes all human behaviour to a single driving force; the striving for superiority. This desire to obtain dominance manifests as an intense striving to move from a position experienced as inferior to one of superiority, perfection or totality (Meyer et al, 1990). Adler believed that man is a purposeful being capable of setting his own goals. As such the attainment of superiority is given a specific direction by an individual through the goals that they set for themselves. The establishment of a life goal is seen as a process that results from the interaction of genetic and environmental factors. Adler believed that people have a natural inclination to establish a life goal that serves mankind, although they may not be completely conscious of this goal (Meyer et al, 1990).

In constructing his theory of masculinity, Adler started with the conventional idea of a polarity between femininity and masculinity but took the idea one step further by proposing that the feminine pole is devalued in society and associated with weakness (Connell, 1995). Children of both sexes by virtue of the fact that they are weak in comparison to adults are forced to take up a feminine position. Consequently boys develop a sense of femininity and begin to doubt their ability to occupy the masculine position (Connell, 1995). The struggle between submission and independence occur alongside one another in the child's life setting up an internal conflict between masculine and feminine forces. Normal development depends on the striking of some sort of balance between the masculine and feminine. The adult personality is thus formed as the result of a compromise and exists under tension independent of one's genetically determined sex.

Adler believed that a weakness would result in an exaggerated emphasis on the masculine. This "masculine protest" as Adler came to call it, is characterised by over-compensation in the direction of aggression and a restless striving for triumphs (Connell, 1995). Within this framework, the violent and aggressive behaviour that is associated with masculinity is

conceptualised as a striving to obtain superiority through the oppression, subjugation or destruction of others.

Among the criticism of Adler's model is that there is a contradiction implicit in his theory. On the one hand, the theory proposes that a child up to the age of approximately five has the freedom to determine their own lifestyle. This choice is made even though at this age a child has no awareness of the factors that will influence their choice of lifestyle and lacks the cognitive ability to make decisions about complex issues like life goals. Adults, on the other hand, who have both insight and greater cognitive capabilities, are not able to make lifestyle decisions and choose their life goals because these decisions have already been made and are difficult or impossible to change. Falling midway between the school of depth psychology and the humanistic approach, Adler's theory does not seem to fit neatly into any of the traditional psychological traditions and thus lacks widespread support (Meyer et al, 1990).

The concept of gender identity

Writing in the mid-twentieth century, Erik Erikson proposed that personality development occurs as a life long process consisting of eight stages each characterised by a developmental crisis (Meyer et al, 1990). Erikson's theory of personality is inextricably linked to the formation of an ego-identity (Connell, 1995). Thus the concept of "ego identity" was popularised by Erikson and "identity" became a catchword in psychological theory. This emergence of the idea of identity within Erikson's personality theory gave birth to the concept of "gender identity".

Gender identity can be defined as, "activities, traits and values culturally and historically associated with men and women." (Cleaver, 2002, p 6). Within a gender identity paradigm, masculinity is seen as, "a configuration of practise within gender relations, a structure that includes large scale institutions and economic relations, as well as face to face relationships and sexuality"

(Connell in Cleaver, 2002, p 6). As such, masculinity, within this theoretical framework, is conceptualised as a group of behaviours, personality traits and values which exist within a social and cultural context external to the individual. These behaviours, traits and values are acquired by an individual in a life-long developmental process and are internalised within his ego identity, thus giving shape to his behaviour and dictating his interactions with members of the opposite sex.

An American psychiatrist, Robert Stoller, was one of the writers who applied Erikson's concept of identity to gender. His work coincided with the emergence of the "transsexual" and the creation of a surgical procedure for "gender reassignment" (Connell, 1995). Stoller made clinical studies of adult men who wanted to undergo gender reassignment surgery and boys who seemed to be on a path to femininity. Stoller's research led him to conclude that there is a core gender identity laid down in the earliest years of life in response to emotional interaction between parent and child. Stoller believed that the interaction between a child and his parents is powerful enough to override physical anatomical forces and hormonal, physiological processes (Cornnell, 2001). Within this theoretical framework, transsexualism is defined not as the desire to be a woman but rather as the belief that one already is a woman.

Stoller's theory of gender identity is built on a study of transsexuals seeking gender reassignment surgery and the belief in the existence of a personality disorder known as male childhood transsexualism (Connell, 1995). Its application beyond these two groups of individuals is thus questionable. Another criticism of gender identity framework is its tendency to dichotomise men and women's roles. Such an approach, which opposes men and women as static categories that exists distinct from one another, is both limiting and problematic. In spite of these criticisms, the concept of gender identity has endured and is still popular in contemporary writings on childhood development and the development of homosexuality (Louw, 1991).

The gender role theory of masculinity

The metaphor of human life as a drama in which individuals take on roles and act in accordance with scripts is an idea that was used by Shakespeare long before the birth of modern psychology. In the 1930s, however, psychologists began to use the term “role” in a psychological context as a way of explaining social behaviour (Connell, 1995).

The concept of a role was applied to gender in the 1930s but only reached its peak of popularity in the 1950s. Within this approach being a man entails acting in accordance with a set of societal expectations and following a set of rules about how one should behave (Connell, 2001; Eagly, Beall and Sternberg, 2004). In this framework there are always two sex roles in any cultural context; a male role and a female role. According to this approach masculinity is an internalised sex role which is the product of social learning and socialisation.

The concept of sex roles in society has persisted and continues to be found in contemporary literature that outlines gender differences (Connell, 1995). An attractive feature of sex role theory is the potential it allows for social change. Since role norms are social realities they can be changed by social engineering within the agencies of socialisation, namely, the family, school, the church, and the mass media (Eagly, Beall and Sternberg, 2004).

One of the chief criticisms of this theory of gender is that it over-emphasises the degree to which behaviour is prescribed. But this is not to say that the theory of gender roles is not useful in analysing social behaviour. This approach is apt in situations where there are well-defined scripts, clear audiences to “perform” to, and in which the stakes are not too high. It is, however, unclear if these criteria apply consistently to gender relations.

This theory is also criticised because gender roles are seen to be complementary and reciprocal (Connell, 1995). Thus the concept “masculine” is only seen to exist in opposition to the concept “feminine”. The idea that

these roles support one another and are in some way necessary for social harmony is limiting, confining and debatable.

Social construction theory of masculinity

A more recent development in the field of gender theory is the notion that masculinity is a social construct. Social construction theory dictates that gender is not fixed in advance of social interaction, but is constructed through the process of social interaction (Connell, 1995; Eagly, Beall and Sternberg, 2004). Like gender role theory, this approach is concerned with public conventions about masculinity but it does not assume that these conventions are pre-existing norms that are passively internalised and simply re-enacted. Rather, an individual constructs his own masculinity through his experiences and interactions with his culture and society.

The social construction theory of masculinity acknowledges that there is no single shared concept of masculinity (Kimmel, 1996). In any society there will thus be multiple constructs of the concept of masculinity and in order to acknowledge these differences social construct theory suggests that it is more appropriate to speak of “masculinities” rather than simply “masculinity” (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1996). The fact that more than one understanding of masculinity may exist in any time and place necessitates a need to consider such factors as age, class and race when attempting to outline concepts of masculinity.

If we assume that manhood is socially constructed and that “men are made not born” (Fausto-Sterling, 2000. p 109) then it follows that within any culture at any given time there will be more than one understanding of what it means to be a man and that each individual within society, given their unique range of experiences, will construct a different understanding of masculinity.

The reality of multiple constructs of masculinity co-existing, raises the possibility that some forms of masculinity will be valued while others will be

devalued in a particular culture. Cornnell (2001) suggests that some forms of masculinity are elevated in certain times and places giving rise to a dominant model of masculinity or hegemonic masculinity. This approach to masculinity acknowledges that not all men benefit equally from the dominant model of masculinity that exists in any society at any given time.

Social constructionist theories of masculinity are appealing for a number of reasons. Social construction theories of masculinity takes cognisance of the fact that masculinity does not exist *a priori* but that it is negotiated in the process of social interaction. Social constructionist theory also allows for the possibility of the co-existence of more than one model of masculinity at any given time and in any given culture but that a hegemonic model may dominate. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of masculinity is acknowledged within this approach. A criticism of this approach, however, is that it does not take account of biological and genetic factors and the role they play in determining the behaviour of men.

Conclusion

Traditional psychological thinking ascribes masculinity to, among other things, intra-psychic forces, drives and conflicts; innate archetypes; and the adoption of a socially and culturally defined role. While each of these conventional psychological theories helps to gain greater insight into the complexities of the concept of masculinity and sheds light on the range of factors that influence the shape of male behaviour, they do not acknowledge the fact that gender is rooted in biology and results from the presence or absence of a Y chromosome. In failing to acknowledge the genetic, physiological and neurological differences between the sexes, these theories seem to tell only part of the story about the origins of maleness. To gain a deeper understanding of the origins of masculinity one should consider the ideas proposed about gender within the framework of evolutionary psychology.

Chapter 4

An evolutionary and neuro-physiological approach to masculinity

Men are different from women. They are equal only in their common membership of the same species, humankind. To maintain that they are the same in aptitude, skill and behaviour is to build a society based on a biological and scientific lie.

(Anne Moir and David Jessel, 1999. p 1)

Introduction

There is no denying the obvious anatomical differences between men and women but the most significant differences are those that lie beneath physical appearances, and manifest in the characteristic behaviours that differentiate the sexes. Identifying the origins of these differences cuts right to the heart of the nature versus nurture debate. On one side of this debate are those who argue that gender is a biological reality that has its roots in evolutionary and genetic factors. On the other side, are those who believe that gender is a psychological and social construct that arises because of psychodynamic forces and the process of socialisation. This chapter outlines the current psycho-physiological and evolutionary psychological perspective on the origin of masculinity.

Research in the past 30 years

Over the past 30 years feminists have worked hard to abolish the stereotypes that limited, prejudiced and disadvantaged women. In an effort to achieve this, many feminists have argued that women are born equal to men. Given this sensitivity to gender, any suggestion of significant biological differences between the sexes was considered to be in poor taste and research into gender differences was considered politically incorrect and subsequently has

not been given prominence. Thus for the past three decades, the predominant idea has been that gender is a social construct which results from rigid stereotypes and social conditioning in the way boys and girls are dressed, raised and educated. Now that women have established their place in society and broken through the “glass ceiling” (at least in many western and more developed countries) gender sensitivity is less of an issue. In countries where women have firmly established the fact that they are born equal to men, it has become acceptable to research, acknowledge and even celebrate the small but significant biological differences between the sexes. Much of the thinking outlined in this chapter is rooted in the assumption that there are important biological differences between the sexes and that these genetically determined differences give rise to behavioural differences. Acknowledging genetically determined gender differences between the sexes is not to say that one sex is inherently better or worse than the other but it is to recognise the value in diversity and the role of physiology in shaping human behaviour.

Two sexes and evolution

Evolutionary biology teaches that there have not always been two sexes (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). This raises the question, “Why are there two sexes in the human species rather than a larger number or none at all?” The answer to this question provides some insight into the evolutionary purpose of two sexes and the origins of gender typical behaviour.

While the human species is composed of two sexes, there are examples of other species where two sexes are not the norm. The single celled physarum polycephalum, for example, has 13 different sexes (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). In this species, a cell of one sex can reproduce by combining with any cell of the other 12 sexes. This form of sexual diversity, while allowing for considerable genetic variety, is not without problems. One problem associated with species composed of more than two sexes is that the offspring of these species are prone to genetic abnormalities that relate to competing mitochondria passed on by the different sexes (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). This

problem is not likely to occur in two sex species, as one sex (in the human species the female) is responsible for passing on its mitochondria to the offspring.

While species with more than two sexes are vulnerable to problems relating to competing mitochondria, species consisting of only one sex are vulnerable to other problems. In some single sex species, for example, reproduction is asexual, in which case the offspring have only one parent to which they are genetically identical (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Such a situation does not allow genetic variability and change. Two sexes bring two sets of genes to the reproductive process, which enables genetic variety in the offspring. Genetic variability in turn increases the probability of a species survival in a hostile environment, since if all members of a species were genetically identical they would all be equally threatened and there would be (except as the result of genetic transcription errors) no evolution. Two sexes thus brings genetic diversify without the undue complexity of more than two sexes. This fact is offered as one of the biological and evolutionary explanations for why humans have evolved into a two sex species (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000).

The combination of two sexes and genetic diversity makes evolution within the human species possible. Simply put, evolution is the process whereby life adjusts to changing pressures and opportunities (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). As a result of evolution new characteristics, some of which are helpful and others detrimental, appear. Characteristics that aid survival increase in each new generation and thus become more prevalent. Evolution involves two processes; natural selection and sexual selection (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Natural selection is the process that explains how human beings have acquired the characteristics we associate with being human; including elements of our behaviour and our biochemistry. The process of sexual selection explains how men and women became anatomically and physiologically different. It is this process of sexual selection that provides insight into the biological origins of masculinity.

Sexual selection - the evolution of the sexes

Evolutionary psychologists and social biologists argue that male behaviour has evolved out of an evolutionary need for men to act in an adaptive way that ensured survival and the continuation of the species (Biddulph, 1997; McBride Dabbs, 2000). The idea that behavioural differences between the sexes have their roots in evolutionary factors seems plausible given that for a large proportion of human history men and women have assumed markedly different roles in society.

In hunter-gather societies work was divided very rigidly along gender lines. For a period of 400 000 years (approximately 99% of human history if one assumes that the human species begins with homo erectus) men hunted and women gathered. In this society, survival depended on men's ability to work in teams, to perform reckless and heroic feats, to be single minded and execute sudden strong physical movements (Biddulph 1997). While on the hunt there was no time for discussion and debate. Success depended on someone being in charge and the other members of the team doing what they were told and following the plan (Biddulph 1997). Men thus worked alongside one another and defined their relationships in terms of their position in the team. Relationships between men were built while engaged in side-by-side, goal directed activity (Biddulph 1997). This may help to explain why even today relationships between men are typically defined in terms of power and are generally characterised by elements of control, competition and criticism (Real, 1997). This observation also provides some insight into why men today still seem to build their relationships around side-by-side goal-directed activity such as watching sport, fishing or standing alongside each other in a bar (Biddulph 1997).

Women, by contrast, spent 400 000 years gathering roots, seeds and insects. This slow, methodical, often-intricate task gave time for talk and discussion and required finger dexterity and tactile sensitivity (Biddulph 1997).

Some theorists believe that all human babies are born premature. They believe that babies are born before they are ready for life outside the womb because their large brains render it impossible for them to remain within the confines of their mother's uterus much beyond the period of nine months. As a result of being born before they are capable of keeping themselves alive, human babies require a huge amount of neo-natal care. This responsibility for child care (which requires an ability to attach, form bonds and nurture) was assumed by women. In primitive society, the survival of the human species, thus depended on women's attention to detail, consistency and compassion as well as their ability to form attachments and execute tasks that required fine motor control (Biddulph 1997).

Given these markedly different gender roles, women's bodies become smaller, more agile and better able to endure and persevere while men's bodies became bigger, stronger and more able to perform tasks requiring short bursts of strength (Biddulph 1997). Behaviour, including the way relationships were established and the communication patterns that existed within this society were dictated and hence shaped by the demands of survival.

Although we no longer live in a hunter-gather society, men (and indeed women) still carry the genetic codes and biological "hardware" that date back to a time when human survival depended on men's ability to hunt and women's ability to gather and look after the young. This genetic "hang-over" will take thousands of years to change. In the mean time men find themselves in a situation where some aspects of their behaviour (which may not always match the demands of their environment) have their roots in genetic codes that date back 400 000 years.

Following this evolutionary psychological line of thinking, it is argued that typical male behaviours including displays of aggression, violence, risk-taking, assertiveness and emotional containment have become part of the biological and genetic make up of men because of the evolutionary function they once performed. These behaviours, which are triggered by biochemical substances

like testosterone and other androgenic hormones, are part of the genetic code of men and are thus inherently male. Support for the evolutionary basis of masculinity is offered by neuro-physiological and neuro-anatomical evidence that shows that there is significant sex differentiation of the human brain and nervous system, which is the result of genetic coding and the presence or absence of testosterone (Biddulph 1997; Clare, 2000; Gurian, 2001; Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000; Moir and Jessel, 1999). Even though these evolutionary explanations are highly speculative and are referred to as “just-so stories” by their critics, they do offer one explanation of why there are two sexes and of how men and women came to be so different.

Testosterone’s role in the design and function of the human body

Testosterone is more than a growth hormone. In addition to being responsible for the anatomical differences between the sexes, testosterone plays a role in shaping neurological development and regulating the functioning of the central nervous system (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Testosterone thus plays a dual role in influencing both the design and the function of the human brain and body and hence in shaping human behaviour.

The action of testosterone in influencing the design of the human body begins in utero in the eight week of pregnancy and continues through childhood and adolescence (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Although gender is determined at the moment of conception by the presence or absence of a Y chromosome, all fetuses start life in exactly the same way - as females (Clare, 2000). The Y chromosome, if it is present, acts in the womb during the eighth week of pregnancy to trigger the growth of certain “add on” male anatomical features and at the same time to retard the growth (but not the presence) of other female organs (Biddulph, 1997). In the eighth week of pregnancy the Y chromosome stimulates the production of testosterone. Testosterone results in the growth of testicles and a penis, and causes other changes to the brain of the developing foetus (Clare, 2000). In the absence of this testosterone,

regardless of the genotype of the developing foetus, the foetus will develop into a female (Clare, 2000).

By the 15th week of pregnancy the testicles of a male foetus are developed enough to begin producing additional testosterone (Biddulph, 1997). This additional testosterone shapes the development of the foetus's brain and body, making it progressively more male. At birth the serum levels of testosterone are equal to those of a 12-year-old boy (Biddulph, 1997). This high concentration of testosterone is necessary in utero to enable the developing boy to grow the anatomical features associated with being male. Within a few weeks of birth, an infant boy's testosterone level decreases to approximately one-third of the birth level, where it remains throughout his years as a toddler (Biddulph, 1997). These very low levels of testosterone during the first four years of life may explain why boys and girls of this age are fairly androgynous and there is not much that sets them apart in terms of their behaviour.

At the age of four, there is a twofold increase in the serum level of testosterone (Biddulph, 1997). This sudden surge of testosterone is believed to be responsible for causing boys of this age to become more active, more reckless and more inclined towards vigorous play, ball games and adventure (Biddulph, 1997).

By the age of five, a boy's plasma testosterone levels have fallen by half again resulting in a decrease in boisterous behaviour (Biddulph, 1997). Although the level of testosterone is lower than it was at age four, the quantity remains high enough to keep boys interested in activity, ball games and exploration (Biddulph, 1997). The testosterone levels in boys of this age are believed to result in their frequent urges to stretch their muscles and move around (Biddulph, 1997). This may make it very difficult for boys of this age to sit still for extended periods of time and meet the behavioural demands of being in a classroom. Their neurological and motor co-ordination development is also such that they find it more difficult than girls to learn to write and perform tasks that require finger dexterity (Moir and Jessel, 1999). These testosterone

induced neurological and physiological differences between boys and girls of this age and their resulting behavioural manifestations may explain the higher frequency of conduct disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders in boys of this age compared with girls of this age. Boys of this age also typically experience more difficulty than girls in learning to read as a result of their comparatively underdeveloped language centre in the brain (Gurian, 2001; Moir and Jessel, 1999). This neurological difference may explain the higher frequency of language development disorder and reading disorders in boys of this age compared with girls of this age.

Between the ages of 11 and 13 there is a dramatic increase in the concentration of testosterone in a boy's body. Blood serum levels of testosterone increase by more than 800% over those of the toddler years (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). This striking increase in testosterone triggers a growth spurt and an elongation of the arms and legs. In approximately 50% of boys of this age, the testosterone levels are so high that some of the testosterone is converted into oestrogen resulting in gynomastia (temporary breast swelling and tenderness) (Biddulph, 1997). The growth spurt that accompanies this increase in testosterone necessitates a "re-wiring" of certain parts of the boy's brain. This re-organisation of the brain may make the typical boy of this age seem a little uncoordinated, cognitively slow to respond and disorganised (Biddulph, 1997; Gurian, 2001).

By the age of 14 testosterone levels are at their peak resulting in all the secondary physical sex characteristics we associate with men including a deepening of the voice, increased body and facial hair, an increase in the size of the testicles and penis, a greater cross-sectional surface area of skeletal muscles and a lower body fat composition (Biddulph, 1997; Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). These are not the only anatomical and physiological effects of testosterone. As a result of testosterone, men have a greater haematocrit (percentage of red blood cells) than women, enabling a comparatively higher rate of oxygen delivery to muscles and other organs of the body (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Testosterone predisposes men to carrying a comparatively greater concentration of fat in their abdominal areas and also facilitates the

easy utilisation of this source of stored energy when energy demands increase (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Testosterone has also been implicated as a contributor to, among other things, more muscle fibres, lower body fat compositions, baldness, bad temperedness, high cholesterol, hairy nostrils, baldness and back hair (Biddulph 1997; Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Testosterone affects all the organs of the body but has a marked effect on the reproductive system, thyroid gland, blood, bone, muscles, skin and brain (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). It is this testosterone induced anatomical difference between the sexes that creates the stage on which the behavioural differences between the sexes are acted out.

Testosterone has been shown to have a marked effect on brain growth and development both inside and outside the embryo. In the presence of testosterone, growth of certain areas of the brain is stimulated while the development of other areas is retarded (Moir and Jessel, 1999). Testosterone is thought to affect primarily the lower and middle sections of the brain, including the hypothalamus and the limbic system (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). The hypothalamus regulates eating, drinking, sexual behaviour and hormone levels (Eysenck and Keane, 2000; Sternberg, 1999). The limbic system, including the amygdala, is involved in memory, sex, aggression and emotion (Eysenck and Keane, 2000; Sternberg, 1999). The discovery of testosterone receptors among subcortical glial cells in primates suggests that there may be a pathway in the upper section of the human brain whereby testosterone might effect the cerebral cortex (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000); the area of the brain involved in perception, voluntary movement, language, thought, planning, and other higher order intellectual functioning (Eysenck and Keane, 2000; Sternberg, 1999). Other hormones have an indirect effect on the brain and hence on thoughts and actions by acting on other organs of the body first. Testosterone, by contrast, binds to neurons in the brain, directly affecting their activity and consequently directly impacting on thoughts and actions. (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Testosterone encourages some behaviours and inhibits others, effects behavioural responses to environmental stimuli and orientates individuals towards issues of sex and power (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Thus it

would seem that the action of testosterone influences brain structure and functioning at both the cortical and sub-cortical levels.

The role of testosterone in shaping behaviour

To understand the intricate relationship between testosterone and male behaviour, it is necessary to take account of the literature on the mind-body dilemma. The contemporary view of the relationship between the mind and the body is that human behaviour is influenced by and influences the physical state of the body. This standpoint would seem to support the thesis that the physical bodily characteristics that result from testosterone will have an impact on the mind and hence the behaviour of men.

Testosterone has been shown to have a role in men's levels of aggression, their need for activity and their desire to dominate and control (Clare, 2000; Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). This idea seems to be supported by the practice of gelding horses and castrating dogs to decrease their levels of testosterone and hence make them less feisty and easier to manage.

The primate study described by Biddulph (1997) and outlined below seems to support the idea of a link between testosterone and behaviour. Primates are well known for their rigid social structure and hierarchy of power. Among male monkeys the pecking order is inflexibly established on the basis of physical strength and dominance. In order to establish the influence of testosterone on these power systems, researchers administered an intramuscular injection of testosterone to the smallest monkey of the lowest rank in a troop. On being returned to his troop, the monkey physically challenged his immediate superior and, it is reported, won the fight. He then set about challenging the next most senior monkey and so on until he had climbed the "power ladder" in his troop. He was, however, unable to maintain his elevated position of power. When the testosterone injection wore off, he fell back to his previous subordinate

position. This experiment seems to suggest that testosterone plays a significant role in sensitising males to social hierarchies, rank and structure.

An article entitled, *Psychological and Behavioural Effects of Endogenous Testosterone Levels and Anabolic-Androgenic Steroids Among Males: A Review* (Bahrke, Yesalis, and Wright, 1990), reports, quoting numerous studies, that there is a clear relationships between testosterone levels, dominance, and aggressive behaviour in various species of animals including nonhuman primates. These studies would seem to suggest that the comparatively higher plasma levels of testosterone in men is the reason for men's higher levels of aggression and their need for power. Furthermore, these studies suggest that testosterone may explain why antisocial, violent and criminal behaviour are essentially male phenomena.

Scientists have endowed testosterone with the most awesome of powers. "Testosterone is the reason men fly to the moon, climb Mount Everest, paint the Sistine Chapel and peddle pornography." (Clare, 2000. p 13). While research suggests that testosterone shapes male behaviour it would be simplistic to adopt a deterministic model of linear causality and ascribe all male behaviour to testosterone. Although male behaviour has multi factorial determinants, the research would tend to suggest that testosterone is one of the significant determinants of masculinity.

Throughout his adult years, a man will have to deal with the influence of testosterone on his behaviour. These include competitiveness, surges of energy as well as a strong desire to achieve, dominate, control and protect (Biddulph, 1997). It is, however, reported that by the age of 40 testosterone levels begin to decline (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). It is believed that this decline in plasma levels of testosterone is responsible for the fact that men of this age typically feel that they have less to prove, have a more mellow disposition, value friendship and intimacy, and replace quantity with quality in their sex lives (Biddulph, 1997).

The role of social factors in influencing testosterone levels

Some researchers have argued that males have comparatively higher testosterone levels because of social conditioning (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). This view would seem to be supported by research that shows that levels of testosterone increase in competitive situations and male dominated environments (Biddulph, 1997). There is also research to show that boys who live in violent and intimidating environments secrete more testosterone than those who live in more peaceful surroundings (Biddulph, 1997). It would appear from the research that baseline levels of testosterone are genetically determined but that testosterone levels fluctuate in response to environmental factors. It has been shown that testosterone levels fall with ill health, physical exhaustion and personal defeat, while they increase with personal victories (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). It has also been shown that testosterone levels change with one's status in life, when one gets married, divorced or becomes a parent (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000).

