

**MASCULINITY CONSTRUCTION:
GRADE 7 BOYS' RELATIONS WITH GIRLS AT A TOWNSHIP
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GAUTENG EAST**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **MASCULINITY CONSTRUCTION: GRADE 7 BOYS' RELATIONS WITH GIRLS AT A TOWNSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GAUTENG EAST** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

L Chimanzi (Mr)

Date

SUMMARY

Guided by Connell's social constructionist theory of hegemonic masculinity, in a study conducted at a township primary school in Gauteng East, I explored the way boys in Grade 7 interact with each other and girls, as well as the way in which they understand the world around them in the context of gender relations.

A purposive sampling method was used to select boys and girls to participate in this qualitative study. A total of 30 research participants, 17 boys and 13 girls, took part in this study. The methodology included the use of individual diaries and focus groups to solicit information and observe gender relations in boys and girls in the construction of masculinity.

Masculinity in this study was constructed through power relations. The themes identified when analysing the social relationships between boys and girls were sexuality, the sturdy boy, homosociality, sex roles, defying authority and the comedian.

Key terms: masculinity construction; hegemonic masculinity; gender relations; township; power relations; primary school; Gauteng East.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

DBE	Department of Basic Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HOD	Head of department
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LC	Luckmore Chimanzi
SMT	School management team
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The concepts of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity have been used widely in contemporary research on male identity in South Africa and the world over (see Morrell 2001, Bhana 2008, Martin & Muthukrishna 2011 , Bowley 2013, Morojele 2013, Vetten & K Ratele 2013, Swain 2005 and Renold 2007,) . South Africa is regarded as one of the leading countries in the study of masculinity in the developing world (Redpath, Morrell, Jewkes & Peacock 2008). Masculinity in this context is a concept that relates to male identity. It is a social attribute of men in a particular setting at a particular point in time (see Wetherell 1996).

‘Hegemonic masculinity’ is a term that has been used by many social scientists in analysing the male practice of dominating others. Hegemonic masculinity is “a mesh of social practices productive of gender based hierarchies, including violence that supports these hierarchies; that is, the unequal relations between females and males *as groups*” (Ratele 2008:516). It is thus a term used to refer to the domination of women but also of one group of men by another.

Renold (2007), in her study of ten and eleven-year-old boys, points out that hegemonic masculinity is tied to dominant notions of heterosexuality. Boys’ play and talk are often heterosexualised. While there is extensive research on heterosexuality and other forms of masculinity construction in teenage boys and young men (see Morrell 2001, Groes-Green 2009, Wood & Jewkes 2001; Mfecane, Struthers, Gray & McIntyre 2005; Sauls 2005; Lindegaard & Henrisen 2005 and Gibson, Dinan & McCall 2005) , there is a lack of research that scrutinises the formation of young masculinities (Renold 2007) and the way boys and girls think and behave in relation to each other (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). **Thus while in this research I focus on one aspect of the construction of masculinity amongst boys, I studied it in relation to girls and therefore the experiences and feelings of both boys and girls were sought on how boys construct masculinities.** This study is thus an attempt to bridge the gap by investigating the relations between boys and girls in their final year in a township primary school in the Gauteng East District.

According to Statistics South Africa's 2011 (Stats SA 2012) census results, there are 51.8 million people living in South Africa. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the population is made up of children below the age of 15. In fact, Gauteng, the province in which this research was carried out, has 2 908 931 children below that age (StatsSA 2012:28). This is the age group that is under researched in terms of gender relations. Most research on this age group have been carried on sexual violence in schools (See Human rights watch 2001 and Prinsloo & Moletsane 2013) rather than masculinities. These research in South Africa schools show that girls are fondled, subjected to aggressive sexual advances and verbally degraded at school (Human rights watch 2001). Renold (2007) argues that studies on children should go beyond a discussion of sexual abuse or deviance to focus on the formation of young masculinities, since masculinity construction is related to sexual violence, abuse and deviance, which in turn has an impact on gender relations in the school environment. Thus masculinity construction among boys and their relationship with girls requires a relational investigation.

Connell (2002a), drawing inspiration from the work of Thorne, points out that when children are mentioned in research it is usually assumed that they are being 'socialised' into gender roles from the adult world, thus making them passive recipients of the socialisation process, yet children's play, talk and social interactions are often related to notions of masculinity. Connell (2002b) argues that masculinities come into existence as people act. It is because of this line of thought that I will adopt a social constructionist perspective in this study in order to better understand the construction of masculinity in boys in their final year at primary school. The definition of social construction will be illuminated in section 1.4.2.

1.2 DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to explore how Grade 7 boys construct masculinity, which will include an exploration of their social relations with girls. Accordingly, the statement of the research problem, together with the research questions and the objectives of the study outlined below, give an overview of what the study is about and what it sets out to achieve.

1.2.1 Statement of the research problem

The South African government has increased school attendance by the girl child dramatically but more has to be done in making the school environment more favourable for girls. South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school which impede the realisation of their right to education (Human Rights Watch 2001).

It is thus implied that issues of gender-based violence in South African schools require an understanding of masculinity. Redpath et al (2008) argue that topics such as power relations and masculinity are treated in the subject Life Orientation only from the Grade 10 level in South African schools instead of being addressed in earlier grades. The Curriculum and assessment policy statement for Life Orientation in the Senior Phase, which Grade 7 is a part does not have any topic on gender relations and masculinity. Gender is only mentioned in passing and only talking about duties of boys and girls. This implies that issues of gender inequality are addressed at secondary-school level rather than at primary-school level. This merging body of work makes such an area of investigation necessary. It is my belief that a greater understanding of masculinity construction among children at primary school level would help in designing policies and practices that make the school environment a safer place for both boys and girls. This research is therefore undertaken to gather and document personal experiences and views on the masculinity construction of boys and girls in Grade 7 at a township primary school in Gauteng East.

While this research is with boys, it attempts to include the views and experiences of girls in their encounter with boys. This study uses a gender lens to analyse these experiences and thus to produce more useful knowledge on the construction of masculinity, with the intention to assist in the formulation and implementation of more policies that would eradicate or reduce gender inequalities.

1.2.2 The research questions

- How do boys construct masculinity in a township primary school in Gauteng East?
- How do boys and girls construct gender-segregated boundaries amongst themselves?
- How do young boys understand their own masculinity?
- How do girls perceive the construction of masculinity by boys?

1.2.3 The objectives of the study

- To explore the way in which masculinity is constructed amongst peers in the school environment.

- To explore the boundaries constructed by boys as they interact among themselves and with girls.
- To explore the way young boys understand their own masculinity.
- To explore the way young girls perceive the construction of masculinity by boys.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Much research has been conducted on masculinity construction in South Africa (see Morrell 2001; Gibson & Hardon 2005; Reid & Walker 2005; Redpath et al 2008). As mentioned above, there is a gap in the existing literature on masculinity construction in relation to the specific influences and implications for gender relations in boys and girls at primary-school level in South African townships. Much attention has been focused on masculinity and violence in boys at secondary level (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman 2002; Morrell 2001; Eckman, Jain, Kambou, Bartel & Crownover 2007; Groes-Green 2009) and young men who have finished school in the townships (see Wood & Jewkes 2001; Mfecane, Struthers, Gray & McIntyre 2005; Sauls 2005; Lindegaard & Henriksen 2005; Gibson, Dinan & McCall 2005) and yet little has been done on boys at primary level in the townships in South Africa. Some of the researches carried out in some South African schools look at children in Foundation Phase while others do not study masculinities among final year primary school boys in a township setting (See Bhana 2006 and Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). Issues of gender and sexuality remain “under-researched and under- investigated in settings outside of working-class African contexts” (Bhana 2013: 59). This study is thus an attempt to address this gap in gender and masculinity construction.

Ratele (2008) contends that traumatic acts of violence against women and girls in several African societies are a daily occurrence, while many South African men exhibit violent behaviour in their intimate relationships. A study conducted by Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle (2009) shows that 42.4% of men in South Africa had been physically violent with an intimate partner; that is, current or ex-girlfriend or wife. Violence is power-related and such violence I feel is nurtured from childhood as boys construct masculinity. Violence and sexuality are related in gender relations.