While there can be little doubt that environmental factors influence the level of testosterone, it is equally true that biological factors give rise to the presence of testosterone in the first place. So it would seem that the behaviour of a man is the result of both biological and environmental factors and to deny the role of biology in the process would be erroneous.

Cortical influences over testosterone

The neocortex of the human brain plays a very important role in regulating human behaviour. In particular the neocortex inhibits many of the primitive, animal instincts that are associated with subcortical structures of the brain (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). It is in the neocortical structures of the brain that we store knowledge, learning and culture (Eysenck and Keane, 2000; Sternberg, 1999). These structures restrain our animal impulses; they keep us from eating every time we are hungry, scratching every time we itch and becoming

aggressive every time we are angry. These neocortical structures play a significant role in regulating the influence of testosterone and stopping men from seeking sex and power to the exclusion of all else (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Thus to acknowledge that male behaviour is influenced by evolutionary, genetic and biochemical factors is not to deny that neocortical structures, knowledge, learning and socialisation also have an influence on the way men behave. The evidence would, however, seem to suggest the testosterone predisposes men to certain behaviours while socialisation, cognitive processes and knowledge help to determine how these behaviours are played out, inhibited or modified.

Conclusion

In looking for answers to questions about the origin of maleness, one cannot ignore the role of evolutionary and biological factors. Arguing this point, James Mc Bride Dabbs (2000) writes, “Long ago evolution shaped the structures of our bodies, brains and behaviour. It remains an invisible force nudging us along and emerging at moments to arouse us or trip us up.” (p 26). To deny that there are inherent biologically determined anatomical and behavioural differences between the sexes would be to deny the importance of physiological and neurological processes in shaping human behaviour and the reciprocal relationship between the body and mind. However, acknowledging the Y-chromosome and testosterone as determinants of behaviour is not to discredit the importance of social factors and psychological forces in shaping the behaviour of men. While masculinity would appear to be grounded in generic and evolutionary factors it is also shaped by social forces, psychological factors and cognitive processes.

Chapter 5

Studying masculinity within the framework of cognitive and evolutionary psychology

We construct masculinity through social discourse, that array of happenings that covers everything from music videos, poetry and rap lyrics to sports, beer commercials and psychotherapy. But underlying all of this clever carpentry is the sneaking suspicion that one must start with a blueprint – or, to stretch the metaphor a bit more, that buildings must have foundations. Within the soul of even the most die-hard constructionist lurks a doubt. It is called the body.

(Fausto-Sterling 2000. p 109)

Introduction

Although men are all alike in that their 23rd pair of chromosomes has an XY configuration, not all men grow up with the same understanding of what it is to be a man. Socialisation, experience and initiation into manhood influence the content of a man's cognitive schema for masculinity and his definition of manhood. This process of socialisation and the formation of schemata results in the formation of beliefs about men, maleness and masculinity. A cognitive psychological approach to the study of masculinity focuses on the content of these schemata and the nature of these beliefs about men and masculinity and highlights the role these cognitive factors play in shaping men's behaviour.

The role of cognitive factors, such as schemata and beliefs, in influencing perception, decision-making and behaviour has been well established (Eysenck and Keane, 2000; Sternberg, 1999). It thus seems reasonable to conclude that schemata for concepts such as masculinity, toughness, strength and gender-roles, together with beliefs about what it means to be a man,

contribute to the way men perceive the world and interact with it, hence giving rise to aspects of their maleness. There is theoretical support for the idea that male behaviour patterns can be ascribed to cognitive factors. The notion that a man's behaviour is influenced by cognition is supported by three theories: (1) The cognitive theory of emotional expression; (2) The cognitive social theory of gender-role formation; and (3) The psychology of beliefs. This chapter outlines the theoretical support for studying masculinity within the framework of cognitive psychology and then proposes an integrated evolutionary psychology model to understand the nature and origin of masculinity.

The cognitive theory of emotional expression

One cannot ignore the fact that evolutionary factors, biological mechanisms, genetic factors, personality traits, hormones, neurotransmitters, and physiological processes influence emotional expression (Sroupe 1996). But cognitive and social factors also have an important influence on the expression of emotions.

Some theorists describe emotional expression in terms of a complex chain of events that begin with a stimulus, which in the light of cognitive appraisal gives rise to the experience of feelings, physiological changes and behavioural responses (Sroupe 1996). This chain of event is illustrated in Figure 5.1

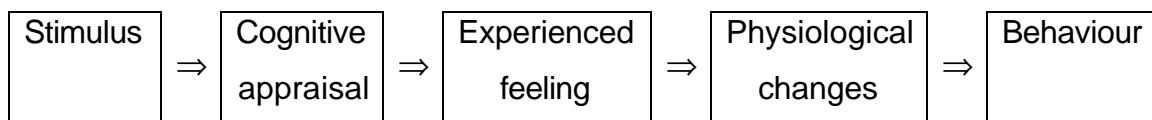


Figure 5.1: Emotional expression as a complex chain of events (Sroupe, 1996, p 12).

It is possible for behaviour, physiological changes and even feelings to loop back and influence each other and the cognitive process (as illustrated in Figure 5.2).

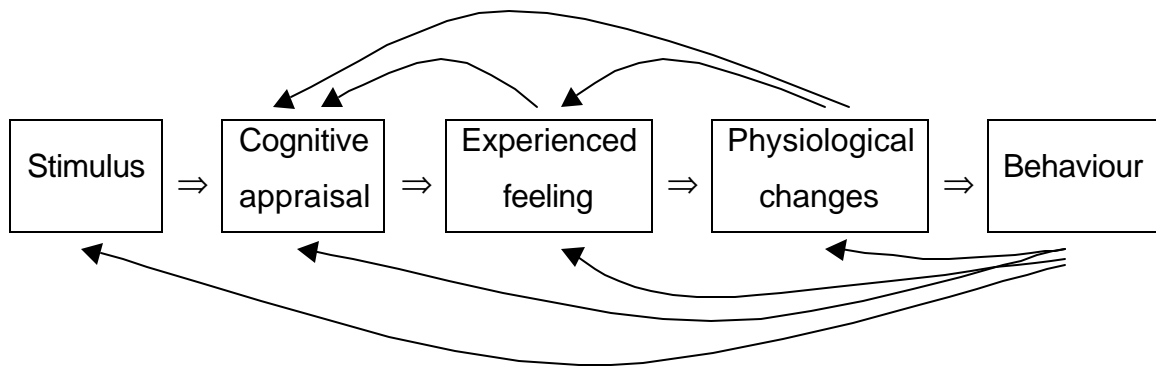


Figure 5.2: Emotional expression as a complex chain of events that feedback and influence one another (Sroupe, 1996).

This model implies that emotional expression can only be understood as part of a complex process having both physiological and cognitive components. Mechanisms such as perception, recognition, appraisal, judgement, memory, and meaning attribution are part of the complex process we call emotional expression (Eysenck and Keane, 2000).

The role of cognitive factors in the emotional process has been well established (Eysenck and Keane, 2000). This includes studies that show that infant emotional development and cognitive development proceed in parallel (Sroupe, 1996; Louw 1991).

Given that cognitive factors have an influence on emotional expression, it seems plausible that the content of a man's cognitive schemata for masculinity and his beliefs about gender-roles will influence the way he expresses his emotions. Since emotions are the currency of relationships, it follows that the way a man expresses his emotions will profoundly influence the quality of his relationships, the nature of his attachments, and the way he interacts with others in his environment. This approach does not deny the role

of physiological factors in shaping behavioural responses but acknowledges that cognitive factors have an important role in the process.

The cognitive social theory of gender-role formation

Gender-role formation refers to the complex process of acquiring behaviour that is characteristic of one's gender. One's gender is genetically determined at the time of conception and gives rise to characteristic anatomical features that differentiate men and women. Gender-role formation on the other hand is a process that is determined by psychosocial factors (Louw, 1991). Research shows that the formation of gender-role behaviours begins in the first year of life and is the result of environmental factors (Louw, 1991). By the age of two a child can tell the difference between males and females and can identify themselves as being male or female (Louw, 1991). Between the ages of two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half children take on rigid sex-role stereotype behaviours and imitate role-models of the same sex (Louw, 1991).

The cognitive social theory of gender role formation attributes the differences between male behaviour and female behaviour to schemata (Louw, 1991). According to the cognitive social theory of gender formation, at a young age children construct and use schemata to classify information about acceptable patterns of behaviour for boys and acceptable patterns of behaviour for girls (Louw, 1991). They thus construct schemata for concepts such as masculinity, toughness and strength. The content of these schemata is influenced by the process of a boy's socialisation into manhood and the nature of implicit and explicit initiation practices.

Schemata are "organised packets of information about the world, events or people" (Eysenck and Keane, 2000, p 556). Schemata are stored in long-term memory and organised in such a way that relationships exist between them (Schank, 1972; Sternberg, 1999). Originally popularised by Bartlett in the 1930s, the concept of a cognitive schema gained support in the 1970s as a result of the work of Schank (1972) and Rumelhart (1975). Although the

concept of schemata were originally proposed and applied in a very specific context, their use has expanded to other areas of cognitive psychology. Schemata now form part of the main body of contemporary cognitive, social and educational psychology.

Schemata are the mental frameworks for organising knowledge, making sense of the world and creating a meaningful structure of related concepts (Eysenck and Keane, 2000). There is evidence to show that schemata have an influence on cognitive processes including perceptions, expectations and meaning attribution (Eysenck and Keane, 2000). The content of schemata profoundly effect cognition and thus influences behaviour (Norman, 1981). It follows that a man's schema for the concept of masculinity will influence the way in which he perceives and interacts with the world. While these schemata (like all other schemata) are modified and reconstructed over time in the light of new experiences and new information, they also show a high degree of rigidity and resistance to change once they have been formed (Eysenck and Keane, 2000).

The psychology of beliefs

Beliefs are defined as propositions that express thoughts, they are the basic units of knowledge categories and are stored in individuals' minds (Bar-Tal, 2000). Beliefs represent the information that an individual has about an object and link an object to some attribute; in this sense, beliefs are value judgements (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The content of beliefs is unlimited and the object of a belief may be a person, a group, an institution, a behaviour, a policy or an event, while the associated attribute may be any object trait, property, quality, characteristic, outcome or event (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

It is possible to identify three types of beliefs (Bar-Tal, 2000):

1. Personal beliefs are those beliefs held by individuals and do not necessarily reflect the views and ideas of the other members of society.
2. Common beliefs are those ideas and thoughts that although not shared by all individuals are held by a few individuals in a society.
3. Shared beliefs are those ideas that are collectively shared by the vast majority or all members of a society.

Beliefs are important units of study in social psychology because of the role they play in human cognitive processes, perceptions and actions (Bar-Tal, 2000). Beliefs are the fundamental building blocks of concepts and cognitive processes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Although all beliefs are created within and carried by a culture, the dissemination of beliefs takes place through interpersonal communication, the media, institutions (such as schools and universities), and religious groups (Bar-Tal, 2000). During the course of their life, an individual learns or forms a number of beliefs about an object. In this way they form beliefs about themselves, others, institutions, events and behaviours. The totality of a person's beliefs serves as the basis from which they form their attitudes, intentions and behaviours (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). It follows then that the beliefs that males have about masculinity, gender roles and society's expectations of them as men, will influence their attitudes, intentions and behaviours. As such, beliefs about masculinity are significant units of study in psychology of gender.

An evolutionary psychology model of masculinity

The evolutionary psychology model I am proposing (represented diagrammatically in figure 5.3) and in which this study is grounded, suggests that the cognitive content of schemata for masculinity and beliefs about gender-roles, interact with biochemical and evolutionary factors to give rise to behaviour patterns that we typically regard as male and which place men at risk for specific socio- and psychopathology.

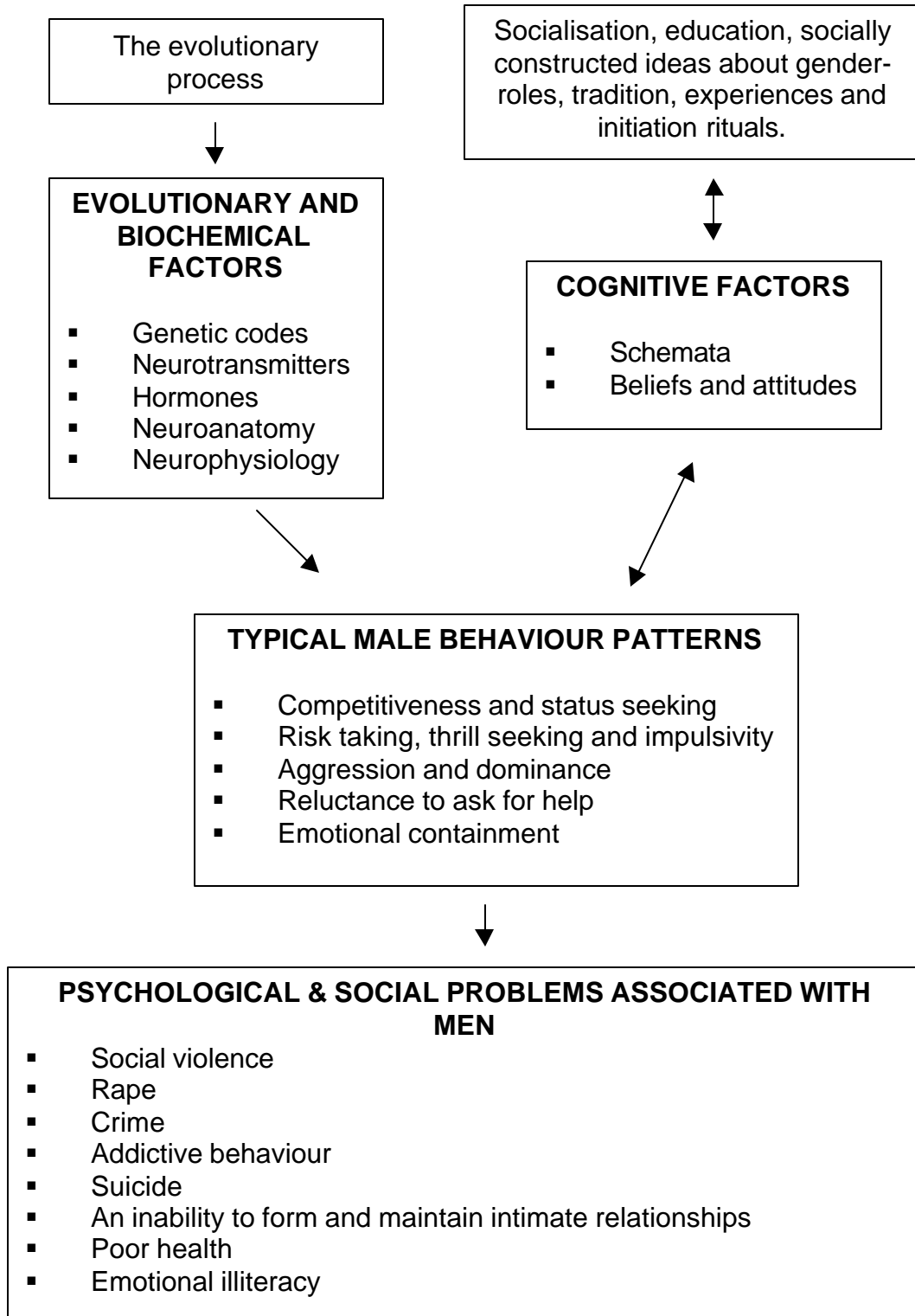


Figure 5.3: An integrated model of the origins and consequences of male behaviour.

While this model acknowledges that masculinity is rooted in biological, genetic and hormonal factors it also acknowledges that cognitive factors such as men's understanding of what it means to be a man and their beliefs about masculinity, play an integral role in influencing, regulating and determining male behaviour. As such the model fits comfortably within the perspective of evolutionary psychology acknowledging both biological and cognitive factors in shaping human behaviour.

This model attributes the content of men's schemata and beliefs to the process of socialisation, education, traditional and cultural practices, experiences and initiation rituals. But the model also acknowledges that there is a reciprocal relationship between these factors and men's cognitive content. In other words, the model recognises that cognitive beliefs about masculinity, for example, influence and will be influenced by the process of boys' socialisation into manhood. Likewise the model acknowledges a reciprocal relationship between men's cognitive content and typical behaviours that are associated with men.

There are four assumptions underlying this approach to the study of masculinity. Firstly, the model assumes that masculinity is rooted in genetic factors that have an evolutionary origin and give rise to anatomical and physiological factors which have a profound influence of men's behaviour. Secondly, the model assumes that men's behaviour is shaped by cognitive factors, primarily their beliefs about masculinity and their understanding of what it means to be a man. Thirdly, the model assumes that these cognitive factors are the result of socialisation, learning, traditions, initiation rituals and experiences. Fourthly, although these cognitive factors are stable they can be modified and as such the behaviour of men can be changed by helping them to alter their beliefs about masculinity and their understanding of what it means to be a man.

This approach to the study of masculinity has three important implications. Firstly, this approach provides a model for psychotherapeutic interventions. Since the model ascribes the behaviour of men, in part, to cognitive factors, it implies that the psychopathological behaviour of men can be modified through techniques that help men to redefine themselves in ways that are more adaptive. If this is true then, by prompting men to examine their beliefs about masculinity they can be helped to gain greater insight into their own behaviour and if necessary to consciously reconstruct their beliefs hence re-shaping their behaviour. Secondly, this approach provides a model for primary psychological interventions that aim to inoculate boys against the psychopathology that is associated with being male. The contents of men's cognitive processes are determined by among other things, socialisation, education, experiences and initiation rituals. This approach thus implies that by critically examining and modifying the way boys are socialised into manhood through institutions like the family, schools and the media, we can begin to help boys construct an understanding of and beliefs about masculinity that decrease their risk of developing the psychopathology discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. Thirdly, this model, by highlighting the role of cognitive factors in shaping men's behaviour, provides a unit for study in masculinity research. It is possible to access the content of men's beliefs about and understanding of maleness and masculinity and hence document these. Structured interviews, surveys and questionnaires can be used to gain insight into the cognitive content of men's beliefs about and understating of masculinity. The model also implies that it would be possible to correlate beliefs about masculinity with pro-social behaviour and likewise identify those beliefs which predispose a man to the psychopathology associated with men.

Conclusion

There is evidence to support the idea that human behaviour has its origins in both evolutionary biology and cognitive factors. Given this fact, it can be assumed that masculinity and maleness are the result of men's genetic make-

up as well as the content of their beliefs about masculinity and their understanding of what it means to be a man. If this is true, then an examination of the content of these schemata and the nature of these beliefs about masculinity is both worthwhile and necessary within the context of identifying the factors that underlie the psychopathology associated with men which was discussed in chapter two.

Chapter 6

Growing up male: Common understandings and shared beliefs about masculinity

*Many people ask me what South African men are like.
It's not easy to say what the men in South Africa are like
because there seem to be so few of them out there.*

(Charlize Theron in an anti-rape advertisement)

Introduction

In all cultures and societies, a boy's initiation into manhood begins when he is born, at the moment he is identified as a boy. This label determines how he is treated as well as the expectations that society will have of him. As a boy is socialised into manhood he learns society's rules for being a man and in the process builds a schema of masculinity and constructs beliefs about what it means to be a man in his culture. While this process might be consistent across all cultures and may be true for all periods in history, the beliefs and values associated with masculinity and definitions of manhood are dependant on both cultural and historical factors. "Different cultures and different periods in history construct masculinity differently. Manhood means different things in different times and to different people." (Kimmel, 1996. p 5).

Contemporary South African society seems to be a hybrid of western values, indigenous traditional cultures and, to a lesser extent, eastern ideas. In this context, it is highly unlikely that there is a shared set of beliefs about manhood in South African culture; if indeed it is possible to speak of a South African culture given that South Africans live in a multicultural society that is undergoing huge political, social and economic transformation. Since there is probably not a single shared understanding of masculinity in contemporary South African culture, this chapter does not attempt to outline an all-inclusive set of values and beliefs that define masculinity and manhood in South Africa.

This chapter does, however, outline the common ideas that define masculinity in modern western society which may also hold true in a South African context. In this chapter traditional African ideas about masculinity are discussed alongside western beliefs and values. This juxtaposition of western and African concepts is an attempt not only to highlight similarities and differences that may exist between western and African beliefs about masculinity but also to acknowledge the extent to which masculinity is a culturally bound construct. Where possible in this chapter, parallels and distinctions have been drawn between contemporary masculine values and those that date back to previous periods of history. This presentation of contemporary ideas alongside beliefs that belong to earlier periods of history serves to illustrate how definitions of masculinity and concepts of manhood are a function of time.

Man and his internal world of feelings

Modern western culture prescribes certain rules for how boys and men should give expression to their inner emotional worlds. Males, at a very young age, are told that, “boys don’t cry.” (West, 1996. p 212). Boys growing up in western society learn to stifle their tears and other emotional displays – the message they receive is, “push it down, stuff it inside, don’t show that feeling otherwise you will be seen as weak and as a failure.” (Horne and Kiselica, 1999. p 8). Boys in many western countries learn that in order to be “a man” they should “hide their feelings and silence their fears” (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999, p 4). Contemporary western society “supports emotional expression for girls and discourages it for boys” (Pollack, 1998, p 3). A boy in western culture is thus forced into a straight jacket of masculine toughness that denies him “his emotions and robs him of the chance to develop a full range of emotional resources.” (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999, p 3). Boys, on their journey to manhood in contemporary western societies thus learn that being a man necessitates keeping one’s emotions under tight control. A corollary to the belief that men should censor their emotions and restrict their emotional expression is the idea that “fear and vulnerability are for wimps”.

Internalising these beliefs, results in adolescent males and men being emotionally contained and less honest about their emotions than females. The view that western adolescent boys are less emotionally expressive than their female counterparts is supported by research that shows that American “males become less facially expressive of emotions with age and females become more so” (Brody, quoted by Kindlon and Thompson, 1999, p 12). There is also evidence to show that American adolescent boys, when compared with adolescent girls, have an impaired ability to identify and express their emotions (Gurian, 1996), have difficulty in expressing a range of emotions and take longer to articulate their emotions (Pollack, 1998).

The belief that boys don't cry is implicit in some traditional African initiation rituals. Even to this day adolescent male initiates in some African cultures are required to endure physical hardship and pain without displaying emotion in order to achieve manhood. An example of this is seen in the initiation rituals in Western Kenya and Southern Ethiopia. In these countries, one of the initiation rituals for boys on reaching puberty consists of mass beatings to harden them and make them stronger. These beatings are reported to be quite vicious and last for days. The initiates are expected to be able to withstand the pain, be brave and not cry (Cleaver, 2002).

In describing his circumcision during initiation, Nelson Mandela, explains how in South African Xhosa society being a man necessitates concealing one's pain and hence suffering in silence.

“I was tense and anxious, uncertain of how I would react when the critical moment came. Flinching or crying was a sign of weakness and stigmatised one's manhood. I was determined not to disgrace myself, the group or my guardian. Circumcision is a trial of bravery and stoicism; no anaesthetic is used; a man must suffer in silence. . . A boy may cry; a man conceals his pain.”

(Mandela, 1996. pp 25 - 26)

This belief that men should conceal their tears, their sorrow and depression, is not confined to western and African cultures. The extract below quoted from the *Bhagavad Gita* illustrates how in Eastern culture it is also considered unmanly to show sorrow and pain.

“To him (to Arjuna) who was overcome with pity, whose eyes were filled with tears and sorry and who was much depressed, Krishna spoke the following words. Krishna said, ‘Whence has this dejection come upon you at this critical hour for it is unworthy of noble people. . . . Yield not to this unmanliness, O Arjuna, for it does not become you. Shake off this petty faintheartedness and arise.”

(*Bhagavad Gita* in Chopra, 1994)

Carol Gilligan (Author, Psychologist and Professor of Gender Studies at Harvard University) maintains that many parents believe that if their boys grow up being too sensitive or too introspective they will not be able to get ahead in a world that is structured around western ideas of power, control, criticism and competition. Gilligan contends that in a desire to help their boys, some parents (often subtly and unconsciously) encourage their sons to be emotionally blunted and to silence their inner voice – to keep their feelings to themselves (Gilligan, 2002).

This restriction and denial of tears, pain and sadness has not always been the norm for men. In ancient times, the Greeks (who were an aggressive warrior culture with strong masculine values of toughness, honour and heroism) encouraged public displays of emotion by men. The acceptability of emotional expression by men is clearly illustrated in the *Iliad of Homer*:

“The manliest warriors weep copiously and publicly. Because the Achaeans are driven back, imperial Agamemnon stand unashamed before the assembled host, weeping like a fountain of black water that from a beetling crag pours its dark stream. When he is bidden visit Hades, Odysseus cries aloud and rolls about. Waiting in

the Wooden Horse, all the Achaean champions, save Neoptolemos, weep and tremble. Priam, pleading with Hector to retire, first beats his head with his hands and then plucks out his hair. When Hector dies, he rolls in dung, and, gathering it up, befouls his head and neck with it and stays in the midst of it for twelve days, inconsolable."

(Onians, 1954)

In addition to restricting men's emotional expression, western society seems to hold a fear of male violence which results in men and boys being shamed for displays of anger and aggression (Horne and Kiselica, 1999). The message to modern western men and boys is thus clear, "Deny your grief and suppress your anger otherwise you won't be a real man." (Horne and Kiselica, 1999. p 8). Another belief, "don't get mad get even," (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 29) reflects a similar theme.

To be a man is to deny that you feel scared and afraid (Pollack, 1998). It would seem that western society dictates that real men, "don't show fear and vulnerability." (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 29). Adhering to this dictate requires men to present a brave face and remain cool, calm, and confident regardless of the situation in which they find themselves.