Renold (2007), in her study of two contrasting primary schools in the United Kingdom (UK), contends that schools have become important social arenas for the production and

reproduction of learners' sexual cultures. Sexuality is an important component in the construction of young masculinities yet when discussing children, "sexuality is in the context of abuse and exploitation" (Renold 2007:276). Sexuality is enshrined in the way boys and girls define, negotiate and consolidate their gender relations. This study was thus conducted to establish the way in which young boys at primary-school level construct masculinity amongst peers in the school environment. An understanding of gender imbalance at a young age may help in formulating more policies which could help to reduce violence in the adult world.

Connell (2003:19) acknowledges that some gender equality advocates at times "assume that if boys were socialised differently, they would automatically behave better towards women when they are men", but this is a simplistic statement considering how education works. Positive ways of socialising boys into 'real boys' at a young age may help in reducing violence in the adult world.

Findings in studies carried out in the UK and locally in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) show the domination of girls by boys at primary school level. Swain (2005), in his study on the construction of masculinity by boys in their final year at primary schools situated in or around Greater London, observed that boys dominated space in the playground through their games although girls refused to be dominated. In a related study on two primary schools in north London, Epstein, Kehily, Mac an Ghaill and Redman (2001) suggest that the geographical and spatial organisation of playgrounds are a manifestation of gendered power relations. Boys took much of the space through their game of football. In this study on how to be a 'real boy', it was found that boys had to be good at football and fighting to gain respect from both boys and girls. In a study carried out in South Africa, in KZN on Grade 7 boys in an inner-city school, boys in their interactions with girls wielded more power and girls were often powerless (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). Since masculinities are fractured, fluid and dynamic, it appears they are far from settled. Everywhere and every time "a whole lot of people are working very hard to produce what they believe to be appropriate masculinities" (Connell 2002b). In this study these and related issues will be explored to further understand how masculinity construction in young boys impacts on gender relations in townships in the South African context.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of theories have been put forward to explain gender (See Giddens 1997) . Renzetti and Curran (in Galliano 2003) point out that feminist sociologists played a major role in the reformulation of sociological gender theories. In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century gender was mainly understood from the perspective of biologists, medical researchers and psychologists (Richardson, 2008). The terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ were used interchangeably and only much later did the social construction approach to gender develop. Gender is socially constructed while sex is biological in nature.

1.4.1 Sex role theory

Besides social construction theory, sex role theory is also used in the study of gender. Sex role theory is arguably still considered the most popular view of gender learning (Connell 2009). This theory looks at the roles and activities which are regarded as appropriate for women and men. According to this view, there is a definite role for each sex, thus there are two sex roles in any given context, namely, male and female (Connell 1987). It is argued that sex role theory connects social structure to the formation of personality but the social position of an individual also influences their sex roles. For example, the sex roles of urban educated people can differ from those of less educated people in the rural areas.

Sex role theory offers a sample framework for describing the insertion of individuals into social relations (Connell 1987). According to this theory, boys and girls actually develop the traits of character considered to be appropriate. As fully socialised members of society, they later in turn apply negative sanctions to perceived deviants and convey the norms to the next generation (Connell 2009). Individuals are thus locked into stereotypes.

Sex roles are acquired through socialisation and role learning. In masculinity studies, sex role theory looks at the cultural expectations for men. Sex role theory thus portrays boys as passive recipients of socialisation. Like sex role theory, “a social role theory is a collection of prescriptions, prohibitions, requirements, and expectations for a person in a particular social category” (Eagly in Galliano 2003:59). Social role theory thus also suggests a passive socialisation process. Boys seem not to have a say as they are socialised into manhood. However, in real life it is not always like this as a study of an American elementary school shows. The boys and girls in that research were found not to be passive recipients of the gender norms delegated to them by their elders. In fact, they were active participants –

accepting and rejecting some aspects of social life. As they played, “they complain, joke, fantasize and question about gender matters” (Thorne in Connell 2009:96). Thorne is an American ethnographic researcher who carried out a study on gender in two primary schools in North America. During the early 1990s, when Thorne published her book, children were not mentioned much in gender research other than being referred to as being socialised into gender roles. During that time, it was assumed that there were only two sex roles, a female one and a male one (Connell 2002a).

Some sociologists argue that sex role theory is inadequate when it comes to understanding the complexities of gender as a social institution (Kimmel 2004). People seem to learn roles through socialisation and then perform them for others. According to Kimmel, sex role theory portrays a singular normative definition of masculinity. To speak of one male sex role is to compress the enormous variety of a culture’s ideals into one identity and to risk ignoring the other factors that shape identities. Thus, a more satisfying definition of masculinity must accommodate different forms of masculinity as constructed and expressed by different groups of men (Kimmel 2004).

Masculinity is not only plural but relational. Masculinity has meaning in relation to femininity (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). Sex role theory herds boys into a masculine corral and girls into a feminine one. Kimmel (2004:97), quoting Carrigan, Connell and Lee, argues that “[t]he result of using the role framework is an abstract view of the *difference* between the sexes and their situations, not a concrete one of the *relations* between them” (emphasis in original text). This suggests that men construct their ideas of masculinity in contrast to definitions of femininity.

Role theory focuses more on individuals than on social structure, thereby implying that the male role and female role are complementary (Stacey & Thorne in Kimmel 2004). This theory therefore negates the question of power and conflict. A pluralistic and relational study of gender cannot pretend that all masculinities and femininities are created equal.

However, masculinity is actively and continuously defined and redefined in our daily interactions with one another (Sathiparsard, Tailor & De Vries 2010) and therefore this research applies a social constructionist framework as a departure point for analysing gender. Galliano (2003) argues that “gender is a set of socially constructed roles”. As children come into contact with existing gender orders, they improvise, copy, create and thus develop

(Connell 2009). Gender is dynamic, meaning the prescriptions and proscriptions of a society change in response to the socio-economic conditions of the time.

1.4.2 The social constructionist perspective

Kimmel's arguments noted above show that masculinity is not a mere product of a top-down socialisation process but rather an active construction by men as they interact among themselves and with women. Galliano (2003) argues that human beings are creatures that are capable of making sense and finding meaning in whatever happens to them. They are thus not passive recipients of socialisation. Thus, "the social construction framework takes as its central 'brief' a refusal of any naturalised set account of the self" (Beasley 2005:99).

The social constructionist framework is opposed to both biological and social essentialism; that is, accounts of a socially fixed singular core identity. It is mostly concerned with the way people understand the world together (Burr 2003; Galliano 2003). Social constructionists reject notions of innate characteristics, arguing that gender constructions are purely the result of intersecting historical, social and cultural factors at a particular moment in time. Robinson (2008:56) points out that "social constructionist theories are best suited to explain men's behaviour in a contemporary, historical and cross-cultural context". Men are actively constructing masculinity and they tend to use culture as a guide. Masculinity is constructed differently depending on the social conditions in which people are situated.

People's experiences are shaped by the societies they live in and they in turn reshape those societies. Thus we talk of a gendered people living in a gendered society (Kimmel 2004). Social constructionists go further than the issue of gendered individuals negotiating their identities within gendered institutions to those institutions producing the very differences we assume are the properties of individuals.

Burr (2003) argues that knowledge is sustained by social process. Therefore, social interactions of any kind are of great interest to social constructionists. The interactions between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed.

Hegemonic masculinity at a local level may differ from hegemonic masculinity at a regional or global level (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The construction of hegemonic masculinity may thus differ from area to area although there may be an overlap. The social construction

of masculinity in a township in Gauteng East may thus differ from any other place where similar research may have been carried out. Boys and masculinities are therefore seen as part of an effective social construction project which should be explored.

A close link exists between the social construction of masculinities and much of the literature on masculinity studies, as will be seen in chapter 2.

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This research is undertaken from a social constructionist perspective. A social constructionist perspective is best suited to a qualitative research approach because the construction of masculinity is context related and qualitative research focuses on context. This study will thus pursue a qualitative approach in answering the research questions to achieve the set objectives.

This study was undertaken at a township primary school in Gauteng province in Ekurhuleni, formerly known as the East Rand. The institution is a co-educational school with most learners coming from various black ethnic impoverished backgrounds.

1.5.1 Study design and procedures

This study takes a purposive or judgemental sampling approach. All Grade 7 educators at the school were gathered and briefed about the nature of the study and the type of participants who were needed.

Initially, all 46 learners in Grade 7 at this school were surveyed about their cross-gender peer relations by the teachers, with the learners that met the sampling criteria being recommended to me as the researcher. Owing to the nature of the topic, participants who could engage in group discussions and who were able to read and write were selected. Thirty learners were initially expected to take part in the research; however, more than 30 learners were invited to participate considering that some participants would withdraw from the study before the study commenced or might fail to attend the focus group discussions (see Savin-Baden & Major [2013] on over recruiting in focus group studies). This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3 of the dissertation.