It is interesting to speculate about the origin of the belief that men should be socialised away from being aware of and giving a voice to their emotions, and trained to be brave and heroic. One idea is that in order for men to be warriors and soldiers it is necessary for them to be unemotional and brave. As such societies which require their men to go to war in order to fight and protect, have a vested interest in raising men who are emotionally un-expressive and do not acknowledge their fear and vulnerability.

The predominant idea in western culture seems to be that men should assume super-hero status, set aside their feelings and be brave and heroic at all times. This idea is, however, being challenged by a growing recognition that even superheroes have the right to cry. This realisation and

acknowledgement that even men need to express how they feel is illustrated in the lyrics of the modern mainstream western popular song, *Superman*:

“I can’t stand to fly. I’m not that naïve.
 I’m just out to find the better part of me.
 I’m more than a bird. I’m more than a plane.
 More than some pretty face beside a train.
 It’s not easy to be me. Wish that I could cry.
 Fall upon my knees and find a way to lie
 about a home I’ll never see.
 It may sound absurd, but don’t be naïve.
 Even Heroes have the right to bleed.
 I may be disturbed, but won’t you concede
 Even Heroes have the right to dream. . . .
 Men weren’t meant to ride
 with clouds between their knees.
 I’m only a man in a silly red sheet
 digging for kryptonite on this one way street.
 Only a man in a funny red sheet
 looking for special things inside of me.
 I’m only a man in a funny red sheet.
 I’ m only a man looking for my dream.”

(*Superman* recorded by Five for Fighting)

Gilligan (2002), maintains that many American men believe that there are some things that they cannot talk about – things they cannot say in public and other things they cannot say to anyone. It is as if men have an internal dialogue that is different from the public conversations that they have. Gilligan believes that western men learn to silence their “inner voices” and censor what they say, because what they would like to say is not always congruent with what they are required or expected to say. Gilligan (2002) contends that men hold their inner voices silent (sacrificing the expression of their emotions and compromising their emotional honesty) in the name of manhood.

Polce-Lynch (2002) explains how this belief that “men do not communicate too much” is expressed in adolescent boy culture by the belief that to be a real man is to “use one word answers (Huy?; Yeah!; Dunno!; Stuff)” (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 30). It was no doubt this tendency for adolescent boys to communicate in single syllable, one word sentences and grunts that lead Australian psychologist, Michael Carr-Gregg (2003), to describe male adolescence as the period of “mono-syllabic neo-autism”.

Restriction of emotional expression leaves boys with a limited range of emotional tools to manage relationships, conflict, adversity, and change. (Real, 1998). Furthermore, this straight jacket of masculine toughness results in maladaptive emotional expression, which in turn leads to unhealthy development and an impaired inability to form attachments (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999).

No one is born a man

There seems to be a common belief in many cultures and societies that one is not born a man but that one becomes a man by adopting certain behaviours and undergoing an initiation. The subtext of the following speech from the second episode of the first series of the American TV screen play *Queer as Folk* is indicative of the notion that becoming a man in modern American culture necessitates taking on certain masculine behaviours:

“I could be a real man if I wanted to. I would just have to lower my voice, stop gesturing with my hands, make sure my face is expressionless, and never, never use words like ‘fabulous’ or ‘divine’ but rather talk about ‘nailing bitches’ and ‘RBIs’.”

The idea that one is not born a man but that one becomes a man by taking on certain behaviours is implicit in attitudes and beliefs that exist in modern western cultures and explicit in some traditional African initiation practices. An example of this is the ritualised circumcision practice in Xhosa culture. Before a Xhosa boy is considered to be a man by the others of his tribe, he has to go

through the initiation of the *Khwetha*, or circumcision lodge. Otherwise he would still be considered a boy and no girl would consider marrying him (Mandela, 1996).

Although circumcision is seen as a rite of passage for some African adolescent males, in other cultures circumcision has a different significance. For example, circumcision rituals were practised by the Jews in Biblical times and are still practised in Jewish culture to this day. The practice of circumcision in Jewish culture, however, occurs in the context of a religious ritual on the eighth day after birth. This religious ritual is performed to show that men can produce offspring only because God permits it (Miles, 1999). In this context, the link between circumcision and masculinity is less clear. This example of how the act of circumcision carries two different meanings in two different cultures is illustrative of how the attainment of masculinity is interracially bound in cultural practices.

Behaviours that define masculinity

There are certain behaviours, deeds and activities that are associated with masculinity. Writing about the explicit and implicit behavioural norms that exist in contemporary western culture, William Pollock (1998), in his book, *Real Boys*, proposes the concept of “the boy code” to describe the rigid set of rules and beliefs that guide and govern the actions of boys and men. Kindlon and Thompson (1999) in their book, *Raising Cain*, identify the same concept as the “culture of cruelty” while Polce-Lynch (2002) speaks of “the pack rules” to describe the typical behavioural patterns of men and boys.

In the context of describing typically masculine behavioural patterns, it has been noted that western men have a tendency to undertake actions which serve to protect, provide, perform and procreate (West, 1996; Horne and Kiselica, 1999). Being a modern man in the west is also seen to be synonymous with behaviour which illustrates physical strength, competitiveness, domination and control.

Pollack (1998) asserts that competition and achievement are of paramount importance to American men and boys. Gaining status and earning one's place in the "pecking-order" as a male necessitates continually ensuring that one is being recognised and acknowledged (Pollack, 1998). Sometimes this continual striving for recognition manifests in boys drawing attention to themselves by making fun of other people, breaking the rules, and causing disruptions (Police-Lynch, 2002). A less subtle version of this idea, is expressed in the belief that exists among contemporary western men and boys that, "winning is good and losing is bad" (Police-Lynch, 2002. p 29).

Contemporary colloquial phrases, for example, "separating the men from the boys", imply that to be a man is to be in an elevated position of power. The colonial practice of calling colonised men "boys" provides an example of how the difference between being a man and being a boy is inextricably related to the balance of power; that being a man implies being in control and having power. "Control is for many men the defining feature of their masculinity, any suggestion or threat of being out of control challenges the very essence of what being a male is all about." (Clare, 2000. p 5). Men in western cultures seem to have been taught to define their power in terms of their capacity to enforce their will without the consent of those involved (especially women).

The commonly held belief that men are stronger than women seems to be true in western and African cultures. This idea that men occupy a superior position of strength is clearly illustrated in a study of the hegemonic masculinity in Northern Uganda (Cleaver, 2002). Participants in this study argued that women are weaker than men, comparatively incapable and a burden. The participants in this study legitimised their views by quoting the Biblical story in Genesis and the belief that man was created first, that woman was created from man's rib, and that women are weaker vessels. Men's comparative strength and position of power over women is further illustrated by the fact that in Northern Uganda, women do all the domestic work and can be beaten if they do not show respect to men. In this culture women's

relatively weaker position is also indicated by the fact that women cannot initiate divorce, which is seen as a man's prerogative.

A corollary to the belief that "men are tough and strong", is the contemporary idea that, "it is okay to be aggressive" (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 29). Violence and aggression seem to be part of many boys' experience and as such is an integral component of masculinity in some cultures. This is illustrated by the extract below from a study of hegemonic masculinity in Nicaragua:

"Violence is a common experience for males from a very early age and is one of the principal mechanisms for socialisation. In popular culture . . . it is considered one of the main dimensions of machismo. . . . Men have to exercise this particularly in front of other men, through stereotypical behaviour such as drinking a lot of alcohol, sexual promiscuity, sports, gambling and dominating women."

(Montoya in Cleaver, 2002. p 171)

In the same context, Real (1998) maintains that American boys' aggressiveness, competitiveness and physicality is often normalised as, "typical boyish behaviour" and dismissed with the assumption that, "boys will be boys." (p117). This creates the belief that to be a man is to be physically strong and to exercise that strength through competition, control and aggression.

Pollack (1998) describes how being a boy in western society means that one has to do things for oneself, be independent and avoid asking for help. Independence is thus seen as an integral part of manhood and dependence is seen as a sign of weakness and vulnerability. The boy code dictates that as a man you should not admit when you do not know what is going on (Pollack, 1998). As such, Pollack (1998) maintains that many American men believe that they must mask their doubts, uncertainty and ignorance because these are perceived as a sign of weakness. Within this idea of weakness, asking for

help constitutes an acknowledgement of defeat, a display of failing and a confession of a loss of control. Poice-Lynch (2002) explains that ideas about independence are reinforced by the messages that boys in western cultures get from their parents and society, that in order to be a man you have to, “go out into the world and make a name for yourself on your own” (p 30).

Masculinity is frequently defined by what one cannot be. In order to be considered manly in modern western society one cannot be soft, sensitive, feminine or gay (West, 1996). This creates a narrow and restrictive definition of masculinity that confines and limits men. The extract from the case study below is indicative of how masculinity is defined by exclusion and illustrates the trauma suffered by those males whose behaviour falls outside western society's narrow definition of maleness.

“In the expensive . . . prep school he had attended, Gerry's difference from other boys was celebrated by an annual “Get Gerry Day”. Once a year for four years, Gerry was hounded like an animal. No matter where he tried to hide, he was caught, bound and gagged . . . and deposited . . . upon a pool table where he stayed until midnight, mostly trying “not to pee on myself.” . . . Gerry's “Gekky” manner rendered him somehow not fully male and gave the other boys licence to do with him what they liked. . . . At 26, Gerry was hospitalised for psychotic depression. Among other delusions, he was convinced that the smell of urine leaked through the pores of his skin.”

(Real, 1998. p 116)

Freeing men to be who they are necessitates challenging definitions of masculinity that restrict and limit the behaviour of men. In the same way that the feminist movement enabled women to redefine themselves in ways that brought them out of the home and into the world, it would seem that men could benefit from a men's movement that encourages broader definitions of masculine behaviour. In order to liberate men from the narrow definitions of

masculinity that exist in western culture it is necessary to propagate the idea that “there are many ways to be a man.”

Men are heroic and action orientated

The role of men in history has been synonymous with adventure, action, discovery, invention, innovation, heroism and waging war. As such there is a belief that being male is associated with action, boldness, heroic activates and an adventurous spirit (Biddulph, 1995). Historically, artists, philosophers, priests, poets and authors have also been predominantly men. While feminists might argue that this proliferation of men at the forefront of discovery only serves to illustrate how women have been marginalised, it does seem to indicate that men do the creative work, explore new vistas and are the initiators of new ideas.

Biddulph (1997) describes Australian boys as being risk takers by nature. This idea that masculinity is associated with taking risks also seems to be true in other countries. American boys seem to hold the belief that the more dangerous an activity the more manly it is (Pollack, 1998). Boys growing up in contemporary western societies, thus, learn that to be a man is to be brave, to put yourself on the line and to take risks.

The belief that masculinity is related to risk taking behaviour may help to account for the comparatively higher incidents of accidental deaths and accidental injuries among men reported in chapter two. This tendency among men to undertake dangerous and reckless tasks and activates may also explain the gender differences in patterns of alcohol abuse and smoking which were also discussed in chapter two.

Men and their moms and dads

Freud proposed the idea that masculinity can only be achieved by moving outside the primary relationship with the mother, and identifying with the father (Meyer et al, 1990). This idea seems to have endured in western society and engendered a belief that in order for a boy to become a man he must separate from his mother and in the process reject all that is feminine. To be called a “mommy’s boy” in western culture is believed to be an insult and implies a lack of independence, strength and manliness.

Messages such as, “stop acting like a girl”, “boys don’t cry” and, “don’t be a sissy” can lead boys to feel anxiety about and even fear of being like the opposite sex. Hence boys learn that becoming a man is not simply a process of growing older, but is achieved by rejecting feminine behaviours and embracing those characteristics that are seen to be masculine (Pollack, 1998). In this process, mothers (as the embodiment of all that is feminine) are rejected in search of manhood. Western society seems to dictate that for a boy it is of paramount importance to distance yourself from your mother and all things that are feminine, otherwise you will be considered soft or called gay (Pollack, 1998). This idea that a boy should separate from his mother to become a man is not unique to western culture.

It is possible that this rejection of the feminine also gives rise to a rejection of all those characteristics that are seen to be associated with the female gender; including the qualities of emotional expression, care, compassion, and concern for relationships. Internalising the belief that as a man you should reject all that is feminine, may thus lead some men to deny aspects of themselves and adopt hyper-masculine behaviours.

Australian authors Biddulph (1995) and West (1996) stress the importance of fathers and other male role models in helping boys to understand what it is to be a man. The belief that the quality and characteristics of the father-son relationship are important in shaping boys’ understanding of masculinity is not only true in Australian society. The role of fathers in teaching boys about

masculinity in other cultures is highlighted in research on masculinity from Jamaica. In Jamaica, 42% of households are headed by women. As a result boys in these communities often look for male role models outside the family, in the community. In so doing they are socialised in the ways of the street by modelling the behaviour of the “don men” (these are men who control local politics in the poor rural areas of Jamaica). In the absence of their fathers these boys look to the older boys in the community to teach them about sexuality and ethical values (Cleaver, 2002).

The idea that fathers are important in helping boys achieve healthy masculinity has special significance in contemporary societies where fathers are absent. The current generation of Australian youths has been described as the most under-fathered generation in history (Biddulph, 1995). Death, divorce and economic demands have taken many fathers away from their families and left boys to be raised by their mothers in single-parent families. This was true for many South African black families who were left effectively father-less by the migrant labour system in the apartheid era. It has also been suggested that often even when men remain part of their families, their emotional distance renders them unavailable to their sons.

Man and his penis

Western society and the American media continually send boys the message that men are hyper-sexual beings (Pollack, 1998). To boys this message translates into believing that: to be a man is to have sex; “girls and women are sexy” (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 29); and “men tell sexual jokes and stories” (Polce-Lynch, 2002. p 29). To many western boys sex thus becomes a conquest and is seen as a way of proving manliness. This idea is not unique to western developed countries. Research from Latin America also suggests that being a man in Latin American culture is to be sexually active (Cleaver, 2002).

In some cultures there is a belief that as a man it is not enough just to be sexually active; to be a man one must be heterosexually active (Cleaver, 2002). As such homosexuality is seen as unmanly in some cultures. (West, 1995). Attitudes towards homosexuality are another example of cultural beliefs that have changed with the passage of time. In Plato's time, for example, it was customary for an older man to act as a mentor and teacher to a younger boy, but sex was apparently also part of this relationship. Christianity, however, saw homosexuality as a great evil and consequently propounded a belief that for a man to have sex with another man is a sin. This resulted in a common attitude that equated homosexuality not only with evil but with being somehow less of a man. It would, however, appear that in certain sectors of modern western culture same sex relationships and unions are acceptable.

In some cultures the idea that one is not a man until one has taken a wife and fathered children dominates the hegemonic model of masculinity. This idea is illustrated in a study of masculinity in Northern Uganda (Cleaver, 2002) which illustrates that no matter how economically successful an adult male in this society is, he is still considered a boy until he has taken a wife and has children. As such a man is not taken seriously until he is a husband and father. Within this society a male cannot participate in the political life of the clan until he is married and has children (in this sense his status is that of a woman, since women are never permitted to get involved in politics of the clan). Given this model of masculinity it is not surprising that men in Northern Uganda tend to be polygamists, taking multiple wives and having many children (Cleaver, 2002).

Beliefs that equate masculinity to virility and sexual prowess put men at increased risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Male's attitudes to sex are not only a health risk to men but also endanger the sexual and reproductive health of women. In addition, these attitudes may help account for high rape statistics in communities where men are feeling disempowered. The idea that to be a man is to have sex may also help explain why the overwhelming majority of sex offenders are men.

Men, their bodies, exercise and sport

Western media images of male toughness occur in the form of Schwarzeneggers and van Dammes. Magazines like *Men's Health* portray maleness in the form of a lean, chiselled, hard body. Masculinity has a "certain feel to the skin, certain muscular shapes, certain postures and ways of moving" (Connell, 1995, pp 52-53). Pressure to conform to this Adonis type image of masculinity has created what is being described as the Adonis Complex; which would seem to be the contemporary male equivalent of the body obsession and eating disorders seen in women who struggle to fit into society's narrow image of feminine beauty (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia, 2000).

Some men suffer as a result of not fitting into society's physical mould of masculinity. In a book on male depression entitled, *I don't want to talk about it*, Real (1998) outlines the pain still felt by an adult man, David, as a result of growing up overweight; in a body that was unmanly. Describing the pain David felt and the fact that the unmanliness of his body made him fair game and hence the victim of teasing by his peers, Real writes:

"David knew how cruel life could be for a fat boy. Without the hard lines of a 'real' boy's body, Dave's round softness had rendered him 'like a girl' He had been deposited outside the circle. He had been fair game."

(Real, 1998. p 115)

It would seem that while in some male sub-cultures it is important to conform to a particular physical form, it is equally important not to be seen to take too much notice of your external appearance. The inherent contradiction in this highlights the complexity of understanding what it means to be a man in the modern world.

This belief that real men do not show pain or weakness extrapolates into a rigid set of ideas that dictate how men should treat their bodies. Andrew

Harvey, in *The Direct Path* (2001) describes how his socialization into manhood led him to construct certain beliefs about his body and how it should be treated. Harvey describes the messages society transmits to men about their bodies, in the following way:

“Your body is a machine, to be treated harshly and with furious discipline. To be sick is to be weak. To listen to the sufferings of the body . . . (is) to be a sissy or spastic. To be demonstrative of any physical feelings at all . . . (is) to be vulnerable to mockery.”

(Harvey, 2001. Side 1)

For many men, there seems to be a certain stoic pride in how much one can abuse one's body without complaining or showing discomfort. This abuse takes many forms; working long hours, enduring physical pain and neglecting the body's need for rest and care (Harvey, 2001). For a man to slow down and take account of his body would be “to fail in a world that values only continual achievement and success.” (Harvey, 2001. Side1).

The origin of the stoicism which seems to characterise modern western masculinity, indicates how beliefs about manhood are culturally influenced and shaped by philosophical ideals. Stoicism is a value system of self-denial and frugality introduced by early Greek philosophers. This value system fitted well with the ideals of the Enlightenment which maintained that passion is bad and reason is good. The ideals and values inherent in both Stoicism and Enlightenment seem to have been incorporated into modern western culture and would appear to be strongly associated with modern masculinity.

Traditionally male sports have been aggressive, physical and dangerous. The message that society sends boys and men is that they are expected to be tough and that they show their toughness by being physical, aggressive and playing sport (West, 1996). When boys start playing competitive sport, they are learning more than just a game. They are being initiated into an organised institution that consists of rules and norms about how one behaves and acts

as a sportsman (Connell, 1995). The competitive nature of sport and its rigid hierarchy are indicative of the hegemonic model of masculinity that pervades western culture. This belief is reinforced by the fact that in many schools sporting prowess is a test of masculinity (Connell, 1995).

A man's value is in his work

In western society, what a man does (his work) and what he produces (his achievements) seem to be more important than who he is. It is as if man in modern capitalist society is defined, "in terms not of being but doing" (Clare, 2002, p 1). The role of economic factors in shaping masculinity has received much attention in the masculinity literature (West, 1996; Connell, 1995; Cleaver, 2002). For example, research quoted by Michael Kimmel in the foreword to a book on men, gender and development, highlights the fact that local small craft producers, small-scale farmers and independent peasants, "stake their notions of masculinity in the ownership of land and economic autonomy in their work" (Cleaver, 2002, p xii).

There are also several studies that emphasise the belief that being a man involves taking on the responsibility of provider to the family. Research from Latin America, for example, suggests that being a man implies being the financial provider to the family (Cleaver, 2002).

Rigid attitudes about what constitutes men's work seem to exist in many cultures (Cleaver, 2002). This gendered division of labour seems to have an historical basis as well as a natural more rational evolutionary basis. Often masculinity is associated with the ability to do hard physical labour and as such work is a way of proving one's masculinity. A study by Morrell (in Cleaver 2002) illustrates how the celebration of physical labour by black mine workers in South Africa played a key part in asserting forms of masculinity under conditions of oppression and servitude.

Social rules and beliefs about what constitutes man's work are indicative of the cultural dimension of concepts of masculinity. For example, in some African cultures working in the field and farming is considered work for women. This is in stark contrast to other cultures where farming and crop cultivation are considered manly pursuits.

It is not a new idea that the gendered division of labour harms women. Feminists have long argued that excluding women from certain forms of work has left them disempowered and economically restricted. The effect of gendered division of labour on boys and men is, however, only now being understood. We are beginning to recognise how men are harmed by rigid gendered rules about work. Studies in countries that have undergone civil war and social unrest illustrate the harm that is caused to boys by the rigid gendered division of labour in these societies. For example, in Angola, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Columbia and Liberia, young boys are deliberately recruited by armies and opposition groups. Seen as more expendable than men, boys are used for the most dangerous military tasks such as mine-detecting and spying. The tasks performed by boys in these situations are in stark contrast to the tasks young girls are recruited for. Girls are expected to act as messengers, cooks and "wives". These boys experience a loss of identity when they leave the armed forces and attempt to reintegrate themselves into society. Save the Children (UK) run programmes in many of these countries aimed at reintegrating boy soldiers back into their communities (Cleaver, 2002).

Rigid ideas about what constitutes man's work put men at significant risk of being unemployed in the modern work place. The statistics quoted in chapter two indicate that patterns of employment are rapidly changing. We live in a world where physical work is being replaced with work that requires the softer feminine skills inherent in manipulating data and building relationships. In the modern world, men are not always the breadwinners of the family. Men who define themselves in terms of their work may thus find themselves facing difficulties as the work environment changes and they face retrenchment. Men who hold inflexible beliefs about gender roles in the work place may also

find it increasingly difficult to find employment unless they are able to expand their notion of men's work.

Historically "boys have been urged to be soldiers while girls are encouraged to be nurturers of one kind or another." (West, 1996. p 221). It is as if there is a commonly held belief that men's maleness gives them an inherent toughness to face the hardship of war and killing. This idea that being a man makes it easier to be a fighter means that it is men who give up their lives when nations go to war. Consider for example the American casualty statistics from the Vietnam War. It has been reported that 58 202 American male military personnel were killed or were classified as missing in action during the Vietnam War. By comparison it is reported that eight American women (all of whom were nurses) died. Of the eight American military women killed only one was killed in action. In addition to the 58 202 American men killed in the Vietnam War, it is reported that a further 23 214 American men were disabled, 5 284 American men lost limbs and 1 081 American men sustained multiple amputations. (The Long Way Home Project: Statistics and References, 2004). While these figures highlight the high number of American men who died in the Vietnam War, these statistics do not indicate how many Vietnamese women were raped, gave up their lives and lost their husbands and children during the war.

While it is still predominantly men who are killed when a country goes to war, it appears that women are playing an increasingly larger and more active role in times of war. Statistics indicate that women account for two percent of American military personnel killed in Iraq between September the 11th 2001 and November the 2nd 2003 (Beck, 2003). The number of women killed in the war in Iraq may seem small but when one considers that two percent translates into five American women being killed compared to the eight American women who died in all the years of the Vietnam War, one appreciates that the role of women in war is changing.

Conclusion

While much has been written in Australia and the United States about modern manhood and masculinity, there is a void of research on how South African men (particularly South African adolescent males) define these concepts. While there are no doubt similarities between foreign and local constructions of these terms, South Africa's unique history, politics, economic situation, and cultural diversity imply that masculinity may have a unique meaning in South African country and culture. The social and political transformation that has and is taking place in South Africa must also have an influence on how men in South Africa define themselves. Trying to understand how masculinity is defined in South Africa raises the question, "How do South African adolescent males define the concept of masculinity and what are their beliefs about male gender-roles?" Finding an answer to this question is the problem that has given rise to this study.

Chapter 7

Research Design and Implementation

*The whole of science is nothing more than
the refinement of everyday thinking.*

Elbert Einstein

Introduction

The design of this project falls within the framework of qualitative research. This mode of investigation has been chosen because qualitative research is the only real way of gaining insight into and understanding how people perceive, understand and interpret the world they live in (Blumer in Patton, 1990). The difficulty with qualitative research, however, lies in the fact that there are no standard rules, common methodological conventions or standard interview procedures to guide the process of investigation (Kvale, 1996). This creates challenges for the novice researcher and makes the researching findings vulnerable to criticism in terms of its validity, reliability and objectivity. In defence of this approach, however, it is significant that the validity of quantitative research has been well established (Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990).

In the context of addressing the validity, reliability and objectivity of qualitative research in general and of this study in particular, it is appropriate to acknowledge the argument that the conventional criteria applied to quantitative research in relation to validity, reliability and objectivity of research design are inappropriate for qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A number of authors emphasise the importance of clearly explaining the procedure used in quantitative research as it is this that allows the reader to scrutinise and assess the methodology, data analysis and conclusions of the research (Bannister et al., 1994; Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2000). A clear and detailed explication of my research methods and

procedures for data analysis are therefore provided in this chapter. A discussion of the implementation of this project is also provided at the conclusion of the chapter.

Aims of this study

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Investigate how a group of South African adolescent males at a High School in Cape Town, define the concept of masculinity.
2. Identify the common and shared beliefs about gender-roles held by this group of South African adolescent males.

Participants

A group of adolescent males, between the ages of 14 and 18 (inclusive), from a Boys High School in Cape Town.

Measurements

1. *The content of cognitive schema for masculinity.*

For the purpose of this study, “the content of cognitive schema for masculinity” will be defined as an individual’s internal representation and cognitively constructed understanding of what it means to be a man and how this meaning relates to their schemata for toughness, strength, sexuality, the male body and fathers.

Because the contents of cognitive schemata are not directly observable, the contents of the cognitive schema for masculinity will be inferred from the qualitative data collected by means of a structured interview consisting of

open and closed ended-questions (see interview schedule included as Appendix A).

The content of the cognitive schema for masculinity will be summarised from the qualitative data collected and presented in the form of statements that describe the cognitive content of these schemata. Thus the content of these schemata will be presented as a verbal “photograph” describing how masculinity is defined by the participants in this research project.