The selected learners were given consent forms to be signed by their parents/guardians. More boys than girls were invited to take part in the research because of the nature of the topic and also because there were more boys than girls in Grade 7 at this school.

Data collection took place over a period of two months. Data was collected by means of focus groups and individual diaries.

The expected 30 learners were divided into three heterogeneous groups. Each group met twice over a period of three weeks for discussions. I used focus groups because these allow communication that occurs naturally in most communities (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). Thus, rich information could be obtained through social interactions. An interview schedule was used during the focus group discussions to avoid losing track of the objective of the research (see Appendix K: Focus group interview guide).

Participants were asked to keep diaries over a period of one month. Diaries answer a wide range of qualitative research questions relating to experiences, perceptions and constructions (Braun & Clark 2013). Participants were provided with a template for completing the diaries (see Appendix L).

Both focus groups and diaries sought participants' notions and experiences on masculinity construction by young boys, by discussing and documenting their relationships within the school environment and pointing out how this affected them in their daily lives.

A tape recorder was used in the collection of data from focus groups. I also took detailed notes to supplement the recorder in case of technical faults. Since I am not fluent in IsiZulu I hired a fluent Zulu-speaking person who could translate during group discussions and also help with the recording while I steered the discussion and took notes. Data transcription took place soon after each group discussion.

Following the focus group discussions and having collected the diaries, the school counselling committee and I conducted a debriefing exercise. Counselling of the participants who had been affected by the research followed thereafter.

Common themes were identified from the collected data and presented and an analysis of the data followed. The analysis is carried out in chapter 4.

1.5.2 Assent, consent and ethical clearance

Before embarking on the study, permission for the study to be conducted and ethical clearance had to be obtained.

The learners selected, as well as others who were willing to be part of the study, were given assent forms to sign (see Appendices A and B).

Since all the participants were minors, informed consent was obtained from their parents/guardians prior to starting the research (see Appendices C and D). The principal of the school also gave permission for the study to be conducted at the chosen institution (see Appendices E and F).

Participants and their parents/guardians and the school were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Participation in the research was voluntary thus participants were given the option to withdraw at any given point should they wish. This was clearly outlined in the information letters they were given (see Appendices A, C and E).

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) gave permission to carry out the research at the chosen school (see Appendices G and H). The UNISA Sociology Department gave ethical clearance for the study to commence (see Appendix J).

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Masculinity construction, hegemonic masculinity, gender relations and township are used repeatedly in this study and hence the way in which these concepts are understood is given below.

Masculinity construction can be defined as the different ways of self-presentation expected from a male in any given context (see Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003).

Hegemonic masculinity is the ideal type of masculinity in any society at any given time that is generally acknowledged and accepted by both men and women (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). In other words, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell 2013:257).

Gender relations – Reeves and Baden (2000) define gender relations as hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women. In this study these are the relationships between boys and girls and are shown by the way boys and girls behave, talk, play and work in response to the construction of masculinity by boys.

Township is a term coined in apartheid South Africa to refer to an urban residential development mainly occupied by people not classified as white. Township life is generally associated with poverty, crime and violence (Mampane & Bouwer 2011).

1.7 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter 1, as indicated above, is the introduction of the research. In this chapter I briefly sketch the background of the problem. The objectives and rationale of the study also make part of chapter 1, and the theoretical framework guiding the study is discussed in detail. An introduction to the research methods used also forms part of the first chapter. Definitions of key terms also appear in this chapter.

Chapter 2 gives a detailed review of the literature on masculinity in South Africa as well as internationally. Of particular importance in this chapter is the focus on young masculinities as it is the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 focuses on methodology. Methods and procedures of data collection are outlined, while an account of the method of analysis and ethical considerations also make part of this chapter. This chapter also includes my reflections as the researcher on the research process.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the presentations, analysis and discussion of results.

Chapter 5 looks at the limitations of the study, as well as presenting the summaries, conclusions and recommendations. Objectives are briefly re-stated and findings are related directly to them.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 laid the foundation of the dissertation by describing the purpose and rationale for the study. As the basis of the study it also dealt in detail with the social constructionist perspective, which is the theoretical framework guiding the study.

Chapter 1 also outlined what the study set out to achieve and the methodology to achieve those objectives. Key terms in the study were also brief defined to give an overview of what is to come in the study. This chapter also shows how the entire research study was planned, thus preparing the readers to what they can expect in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, rich evidence of the diversity of masculinities has been uncovered (Connell 2012). Social constructionist thinking proposes that ideas about masculinity are fluid concepts informed by cultural beliefs, traditions and religion, among other contributors. Whitehead and Barrett (2001:15–16) state that “masculinities are those behaviours, languages and practices, existing in specific cultural and organisational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine”. This suggests that in each epoch and location masculinity may be constructed differently.

This section starts by looking at the social construction of gender relations and masculinity. Different types of masculinity are highlighted and the widely used concept, hegemonic masculinity, in relation to other formulations of masculinities and gender in general will receive particular attention. Since this research was carried out at a school, studies on school gender relations are also focused upon. As the research was carried out in South Africa, construction of masculinity in the context of South Africa or local masculinities will receive particular attention throughout.

2.2 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER RELATIONS

Traditionally, sex was the term used to refer to biological differences and gender to socially constructed differences (Giddens 1997). However, this distinction is becoming increasingly blurred albeit still useful. Sex refers “both to a category of person and to acts in which people engage, as in having sex” (Giddens 1997:91). Gender is often understood to describe a set of qualities and behaviours expected from men and women. Giddens (1997:582), for example, defines gender as “[s]ocial expectations about behaviour regarded as appropriate for the members of each sex”. In this study the traditional distinction between sex and gender will be applied where sex refers to the biological difference between boys and girls while gender refers to the social differences between males and females.

Gender can be described in terms of the social relations within which individuals and groups act (Connell 2002a). This suggests that gender is a result of social constructions. In

relationships the emphasis is on the ways that people, groups and organisations are connected and divided (Connell 2002a). These relationships show hierarchical relations of power as discussed in the paragraphs below. Since gender is a social construct, the way men and women, or boys and girls, interact is guided by their gender roles and identities. Gender relations in this study are thus regarded as products of social interactions between boys and girls. The way boys and girls talk, play and work makes evident gender relations.

Gender relationships are guided by one's sex. Connell (2002a:54) says in this regard "[g]ender relations are the relationships arising in and around the reproductive arena". There are thus prescriptions within a society on how boys or girls should interact with others. This perspective relates to sex role theory (see section 1.4.1 on theoretical frameworks above).

Households present different patterns of male–female relations depending on their structure. If, for example, religious or conversational practices within a household "place men in authority over women, we speak of a patriarchal structure of gender relations" (Connell 2002a:55).

Gender relations in society may also change as a result of economic, legal, political or environmental conditions. Thus gender cannot be observed as an entity but in conjunction with other oppressive social relations. These socially constructed categories of difference and inequality include race, ethnicity, social class, religion, age and sexuality (Spade & Valentine 2011). The interplay between such different socially constructed categories is linked to the concept of intersectionality which is attributed to Kimberly Crenshaw (Weldon 2008; Single-Rushton & Lindstron 2013).

Weldon (2008:193) points out that "[i]ntersectionality is a concept that describes interaction between systems of oppression". These systems of oppression should not be analysed independently of each other but should be recognised as interlocking categories of analysis that together cultivate profound differences in our personal biographies (Collins 2011). Crenshaw used the concept of intersectionality to illuminate the different experiences of different women. Many feminist scholars sought to isolate gender oppression from other forms of oppression without recognising that their work seemed to be preoccupied with the experiences of white middle-class women. Their work thus failed to acknowledge black women's unique experiences of racism and sexism as inseparable (Single-Rushton & Lindstron 2013). Although these sentiments developed in the context of the United States of

America, they can also be applied to other regions, including South Africa today. In line with Crenshaw's ideas, Spade and Valentine (2011:55) argue that "[g]ender is a complex and multifaceted array of experiences and meanings that cannot be understood without considering the social context within which they are situated". Gender thus intersects with other socially constructed categories of difference and inequality at all levels. This cannot be avoided since everyone is assigned race, gender, class and other social identities. Thus the issue of a dominant and subordinate group seems inevitable.