2. Personal beliefs about gender-roles.

For the purpose of this study, “personal beliefs about gender-roles” will be defined as propositions that express how an individual believes men should act and express their emotions in order to meet society’s expectations of them as men. Examples of such beliefs might include, “men should control their emotions” and “men who openly display their emotions are weak”.

Beliefs are not directly observable and this makes them difficult units of study but their existence can be inferred from overt behavioural responses and the content of speech (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Personal beliefs about gender-roles will thus be inferred from the qualitative data collected by means of a structured interview consisting of open and closed ended-questions (see interview schedule included as appendix A). Since beliefs are the basic units of knowledge categories, it should be possible to deduce the beliefs about masculinity by reducing the qualitative data obtained to propositions that state clearly how participants believe men are expected to behave. In this way, the cognitive schemata used for masculinities in South African society can be determined.

Procedure for data collection

1. Randomly select 15 adolescent boys between the ages of 14 and 18 (inclusive) from an independent Boys School in Cape Town. Three boys

of each age will be selected. The boys will be selected according to the following procedure:

- Excluding all non South African boys, sort the boys in the school into age groups.
 - Sort each group into alphabetical order.
 - Assign each boy on the list a number starting at the top of the list with the first boy being number one.
 - Use a computer to randomly generate three numbers between one and the highest number in each age group.
 - Select the three boys in each age group who match the randomly generated numbers.
 - Repeat this procedure with each age group.
2. Obtain the informed consent of the participants.
 3. Ask the participants not to discuss the content of the interview with others until all the data has been collected. This is important to ensure that there is no consensus forming prior to interviewing the participants. To facilitate this do not make the participants aware of the names of other participants.
 4. Interview each of the participants by holding a structured conversation on masculinity and gender roles. Appendix A outlines the themes that will be raised during the conversation.
 5. Audiotape and transcribe each interview.
 6. Analyse qualitative data from the interviews and infer the content of the schemata for masculinity and identify the personal beliefs about gender-roles.

Data analysis

1. Become familiar with the qualitative data by reading the interview transcripts several times.
2. Re-read each interview with three questions in mind:
 - a. What are the common themes in this interview?
 - b. What contradictions are explicit or implicit in this interview?
 - c. What is not being said in this interview?
3. Summarise each interview using the information obtained in step two. The purpose of such a summary would be to create a rich and detailed verbal photograph of each of the participant's cognitive schema for masculinity.
4. Using the information in the summaries, identify and record the common themes and conclusions about how the adolescent male participants in this study understand the concept of masculinity.
5. Use the information obtained in steps 3 and 4 above where appropriate to compile a list of personal beliefs about masculinity for each participant. Each of these beliefs will take the form of a proposition about how men should act. The intention in doing this is not to force the data into some predetermined structure but rather, where the data suggests an underlying belief, to identify it, expose it and hence make it explicit. Identifying the underlying beliefs will add to the richness of the data obtained in steps three and four by adding another dimension to the data.
6. Compare the lists of participant's personal beliefs to identify common and shared beliefs about masculinity and gender roles.

Minimising research bias

It is important to recognise that when doing qualitative analysis of interviews, one is interpreting the participants' words and it is possible to interpret these words in a multitude of ways. It is also significant that all research of this nature "contains biases and values, and that knowledge and understanding are contextually and historically grounded" (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998. p 122). One way of strengthening a qualitative study design is through triangulation (Patton, 1990). Triangulation is defined as, "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs" (Patton, 1990. p 187). Several different types of triangulation can be identified and used in this type of research. In this study the technique referred to by Patton (1990) as "analyst triangulation" will be used to minimise research bias and improve the validity of the findings. Analyst triangulation involves the use of several different analysts who independently analyse the same qualitative data set and then compare their findings.

In this research the following procedure has been used to minimise researcher bias and ensure reliability of data interpretation:

1. Ask a research assistant to interpret the data. The research assistant should be a Psychologist who has no prior knowledge of the research questions.
2. Present the research assistant with copies of the interview transcripts and ask them to identify personal beliefs about masculinity and the role of men in South African society implied by the content of the interviews.
3. Compare the lists of personal beliefs that the research assistant produces with the lists compiled in step five above to determine whether the research findings are validated by independent data analysis.

Ethical issues

Louw (1991) warns researchers in the area of human development to give careful consideration to the following ethical issues, when designing their research: (1) Potential effect of the research on participants; (2) Protection of personal rights and privacy of the participants; (3) Potential for the findings to cause damage to other individuals.

In evaluating the potential for this research design to do harm to the participants, it should be noted that this study does not involve the testing of an intervention. As such nothing will be “done” to the participants that could potentially harm them. Participants will be asked to answer questions that will provide the researcher with insight into cognitive schemata, but since no attempt will be made to interpret the answers for the participants, the potential for this to do harm is not high. It is possible that asking these questions may raise the participants’ level of consciousness about issues relating to masculinity, sexuality, gender-roles and parental relationships. This may cause some cognitive discomfort for the participants and/or increase their level of anxiety. Care will thus need to be taken to ensure that participants are not pressurised to answer questions which they feel uncomfortable with and the interviewer will need to be sensitive to overt and subtle signs of discomfort on the part of the participant. It will also be necessary to reassure the participant that they are not compelled to answer any of the questions in the interview.

In terms of protecting the personal rights and privacy of the participants, it will be necessary to obtain the informed consent of the research participants and guard their privacy. In order to obtain informed consent, the purpose of the research will be explained to the participants, they will be assured of anonymity and will be told that the interviews will be audio-taped. It will also be made clear that they can withdraw from the research project at any time if they feel uncomfortable. They will then be asked to give their consent to being part of the study. Anonymity will be ensured so that the privacy of the research participants is protected.

The potential exists for the findings of this research to be used in designing other research projects and in planning psycho-educational programmes and therapeutic interventions. It will thus be necessary to ensure that the findings are accurately reported and that the necessary action is taken to maintain the validity and reliability of the data (as much as it is possible to insure validity and reliability in qualitative investigations of this nature). The responsibility, thus, falls on the researcher to follow the procedure outlined above; to make every effort to ensure that the data is accurate, reliable and valid; and to make every effort to interpret the data and present the research findings in a way that is responsible, honest and ethical.

The age, socio-economic status and cultural background of participants

All participants in the study were drawn from an independent boys' school in a Cape Town suburb. This group of research participants hence represent a certain stratum of South African society. Although not representative of South African society in general, the sample does reflect a cross section of South African adolescents since it consists of young men of different ages and from different cultural backgrounds and language groups.

The age distribution of the sample is such that each age group from 14 to 18 (inclusive) is equally represented. The racial and cultural distributions of the sample are indicated in table 7.1 and table 7.2. In terms of socio-economic status, the group is homogeneous as the school serves that segment of the South African society that can afford independent school education.

Racial group	Number of participants:
White	9
Black	3
Coloured	1
Asian	2

Table 7.1: Racial composition of the participants.

Home language:	Number of participants:
English	12
Afrikaans	0
Isi Xhosa	2
Isi IsiSotho	1

Table 7.2 Home-language of participants.

One would expect to find a relationship between the content of cognitive schemas for masculinity and extraneous variables, such as age, cultural group, ethnicity and socio-economic status. It was not, however, possible in this study to make inferences about how these variables correlate with beliefs and attitudes, given the size of the sample and the racial, cultural and socio-economic composition of the group.

Implementation of the project

Several difficulties were experienced with the implementation of this project. The first major difficulty related to the huge amount of time that was required to interview participants and transcribe the interviews. I had not realised how time-intensive a process like this is. The considerable amount of time that this required hindered completion of the project. This resulted in delays in submission of the final dissertation.

Difficulties were also experienced transcribing the interviews. Adolescent males are notorious for speaking indistinctly and for using colloquialisms. This necessitated listening to the interviews several times in order to hear correctly and discern the sense of what was being said. This procedure was long and tedious. It was also difficult to punctuate the transcripts as the nature of conversational interaction is such that sentences sometimes run on, sometimes are left incomplete and it is frequently hard to determine where one sentence ends and the next begins. Punctuating the interviews in such a

way as to retain the original sense of the interaction and make the transcripts readable was challenging.

Once the interviews had been transcribed it was a relatively simple task to summarise the content of each interview, identify themes, record similarities and highlight contradictions. This process was facilitated by having completed the literature review outlined in chapter five. The review of the literature on masculinity provided a metaphorical “sieve” which exposed common themes and ideas in the transcripts. The list of themes identified in this way is included as Appendix B.

Once the themes had been identified, the process of exposing the underlying beliefs implicit in the transcripts could begin. This process was initially slow and laborious and necessitated reading and re-reading the interviews in order to establish a list of personal beliefs about masculinity and gender roles for each participant. Once each participant's lists of personal beliefs had been constructed, I found I was over-loaded with information and faced with long lists of personal beliefs which were often repetitive and haphazardly presented. This necessitated an extended process of using the themes I had already identified to re-work each individual participant's list of beliefs into groups under appropriate headings. At this point I also had to refine each participant's list of personal beliefs by deleting those beliefs which were repeated or which did not fit comfortably within the common themes which had been identified. This process was facilitated by the use of a word-processor which allowed me to “cut and paste” and delete (and un-delete) information effectively and efficiently. The process of sorting and “distilling” the original lists of personal beliefs, made the final version of each participant's list of beliefs more focused, manageable and meaningful.

The interview transcripts were forwarded to the research assistant who was commissioned to independently validate the research findings. Megan de Beyer, an experienced Psychologist, was used in this capacity. Megan holds a MA degree in Psychology and is registered as a Psychologist with the Health Professionals Council of South Africa. Megan is also widely read in the area of

masculinity and boys' emotional development. Megan was asked to read the transcripts and independently identify the beliefs implicit in each interview. Megan was able to confirm that the beliefs I had identified were implied by the content of the interview transcripts. On those few occasions where there was not consensus between Megan and I on the content of personal beliefs, the belief was deleted. No discussion was entered into and no attempt was made to convince one another of differences of opinion. As such only those beliefs on which there was consensus are reported in chapter eight. As a woman, mother and experienced Psychologist, Megan was also able to highlight references to women and beliefs about femininity which I had over-looked. Although I acknowledge that the interview transcripts are a rich source of information about the participants' perception of the role of women in South African society, these have not been reported in this dissertation as they fall outside of the scope of the aims of this study. The beliefs about the role of women in society which Megan drew attention to did, however, act as a foil to the definition of masculinity expressed by participants and helped me to clarify my thinking before preparing the chapter in which the research findings are presented.

Once participants' lists of personal beliefs had been verified, the lists were compared so that common and shared beliefs could be identified. Once again I used the themes I had identified to group these beliefs in a meaningful way. These lists of common and shared beliefs are presented in Appendix C. Appendix C was used as the basis for preparing the first draft of chapter eight. Although the basic content of chapter eight remained the same it had to be re-written several times and re-structured. Part of the difficulty with writing chapter eight was that I wanted to find a way to effectively present the common beliefs while at the same time provide examples from the transcripts to illustrate these beliefs. It was also important to present the research findings in a way that would be readable and sensible. The themes I had identified made finding a structure for the chapter easy but it was not a simple process to incorporate extracts from interviews into the text in an integrated way. Writing chapter eight required me to once again return to and re-read the original interview transcripts several times. Preparing chapter eight was

thus an extremely challenging, frustrating and protracted process. I am nonetheless satisfied that the final version of chapter eight reflects the richness of the data collected and accurately summarises the common and shared beliefs held by the participants.

Conclusion

The social relevance and value of a study that focuses on upper middle class South African males could well be questioned. In a country plagued by the complexities of social and political transformation, educational crisis, economic problems and serious health problems such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, it is not easy to justify the importance of a study that focuses on the issue of how masculinity is defined by the “economically privileged class”. But to say that this issue is unimportant is to devalue the importance of men who are emotionally well-adjusted, relationship-enabled and capable of responsible and caring behaviour. Understanding how adolescent boys define masculinity and understand their role as men in society is a precursor to helping them to re-define themselves as men in ways that are more adaptive. Anyone who works with adolescent males in South Africa needs to understand how this group conceptualises their role as men in a society that is in transition. How South African males see themselves as men and the beliefs they hold about gender-roles have important social, educational and psychological implications. It is hoped that this research will provide some insight into how South African adolescent males in upper-middle class society understand society’s expectation of them as men and how this understanding translates into the beliefs they have about men and gender-roles.

Chapter 8

Research findings

*Knowledge is not a mirror of reality
but a social construction of reality.*
(Kvale, 1996. p 239)

Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the beliefs and attitudes held by a group of 15 adolescent males about masculinity and the role of men in South African society. These beliefs were inferred and validated, through a process which has been outlined in chapter seven, from qualitative data collected in structured interviews with the research participants. Where appropriate I have indicated the extent to which a belief or attitude is shared by all participants or commonly held by some participants. Where a belief is only held by one participant, this has also been indicated.

Sometimes the beliefs expressed by participants are contradictory as would be expected in a multi-cultural society which is in a process of transformation, as is the case in South Africa. The fact that participants contradict themselves and each other is also indicative of the notion that there are multiple constructs of masculinity and hence no single unified commonly held understanding of the term. While these contradictions exist, it is possible to identify common themes, ideas and shared beliefs about manhood and the role of men in South African society. It is these common themes and beliefs which are described in this chapter.

In places an attempt has been made to illustrate and substantiate the findings and conclusions by providing verbatim extracts from the interviews. These extracts are presented in this chapter (formatted in italics and indented so that they are immediately apparent) alongside the identification and discussion of the beliefs and attitudes. Presenting the words of the participants in this way

retains some of the richness of the original data. This approach also allows the reader to experience the data first-hand thus adding a more personal and realistic dimension to the discussion. Furthermore, these extracts serve the important function of allowing the reader to judge for themselves the soundness of the inferences and the validity of the conclusions. Extracts from the interviews are included along with the participant's initials, age, race and home-language. For reasons discussed in chapter seven, no attempt has been made to correlate exogenous variables such as age and cultural background with beliefs and attitudes.

Beliefs expressed by participants about gender differences

A common theme to emerge from the data is the idea that significant and distinctive differences exist between men and women. All participants hold the view that the differences between the sexes extend beyond the obvious anatomical differences and included differences in the way men and women perceive situations, behave, move, dress and think. Important differences are also noted between the role played by men and women in the workplace, society and the family. Only one participant expressed a belief that it is difficult to generalise about gender differences because of the wide variations in individual patterns of behaviour and his perception that personality exerts a more powerful influence than gender on an individual's behaviour.

It would seem that there is a commonly held belief among research participants that women are equal to but different from men. Although all participants identified significant differences between the sexes only three participants expressed a belief that these differences make men in some way superior to women.

When asked to describe what is considered masculine in South African culture participants noted that gender stereotypes are less rigid now than was the case in the past. Participants pointed out that more flexible contemporary gender stereotypes make it difficult to identify characteristics that are

associated exclusively with men. All participants, nonetheless, acknowledge that the term “masculine” does have certain associations in South African culture. Characteristics that participants associate with the term masculine include being strong, dominant, big, well-built, tall, broad, emotionally contained, in charge and capable of getting what you want. Participants also hold the belief that men in South African society are associated with recklessness, playing sport, drinking, attracting girls, having sex, and going out into the world to make money.

In contrast to what is described as masculine, participants describe being feminine as being gentle and soft in speech and action. In this context the word “soft” has associations with being malleable, flexible, tender and temperate. In the eyes of participants, it is considered feminine to hug other people, be involved in the emotional aspects of life, be a counsellor, be frivolous, pay attention to your appearance, ask for help, be nurturing, and care for children.

Table 8.1 provides examples of participants’ descriptions of masculine and feminine traits.

Descriptions of masculine traits:	
<i>“Sport. Drinking. Getting girls. Being able to support yourself. Getting yourself into and out of rough situations.”</i>	(PR, 18, White, English)
<i>“... big muscles and lots of hair.”</i>	(KC, 17, Asian, English)
<i>“... playing rugby or eating a kilogram of steak.”</i>	(TL, 17, Coloured, English)
<i>“Powerful, more macho, more competitive.”</i>	(RG, 17, White, English)

“Being more focused . . . driven . . . (and) passionate.”

(AF, 16, White, English).

“You have to be strong. You have to be able to control yourself.”

(KS, Black, 16, isiXhosa)

Men are “physically more durable . . . (and) stronger than women ... but emotionally they are weaker. . . . (Men) act independent and bold and strong and un-phased by anything.”

(CA, 15, White, English)

“Muscles, how built you are, how tall you are, features, skin. Some people like the whole rugged look – they see that as masculine.”

(MI, 15, Black, English)

“Strong and dominating.”

(KD, 14, White, English)

Descriptions of feminine traits:

“Asking for help . . . (and) admitting you need help.”

(PR, 18, White, English)

Women are able to “look at many different things at the same time - they can multitask. . . . (Women are) a little more personal and emotional than men and more like counsellors.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

Having “a stronger bond – and better relationship skills than most men ... (and an ability to) deal with things better than men . . . (for example) with stress and problems in their lives. . . . I think parents teach girls to be more in touch with themselves.”

(CA, 15, White, English)

Table 8.1: Examples of participants’ descriptions of masculine and feminine traits.

In the process of discussing society's expectations of men and gender stereotypes, one participant pointed out that society's rules and expectations work against him. He believes that he does not fit into society's rigid and narrow definition of what a man should be. This participant described how his perception of not fitting the rigid stereotype of what a man should be left him feeling angry, depressed and helpless. In a similar vein, participants note that men suffer as a result of society's expectations of men. This belief is implied in the following responses:

Society expects men to “achieve more . . . go further . . . get better jobs . . . (and) earn more money” than women.

(PR, 18, White, English)

As a man “you have to be known to be strong . . . I think a lot of people in this world – like homosexuals – suffer because it is not what people expect you to be.”

(CA, 15, White, English)

In talking about meeting society's expectations of men, one participant commented that:

Being masculine “is not for oneself but rather as a show off to others . . . you are trying to bring yourself across in a physical presence that makes you seem hard and in that way masculine.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

This statement seems to reflect the belief that to be a man in South Africa is to sacrifice yourself in order to meet the expectations of society and appear physical and strong.

Participants attributed gender differences to two causes. On the one hand, a belief is expressed that gender differences are ordained by God and are the

result of an innate difference in the nature of man and woman. On the other hand, gender differences are attributed by participants to social conditioning and learning. In this context one participant explained that adopting masculine behaviours is something one does for other people in order to meet social expectations. None of the participants expressed an attitude or belief which indicated that gender differences have their roots in evolutionary factors.

Table 8.2 provides examples, from the interview transcripts, of statements which reflect beliefs about the origin of gender differences.

Responses which imply a belief that gender differences are ordained by God:	Responses which imply a belief that gender differences are a result of social learning:
<p><i>“Attitudes, feelings, emotions - women have one set and men another. God separated them into two groups and made them different.”</i></p> <p>(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)</p>	<p><i>“It is part of society - how men have been raised - to look all strong on the outside and stuff. They are not the kind of people who will say, ‘I love you.’ Society has made it that way.”</i></p> <p>(DH, 18, white, English)</p>
<p><i>“It has been like that from the beginning of time – Adam was born first and then Eve. Man has always been the hunter and the leader of the clan.”</i></p> <p>(CA, 15, White, English)</p>	<p><i>“Growing up we are told to be a big boy and be strong and independent.”</i></p> <p>(CA, 15, White, English)</p>

Table 8.2: Participants’ responses which imply beliefs about the origin of gender differences.

Beliefs about sexism and gender discrimination

In the context of talking about gender discrimination, three participants expressed the view that there is no gender discrimination in South African society. By comparison six participants believe that women are still discriminated against in South Africa, although two of these participants believe that sexism is less prevalent than it has been in the past. Two participants believed that men are discriminated against in South African society.

In giving examples of gender discrimination participants note that women are discriminated against in politics. A belief is expressed that it is unlikely that a woman would be elected as the leader of a politically powerful modern western country. Participants also note that women are discriminated against in some churches and religious sects where women are precluded from performing religious ceremonies. By comparison some participants hold the opinion that men are discriminated against by the legal system, believing that men receive longer prison sentences than women who commit identical crimes. A view is also held that men are discriminated against in the university admissions process since it is easier for women to gain admission to South African universities than it is for men.

Tables 8.3 and 8.4 provide examples, from the interview transcripts, of statements which reflect beliefs about gender discrimination in South Africa.

Responses which imply a belief that women are discriminated against:
<p><i>"For example in the work place in management positions. I think women are not treated as well and this is demeaning to them. In the past women were more 'at home' people - they were the housewives and the men brought home the bacon. I guess in the workplace women are still seen that way."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(MI, 15, Black, IsiSotho)</p>

“Women are discriminated against in parliament. You will not find a female president in any major country.”

(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

“One of the things women have a problem with is actually being equal - a lot of people still look down on women and think men are the superior race . . . (because men) seem to be bigger and stronger and more durable than women.”

(CA, 15, White, English)

Women are still “just that one step behind men in going places, in being places, in being offered places”. Being a women means “that you are looked down upon.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

“In the last 20 years - if not less –it has slowly become normal to see women in upper management in industry. Although there are still very few women in top positions there are significantly more than there used to be. But I still think that the stereotypical women who is in the kitchen and looks after the children – that will take at least 2 generations to disappear – if it disappears at all. Which I think in many cases will not be the case. I do not think that it is going to change so that women are seen at the same sort of level as men.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

“I do not think women are as clever as men. I think women are on a lower scale. ... Women aren’t intelligent. ... You get some women who are very clever; they make men look stupid. But in general women are not as clever as men.”

(PR, 18, White, English)

Table 8.3: Examples of responses which imply a belief that women are discriminated against in South African society.

Responses which imply a belief that men are discriminated against.
<p><i>"I think because you're a man, you might get blamed for a lot of things that women wouldn't get blamed for."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(CL, 14, White, English)</p>
<p><i>"Something that irritates me is that women who kill people get put in jail for a lot less time than men. I think that is wrong. If women want equal rights then they must take the same punishment as men."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(KC, 17, Asian, English)</p>
<p><i>"It is harder for white males to get into university – it is easier for women to get education."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(RG, 17, White, English)</p>

Table 8.4: Examples of responses which imply a belief that men are discriminated against in South African society.

Another more subtle form of gender discrimination is noted by participants who express a belief that women are treated more gently than men. In this context participants point out that society in general is much more direct, insensitive and unkind when communicating with men. This belief seems to imply that there is an assumption in South African society that men, by virtue of their maleness, are equipped with a mechanism to deal more easily with harshness, pain and difficulty. Consequently men can be treated with harshness and are expected to perform gruelling tasks like going to war, being subjected to corporal punishment and playing dangerous physical sports while this is seen as inappropriate for women.

Beliefs which imply that men and women think differently

A common belief among participants is that men and women have different cognitive styles. In describing differences between the way men and women think, participants express the belief that women think things through more

thoroughly than men and are more capable than men of giving active attention to more than one stimulus at a time. A belief was articulated that women make decisions more carefully than men by thinking through the advantages and disadvantages before committing themselves to a particular course of action. An opinion was expressed that women and men make different attributions and consequently faced with the same situation will interpret the situation differently. There is thus a belief among participants that it is not uncommon for men and women to construct two different meanings when confronted with an identical situation. A belief is held that a difference in the cognitive style between men and women results in men and women holding different attitudes and making different decisions. The responses below reflect the belief that men and women think differently.

“Women and men have a different perspective on things. It is just different. If I were to do something men would look at it one way and women another.”

(KS, 16. Black. IsiXhosa)

“I think that women maybe think a bit deeper than men and they maybe think about the decisions they make.”

(CL, 14, White, English)

The belief that men and women think differently is supported by the research discussed in chapter four, which shows that there are significant neurological differences between the brains of men and women. These gender differences in neurological structure are thought to give rise to differences in perception, information processing and decision making (Gurian, 2001) thus providing a biological basis for these gender differences in cognitive style.

A common belief among participants is that women are intellectually more capable than men. This perception is supported by the empirical data discussed in chapter two which indicate that women are outperforming men in universities and schools both in South Africa and in other countries. The belief

that women have more intellectual muscle than men is indicated in the following response:

“Mentally I think women are way more powerful than men because it is always the men who come off short. But physically it is always the men who overpower the women.”

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

It is hard to gauge the impact of this belief on boys' motivation and achievement in schools; one can only hypothesise about the self-fulfilling prophecy that unfolds if boys and teachers adopt the belief that girls are more skilled at academic tasks than boys. It is also interesting to speculate about the origin of this belief given the debate on the feminisation of schools, which was discussed in chapter two, and the fact that teaching is becoming a female dominated profession.

Beliefs which imply that men and women relate differently

In discussing gender differences in relationships, participants expressed a belief that women have better relationship skills than men, are more relationship orientated and have a greater number of intimate relationships than men. There is also a shared belief among participants that women's relationships with each other are more intimate than those between men. It is, however, interesting to note that in this context, a belief is held that women have more relationship difficulties and conflicts in their interpersonal relationships with other women than men have in their interpersonal relationships with other men.

There is a belief among participants that men typically have one close intimate relationship while their other relationships are more business-like. The response below is indicative of this idea that men, by comparison to women, lack intimacy in their relationships.

“I think a lot of men have no one to talk to when they are hurt or sad except maybe their mothers. That is another way women are different because they talk to one another. I would love that - to be able to say to someone, ‘I am going through a rough patch.’ But guys do not have that.”

(KC. 17, Asian, English)

Participants report that their friendships with other males are significantly different from their friendships with females. Participants describe their friendships with other males as being characterised by activity and action while their friendships with females are characterised by talking. Although participants report that their friendships with females characteristically involve communication they also commonly report that they find it easier to communicate with males than with females. Participants report that there are certain topics of conversation that one cannot raise with members of the opposite sex. Most participants hold the belief that men are more guarded in their communication with women, in comparison to their communication with other males. Only one participant reports that he finds it easier to talk to females about intimate issues and that his experience of male conversation is that it is shallow by comparison to communication with females.