2.2.1 Gender construction at a young age

Systematic relationships of domination and subordination structured through social institutions such as schools represent the institutional dimensions of oppression. Racism, sexism and elitism all have concrete institutional locations. Although these dimensions of oppression may be obscured by policies claiming equality of opportunity, in actuality race, class and gender place certain groups in favourable positions (Collins 2011). This results in different forms of masculinities being constructed. In a study carried out in New York with teenage students it was observed that "[m]assive unemployment and poverty, along with institutional racism, have powerfully interacted to reshape the notions of masculinity among Black and Latino men" (Carter 2011:195). Similarly, in a local study with young African men living in a working class Eastern Cape township, a relationship between social class and gender was easily identifiable. Poor women from squatter camps reported to have been assaulted more regularly than women from middle-class households (Wood & Jewkes 2005). Poor boys in this community also faced difficulties in acquiring partners and gaining status with peers. It can thus be argued that it is inaccurate or distorting to speak of gender without considering the intersections it has with other systems of oppression. Men's race, class, sexual orientation and (dis)ability can thus simultaneously have an influence on their experiences as men. Bhana (2005:205) points out that "[m]asculine identities in school reach back in time into the family and, in turn, the social location of these families plays a major part in the early process by which early masculinities are formed". May (in Bhana 2005) points out that poverty and race are linked in South Africa since more than half of the black population is poor. Morrell and Makhaye (2006:161) add to the issue of masculinity and poverty in the South African context by pointing out that "[f]ractured families, lack of life opportunities and shortages of resources all dispose boys to demonstrate masculinity in a violent way, often against girls". Morrell (2001) also contends that in black working-class

South African townships, there is a strong link between violent masculinities and schooling. It can thus be convincingly argued that ending violent gender relations is inseparable from ending social and economic inequalities (the issue of violent masculinities is further addressed in section 2.5.4.1 on corporal punishment and the construction of masculinity in South Africa).

Thorne's (in Connell 2002a) research on primary school children in North America shows that children are not passive recipients of gender constructions, but practise gender actively on their own terms. Thus gender relations among children at school and in their social lives are being made and re-made every day. This shows that gender relations are not static; they are context specific and may vary between different places and households.

Gender relations can also be defined from a power relationship perspective. Reeves and Baden (2000:18) define gender relations as "hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women". The gender roles and identities of men and women look natural, but they are socially determined and culturally based (Reeves & Baden 2000; Connell 2002a; Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). It can be argued that the emphasis in gender relations is on the "connectedness of men's and women's lives, and to the imbalances of power embedded in male-female relations" (Reeves & Baden 2000:18). Describing the relationships between boys and girls as if they belong to "sexual classes" is thus determined by a social and cultural context. Institutions associated with both private and public spheres reflect and maintain gender relations. In spite of the fact that in many societies there is a call for greater gender equality, there are also instances where there is a call for a return to so-called traditional values, including the subordination of women, often by men when they feel threatened by the erosion of their power.

Although in some societies men still want to dominate women, boys and girls give meaning to gender relations as they interact. In the elementary schools studied by Thorne, "the meanings of gender were constantly being debated and revised by the children, the gender boundaries both enforced and challenged on the playground and classroom" (Connell 2002b:214). Thus concepts like masculinity and gender relations have fluid definitions.

Gender relations are therefore understood in this study as fluid social interactions between boys and girls, manifesting, amongst other characteristics, in the boys' desire to construct and re-construct masculinity.

2.2.2 The social construction of masculinity(ies)

Masculinity is a concept that is context specific, fluid and historically oriented. It is constructed within the context of gender relations. Brittan (1989:1) points out “that any account of masculinity must begin with its place in the general discussion of gender”. By performing masculinity one will be unveiling gender relations. As a social phenomenon masculinity comes into existence as people act. Research has shown us that we ‘do gender’ every time, for example in the way we conduct conversations (Connell 2002b). Masculinity can thus be defined in relation to other men or in relation to women (Wetherell 1996; Connell 2002a). In other words, any definition of what men are, is constructed in relation to other men or women.

2.2.2.1 Fracture (context specific) as an element of the social construction of masculinity(ies)

Since masculinity is context bound, a man can be defined as “not being a man” if he behaves in a way that is not expected of a man in a particular social context. However, men may also fight against being downplayed and can try to obtain recognition for their (alternative) masculinity. An example would be the “various forms of effeminate heterosexual masculinity being produced today” (Carrigan et al 2009:154), for instance through styles of dress.