The idea that men are guarded in their communication with woman underlies a much broader notion that woman should be treated with suspicion. This idea is also implicit in the attitude expressed by participants that women try to intimidate and control men with what they wear. The belief that women are dangerous and should be treated with suspicion seems to have found expression in many societies. This calls to mind how women in Muslim countries are confined and restricted in a repressive way that implies that they are dangerous and need to be controlled and contained.

In the context of talking about inter-personal relationships, participants note that men and women deal with relationship difficulties differently. In the minds of participants, men deal with inter-personal conflict with a characteristic “fight or flight” response. This belief is implied in the following response:

“If someone soeks with you in a bar you are not going to say, ‘Hey guy let’s sort this out.’ You are probably going to fight about it.”

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

Beliefs which imply that work in South Africa is gendered

All participants acknowledged that in South African society there are certain types of work that are considered to be women’s work and other types of work that are considered work for men. As such there is a shared belief among participants that work in South Africa is gendered.

A frequently expressed belief is that engineering, construction and building work are the preserve of men. A less frequent, but nonetheless common, belief is that work that involves manufacturing and assembling is also reserved for men. Three participants hold a belief that the world of finance, business and economics are predominantly the domain of men in South Africa while two participants expressed a belief that work in the transport and motor vehicle industry are chiefly considered to be men’s work.

Reasons given for these pursuits being the domain of men include the belief that work which requires physical strength, physical activity and resilience is reserved for men. Accounting for the gender division of labour, one participant when asked to explain why some careers appear to be male dominated, responded by saying:

“Because these are the jobs that earn all the money. Men are expected to earn the money to provide for their families. That is just the way it is. So men get these jobs so they can earn the money.”

(KC. 17, Asian, English)

One participant expressed an opinion that work is gendered because men and women have different preferences and thus seek out and feel comfortable doing different work. This view is reflected in the following response:

“I think that some women prefer to do certain jobs and some men enjoy doing other kinds of jobs. So I think it more has to do with preferences than actually jobs that are set out for women or men.”

(DH, 18, White, English)

Participants identified women's work in South African culture as being those pursuits which involve interior decorating, clothing design, child care, domestic work, secretarial work, counselling, nursing, teaching pre-school children, serving and taking care of others, hairdressing, and being a make-up artist. According to participants, the common features of women's work is that it requires attention to detail, creativity, the ability to nurture and provide emotional care, as well as the ability to attend to personal needs, provide special care and a personal touch. These attitudes are reflected in the following response:

“I would say that what makes things considered women's work is the same throughout: they are more at home or something which requires a personal touch or something that requires special care. You often talk about a women's touch – that is the emotional touch that little bit of a personal touch, like artwork – it is something which can make your work different to another's.”

(AF, 16, white English)

One participant believes that the defining feature of women's work is that it generally involves assuming a role which is subordinate to a position occupied by a man. In this context he gave the example of secretarial work and nursing which he saw as supportive roles inferior to the role of the boss and the doctor (roles he believes are played predominantly by men in South African culture).

It is frequently noted by participants that household tasks within families are also divided rigidly along gender lines with women taking responsibility for child care, cleaning and providing food. By comparison it is believed that a South African man's chief responsibility in the family is financial provision, an idea that is discussed in more detail in the section outlining the man's role in the family.

Beliefs which imply that women are emotionally expressive and men are emotionally dishonest

There is a shared belief among participants that men and women express their emotions differently. Among the differences noted are that, by comparison with men, women express their emotions with a greater intensity and more easily, pay more attention to the emotional content of situations, are more aware of and have greater control of their emotions, are more skilled at handling their emotions, express a wider range of emotions, feel more comfortable with the emotional aspects of life, and are able to identify and name their emotions. These beliefs were implied in responses such as the two given below:

"Women are more aware of their emotions and more aware of how to handle them."

(MI, 15, Black IsiSotho)

"Women talk about their emotions - like the exact emotion that they are trying to express. Men, if they are pleased with someone and want to say, 'Thank you,' they will take him out for drinks or take him to a rugby game. Women would say, 'Oh you mean so much!' But a man would never say that."

(PR, 18, White, English)

By contrast to the beliefs held about women's emotional expression, participants believe that men do not show their emotions. This perception is reflected in the following response:

Women “talk about their problems and share their problems much more than men will. . . . You get the perception that men are unemotional but actually they just do not show their emotions because at a young age they are told if you show your emotions or cry then you are deemed to be a whimp or a sissy . . . society drums it (expressing emotions) out of men.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

This belief that men shut their emotions out is also expressed as a belief that men are dishonest about their emotions. The perception that men are emotionally dishonest, led participants to comment that they find it difficult to read a man's emotional state, as is indicated in the following response:

“Women are more comfortable expressing their emotions. Guys will express their emotions but they are not as comfortable doing it publicly. If a guy is upset he will be upset on his own in his room somewhere. He is not going to cry with all his friends. . . . Women are more free to show off their emotions. They feel more comfortable doing it. So, you can look at a guy and you do not know if he's emotionally strong or not because you can say something really hurtful to him and he will just look at you and brush it off. Another guy you say the same thing to and he will also just look at you and then go off and cry. You will not know how they feel.”

(TL, 17. Coloured, English)

In discussing men's reluctance to talk about their emotional state, one participant notes that although men do not talk about how they feel they do demonstrate their feelings through their behaviour and actions. Noting differences in male and female patterns of emotional expression led participants to conclude that women are more emotionally stable than men, men are emotionally weaker than women and that women find it easier to deal with problems like death and loss. Commenting on the difficulty men have in dealing with personal and emotional issues, one participant notes:

"Men don't really deal with their issues like women do. I think a lot of men just resort to drugs or alcohol and women can actually go out and speak to people about things – men just try to find the easiest way out - using their physical abilities or hide their emotions or drink them away . . . (so that) they do not have to deal with them"

(CA, 15, White, English)

Participants believe that a man is said to be "in touch with his feminine side" if he is aware of his emotions and is able to give a voice to his inner world of feelings. This belief suggests that an attitude exists in South African society that emotion lies at the heart of what it is to be feminine while the essence of masculinity is devoid of feeling. The belief that anything emotional is feminine and hence unmanly is clearly expressed in the following response:

"If you show too much emotion you are considered soft – more feminine. If you don't show emotion – if you are closed – people will think you are more manly."

(RG, 17, White English)

Two participants acknowledge that although men and women express emotions differently, this does not imply that men do not have the same emotions as women. In this respect they note that men have the same emotions as women but they do not demonstrate them in the same way. These participants also believe that men mask their reactions and only allow

themselves free expression of their emotions when alone and out of the public eye. In a similar light, participants note that women are given more freedom and permission to express their emotions while young boys are actively encouraged to control and contain their emotions. Although participants point out that men, as a general rule, will not publicly display hurt, there is an acknowledgment that it is normal and acceptable for a man to express sadness if someone significant dies. This belief is reflected in the following response:

“There is a common saying that, ‘boys don’t cry.’ But if something terrible happens like your father dies then it is acceptable of course. But if something happens on the rugby field – like you break your leg – then it is not. In situations of bullying if a boy is pushed to the point of crying then he is considered weak.”

(RG, 17, White English)

Beliefs which imply that there are no clearly defined points that mark a boy’s entry to manhood

A significant, commonly held belief is that women are always feminine. This belief seems to imply that by comparison with femininity, masculinity is something that has to be achieved rather than something that simply flows as a natural consequence of being male. The theme of masculinity as something that has to be attained is commonly expressed by the research participants in this study.

A common idea to emerge is that in South African culture there is ambiguity surrounding a boy’s entry into manhood. Common beliefs held by participants are that there is an absence of initiation rituals in contemporary South African culture, no clear points which mark a boy’s entry into manhood, and uncertainty about when one has become a man and achieved masculinity. The lack of initiation rituals and rites of passage creates uncertainty about

when exactly a boy becomes a man. This uncertainty may leave contemporary man unsure of his masculinity and hence with a constant feeling that he needs to prove his manhood both to himself and to society.

Although participants generally acknowledge a lack of certainty about when one become a man, only one of the participants expressed a desire to take part in an initiation ritual. A 16 year old Xhosa participant perceives a ceremonious induction into manhood as an integral and necessary part of his attainment of manhood. This participant's belief about the value of initiation rituals is reflected in his response below:

“For some people initiation rituals are important and for others they are not. For me personally it is important because it marks my transformation from a little boy into a man. It means a lot to a person. My brother just went through it and I could see the difference in him you could sense that he had changed you could see that he was a brand new person.”

(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

Beliefs that imply that to be a man is to give up being a child

Participants agree that being a man in South Africa entails giving up child-like behaviour, becoming more mature, adopting a serious outlook and accepting responsibility. The ability to make good decisions, not be foolish and no longer think like a child is perceived to be a sign that a boy has become a man. In a similar vein, women are described by participants as being more childish than men. It would thus seem that men in South African society are not permitted to “play” and are required to abandon all that is fun, frivolous, playful or associated with children in order to achieve manhood. One participant, speaking in the context of initiation rituals, makes the point that becoming a man necessitates giving up childish ways and adopting responsibilities, when he says:

Initiation rituals “make it harder because now you can not go back, you can not escape and be a child again. When you become a man, you are a man, and you have responsibilities.”

(KC, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

Beliefs which imply that masculinity is constructed in the media

When asked to identify a media icon of masculinity that would demonstrate how men act, all but three participants were happy to identify an individual or character that embodied their understanding of what it is to be a man. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mel Gibson are identified as icons of masculinity by virtue of their physical power, muscular appearance, size, action orientation, independence and preparedness to fight. The lead characters in the film, *Pulp Fiction* are also identified as good examples of how men in South African society act because these characters are rough, direct and have the respect of others. David Beckham and Brad Pitt are named as icons of masculinity because they are confident and bold. Other icons of masculinity identified by participants, but for reasons which are not made clear, are Russell Crow, Charlton Heston in his role as Ben Hur, and Nicholas Cage in the screenplay, *The Family*. Nelson Mandela is also named as an icon of masculinity by one participant. In explaining why Nelson Mandela embodies masculinity this participant speaks of the role Mandela played as father of the nation, leader of the country and liberation warrior in the fight against apartheid. One participant believes that any footage of men playing rugby would illustrate how men in South African culture are expected to act. This participant is of the opinion that rugby illustrates what it is to be a man because it is brutish and physical and does not require intelligence.

Two participants expressed a reluctance to identify a single icon of masculinity pointing out that there are many ways to be a man and many different types of men. These participants are of the opinion that the multiple

constructions of masculinity in society make a single embodiment of the term impossible. Another participant notes that there are no good media icons of masculinity since media images are unrealistic reflections of reality and what it means to be a man.

Beliefs which imply masculinity has a distinctive physical appearance

All participants acknowledge that masculinity is inextricably related to physical form. Participants note that men can be differentiated from woman by virtue of the fact that they have a particular way of speaking, standing, walking, arranging their hair and wearing their clothes. In this context beliefs exist that women characteristically move from side to side when they walk, swing their arms and place one foot in front of the other. By comparison, men are described as standing and walking in a confident, proud, erect manner with their shoulders back and chests out. A belief is also held that in order to be considered manly in South African culture an individual must present themselves boldly and confidently and never appear to be afraid, hesitant or uncertain. The idea that real men do not appear to care too much about anything and should appear composed, calm and confident at all times, is a common idea which found expression in many interviews.

Slouching is considered to be unmanly and women are described as standing like “tea pots”, with their hips out to one side and their hands extended out and away from their bodies. A belief is held by more than one participant that there are certain hand movements that are associated with men and that moving one’s hands around in the air is considered to be uncharacteristic of men in South African society.

In comparing speech patterns between men and woman, participants note that men speak in a more monotonous tone and that women place greater emphasis on certain words when they speak making their speech more song-like than that of men. One participant believes that women speak in a voice which is considered to be calmer and more soothing. The belief that men

speak without placing emphasis on words may help to explain the phenomenon discussed in chapter six, that adolescent boys go through a period of mono-syllabic neo-autism, during which they communicate in guttural sounds and single syllables, as they adopt hyper-masculine behaviour in an effort to achieve manhood.

In describing the difference in the way men and women dress, a belief is held that it is feminine to wear tight clothing which draw attention to the shape of one's body. Participants also note that in South African culture, men seem to pay less attention to and take less care of their appearance. A belief is held that trying to look pretty is unmanly. Participants associate men who are gay with being fashion conscious and concerned about wearing clothes to look good. It would thus seem that the concept of a metro-sexual (described in the popular press as a heterosexual man who concerns himself with fashion and beauty) is not yet commonly subscribed to in the sub-culture represented by the research participants in this study.

Participants share the belief that men, by comparison with woman, are physically well-developed, stronger and more capable of performing dangerous and demanding physical feats. In contrast a belief is expressed that women are gentler and are more vulnerable than men and hence more likely to be robbed and assaulted. In this context one participant expressed a belief that South African society values strength and physical stature and rewards these qualities with recognition and status.

There is a shared belief among participants that a man's body has a distinctive shape and form. Physical characteristics that are associated with masculinity include being physically large, muscular, tall and having a low body fat composition. This idea that masculinity has a distinct physical form is expressed in the common belief that a boy is considered to be a man only once: his body has matured; his muscles have formed; and he acquires facial, axillary and pubic hair. This belief is reflected in the following response to the question, "How does a boy know when he has become a man?"

"Maybe when you start growing hair under your arms and you start to shave. When you start having sex."

(PB, 14, White, English)

The belief that a man should be tall is also held by some participants. One participant makes an association between being tall and commanding authority and power, which seem to be important elements of masculinity in South African culture. This participant holds a belief that when you are tall you are in charge and notes that because he is short he often has had to back-down when challenged or confronted by other males.

A belief is held by some participants that men's bodies are more capable than women's. In the context of discussing men's perceived physical superiority, participants express a belief that men have greater endurance than women, can run harder and faster and further than women and can breathe under water for longer than women. The response below is indicative of these beliefs and the idea that men's bodies are superior to those of women:

"We are stronger. We can move things. They can't. Our endurance is like double as much as a women's. We can run harder, faster and go further. We can breathe underwater for longer. Our bodies are much more advanced and enhanced than theirs. In all respects: endurance, cardiovascular; strength, everything!"

(PR, 18, White, English)

All participants acknowledge the important role played by exercise in the life of South African men. To stay in shape, to look good, and to be lean are the most common reasons identified for men taking part in exercise programmes. It would seem from the attitudes and beliefs expressed that men in South African culture are under pressure to maintain a particular body shape and that they exercise in order to achieve this. In this context, participants note

that men are subjected to the same pressure as women to maintain a particular body shape. This belief is implicit in the following response:

“Girls are never satisfied with their image and I do not think guys are either. Any guy, even if he is the most pumped, will want to be bigger. I do not think anyone is 100% comfortable with they way they look.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

Other less common reasons given for exercising include to keep fit, stay healthy and to become bigger and stronger. The least common reason given for exercising, identified by only one participant, is recreation.

In discussing the role of exercise in male culture, participants also speak of the role played by exercise in making them feel good. This idea that men exercise to improve their mood is interesting when one considers that men are reported to have lower base-line levels of serotonin than woman (Gurian, 2003). Serotonin is a neurotransmitter known to play a significant role in, among other things, an individual's mood (Neil Martin, 1999). A group of anti-depressant medications, identified as selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, alleviate symptoms of depression by increasing the concentration of serotonin in the central nervous system (Neil Martin, 1999). Serotonin levels have been shown to increase in response to exercise. Given that men have a lower baseline level of serotonin and that serotonin levels rise in response to exercise, it would seem that there is biochemical support for: (1) the idea that men exercise to feel good; and (2) an argument that men require exercise more than women in order to attain a sense of well-being.

There seems to be a contradiction in the attitudes and beliefs expressed by participants. On the one hand participants seem to be saying that men exercise to keep in shape and look good. Some participants commented that men in South Africa are concerned about their physical appearance and others suggest that no man is ever satisfied with his appearance. Only one participant in the study said that he was satisfied with his physical

appearance and would not choose to change any aspect of it. Most participants articulate a desire to be physically larger, more athletic and more muscular. It is also noted by one participant that men gain confidence from the way they look. This seems to imply that men are conscious of their appearance and have a desire to sculpt their bodies. On the other hand, a belief is expressed that men do not care what they look like and that it is important for a man to look as natural as possible. In an attempt to reconcile this apparent contradiction, it would seem safe to hypothesise that even though men do not appear to care about their appearance they do want to conform to a certain body shape and appear athletic, lean and muscular. It would also seem fair to conclude that although men do not like to admit it, most men want to look good. This belief is clearly evident in the following response:

“Although men do not like to admit it, most men like to look good.”

(AF, 16, White, English)

The term *boykje* is used in the participants' sub-culture to describe a male who is both well-built and a good sportsman. *Boykjes* take part in physical training which includes both aerobic exercise and resistance training in order to sculpt their bodies. A *boykje* is also conscious of what he eats and diets in order to achieve a lower body fat composition. A *boykje* will typically use nutritional supplements and a high protein diet to assist him in his quest to hone his physical shape. A belief is held by participants that some males take on the persona of a *boykje* in order to prove their masculinity.

Beliefs about love between men

Participants express very clear ideas about the nature of love between men and its place in male friendships. All participants share the belief that it is possible for two men who are straight to love each other. All but one participant, however, feel that a man who is straight would never say, “I love

you” to another man unless it was in the context of a father-son relationship. The single participant who believes it is conceivable for a man who is straight to verbalise his love for another man, acknowledges that he does not do this.

Participants note that the only time a man would verbalise his love for another man would be in the context of playfulness and joking with one another or while under the influence of alcohol. As such it seems that men who are straight, in the segment of South Africa culture represented by these participants, do not ever sincerely and directly verbalise their emotional attachment to one another. More than one participant said he would think it strange and feel uncomfortable if a male friend said, “I love you,” to him and another commented that he would think his friend were gay if he verbalised affection so directly.

Participants do, however, acknowledge that men demonstrate their affection for one another even if they do not verbalise their attachment. Participants describe how a man who is straight will demonstrate his love for another man by: undertaking self-sacrificing acts to support him; being available to him in times of trouble or crisis; taking his side in a confrontation or difference of opinion; offering him practical help; and socialising and spending time with him.

Participants commonly expressed the belief that society views being gay as unnatural, abnormal, unmanly and incorrect. By contrast, only two participants believe that South African society is accepting of gay men. In this context, participants often draw a distinction between their own personal beliefs and their perception of society’s beliefs. While participants believe that society is unaccepting of gay men, they generally expressed a personal view that homophobia is wrong and that gay men should be treated with more respect by society. Among the reasons identified for homophobic attitudes in society are that a gay lifestyle undermines the family unit and threatens survival of the species because gay unions do not result in procreation. Biblical references and a belief that it is a sin to be gay were also used by some participants to justify society’s negative attitude towards men who are gay. In the context of

discussing the unnaturalness of gay relationships, three participants expressed a belief that humans are biologically designed to be heterosexual, thus justifying their perception of society's belief that gay relationships are unnatural.

A common belief is that one can easily identify a man as gay by the way he walks, talks and dresses. Only one participant expressed a belief that it is not easy to make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation. By contrast, some participants believe it is not possible to tell if a woman is gay but that it is always possible to identify a man who is gay. Participants hold the belief that in comparison to men who are straight, men who are gay are emotionally expressive, more sensitive, effeminate, fashion conscious and concerned about their appearance. A belief is also held that in gay relationships one partner plays the role of "the man" (being more masculine) and the other plays the role of "the female" (assuming a more feminine role in the relationship).

A common belief among participants is that men who are straight feel uncomfortable, scared and unsafe when in the company of men who are gay. In discussing the anxiety that men who are straight feel when confronted with men who are gay, participants acknowledge that the reaction is something akin to stranger anxiety and results from a lack of exposure to and understanding of gay individuals. In discussing this reaction to men who are gay, participants express the belief that a boy who is gay will not be accepted by his peers and will become socially isolated. In this context participants also acknowledge that they would not like to be seen with a person who is gay because individuals assume that if one spends time with people who are gay then one is gay by association. This belief is evident in the following responses:

"I would not like to be seen with two guys scoring - like two buddies of mine at the same table as me. I would not want to be associated with that. I don't want to be seen as a homosexual."

(PR, 18, White, English)

"It is also part of their image and stuff and if somebody said like, 'that boy is gay' and he is friends with him then he must also be gay. People do not want to be seen with someone who is gay."

(DH, 18, White, English)

"Even if there was a guy who was like the best rugby player in the school and he was gay he would not be accepted. People would be scared of him."

(KC, 17, Asian, English)

This belief that males who are gay only socialise with other males who are gay is no doubt a further contributor to the social isolation by their peers of adolescent boys who are openly gay adolescents. This social isolation of adolescent males who are perceived to be gay may help to explain why adolescents who are gay are identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Statements made by many of the participants imply that an individual chooses to be gay. This belief that sexual orientation is matter of choice is in stark contrast to the scientific wisdom that sexual orientation is influenced by a neurological structure known as the dimorphic nucleus and is a function of genetic codes rather than free choice (Gurian, 1997).

Beliefs about a man's role in the family

There is consensus among all but one participant that as a father a man has a particular role to play in the family which is distinct from that played by a mother. Only one participant believes that the role played by the mother in the family is the same as that played by the father. Participants identify the man's primary role in the family as financial provider. In this context a belief is held that women rely on men for financial support and that men should earn more money than women. The response below is indicative of beliefs and

attitudes that exist with respect to a father's financial responsibilities to his family:

"I do not think that a husband who just had a standard job would be comfortable if his wife earned more money than he did - not everyone but most men. A man's role is to be the man and make babies and supply the money. If I was married to a woman who made more money that would be cool but many guys would feel that they were not doing their job."

(KC. 17, Asian, English)

The belief that a man should be a financial provider has implications for men who are unemployed, retrenched or unable to provide financial support to their families. If this belief is shared by the wider South African community than it follows that South African men who find themselves unable to provide financial security for their family will feel disempowered and de-masculinated. Men who are metaphorically castrated by an inability to provide for their families may try to reassert and re-empower themselves as men by adopting hyper-masculine behaviours in other areas of their lives.

A father's role is also defined by participants as that of a protector. A father is described as one who keeps the family safe and together, particularly in times of crisis. In this sense a father is described as being like a container which safe-guards the family and prevents it from dispersing and fragmenting. In a similar vein, a man's role in the family is defined by participants in terms of providing stability and structure. These beliefs are reflected in the following response to the question, "What do you think the dad's role in the family is?"

"I think he is like the leader of the house. That is not to say that the women are not the leaders but men are the physical leaders – the leaders who do other work – a lot of the hard work in a way. Ja. They are kind of like the leader and they should try to keep the family bound together and

provide the structures. And they should be the protection for the families – like if someone says something about a person in the family then he will defend it because he is proud of the family and loves them. And also to be very supportive to the children and his wife and it is also the job of a father to maintain a very good relationship with his wife because that is what binds the family together.”

(DH. 18, White, English)

Participants also believe that a father is responsible for being present in the family not only in terms of physically spending time with the family, engaged in family activities, but also in terms of being emotionally available to the family. Other roles assigned to fathers include providing love and maintaining the house.

An idea commonly articulated by participants is that a man is the head of the family and as such the man should be in control of the family and should make all the decision. In his description of the man's role as head of the family one participant notes that the man is also responsible for being the family's representative and spokesperson.

Another theme to emerge in the discussion of the role of the man in the family is the idea that every family should have a man. This idea seems to highlight the importance and uniqueness of the man's role in the family but also prompts one to ask, “What will happen in the absence of a man in the family?” and, “Can a family have two men?” The answer to this latter question could help to shed light on the dynamics of the father-son relationship during the process of a boy trying to achieve manhood while still living in a family that already has a man.

In discussing the father's role in relation to the role of a mother, participants express the belief that the man should work with the mother in a co-operative way, supporting her and maintaining a good relationship with her. One

participant believes that mothers do more work in the family and thus carry a greater burden than fathers.

A common belief exists that a male is only considered to be a man once he has a job and a family. It seems that, in the eyes of the participants, society expects men not only to take a wife and procreate in order to play their role as men but also to take on the much bigger responsibility of providing financial security and material support for his family.

In describing the concept of a father, participants speak of the father's role as teacher to his son. Participants believe it is the responsibility of a father to teach his son how the world operates, how to relate to people, how to be independent and how to be a man. Participants also speak of fathers as teaching their sons the difference between men and women. This notion of the father as teacher is also apparent in the belief that a father should be a role-model and hero to his children is reflected in the following response:

"The father is someone who is always around. He should be his son's idol; someone to look up to. Most of the time a son becomes what his father shows him. A father should be someone a boy can look up to."

(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

Participants also identify the role of the father in the family as that of a disciplinarian. As such a belief is held that fathers are responsible for setting and maintaining boundaries. It would also appear that participants believe that in South African families, a father handles all major disciplinary offences. In this context, it is significant that participants share a perception that the father's role as disciplinarian often hinders his relationship with his son.

By contrast, the role of the mother is described by participants in very different terms to that of the father. Generally participants speak of the mother as being responsible for: providing food; providing stability; and keeping control of the family by organising their activities and keeping track of

the details of what is happening where and when. The mother is also described as being responsible for providing love, care, encouragement, and nurturing. The role of mothers in providing emotional support is underlined by participants who speak of mothers teaching their sons how to deal with their relationships and emotions. In this context the role played by mothers as peace-keeper in the family and “bridge” between the father and children is also evident. One participant believes that the role of the mother is more difficult than that of the father while another speaks of the complexity of the mother’s role and her need to be emotionally strong and wise. Some of these ideas are evident in the following response:

“I guess my mom takes the brunt of all of the problems. Because the kids can not talk to dad they talk to mom. Dad craps on mom’s head and we crap on mom’s head when mom does not give the right answer. So moms tend to take a lot. So, as for the role of moms, I guess they must be emotionally strong and wise and know what is going on and know what to do.”

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

A common theme to emerge is that mothers do the emotional laundry in the family, offering emotional support, assisting family members to process their emotions, repairing relationships and rescuing family members from emotional reactions.

Beliefs about the relationship between a father and his son

Participants hold a common belief that the single most important ingredient of a good father-son relationship is a father who is present in the family and spends time with his son. In describing the ideal father-son relationship, participants speak of the importance of fathers being engaged with their sons in activities which their sons have chosen and find enjoyable. The perception

that time together is an important ingredient of a good father-son relationship, is highlighted in the following response:

"I do not have a good relationship with my father because I do not see him that often. My brother has a good relationship with him because he sees him more."

(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

Participants also identify open communication and trust as important elements of a good father-son relationship. By contrast a bad father-son relationship is described as one in which the son does not get to see his father, is unable to communicate with his father or is abused by his father.

The nature of the mother-son relationship is described in different terms to that of the father-son relationship. Participants hold a belief that the ideal mother-son relationship is characterised by a pattern of communication in which the son feels free and safe enough to say anything. In this context the role of the mother in providing emotional support to her son is reiterated and the need for a mother to be in touch with her son's emotional state is highlighted.

As can be seen in table 8.5 only two participants describe their relationship with their fathers as being characterised by closeness and open, honest, intimate communication. One participant describes a relationship in which there is mutual understanding but a lack of closeness and intimacy. One participant reports that his father is dead. All other participants said they are dissatisfied with the quality of the relationship they have with their fathers or that they have no relationship with him. These participants speak of a lack of communication and trust between them and their fathers. The main reason identified for this poor father-son relationship is fathers being unavailable or too busy to spend time with their sons. It is significant that all ten of the boys who report being dissatisfied with the quality of their relationship with their fathers come from families where their mother and father are still married and their father resides with the family.

Description of the relationship:	Characteristics of the relationship	Number of participants
Non-existent father-son relationship	Son has no relationship with his father because his father is absent from the family as a result of death or divorce.	2
Unsatisfactory father-son relationship	Son reports that he is dissatisfied with the quality of his father-son relationship	10
Satisfactory father-son relationship	Son reports having a satisfactory relationship with his father although the relationship lacks intimacy and open honest communication:	1
Close father-son relationship	Number of participants who report having a close intimate relationship with their father, characterised by open honest communication:	2

Table 8.5: Quality and nature of the participants' father-son relationship.

The responses in table 8.6 serve as examples of the distance described by many participants between them and their fathers. One also gets a sense of the sadness and father-hunger from the responses in table 8.6.

By comparison to the quality and nature of the father-son relationship, only one participant reports not having a relationship with his mother. One other participant describes his relationship with his mother as being a love-hate relationship in which he can communicate with his mother on most issues but feels there are some things he can not say to her. This boy feels that his relationship with his mother is hampered by her rejection of the person he is becoming. Two participants reported that they have good relationships with their mothers although they sense that they have separated from their mothers and subsequently communicate less with them now than previously.

All other participants reported having good, close relationships with their mothers.

Responses describing participants' relationships with their fathers:
<p><i>"I do not think there is a relationship (between my father and I). He is like never there. He is like always out. And then when I ask him about something he just shouts. He is not committed to this family."</i></p> <p>(WT, 16, Asian, English)</p>
<p><i>"I do not really know him (my father) at all which is really sad. When I do talk to him he is the best man in the world but most of the time I am in a different place to him. And that is quite sad because when he dies I will not know him at all. He makes the attempts but I just turn them down. Part of the problem is that he wants me to be this cool academic guy and be in the corporate world. But I do not want that."</i></p> <p>(KC, 17, Asian, English)</p>
<p><i>"My dad does not do that (spend time with me). He keeps to himself and I keep to myself. I think that guys whose parents have spilt up actually have it better because they get to spend alternate weekends with their dad and then their dads take them out and do stuff with them."</i></p> <p>(TL, 17, Coloured, English)</p>
<p><i>"My dad has just started a business now so he is working continually and before that he used to work for another company and he was always in the office doing this that and the other so I think I have more of a relationship with my mom. I can talk about more things with my mom than with my dad"</i></p> <p>(MI, 15, Black, IsiSotho)</p>

Table 8.6: Examples of responses describing participants' relationships with their fathers.

Most participants report that in order to please their father they have to achieve good academic results. Other behaviours which participants reported

meet with their father's approval are doing well on the sports field and winning awards. The common theme to emerge is that a father's approval of his son is contingent on his son's achievements. This relationship between a father's approval and a son's achievements might explain the origin of the belief reported by Clare (2002) that many men measure their worth by what they produce rather than by the type of person they are. Only one participant reports that he would not have to do anything to please his father as his father approves of him regardless of what he does (this was one of the two boys who reported a close relationship with his father). Three participants feel that nothing they do is ever good enough for their fathers. These boys report that no matter what they achieve their fathers demand more and find fault with them. The difficulty that participants report with gaining the approval of their fathers is indicated in the responses below to the question, "What does it take to please your father?"

"Fly to the moon! It just seems like there is always a glitch in anything that I do. It is like even with the perfect computer programme someone will always find a way to hack it. That is what my dad does – there is always something wrong with everything I do."

(CA, 15, White, English)

"Get 100% at school."

(KC, 17, Asian, English)

"I would have to (long pause). There is nothing I can do to please my dad. Everything that I try to do does not make him happy. He just says, 'Well done' and then that is it. It is really crap."

(WT, 16, Asian, English)

Most participants report that it is very easy to win the approval of their mothers. This perception is reflected in the responses below given to the question, "What would you have to do to please your mom?"

“Not much. Get one good mark here or there. Do one good thing. Help her out in the kitchen. Just small things.”

(PR, 18, White, English)

“She says she loves me no matter how bad my marks are or what I have done. She knows I am still the same person. So I could do anything to please her. I could wash her car that would please her.”

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

Participants report that among the behaviours that meet with approval from their mothers are listening to her, spending time with her, taking account of her feelings, trying hard at school, thinking ahead and planning, keeping tidy and taking care of oneself. Four participants report that getting good academic results would please their mothers. By contrast participants report that it displeases their mothers when they: show anger; do not show respect for other people; do not think things through or consider the consequences; and are moody, reckless, careless, untidy or dishonest. It is interesting to note that many of these behaviours which participants report meet with the disapproval of their mothers, are also the characteristics they identified as masculine.

Beliefs about what constitutes masculine behaviour

Participants associate certain patterns and styles of behaviour with South African men. In describing behavioural differences between the sexes, participants express the belief that men are more impulsive and reckless than women. Participants believe that by comparison to woman, men engage in more frequent risk taking behaviour and have a greater tendency to place themselves in dangerous situations. This belief is supported by the empirical data presented in chapter two which shows that in South Africa men are significantly more likely than woman to seek attention in emergency rooms as a result of accidental and self-inflicted injuries.

Men's risk taking behaviour and impulsivity has been ascribed to neurological, neurochemical and genetic factors. Men's tendency to be impulsive and driven to action is described by Gurian (2003) as men's inclination towards taking action first and talking second. Gurian (2003) attributes this inclination to men's inherently lower levels of serotonin and oxytocin which according to him provides a biological basis for men to be impulsive, choosing to take action first and talk second. Gurian (2003) also reports that neurological and biochemical differences between the male and female brain cause men's fight or flight response to be triggered more rapidly than is true for woman. The triggering of the flight or fight response drives men to action when confronted with stressors. A man's impulse to choose action prior to communication may assist in explaining the significantly higher incidence of suicide among men which was discussed in chapter two.

Participants associate the impulsive, risk-taking, action-orientated elements of men's behaviour with men's thrill seeking, adventurous spirit and heroic nature. The vivid television footage following the destruction of the World Trade Centre on September the 11th, 2001, provides a graphic illustration of men's heroic nature and action orientation. In the television converge of this incident, there is a marked concentration of men performing self-sacrificing and dangerous yet heroic rescues while women are pictured as emotional onlookers. It is impossible to know the extent to which this illustrates the inherently heroic nature of men as opposed to illustrating how men act out a stereotype of being heroic thus fulfilling a societal expectation that men should be brave.

Competition is identified by participants as a hallmark of masculinity. A belief is held that men compete as a way of seeking status. It is also noted by participants that this tendency to seek status is evident in the way men compete to establish who can, for example, consume the most alcohol. Competition is also named as one of the factors that make sport appealing to men.

The belief that men like to compete is supported by the biochemical research discussed in chapter four, ascribing the competitive element of men's behaviour to the action of testosterone (Mc Bride Dabbs, 2000). Evidence also suggests that blood serum levels of testosterone increase in competitive situations (Biddulph, 1997); which not only adds support to the idea that a relationship exists between testosterone and competition but also suggests that testosterone fuels men's competitiveness in competitive situations.

The idea that real men stand up for what they believe in, and are in some sense warriors, is another common theme. In this context a belief is held that to be a man is to seek achievement and recognition. A belief is also expressed by participants that society expects men to perform and achieve.

A common belief among participants is that a male has only achieved manhood once he is able to accept responsibility, take care of himself, no longer needs his mother, and is ready to leave home and be alone in the world. In this context, participants believe that society expects men to be able to support themselves. The idea that masculinity is associated with independence and self-sufficiency is evident in the response given by a participant to the question, "How do you know when you have become a man?"

"When you have become independent. When you make correct decisions. When you are not foolish. Like if someone were to say to you, 'Get up and leave the country – go and start a family,' you would be able to know what to do and you would be responsible and stuff like that."

(PR, 18, White, English)

The idea that manhood is achieved through independence and separating from mother is also evident in the following response to the question, "How can you tell when a boy has become a man?"

“He becomes more responsible and he can take care and look after himself. He does not need his mom to go and do stuff for him. He can do it himself. He becomes more independent.”

(WT, 16, Asian, English)

Another common idea to emerge is the notion that men are the leaders in South African society and that to be a man is to be in charge and in control. This belief is reflected in the following response:

“To be a man you have to be big and strong and in charge and be able to get what you want.”

(KC, 17, Asian, English)

Speaking of society's expectations that a man should be strong and in control, one participant notes the belief that a man should be in control of relationships. This belief is reflected in the following response:

As a man “you have to live up to the example . . . (and be) big and strong and the powerful one in relationships. A lot of people think that the man should be in control of the relationship; that he should make all the decisions.”

(CA, 15, White, English)

A belief exists among many participants that although women do occupy leadership positions in South Africa, men are ultimately in control and are the supreme leaders. One participant, in explaining the leadership role played by men, expressed a belief that men have dominated society since the time of Adam and Eve and that this is ordained by God and would thus always be the case. More than one participant points out that, in their opinion it is unlikely that a woman would ever be elected president of South Africa or the United States of America. This attitude is reflected in the following responses:

“The leading party and presidents are still men. They are black now but they are men. We have a few women politicians in parliament but men still run the country.”

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

You may get female deputies but take for example Patricia de Lille she did not stand a chance of winning the election because she is a woman.”

(KS, 16, Black, isiXhosa)

Another idea to be expressed in this context is the belief that women who have gained elevated positions in society's hierarchies have done so by taking on masculine behaviours and emulating men. This belief is reflected in the following quotation:

“I think a lot of women try to do what men do, partly to get up into the hierarchies and stuff. I think that is how a lot of women have worked up – they see how men do it and they take on those behaviours. Women, if they want to be successful have to take on that persona and those characteristics.”

(DH, 18, English, White)

This idea underlies a belief that women who want to be successful have to adopt masculine personas in order to gain positions of power and influence. A belief is also held that when a woman is in a senior position in an organisation people generally assume that she used sex to gain her power. In the context of leadership, a belief is also expressed that society chooses leaders who are physically strong, physically attractive, and well-built.

Some participants articulate a belief that women in South African culture do in fact hold power but they give this power to men by acting helpless. This belief is evident in the response below:

“Women have to act kind of helpless so that guys feel powerful. I think generally women make themselves less powerful just because they want the men to feel more powerful. A lot of women have the ability to be quite powerful.”

(KC, 17, Asian, English)

A commonly held belief is that to be a man is to be strong. Participants associate the need for men to be strong with the need to keep your guard up and not show signs of weakness or vulnerability. This attitude is reflected in the following response to the question, ‘Do you think men have difficulty showing their vulnerability and weakness?’

“I think so because once you show it you are weak. I think men always have to keep their guard up. Men are more out to get each other so when you let your defences down and let people see that you are vulnerable and that you are not as strong as they think you might be then it is over. Once you let your guard down and let people see that you are weak. For example if two guys fight and one guy gets the hell beaten out of him and everyone else sees that he is an inferior person and not as good as everyone else. So you have to keep you guard up and be able to look after yourself and defend yourself. Being emotionally stable and being able to get back up is also important. “

(MI, 15, Black, IsiSotho)

Beliefs about masculinity and sport

Sport is acknowledged by all participants as playing an important role in the male sub-culture of South African society. In discussing the significance of

sport in male culture, participants speak of the role played by sport in recreation, socialising and bonding. Participants note that sport is used by many men as a way of relaxing, releasing stress and being with their friends. Participants articulate an awareness of the role played by sport in helping men to feel that they are part of a group, that they belong and that they are connected. This is particularly significant in the light of the belief participants hold that men characteristically lack close and intimate relationships outside of their primary relationship. It would seem that sport plays a significant role in allowing men to feel connected to other men in a way that is not possible in the other areas of their lives. The role of sport in bonding also seems to add support to the idea that men build relationships while engaged in side by side, goal-directed activity.

In explaining the role played by sport in South African culture, participants identify the opportunities sport provides for proving one's physical prowess. In this context it is noted that sport provides competitors with the opportunity to demonstrate their physical ability and hence to prove their masculinity and win the approval and admiration of others (particularly members of the opposite sex). A belief is also held that men enjoy sport because of the opportunity it affords them to compete.

Another idea evident in the responses given by participants is that sport provides men with an opportunity to win the approval and admiration of the opposite sex. This notion is evident in the following response:

"If you want to pull chicks you have to play sport. I once told a girl I did not play sport and she was like, 'What are you doing?' . . . A friend and I found ourselves considering changing from hockey to rugby because we thought if someone asked us and we could say we played rugby then we would be cool."

(KC, 17, Asian, English)

A common idea to emerge is the notion that sport appeals to men because it is fun and allows them the opportunity to be child-like, to play and to get dirty. One participant expressed a personal belief that men would not play sport if it was too serious, too competitive or seen as work. Sport seems to be one of the few ways in which men in South African culture are permitted to be masculine and manly yet playful and child-like at the same time. The quotation below, which describes one participant's perception of the appeal of sport, is indicative of these ideas:

"It is social, it is fun, you do not have to act your age, you have an excuse to get dirty and stuff."

(TL, 17, Coloured, English)

All participants are of the opinion that there are certain sports that are considered men's sports and certain sports that are reserved for woman. Participants commonly identify rugby as being the domain of men. When asked to explain why rugby is not considered suitable for woman, participants speak of the physical contact, physical demands and physical danger the game entails. This seems to imply that somehow men, by virtue of their maleness, are able to deal with physical contact, physical danger and physical pain but that woman are not. This attitude that men are capable of withstanding greater abuse than women and that women require protection from abuse while men do not, is an idea which is frequently expressed. Other sports identified (although less commonly than rugby) as men's sports are cricket, basketball, American football and baseball. When asked why hockey is not described as a man's sport, participants point out that because hockey is played by woman it is not considered to be a sport for men. In this context, participants make reference to the fact that in their sub-culture hockey is called *moff-stok* (an Afrikaans term that literally means gay-stick) which highlights the belief that it is an unmanly game. The belief that something is only considered masculine if it excludes anything to do with woman, is evident in this attitude.

When asked to identify woman's sports, participants name netball, gymnastics, ballet and dancing. In explaining the characteristics of women's sports, participants express a belief that sports that are non-aggressive, do not involve physical contact, are not dangerous and involve quick and agile movements are reserved for women.

In talking about the role of sport in proving one's masculinity participants note that sport allows one to demonstrate how strong, tough, brave, committed and competitive one is. Since strength, toughness, bravery, commitment and competition are associated with masculinity in South African culture, sport allows some men to achieve manhood in a very public way. Of course this also implies that those males who are unable to excel on the sports field need to find some other way to be identified with masculine pursuits in order to achieve masculinity. One way of doing this is to become an avid sports fan and sports enthusiast, which may explain South African men's apparent fixation with sports events and sports results because it allows them to be identified with a very masculine pursuit.

Beliefs which imply that sexual activity and virility are measures of one's masculinity

An idea apparent in many interviews is that the journey to manhood entails a sexual awakening and an awareness of physical attraction to the opposite sex. Some participants identify reaching sexual maturity as a significant means of differentiating boys from men. A common belief is that to be a man is not only to have reached sexual maturity but also to have become sexually active. In this context one participant recounts a story of how among his peers a common form of taunting and verbal put-down is to imply that someone will never be able to have sex and will thus remain a boy forever. This account is presented below:

"For a teenager, people make jokes about each other not being able to have sex or never being able to have sex for

the rest of their lives, like, 'Ha ha! You are never going to be able to have sex. You are never going to get laid.' I think it is very important part of masculinity. If you are a virgin in your later ages then they still see you as a child as an underling."

(MI, 15, Black, IsiSotho)

Other participants also acknowledge that it is an insult to a man's masculinity to imply that he is unable to have sex or is incapable of finding a sexual partner. Participants note that having sex helps one to feel grown-up and manly, as is evident in the following response:

"For some guys it is just important to have sex. For example a guy in a township who has sex feels big as if he is a man."

(KS, 16, Black. IsiXhosa)

Participants acknowledge that being heterosexually active can be a way of proving that one is not soft or gay. More than one participant believes that to be a virgin is to be seen as a child, an underling and as such not yet a man. These accounts seem to indicate an attitude in South African society that one is only a man once one has become sexually active.

A significant proportion of participants believe that men have a higher sex drive than women and that men seek out sex more frequently than women. A belief also exists that men talk about sex more frequently and in greater detail than women and that the act of having sex carries more meaning for women. Men's sexual behaviour is often described using words that indicated a predatory and primal instinct. Most participants attribute these gender differences in sexual expression to the innate nature of man while a smaller group believe these differences are merely a playing-out of social expectations and are hence the result of socialisation.

Only five participants believe that the generally accepted notion that men have a greater sexual appetite than woman is a myth. Four of these participants believe that there are some men who have a high sex drive and some who do not, the same being true for woman. The fifth participant believes that while men and woman share the same sex drive, woman conceal their desire for and enjoyment of sex because that is what society demands of them. Most of the participants seem to hold a belief that men have a high sex drive and that it is in their nature and is their birthright as men to pursue sexual gratification. It would seem from the attitudes expressed by participants that boys in this segment of South African society are socialised into a heterosexually permissive culture.

There is consensus among participants that while it is socially acceptable for a man to have multiple sexual partners and to enjoy sex, this is not true for woman. An attitude is expressed that women who have multiple sexual partners are thought of in derogatory terms while men earn status for the same behaviour. In this regard it is noted that men brag about their sexual activity as a way of seeking status. These attitudes seem to underlie a belief among participants that girls who, like them, seek sexual experience and pleasure are valued less than girls who deny men sexual favours. This belief may manifest in an, albeit subconscious, de-valuation of sexually responsive women. It seems plausible that a man who devalues sexually expressive and responsive woman will dedicate himself to a relationship of sexual frustration with a woman who is sexually unresponsive. Being attracted to sexually unresponsive women has a secondary gain in that it offers an insecure man a sense of security since if his partner does not enjoy sex he need not worry that she will actively seek out or willingly respond to sex with other men. Given this line of reasoning it would seem that men who devalue sexually responsive women (as is the case with the majority of research participants in this study) will be at risk for infidelity, seeking sex for pleasure outside their primary relationship while simultaneously valuing their non-sexual mates.

Conclusion

Judging from the beliefs and attitudes held by this group of research participants, it is possible to describe a typical South African man. It would appear that men in South Africa are confident, contained, competitive and controlling. They achieve masculinity by establishing independence, autonomy and taking control. While these men are perceived as being sexually liberated and emotionally restricted the reverse is true of woman. Providing, protecting, procreating and performing are integral parts of the role assigned to men in South African society and certain vocational pursuits are preserved exclusively for them. Men and women have different cognitive styles which result in characteristic differences in perception, information processing and decision making. Men move, stand, speak and present themselves in a characteristic way which sets them apart from woman. To be a man in South African culture is to take risks, live dangerously, be impulsive, heroic and action orientated. Boys in South Africa play with other boys but should not get too close or too intimate with them otherwise they will be perceived as gay. Men in South African culture abandon their child-like ways and adopt a mantle of seriousness except when they play sport during which time they can get dirty, play as boys and demonstrate their physical prowess while they re-affirm their manliness. South African masculinity comes in the form a well-built, lean, muscular body. Although a man may aspire to fit this mould he must not appear to care too much about his appearance.

Fathers seem to be physically and emotionally absent from South African families and boys have a father-hunger which gives rise to a desire to spend time with and get close to their dads. While fathers play the role of teacher and disciplinarian they would be well advised to spend more time with their sons, engaged in fun activities with them while simultaneously endeavouring to build trust and encourage open honest communication. It seems boys lack the approval of their fathers and feel that their fathers' acceptance is contingent on producing results and achieving success.

These rigid and restrictive ideas about what it takes to be a man, force men in South Africa to be half of themselves – they are permitted to express their tough, heroic, action-orientated and physical selves but are not allowed to acknowledge or give a voice to their internal, emotional world. South African boys are thus dehumanized and not permitted to be fully connected to themselves and to others. In this way boys in South African culture are hollowed out, stuffed full of bravado and then trained away from healthy attachment, intimacy and emotional expression.

Chapter 9

Implications of the research findings

One can ask questions about the world, but one cannot claim to have discovered the truth. The best one can expect is that a new interpretation, a different perspective, or an interesting slant can be created.

(Davis and Gergen, 1997. p 7)

Introduction

The ideas and attitudes about masculinity and gender roles expressed by research participants in this study are discussed in chapter eight. These ideas have been summarised as a list of beliefs which describe how research participants conceptualise men, masculinity and gender roles in South African society. This list of beliefs is presented in Appendix C. The assertions about how men express their masculinity listed in Appendix C serve as a description of the content of the cognitive schemata for masculinity for the subsection of men represented by this sample of South African male adolescents.

Using the list of beliefs in Appendix C as a starting point, this chapter considers the extent to which the content of research participants' cognitive schemata for masculinity is congruent with the concepts and ideas about masculinity presented in the literature and discussed in chapter six. The difficult issue of how to interpret these beliefs and understand their implications is also considered. Some strategies are then suggested for encouraging healthy and positive masculinities in South African society. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of this research project and recommendations for further research.

Congruence of research findings with ideas reported in the literature

Speaking of hegemonic masculinity, one author writes:

“Literature on masculinity generally finds that there is a ‘dominant’ form of masculinity that influences boys’ and men’s understandings of how they have to act in order to be an ‘acceptable’ male, and that this dominant mode is associated with heterosexuality, toughness, power and authority, competitiveness, and subordination of gay men.”

(Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002. p 75).

The content of the list of beliefs in Appendix C clearly echoes this notion of hegemonic masculinity. The list of beliefs in Appendix C also bears a striking resemblance to the beliefs and attitudes about men and masculinity reported in the American, British and Australian literature and outlined in chapter six. Reading Pollack’s (1998) description of the “Boy Code” and Polce-Lynch’s (2002) discussion of the “Pack Rules” leaves one with little doubt that the group of research participants in this study construct masculinity and manhood in a very similar way to boys in western countries. This similarity is not surprising given the discussion in chapters six and eight of the role played by the media in constructing masculinity and the influence of western media (particularly western music, film and television) on South African society.

Although there seems to be a high degree of congruence between western constructions of masculinity and the beliefs and attitudes of the research participants in this study, there are several differences. One obvious difference is found in the beliefs expressed by research participants about sexism and gender discrimination. The South African adolescents interviewed in this study seem conscious of gender discrimination and sexism which works against both men and women. Allied to this is the belief that men are the leaders in society and that belief that the man is the head of the family. These ideas, although clearly articulated by research participants in this study, are not immediately apparent in the literature reviewed in chapter

six. It is, however, difficult to interpret why ideas about gender discrimination were explicit among the beliefs expressed by these research participants. On the one hand, articulation of these beliefs by the participants in this study may be indicative of a greater degree of gender discrimination in South African society. On the other hand, it may reflect a higher level of awareness and sensitivity to issue of gender discrimination.

Another obvious difference between the beliefs presented in Appendix C and the literature reviewed in chapter six is the notion that a father's approval is difficult to win. Although the literature reviewed in chapter six talks of boys in Australia and America having a "father hunger" and being out of relationship with their fathers as a result of the 3 Ds (death, divorce and emotional detachment), little is said about fathers withholding their approval.

The belief held by participants in this study that to be a man is to give up being a child, is another example of an idea that, although implicit, is not explicit in the literature reviewed in chapter six.

Interpreting beliefs about masculinity as perceptions of reality

A large number of the beliefs presented in Appendix C can be read as perceptions of reality which may or may not be accurate reflections of gender differences and South African society. The belief that men and women think differently, is one example of a belief that fits into this category. Other examples of beliefs which can be interpreted as perceptions of reality include, women think things through more thoroughly than men, women are more capable than men of giving active attention to more than one stimulus at a time, and women are intellectually more capable than men.

If one frames the beliefs in Appendix C as perceptions of reality, it may be possible to use qualitative and quantitative research methods and empirical data to test the validity of participants' perceptions of masculinity and gender roles. By adopting this approach to the content of participants' schemata for

masculinity, it would be possible to draw conclusions about the degree to which the South African adolescent males represented by this sample hold perceptions about men and masculinity that are consistent with information collected in other empirically based research. It may thus be possible to identify and expose gender myths that exist among the segment of society represented by the boys who participated in this study.

Interpreting beliefs about masculinity as expressions of needs

Some of the statements from Appendix C may be read as reflections of the needs of adolescent males. For example, it may be possible to interpret the belief that men lack intimacy in their relationships, as an expression by participants of a need for greater intimacy in their relationships. An acute need for intimacy among adolescent males is not surprising when one considers that adolescent males are in the developmental process of separating from their parents and their families, and rejecting their parents as they struggle to achieve autonomy and an identity separate from the family. The changing nature of the adolescent-parent relationship may leave adolescent boys feeling disconnected and lonely and may thus have lead participants to comment that man's relationships lack closeness.

Some of the beliefs in Appendix C also seem to be verbalisations of adolescent males' developmental needs. For example, the belief that to be a man is to be independent, autonomous and in control, may reflect the adolescent developmental tasks of striving to achieving autonomy and independence.

Some of the beliefs listed in Appendix C can also be read as calls from the research participants for a change in the status quo. For example, the belief that boys have a father-hunger, could be interpreted as a cry from the research participants urging their fathers to spend more time with them and be more intimately engaged with them. Another example of a belief from

Appendix C which fit into this category is idea that it is not easy to win a father's approval.

Categorising beliefs about masculinity as adaptive or maladaptive

Another way to interpret the list of beliefs in Appendix C is to categorise each belief as positive and healthy or negative and dysfunctional. Such an approach would presumably allow one to identify negative beliefs about masculinity which exist in South African society and then propose strategies that could be used to substitute dysfunctional beliefs with more adaptive, positive beliefs. Such an approach, while tempting and perhaps even useful, is not without complications and limitations.

One of the appeals of this approach is that it may enable one to identify beliefs which contribute to the psycho- and socio-pathology associated with men which was discussed in chapter two. For example, one could hypothesise that the belief that to be a man is to be independent and the belief that men do not show their emotions, contribute to the comparatively high suicide rate among South African men. Similarly one could speculate about the causal relationship between beliefs about risk-taking, adventure and thrill seeking, and the comparatively higher rate of accidental and self-inflicted injuries among men. It might also be possible to draw conclusions about how the beliefs and attitudes expressed by participants about sex, contribute to the spread of HIV in South Africa. While it might be appealing to make such reductionist conjectures it is noted that it is not always a simple process to draw a straight line of causality from a belief to a behaviour. The situation is complicated by the fact that beliefs and behaviour co-exist within a reciprocal relationship which make causal inferences tenuous. While it may be true to say that beliefs shape behaviour, as was discussed in chapter five, it is not possible to say that a single belief is directly and solely responsible for a particular pattern of behaviour.

Chief among the complications of categorising beliefs as healthy or unhealthy is that such an approach necessitates a value judgment. Any value judgements of a belief about masculinity would be guided by a bigger system of personal beliefs such as an individual's religious convictions, philosophical standpoint and world view. There may, thus, not be consensus as to whether a given assertion about masculinity is positive or negative. For example, there would no doubt be some debate as to whether the belief that a man is the head of the family, constitutes a positive, adaptive belief or a negative, dysfunctional belief.

Another difficulty with such an approach is that some beliefs about masculinity might be considered positive in some contexts and negative in others. The belief that men take risks and live dangerously is an example of such a belief. Risk taking is problematic and maladaptive in situations where it contributes to mortality and morbidity as a result of reckless accidents. Risk taking is, however, positive in situations where it leads to innovation, creativity, breaking new ground, new discoveries and other advances.

Interpreting beliefs about masculinity as restrictive rules

It is possible to frame some of the beliefs presented in Appendix C as restrictive rules which act like a gender straightjacket, confining South African men to particular roles. For example, the belief that men play contact sports implies that in order to be considered masculine one must play a dangerous and physically demanding sport. A corollary to this belief is that if one does not engage in some form of physically dangerous sport, then one is somehow less masculine than those who do.

The purpose of framing beliefs about masculinity as restrictive rules is not to judge assertions about masculinity as adaptive or maladaptive. The aim of this approach is, however, to highlight the idea that social constructs of gender and beliefs about masculinity limit and confine South African men, thus denying them freedom to express their masculinity in any way that falls

outside the hegemonic model of masculinity. Appendix D presents the beliefs extracted from the list in Appendix C, which can be framed as “restrictive rules” which contain South African men within a gender straight jacket.

These restrictive rules which seem to comprise hegemonic masculinity, deny South African men choice and consign men to certain roles on the basis of the physical shape of their genitalia. Assigning people roles based on their physical characteristics calls to mind apartheid style practices of categorising and limiting individuals because of some genetically determined physical characteristic. The building of a truly democratic South African society requires that we challenge restrictive hegemonic notions of masculinity which confine men and rob them of freedom to be what they choose to be given the biological reality of being male.

It is not only in South Africa that men are damaged by restrictive hegemonic notions of masculinity. In an article entitled, *Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States – a Case Study of Northern Uganda*, Doland (in Cleaver, 2002) highlights the damage inflicted on society by restrictive beliefs about gender. Drawing on material from research in northern Uganda, Doland describes how men in Uganda who are unable to live up to the hegemonic model of masculinity and are offered no alternative model, turn to acts of violence. Doland’s article makes clear the damage done to men and their communities by restrictive and rigid beliefs and ideas about masculinities.

Framing beliefs about masculinity as restrictive rules and proposing alternative models of manhood is not the same as suggesting that “maladaptive” beliefs should be substituted by other “adaptive” beliefs. This approach is about offering men alternative models of manhood, giving them choices and not forcing them to fit into a single prescriptive narrow mould of masculinity. This approach is not about forcing all South African boys into a new box labelled “modern man” but rather about encouraging and valuing diversity in male roles and giving men freedom to express their maleness in the their own way.

Promoting less restrictive models of masculinity

It is not a simple process to loosen the straps on the gender-straight jacket, challenge the restrictive hegemonic model of masculinity, and establish a more flexible system of beliefs about gender. Values, beliefs and attitudes exist within a complex social system and have often developed as strategies to deal with physical realities. These values, beliefs and attitudes function as metaphorical glue which holds society together and keeps it functioning in a relatively stable way. Changing social constructions and beliefs about masculinity is thus not easy and any proposals for change would have to take cognisance of the biological reality of gender and the physical and social reality of the world in which men live.

Although the work of creating flexibility in gender roles and establishing alternative models of manhood in South Africa is not easy, we are not completely powerless and helpless in effecting social change. There are strategies and interventions that could be used to begin this process of freeing South Africa's men from restrictive beliefs and offering men alternative, less restrictive models of masculinity. Such strategies include:

1. Highlight alternative models of manhood.

While beliefs and attitudes about the masculinities are culturally transmitted and acquired in the process of socialisation, men do not accept hegemonic ideas of masculinity without making choices. Men are actively involved in the process of constructing their own understanding of masculinities. As such, when faced with alternative models of manhood and new beliefs and ideas, men can re-construct their understanding of what it means to be a man. This highlights the importance of helping boys and men achieve positive and healthy masculinities by exposing them to alternative models of masculinity and making them conscious of the restrictive beliefs and attitudes about manhood which exist in South African society.

One way to promote less restrictive models of masculinities is by acknowledging, discussing and affirming (in schools, homes and in psychologists' consulting rooms) the wide variety of male role models in our society. Media images of masculinity vary from the emotionless Arnold Schwarzenegger to the courageous Billy Elliot providing material for discussion and graphic illustrations that there are many ways to be a man.

2. Encourage men to look after their bodies.

Men in South African society could be encouraged to adopt a positive attitude towards their own bodies, look after their bodies, take responsibility for their health, care for themselves and engage in pro-health behaviours. Boys need to be taught and that their bodies are not machines that can be treated with harshness and put in dangerous situations.

Encouraging boys to look after themselves will necessitate an examination of the obvious and more subtle abusive practices in our society that allow boys and men to be treated harshly and hurt. Boys need to be protected from the culture of cruelty which characterises the socialisation of males in our society and shielded from bullying, harassment and emotional violence. This requires South African society to challenge the assumption that boys can take pain and are immune to wounding simply because they are males. Furthermore, the myth that sexual and physical abuse does not happen to boys needs to be challenged and the silence that surrounds the abuse of boys needs to be broken. Structures need to be put in place in communities and schools which allow boys to report incidents of abuse to compassionate and understanding adults outside of the family. Boys need to be given the clear and consistent message that their bodies are valuable, should be treated with care, and may not be hurt or abused by anyone.

In this context, the way boys are disciplined in families and in schools also needs to be examined. Disciplinary interventions used to modify boys' behaviour need to be seen as a way of building character and conscience

within a process of restitution rather than as a means of inflicting physical pain or emotional manipulation. Boys need discipline that is clear and consistent but not harsh and abusive (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999). If boys are unduly shamed, harshly punished, or encounter excessive adult anger, they will react to authority with oppositional defiance and resistance (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999) and may internalise self-hate and self-loathing which manifests in a neglect of self.

3. *Encourage healthy emotional attachment.*

South African men could be encouraged to seek meaning and purpose in their lives outside of their roles as protector, provider, procreator and performer. Men should be encouraged to value relationships as much as they value achievement and status and success. Such an attitude would encourage men to measure their worth not only by what they do or what they achieve but also in terms of the nature and quality of their interpersonal relationships. Engendering such an attitude may assist South African men to realise that in addition to being competitive, controlling and critical in their relationships, men can also be introspective, thoughtful, co-operative, kind, compassionate and tender.

A value system which includes the belief that emotional attachment, intimacy and interdependence are manly would also help to engender positive and healthy masculinities in South Africa. It seems that the relationships between many men are characterised by emotional distance, guardedness, and coldness. The loneliness of men has to be addressed in the lives of boys. Boys need to be encouraged to initiate friendships, maintain them, and experience the conflicts that arise in male friendship from different levels of athletic skill, from teasing, and from competition for the attention of girls (Kindlon and Thompson, 1999). Too often boys lack both the resources and the will to resolve those conflicts and preserve friendships. Schools have an important role to play in teaching boys these relationship and conflict resolution skills.

4. *Take the masculinities to school.*

In order to offer South Africa's males alternative models of manhood, it is necessary to influence and alter the socialisation process through which boys learn about their culture, society, social interaction, power relations, and relationships. This requires the development of projects aimed at providing psycho-education for institutions that are primarily involved in the socialisation of boys and the construction of gender stereotypes. Schools in particular need to be the focus of such psycho-educational programmes. South African educators need to be conscious of gender issues and carry a high level of gender awareness. Gender issues, both those that affect girls and those that affect boys, need to be an integral part of the school curriculum and need to be taken into account in formulating policies, procedures and programmes within schools. Boys' schools could begin this process by implementing programmes that aim to make boys more aware of gender, how gender issues affect their lives and how the hegemonic masculinity is constructed in South African society. Clearly this will necessitate the training of educators to sensitise them to gender issues that affect South Africa's men.

One way to facilitate discussions on gender and masculinities in schools would be to repeat the UNICEF, *Let's Talk Men* project. *Let's Talk Men* consists of a series of educational films on masculinities produced by the regional offices of UNICEF in South Asia (Cleaver, 2002). These films were designed for use as experiential learning tools in classrooms. The films are accompanied by a facilitation guide and can be used in the absence of, or in conjunction with, existing programmes that deal with gender issues. The primary target audience for this material is adolescents, particularly boys, between thirteen and twenty years of age. The material has been successfully used, particularly in the context of violence against woman, to allow boys to explore and question masculinities and understand gender roles and responsibilities (Cleaver, 2002).

In order to empower educators to feel comfortable and confident about addressing gender issues, it may be necessary to provide psycho-educational workshops for educators of boys. These workshops could address issues including: the problems effecting men and boys in South Africa; how beliefs and attitudes about what it means to be a man contribute to these problems; social constructs of masculinity in South Africa culture and South African schools; and the role of schools and educators in helping boys achieve positive and healthy masculinities.

Effective education programmes that encourage boys to be critical consumers of the media are also an important part of engendering positive and healthy masculinities in society. As discussed in chapters six and eight, masculinities are constructed in the media and the media acts to reinforce the restrictive hegemonic masculinity. Jean Kilbourne (1999), in her book, *Can't Buy My Love: how advertising changes the way we think and feel*, makes the significant point that the media's portrayal of men and woman, particularly in advertising, creates and sustains a hegemonic masculinity that damages both men and woman. Boys need to be made aware of this and challenged to examine more closely the construction of gender in the media.

It is acknowledged that adolescent boys may be suspicious of institutionalised programmes and that this may undermine the efficacy of the proposed school based interventions. Nonetheless, schools play such an important role in the socialisation of boys and the transmission of cultural values that they should be included in the process of encouraging alternative models of masculinity.

5. *Encourage a men's movement within feminism.*

While gender does appear to be, at least in part, socially constructed it is significant that it is both men and women who are involved in its construction. As such any programmes aimed at changing concepts of masculinity in our community will have to involve women as well as men. In this regard feminism

has an important role to play in promoting alternative models of masculinity and helping South African males achieve positive and healthy masculinities.

Traditionally, feminism is thought of as a women's movement that concerns itself with changing the role of woman in society and hence revolutionising the world. Although feminism is acknowledged to have achieved a gender revolution, at least in many western countries, one could argue that a revolution that involves only half the population is not much of a revolution. If feminism is serious about achieving a gender revolution it should be as much concerned about the rights of men and their liberation and empowerment, as it is about the plight of woman. As such there is an argument that feminism should be concerned with making the world a safer, healthier and better place for men as well as women.

Arguing for a men's movement within feminism is not to deny that there is still important work to be done liberating South African woman. Arguing for a men's movement within feminism is, however, to call for: an acknowledgment that what is good for men is also good for woman; making funds available for research on issues affecting South African men; prioritising the development of programmes that deal with issues affecting South African men; and acknowledging the needs of South African men in the formulation of government policies and programmes.

In the context of discussing the role of women in encouraging positive and healthy masculinities, it is important to note that men's behaviour is very strongly influenced by a desire (which may have a biological and evolutionary basis) to attract members of the opposite sex. It follows that interventions which aim to effect changes in men's behaviour will be futile if they are not consistent with the expectations and preferences of women. It follows that women will also need to be involved in the process of exposing hegemonic masculinity, challenging its assertions and proposing alternative models of manhood. In particular the expectations that South African women have of men will need to be exposed, addressed and perhaps modified.

6. *Engage fathers in the process of raising boys.*

The literature asserts that fathers and male role models have an important role to play in helping their sons understand masculinities, gender roles and gender relationships (Biddulph, 1995, West, 1996). This notion is also echoed by research participants in this study who speak of the role played by fathers in teaching their sons about gender differences and gender relationships. Reports from other countries, however, indicate that fathers are missing from families, are uninvolved in the process of raising their sons, and emotionally unavailable to their sons (Biddulph, 1995; Pollack, 1999; West, 1996). The same pattern of absent and emotionally detached fathers is explicitly articulated by the research participants in this study. This would suggest that it is imperative to encourage South African fathers to be more closely involved with their sons and more actively involved in the process of raising boys.

Furthermore engendering positive and healthy masculinities in South Africa requires research, discussion and education on the role of fathers in the family and the nature of the father-son relationship. Effective programmes for fathers on parenting are also integral to this process. The importance of mothers and the significance of the mother-son relationship has long been a focus of psychology. It is now time for the role of fathers and the dynamics of the father-son relationship to receive equal attention.

The reality of single parent families, the high incidence of divorce, and the frequency with which men desert their families in South Africa, also needs to be addressed. If it is acknowledged that fathers have such an important role to play in raising boys it follows that strategies are needed to keep South African fathers in the family and actively involved in the process of raising children. The issue of fathers' restricted access to their children and the subject of "fathers' rights" also needs to be reconsidered in the context of acknowledging the important role men play in raising children and the need boys have to be in relationship with their dads.

The issue of men's absence from the life of children is also significant in the context of recognising that education in South Africa is increasingly a female dominated profession. The shortage of male role models in South African schools and the feminisation of schools, which was discussed in chapter two, will also need attention. Boys need access to healthy male role models and schools, as institutions involved in the socialisation of boys, have an important part to play in providing these male figures. The state will thus need to investigate strategies to recruit and retain suitable men to work in South African schools.

7. *Acknowledge that masculinity is a matter of birth.*

Some feminists would have us believe that men and woman are the same. While there is little argument that men and woman are identical in their common membership to the human race, they also differ significantly in fundamental ways. These genetically determined differences and biologically determinants of behaviour need to be recognised, acknowledged and celebrated.

One example of the importance of acknowledging the biological determinants of gendered behaviour, is provided in an article by Neil Doyle (in Cleaver, 2002) aptly entitled, *Why do dogs lick their balls?* This article espouses the danger of ignoring the role of sexual desire in shaping men's behaviour when the issues under discussion are men's sexual health, sexual violence, and relationships. This article does not argue that men's sexual appetite can in any way be used to justify men's behaviour, in exactly the same way that we cannot use hunger to justify cannibalism. The article does, however, highlight the need to take cognisance of the role of biological and evolutionary factors in determining men's behaviour and defining masculinities.

In the same way that Doyle (in Cleaver, 2002) argues that men's biologically determined sex drive plays a fundamental role in shaping men's behaviour, so too must the role of testosterone be acknowledged. As discussed in chapter

four, testosterone is a powerful substance that makes boys unmistakably male in the way they think, learn, communicate and behave. Testosterone, for example, has been shown to make boys relatively competitive, aggressive and active. These elements of boys' behaviour need to be acknowledged and channelled, not pathologised and suppressed. Psychologists, educators and parents need to recognise these elements of male behaviour as normal and take them into account in the way boys are educated and parented.

In the same vein, educators need to be made aware of the brain based research that highlights the neurological based gender differences in learning. The implications of this brain based research need to be taken into account when designing and implementing learning programmes for boys and when assessing boys. Schools need to be made "boy friendly" but this can only happen if educators, school managers, curriculum planners and policy makers understand the biological nature and needs of boys.

8. Augment boys' action and doing skills with language and feeling skills.

As discussed in chapter four, men carry genetic codes dating back 400 000 years which predispose them to building and hunting. Now that society has changed and men are no longer required to wrestle wild animals and move physical objects through space, our challenge is to find alternative ways for boys and men to use their physical strength and action-orientation. Such a transition necessitates adding language and feeling skills to the action and doing skills of boys. By doing this we can create a breed of super-boy that is flexible across different situations, having both the capacity to feel and communicate as well as strength, energy and pluck.

Given the importance of adding communication skills to boys' repertoire of behaviour, we need to acknowledge the significance of appropriate and effective literacy courses and language programmes for boys. It is noteworthy that developmental delays in language and reading acquisition are more prevalent among boys and indications are that boys language development

lags behind that of girls, particularly in the early school years (West, 2002). This seems to imply that it is difficult to teach boys and girls language in the same classroom. Furthermore it suggests that if little boys are taught language in the same classroom as little girls (who acquire language skills with more ease and success), boys may internalise the belief that they can not read and write (and hence communicate) as well as girls, and that these are feminine pursuits. Encouraging boys to read, acquire language skills and communicate effectively is integral to any programme that tries to promote healthy masculinities in South African society. In this context, the early identification and appropriate support of boys with reading disorders and disorders of written expression is also of paramount importance.

The importance of allowing boys to have and express an emotional world is also an important part of creating positive and healthy masculinities in South Africa. In order to achieve this, parents and educators need to give boys permission to have an internal life, approval to express the full range of human emotions, and help in developing an emotional vocabulary so that they may better understand themselves and communicate more effectively with others. In this context it is worth noting that the great men of history, Nelson Mandela, Jesus and Buddha, were men who exhibit courage, strength, power and determination, along with emotional sensitivity, an ability to express themselves and love for others.

9. Encourage inter-disciplinary collaboration and action research.

As Cleaver (2002) points out, any programme which aims to address the plight of men and challenge the hegemonic masculinity, needs to consist of an inter-disciplinary and multi-pronged approach. Such an approach would consist of legislation; social policy; training of professionals, educators and parents; capacity building of local community groups; as well as community based psycho-education programmes on gender issues and masculinities. Creating positive healthy masculinities in South Africa requires the involvement of groups of individuals from many disciplines and intervention at

many levels within our society. Engendering positive and healthy masculinities in South Africa is not the work of a single organisation or a single group of professionals.

The need to develop and test the efficacy and impact of programmes which address issues affecting South African men, is also of paramount importance. Testing the effectiveness of such programmes may be difficult since social and cultural change is not easy to measure and is a slow process that may take generations. This kind research and development is also expensive, especially when one considers the other important social problems which compete for funding in South Africa. Nonetheless, engendering healthy positive masculinities in South Africa is important work that requires such an investment of time and resources.

Limitations of this study

The research participants in this study were drawn from a single sex independent school in a Cape Town suburb. This group, although racially mixed, can hardly be taken as representative of all boys in South Africa. The sample size of 15 is also very small and may even call into question how representative this group is of the sub strata of society that they represent. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the views expressed by these boys and their experience of masculinity are an accurate reflection of the beliefs held by all boys in the community represented by research participants.

It should also be noted that adolescences is a period during which the self-concept is under construction. It is conceivable that beliefs about masculinity change in conjunction with changes in self-concept. As such it is possible that the beliefs expressed by this sample of adolescents are not congruent with the beliefs held by adult South African males. This issues is worthy of further exploration and research.

The main source of data for this study is audio recordings of semi-structured interviews and interview transcripts. Since no attempt was made to record non-linguistic cues such as facial expressions and body positions, the data is incomplete and does not record the richness of the inter-personal experience of talking to adolescent boys about masculinity and gender roles. In addition no attempt was made to analyse the language used by participants to describe masculinity. A rich source of information was thus not exploited. Furthermore the extent to which verbal responses to questions in an interview context allow access to cognitive schemata is also open to criticism.

It is also important to realise that the participants in this study may have been giving socially expected answers to interview questions rather than honestly sharing their own perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. The content of the interviews may thus reflect cultural norms and gender stereotypes rather than the personal beliefs of individual participants.

The fact that the interviews were conducted by a white male is also noteworthy. It is acknowledged that the personal characteristics of the interviewer (including variables such as age, class, race and sex) influence the interview process and outcome (Hearn, 1998). It is also conceivable that the research participants may have judged what a white male psychological researcher would want to hear about masculinity and gender roles and then constructed appropriate socially desirable answers to the interview questions.

My own personal biases as well as those of the other research assistant also need to be noted as limitations of this study. The process of inferring beliefs from the interview transcripts and the subjective process of making choices about which quotes and interpretations to present, no doubt shaped the content of the research findings, the conclusions and the recommendations in this study. The final interpretation and presentation of data is thus inextricably, "overloaded with the researcher's interpretive baggage." (Scheurich, 1997. p 74).

During the interviews I was able to guide the content of the interaction, determine the direction of the discussion and lead participants down a particular line of reasoning. My own experience of masculinity and my own agenda have thus undoubtedly, albeit subconsciously, influenced the interview process and hence shaped the interview content. This is another limitation of the study.

Conclusion

Noting the limitations of this study is not to reject its findings, conclusions and recommendations as completely insignificant. This dissertation highlights the need for South Africans to be conscious of and to give attention to the hegemonic construction of masculinity and the beliefs, attitudes and values which shape manhood and define gender roles in South African society. Even if this dissertation does not capture or report how masculinity is conceptualised in the broader South African context it does raise important questions about how masculinity is constructed and exposes some the restrictive rules which confine South African men to particular roles in society.

Another important feature of this dissertation is the structure it provides for investigating social constructions of masculinity. This theoretical orientation of this dissertation could serve as the framework for a much bigger research project to investigate beliefs about masculinity across a wider spectrum of South African society. The same theoretical orientation could also be used to investigate how females in South Africa conceptualise masculinity and define gender roles.

A third significant element of this dissertation is the list of beliefs it has generated (presented in Appendix C). This list of beliefs could serve as the basis for the construction of a beliefs questionnaire. Such a beliefs questionnaire about masculinity and gender roles would enable researchers to collect data from a wide cross section of South African society. Such a questionnaire would also allow researchers to investigate the influence of

variables such as age, race and socio-economic status on concepts of masculinity and beliefs about gender roles in South African society.

There is need for further research on the issue of hegemonic masculinity in South African society, which does not draw on interviews, questionnaires and self-reporting. The methodological problems of interviews have already been discussed above. Alternative methods of data collection which avoid these limitations would be valuable. One possibility would be a study which examines practices in schools and society which reflect hegemonic notions of masculinity.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Let boys be boys.

Lyrics of a contemporary song

We live in an era in which masculinity is being problematised and devalued, as was discussed in chapter two. This has given rise to a flood of “masculinity in crisis” discourse which is framing men as pathological and dysfunctional. While recognising that not all men are maladaptive, it is acknowledged that masculinity is associated with the psycho- and socio-pathology identified in chapter two. The fact that men are a population at risk prompts questions about the origin of maleness and the determinants of the masculinities. Traditional theories about masculinity are outlined in chapter three while neurological and biological determinants of maleness are presented in chapter four. Chapter five proposes an integrated model which allows the masculinities to be conceptualised as both a biological and socially constructed reality. While elements of men’s behaviour have their origin in genetic codes and evolutionary factors, as outlined in chapter four, there are other aspects of men’s behaviour which are shaped and determined by the socially transmitted and shared beliefs about masculinity which are outlined in chapters six and eight. Focusing on the biological determinants of men’s behaviour, one would look to pharmacologists, genetic engineers and neurosurgeons to solve the social and psychological problems identified in chapter two. If, however, one turns one’s attention to the cognitive factors that shape behaviour, one sees that it is psychologists, educators and parents that have an integral role to play in inoculating South African boys against the psychopathology that is associated with being male in South African society.

As was explained in chapter five, cognitive factors generally and beliefs and attitudes specifically, play a significant role in influencing perceptions,

thoughts, emotions, decisions and behaviour. It follows that there is much that can be done to address the socio and psycho-pathology discussed in chapter two, by challenging the beliefs and attitudes that exist in South African society about masculinity and the role of men in South African society. This study set out, using the methodology described in chapter seven, to identify the content of a group of adolescent males' schemata for masculinity and their beliefs about manhood and gender roles. The findings of the study are presented in chapter eight and summarised in Appendix C.

The issue of how to interpret the beliefs and attitudes expressed by research participants is considered in chapter nine. An argument is also made in chapter nine for reading the beliefs and attitudes expressed by participants as restrictive rules which confine and limit South African men. Rigid beliefs and attitudes about manhood and gender roles create a gender straight jacket that restricts men and confines them to patterns of behaviour which can be maladaptive and dysfunctional. Creating a healthy democratic society necessitates freeing South African men from these inflexible ideas and narrow definitions of masculinity, affirming that there are many ways to be a man, and helping boys achieve positive and healthy masculinities. Strategies are thus proposed in chapter nine for initiating the process of establishing alternative, less rigid models of manhood in South African society.

This study seem to confirm the idea that masculinity is in trouble in South African society. The indications are clear that South African men are a population at risk for certain forms of psychopathology and that important social problems are predominantly caused by South African men. The beliefs and attitudes expressed by participants in this study also confirm the idea that hegemonic masculinity in South Africa is restrictive and damaging. While it might be true that the media has sensationalised and exaggerated the problems men are facing in society, it is equally true that some men are experiencing difficulties. Although I am reluctant to support the idea that masculinity is in crisis and that all men are in trouble, I must acknowledge that this dissertation has led me to conclude that some South African men need help. I have no doubt that hegemonic masculinity in South African society

restricts and damages many men. I thus affirm that some men in South Africa need to be offered alternative, less restrictive models of manhood and need to be liberated from the roles they have been assigned as the rapists, criminals, perpetrators of violence, academic underachievers, alcoholics, drug users, adulterers and victims of suicide in South African society.

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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

The following issues will be raised with each participant. The order in which issues will be raised and the way in which they will be raised will not be predetermined; the issues will be raised spontaneously and the participants will be allowed to dictate the direction in which the conversation progresses. In this way it is hoped that a spontaneous semi-structured conversation will be held which will enable the researcher to gain insight into the participants' thinking on gender issues without creating an interview type situation in which the responses of the participants are shaped by the predetermined order and wording of the questions.

GENDER ROLES

- behavioural differences between men and women
- characteristics that are considered manly
- characteristics that are considered feminine
- societies attitude towards men and women
- gender discrimination
- gender roles in the work place
- the process of becoming a man
- initiation ritual (explicit or implicit)
- icons and media images of masculinity
- the process of proving one's manliness
- dress codes for men and women
- love between men
- the man's role in the family
- differences in the way men and women express their emotions

SEXUALITY

- gender differences in attitudes towards sex
- male sexual expression

- the role of sex in proving one's masculinity
- homosexuality

THE MALE BODY

- physical characteristics associated with being a man
- the role of exercise in male culture
- the use of make-up and cosmetic surgery by men and women
- participants' personal attitudes to their own body (willingness to alter some aspect of their physical appearance so as to be more manly)

SPORT

- the role played of sport in male culture
- characteristics of traditionally male sports
- sport as a way of proving one's manliness

TOUGHNESS AND STRENGTH

- the meaning of toughness and strength
- proving one's toughness and strength
- physical toughness versus emotional toughness
- the relationship between strength, power and control
- showing signs of weakness and vulnerability

FRIENDSHIPS

- characteristics of friendships between males versus characteristics of friendships between men and women

FATHERS

- the role of fathers

- the characteristics of fathers
- characteristics of the father-son relationship
- behaviours that meet with the approval of fathers
- behaviours which meet with disapproval or rejection by fathers

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MOTHER

- role played by mothers
- characteristics of mother son relationships
- behaviours that meet with approval from mothers
- behaviours which meet with disapproval and rejection by moms

RELATIONSHIPS WITH SIBLINGS

- characteristics of relationships with siblings of the same sex
- characteristics of relationships with siblings of the opposite sex

APPENDIX B

Common themes identified from interview transcripts about masculinity and gender roles in South Africa

1. Beliefs about gender differences.
2. Beliefs about sexism and gender discrimination.
3. Beliefs which imply that men and women think differently.
4. Beliefs which imply that men and women relate differently.
5. Beliefs which imply that work in South Africa is gendered.
6. Beliefs expressed which imply that women are emotionally expressive and men are emotionally dishonest.
7. Beliefs that imply no clearly defined points mark a boy's entry into manhood.
8. Beliefs which imply that to be a man is to give up being a child.
9. Beliefs which imply that masculinity is constructed in the media.
10. Beliefs which imply that masculinity has a distinctive physical appearance.
11. Beliefs about love between men.
12. Beliefs about a man's role in the family.
13. Beliefs about the relationship between a man and his son.
14. Beliefs about what constitute masculine behaviour.
15. Beliefs about masculinity and sport.
16. Beliefs which imply that sexual activity and virility are measures of one's masculinity.

APPENDIX C

Common and shared beliefs express by participants about masculinity and gender roles in South Africa

<i>Beliefs about gender differences.</i>
<p>Men and women are different but equal.</p> <p>Differences between the sexes extend beyond obvious anatomical differences.</p> <p>Men and women play different roles in society, the work place and in the family.</p> <p>Contemporary gender stereotypes, although flexible, are distinct.</p> <p>Flexible contemporary gender stereotypes make it difficult to identify characteristics that are exclusively associated with men.</p> <p>Masculinity is associated with being strong, dominant, big, well-built, emotionally contained, in charge and capable of getting what you want.</p> <p>Men are associated with recklessness, sport, drinking, attracting girls, having sex, and going out into the world to make money.</p> <p>Femininity is associated with being gentle and soft in speech and action, and with being emotional.</p> <p>It is considered feminine to hug other people, be involved in the emotional aspects of life, be a counsellor, be frivolous, pay attention to one's appearance, ask for help, be nurturing and care for children.</p> <p>To be a man in South Africa is to sacrifice yourself in order to meet the expectations of society and appear physical and strong.</p> <p>God ordained gender differences.</p> <p>Gender differences are the result of inherent differences in the nature of men and women as well as social conditioning and learning.</p> <p>Sometimes males adopt masculine behaviours in order to meet social expectations.</p>

Table 1: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants that imply men and women are different but equal.

Beliefs about sexism and gender discrimination.

Both men and women are discriminated against in South African society.

Women are discriminated against in the political arena.

Women are discriminated against in some churches where they are excluded from performing religious ceremonies.

Men are discriminated against in the legal system and receive harsher prison sentences than women for identical infringements.

It is easier for women to gain access to universities than it is for men.

Women are generally treated with more gentleness than men.

Individuals are much more direct, insensitive and unkind when dealing with men.

Men can deal more easily with harshness, pain and difficulty than women can.

Table 2: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about sexism and gender discrimination.

<i>Beliefs which imply that men and women think differently.</i>
Women think things through more thoroughly than men.
Women are more capable than men of giving active attention to more than one stimulus at a time.
Women think through decisions more carefully than men.
Men and women make different attributions.
Women are intellectually more capable than men.

Table 3: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants that imply men and women think differently.

<i>Beliefs which imply that men and women relate differently.</i>
<p>Women have better relationship skills than men.</p> <p>Women are more relationship orientated than men.</p> <p>Women have a greater number of intimate relationships than men.</p> <p>Women have more relationship difficulties and experience more conflicts in their interpersonal relationships with other women than men do in their relationships with other men.</p> <p>Men's interpersonal relationships lack intimacy.</p> <p>Relationships between men are characterised by activity and action.</p> <p>Relationships between men and women are characterised by talking.</p> <p>Men are more guarded in their communication with women than they are in their communication with men.</p> <p>Women should be treated with suspicion.</p> <p>Men deal with relationship difficulties with a characteristic 'fight or flight' response.</p>

Table 4: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants that imply men and women relate differently.

Beliefs which imply that work in South Africa is gendered.

In South African society some jobs are considered men's work and some are considered women's work.

Engineering, construction, manufacturing and assembling are considered male pursuits.

The world of economics, business and finance are predominantly the domain of men as is work in the motor vehicle and transport industry.

Work that is considered men's work requires physical strength, physical activity and resilience.

Men get the jobs that earn more money.

Work is gendered because men and women have different preferences.

Women's work are those pursuits that involve interior decorating, clothing design, child care, domestic work, secretarial work, counselling, nursing, teaching young children, serving, taking care of others, hairdressing and being a make-up artist.

The common features of women's work is that it requires attention to detail, the ability to nurture and provide emotional care, creativity, and the ability to attend to personal needs.

Table 5: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that work in South Africa is gendered.

<i>Beliefs expressed which imply that women are emotionally expressive and men are emotionally dishonest.</i>
<p>Women express emotions with greater intensity than men.</p> <p>Women pay more attention to the emotional content of situations than men.</p> <p>Women are more aware of and have greater control over their emotions than men.</p> <p>Women have more skills in handling their emotions than men.</p> <p>Women express a wider range of emotions than men.</p> <p>Women are more comfortable with the emotional aspects of life than men.</p> <p>Women are more capable than men of identifying and naming their emotions than men.</p> <p>Men do not show their emotions.</p> <p>Men deny the way that they feel.</p> <p>It is difficult to infer a man's emotional state from his behaviour and actions.</p> <p>Men are reluctant to talk about their emotional state.</p> <p>Men demonstrate rather than verbalise their emotional state.</p> <p>Women find it easier to deal with problems like death and loss.</p> <p>Women are emotionally more stable than men.</p> <p>A man is in touch with his feminine side if he is aware of and can give a voice to his emotional state.</p> <p>Although men and women experience the same emotional states they do not demonstrate them in the same way.</p> <p>Men mask their emotions and only allow themselves freedom to express their feelings when out of the public eye.</p> <p>Young boys are actively encouraged to control and contain and mask their emotions.</p> <p>It is socially acceptable for a man to cry if someone significant dies.</p>

Table 6: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that women are emotionally expressive and men are emotionally dishonest.

<i>Beliefs that imply no clearly defined points mark a boy's entry into manhood.</i>
<p>Masculinity is something that has to be achieved.</p> <p>There is an absence of initiation rituals in contemporary South African society.</p> <p>It is not clear at what point a boy becomes a man.</p> <p>Initiation rituals have no meaning and serve no purpose in South African society.</p>

Table 7: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that there are no clearly defined points that mark a boy's entry into manhood.

<i>Beliefs which imply that to be a man is to give up being a child.</i>
<p>To be a man is to give up being a child.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one gives up child-like behaviour.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is able to act in a mature way.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is able to be serious is no longer frivolous.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is able to make decisions without help.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is no longer foolish.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is able to accept responsibility.</p>

Table 8: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that to be a man is to give up being a child.

<i>Beliefs which imply that masculinity is constructed in the media.</i>
<p>There are media icons and media images that embody masculinity.</p> <p>Media icons of masculinity demonstrate physical strength, power, a muscular appearance, independence, action orientation, and a willingness to fight.</p> <p>In the media masculinity is synonymous with being direct, tough and rough.</p> <p>In the media men are portrayed as people who command respect, are bold and confident.</p> <p>There are many different ways to be a man and hence no single media icon can embody masculinity,</p>

Table 9: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that masculinity is constructed in the media.

Beliefs which imply that masculinity has a distinctive physical appearance.

Men move, stand, speak and present themselves in a characteristic way.

There are some hairstyles that are considered masculine and some that are feminine.

It is considered masculine to stand erect, with one's shoulders back and chest out.

It is considered manly to present oneself in a bold and confident way.

It is unmanly to appear to be afraid, hesitant or unsure.

A man should appear to be calm and controlled at all times.

It is uncharacteristic of man to move their hands about in the air.

Men speak in a more monotonous tone than women.

It is feminine to wear tight clothes that draw attention to one's physical shape.

Men appear to take less care of and be less concerned with their appearance than women.

Trying to appear pretty is considered feminine.

Gay men are concerned with their appearance and wear clothes to look good.

Masculinity has a particular physical shape.

A man's body has a distinctive shape and form.

Men are physically more muscular and stronger than women.

Men are more capable than women of performing dangerous and physically demanding tasks.

Women are gentler and more vulnerable than men and hence have to be protected.

Society values physical strength and stature and rewards these with recognition and status.

Men are physically superior to women.

Men exercise to stay in shape, to look good and to be lean.

Men exercise because physical activity makes them feel good.

Although men do not like to admit it, they are concerned about how they look.

A man must not appear to be too concerned with his physical appearance.

Very few men are completely satisfied with their physical appearance.

Most men, given the choice, would choose to be physically larger, more athletic, stronger and more muscular.

Although they do not admit it most men are concerned about the physical shape of their bodies.

Men should look as natural as possible,

Table 10: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that masculinity has a distinctive physical appearance.

Beliefs about love between men.

Men who are straight do not say, "I love you" to other men.

When men who are straight do say, "I love you" to each other they are joking and messing around or they are drunk.

Real men are heterosexual.

It is considered unmanly to be gay.

It is considered unnatural to be gay.

It is a sin to be gay.

Society is un-accepting of men who are gay.

A gay lifestyle undermines the family unit and threatens the survival of the species because gay unions do not result in procreation.

Humans are biologically designed to be heterosexual.

It is easy to identify a man who is gay by the way he walks, talks and dresses.

It is always possible to determine a man's sexual orientation without having to ask him.

Gay men are more emotionally expressive than straight men.

Gay men are more fashion conscious and concerned about their appearance than straight men.

Gay men are more sensitive than straight men.

In gay relationships, one partner is 'masculine' and one is 'feminine'.

Men who are straight feel anxious in the company of men who are gay.

If a man associates with men who are gay, it is assumed that he is also gay.

Gay adolescents are not accepted by their peers and become socially isolated.

One chooses to be gay.

Table 11: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about love between men.

Beliefs about a man's role in the family.

A man's role in the family is distinct and different to that of a woman's role.

A man's role in the family is to provide and protect.

A man has a responsibility to provide financially for his family.

Men should earn more money than women.

A man provides structure and stability in a family.

A man should safeguard and protect his family from danger.

The man in the family is responsible for maintaining the house.

A man is the head of the family.

A man should spend time with his family.

A man is responsible for being the family's spokesperson and representative.

Every family should have a man.

A male is only truly said to be a man once he has a job and a family.

Fathers are teachers and disciplinarians.

A father is responsible for teaching his son about the physical world.

A father is responsible for teaching his son how to relate to people.

A father is responsible for teaching his son how to be independent.

A father is responsible for teaching his son how to be a man.

A father teaches his son the difference between men and women.

A father should be a role-model and hero to his son.

The father in a family plays the role of disciplinarian.

A father is responsible for setting and maintaining boundaries.

A father's role as disciplinarian often hinders his relationship with his son.

The mother in a family is usually responsible for preparing food.

The mother in a family is responsible for providing stability.

The mother in a family is responsible for organising the activities of the family and keeping track of the details of what is happening when and where.

The mother in a family is the main source of love, care, encouragement, emotional support and nurturing for other family members.

<p>A mother teaches her children how to deal with relationships and emotions.</p> <p>Mothers frequently have to play the role of 'peace-keeper' in the family.</p> <p>Mothers frequently have to act as a channel of communication between family members.</p>
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Table 12: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about a man's role in the family.

Beliefs about the relationship between a man and his son.

The single most important ingredient for a good father–son relationship is a father who spends time with his son.

A good father spends time with his son engaged in activities which the son has chosen and finds enjoyable.

Open communication is an essential element of a good father-son relationship.

Trust is an essential ingredient of a good father-son relationship.

A good mother-son relationship is one in which the son feels free and safe enough to say anything.

Boys have a father-hunger.

Many boys have a poor relationship with their fathers.

Many boys wish they were closer to their fathers.

Most boys have a better relationship with their mothers than they do with their fathers.

It is not easy to win a father's approval.

A father's approval of his son is contingent on the son achieving academic or sporting success or winning an award.

Most fathers are never completely satisfied with what their sons achieve and always demand more and a higher level of achievement.

Most boys feel that nothing they do is ever good enough for their fathers.

Fathers are generally critical and quick to find fault with their sons.

It is easy to win the approval of one's mother.

Table 13: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about a man's relationship with his son.

<i>Beliefs about what constitutes masculine behaviour.</i>
<p>Men take risks and live dangerously.</p> <p>Men are more impulsive than women.</p> <p>Men are more reckless than women.</p> <p>Men are more inclined to risk taking than women.</p> <p>Men have a thrill seeking and adventurous spirit.</p> <p>Men have an heroic nature.</p> <p>Competition and dominance are hallmarks of masculinity.</p> <p>Part of what appeal of sport to men is the opportunity it allows for competition.</p> <p>Men stand up for what they believe in.</p> <p>Men have a warrior nature.</p> <p>Men are more inclined to status seeking and gaining recognition.</p> <p>To be a man is to be independent, autonomous and in control.</p> <p>One has become a man once one is capable of looking after oneself and no longer requires a mother.</p> <p>One becomes a man when one is able to accept responsibility.</p> <p>One is considered to be a man when one is ready to leave home.</p> <p>One is considered to be a man once one is independent and self-sufficient.</p> <p>Men are the leaders in society.</p> <p>Society expects men to assume control.</p> <p>It is unlikely that a woman would be elected as the political leader of South Africa or the United States of America.</p> <p>South Africa is run by men.</p> <p>Women who have gained positions of power in society have done so by emulating men and adopting masculine behaviours.</p> <p>Women use sexual influence as a source of power.</p> <p>Society chooses leaders who are physically strong, physically attractive and well-built.</p> <p>Women give their power to men by acting helpless.</p> <p>Men are expected to be strong.</p>

Table 14: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about what constitutes masculine behaviour.

Beliefs about masculinity and sport.

Real men play contact sports.

Sport plays an important role in the life of a man.

Men play sport because it is recreational.

Men are involved in sport as a way of socialising.

Men use sport as a way on bonding and forming relationships with other men.

Taking part in team sports allows men to feel that they are part of a group giving them a sense of connectedness and belonging.

Sport provides men with the opportunity to prove their physical prowess.

Sport allows men the opportunity to win the approval and recognition of other people.

Women admire and are attracted to good sports men.

Watching and taking part in sporting activities is a way of relaxing and releasing stress, for men.

Sport can be used as a way of proving ones masculinity.

Sport appeals to men because it allows them to 'play' and be child-like in a very masculine and physical way.

Some sports are considered 'men's sports' and some sports are considered 'women's sports'.

Men's sports are those sports which involve physical contact, are physically demanding and dangerous.

Women's sports are characterised by quick agile movements and a lack of aggression, contact and danger.

Men's bodies can take more physical abuse than women's bodies.

Women need to be protected from physically dangerous situations.

Sports which are played by women are considered less masculine than those which are not.

Sport allows men to demonstrate how strong, brave and committed one is.

Table 15: A summary of the beliefs expressed by participants about masculinity and sport.

Beliefs which imply that sexual activity and virility are measures of one's masculinity.

A boy becomes a man once he is capable of procreating.

A male is considered to be a man once he is sexually active.

It is an insult to a man to imply that he is incapable of having sex.

It is an insult to a man to imply that he will be unable to find a sexual partner.

One feels grown up when one has had sex.

Being heterosexually active is one way of proving that one is not gay.

To be a virgin is to be seen as an underling and hence not yet a man.

Men have a higher sex drive than women.

Men talk about sex more frequently than women.

Men talk about sex in more detail than women.

The act of sex carries more meaning for women than it does for men.

It is a man's birthright to pursue sexual gratification.

Men are socialised into a sexually permissive culture.

It is socially acceptable for a man to enjoy sex.

It is not socially acceptable for a woman to enjoy sex.

A man who has multiple sexual partners is seen as virile.

It is not socially acceptable for a woman to have multiple sexual partners.

Men brag about their sexual activity as a way of earning status.

Women who seek sexual experience and enjoyment are devalued by comparison to women who deny men sex.

Sexually responsive women are devalued and regarded with suspicion.

Table 16: Summary of the beliefs expressed by participants which imply that sexual activity and virility are measures of one's masculinity.

Appendix D

Beliefs about masculinity and gender roles which can be read as restrictive rules

Masculinity is associated with being strong, dominant, big, well-built, emotionally contained, in charge and capable of getting what you want.

Men are associated with recklessness, sport, drinking, attracting girls, having sex, and going out into the world to make money.

Femininity is associated with being gentle and soft in speech and action, and with being emotional.

It is considered feminine to hug other people, be involved in the emotional aspects of life, be a counsellor, be frivolous, pay attention to one's appearance, ask for help, be nurturing and care for children.

To be a man in South Africa is to sacrifice yourself in order to meet the expectations of society and appear physical and strong.

In South African society some jobs are considered men's work and some are considered women's work.

Engineering, construction, manufacturing and assembling are considered male pursuits.

The world of economics, business and finance are predominantly the domain of men as is work in the motor vehicle and transport industry.

Work that is considered men's work requires physical strength, physical activity and resilience.

Women's work are those pursuits that involve interior decorating, clothing design, child care, domestic work, secretarial work, counselling, nursing, teaching young children, serving, taking care of others, hairdressing and being a make-up artist.

The common features of women's work is that it requires attention to detail, the ability to nurture and provide emotional care, creativity, and the ability to attend to personal needs.

Men do not show their emotions.

Men deny the way that they feel.

Men are reluctant to talk about their emotional state.

Men demonstrate rather than verbalise their emotional state.

A man is in touch with his feminine side if he is aware of and can give a voice to his emotional state.

Men mask their emotions and only allow themselves freedom to express their feelings when out of the public eye.

Young boys are actively encouraged to control and contain and mask their emotions.

It is socially acceptable for a man to cry if someone significant dies.

Masculinity is something that has to be achieved.

To be a man is to give up being a child

One becomes a man when one gives up child-like behaviour.

One becomes a man when one is able to act in a mature way.

One becomes a man when one is able to be serious and is no longer frivolous.

One becomes a man when one is able to make decisions without help.

One becomes a man when one is no longer foolish.

One becomes a man when one is able to accept responsibility.

Media icons of masculinity demonstrate physical strength, power, a muscular appearance, independence, action orientation, and a willingness to fight.

In the media masculinity is synonymous with being direct, tough and rough.

In the media men are portrayed as people who command respect, are bold and confident.

Men move, stand, speak and present themselves in a characteristic way.

There are some hairstyles that are considered masculine and some that are feminine.

It is considered masculine to stand erect, with one's shoulders back and chest out.

It is considered manly to present oneself in a bold and confident way.

It is unmanly to appear to be afraid, hesitant or unsure.

A man should appear to be calm and controlled at all times.

It is uncharacteristic of man to move their hands about in the air.

Men speak in a more monotonous tone than women.

It is feminine to wear tight clothes that draw attention to one's physical shape.

Men appear to take less care of and be less concerned with their appearance than women.

Trying to appear pretty is considered feminine.

Gay men are concerned with their appearance and wear clothes to look good.

Masculinity has a particular physical shape.

A man's body has a distinctive shape and form.

Men are physically more muscular and stronger than women.

Men are more capable than women of performing dangerous and physically demanding tasks.

Women are gentler and more vulnerable than men and hence have to be protected.

Men are physically superior to women.

Men exercise to stay in shape, to look good and to be lean.

Men should look as natural as possible,

A man must not appear to be too concerned with his physical appearance.

Straight men do not say, 'I love you' to other men.

When men do say, 'I love you' to each other they are joking and messing around or they are drunk.

Real men are heterosexual.

It is considered unmanly to be gay.

It is considered unnatural to be gay.

It is a sin to be gay.

Humans are biologically designed to be heterosexual.

It is easy to identify a man who is gay by the way he walks, talks and dresses.

Gay men are more emotionally expressive than straight men.

Gay men are more fashion conscious and concerned about their appearance than straight men.

Gay men are more sensitive than straight men.

If a man associates with men who are gay, it can be assumed that he is also gay.

One chooses to be gay.

A man's role in the family is to provide and protect.

A man has a responsibility to provide financially for his family.

Men should earn more money than women.

A man provides structure and stability in a family.

A man should safeguard and protect his family from danger.

The man in the family is responsible for maintaining the house.

A man is the head of the family.

A man is responsible for being the family's spokesperson and representative.

A male is only truly said to be a man once he has a job and a family.

The mother in a family is responsible for preparing food.

The mother in a family is responsible for providing stability.

The mother in a family is responsible for organising the activities of the family and keeping track of the details of what is happening when and where.

The mother in a family is the main source of love, care encouragement and nurturing for other family members.

A mother provides emotional support for the other family members.

Men take risks and live dangerously.

Men are more impulsive than women.

Men are more reckless than women.

Men are more inclined to risk taking than women.

Men have a thrill seeking and adventurous spirit.

Men have an heroic nature.

Competition and dominance are hallmarks of masculinity.

Men stand up for what they believe in.

Men have a warrior nature.

To be a man is to be independent, autonomous and in control.

One has become a man once one is capable of looking after oneself and no longer requires a mother.

One becomes a man when one is able to accept responsibility.

One is considered to be a man when one is ready to leave home.

One is considered to be a man once one is independent and self-sufficient.

Men are the leaders in society.

Society expects men to assume control.

Men are expected to be strong.

Men play contact sports.

Women admire and are attracted to good sports men.

Some sports are considered 'men's sports' and some sports are considered 'women's sports'.

Men's sports are those sports which involve physical contact, are physically demanding and dangerous.

Women's sports are characterised by quick agile movements and a lack of aggression, contact and danger.

Men's bodies can take more physical abuse than women's bodies.

Women need to be protected from physically dangerous situations.

Sports which are played by women are considered less masculine than those which are not.

A boy becomes a man once he is capable of procreating.

A male is considered to be a man once he is sexually active.

Being heterosexually active is one way of proving that one is not gay.

To be a virgin is to be seen as an underling and hence not yet a man.

Men have a higher sex drive than women.

Men talk about sex more frequently than women.

Men talk about sex in more detail than women.

It is a man's birthright to pursue sexual gratification.

It is socially acceptable for a man to enjoy sex.

It is not socially acceptable for a woman to enjoy sex.

A man who has multiple sexual partners is seen as virile.