Words like ‘queer’, ‘faggot’ and ‘sissy’ can be used to refer to men and boys not showing acceptable behaviour (Kinsman 2009) in certain contexts. These are meant as derogatory terms levelled against someone who refuses to comply with “compulsory heterosexuality” or heteronormativity.

As observed above in section 2.2 on the social construction of gender relations, masculinity is context specific. It is inherent in gender relations. The two terms, ‘masculinity’ and ‘gender relations’, are profoundly intertwined thus making it impossible to talk of one without relating to the other. In this section I also argue that the cultural resources available in a particular area shape especially boys and men. Frosh et al (2002) point out that different masculinities are produced through performances that draw on the cultural resources available. Giddens (1997:592) defines masculinity as “[t]he characteristic forms of behaviour expected of men in any given culture”. This definition shows that any culture defines what it means to be a man differently. Thus there is not one type of masculinity – gender is constructed within institutional and cultural contexts that produce multiple forms (Connell 2002a; Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). Schools and families are the social institutions that

construct different forms of masculinity. They convey to boys the social norms or expectations differently. Thus, there is not one gender role for boys. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003:69) point out that “[a]s schools create the conditions for the emergence of masculinities, different meanings of maleness compete for ascendancy”. Thus it can be argued that “[t]here are *multiple* patterns of masculinity ... in contemporary societies” (Connell 2002a:77, emphasis in original text). What may be perceived as appropriate behaviour for boys in one culture or at one school may be observed with disdain in another. In one culture violence may be looked upon as the ultimate test of masculinity while in another one it is observed with contempt.

Brittan (1989) refers to masculinity as “male signs”. To be a ‘real’ man may mean to be rough, tough, dangerous or to be a ‘ladies’ man’ (Brittan 1989). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003) point out that by masculinity we are referring to different ways of male self-presentation. Each location and context in any given society has its own way of showing manhood. Brittan (1989) argues that we can talk about these styles of male behaviour almost like fashions. Fashion is not the same in all places and contexts thus masculinity cannot be the same in all areas at the same time. Wetherell (1996:320) supports this point by pointing out that “[m]asculinity is a set of choices about what to wear, what to look like, and about how to behave in different social situations”. This reiterates the view that the construction of masculinity is fluid. Since male identity can differ in different social settings or contexts it seems appropriate to talk of masculinities rather than masculinity. While Nencel (2009) points out that masculinity is negotiated in different arenas, Shefer, Ratele, Strebel and Shabalala (2005) refer to the fluidity and fragmentation of masculinity in this regard. Owing to the fact that masculinity is negotiated in different arenas, “[t]he relationship between gender and sexuality in the construction of masculinity needs further exploration” (Nencel 2009:137). Miller (2009), citing different works of Connell, also points out that there is a need for a critical investigation of masculinity in different facets of life.

There is further evidence of multiple masculinities within the same cultural setting, institution, peer group or workplace (Connell 2002a; Bhana 2005). A study carried out in a high school in Texas shows that “the interplay of gender, class and ethnicity constructs *several versions of masculinity*” (Connell 2002a:89, emphasis added). Thus, masculinity is no longer understood as a homogenous set of stable traits or characteristics. Boys from different social backgrounds are likely to construct masculinity differently at school. Thus the meaning

of masculinity among children from the very rich and the very poor within the same society can be different.

Certain contexts within the same culture might allow for the expression of various types of masculinity. For example, a behaviour of being polite in church can be considered as masculine while being polite in a tavern may be construed as a sign of weakness. Masculinity is thus a fractured concept.

2.2.2.2 Masculinities as dynamic

Connell (2008:208) states that “different cultures and different periods of history, construct masculinity differently”. Since culture is dynamic, masculinity is also dynamic. Each historical epoch has certain perceptions of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not acceptable behaviour in men. The fact that different masculinities exist in different cultures and historical epochs shows that masculinities are susceptible to change. Connell (2002b:210) supports this view by saying “[t]o speak of the dynamics of masculinity is to acknowledge that particular masculinities are composed, historically, and may also be decomposed, contested, and replaced”. Connell continues by arguing that the dynamics of masculinity are of great importance to educators “since educational agendas flow from the possibilities of change in gender relations” (Connell 2002b:210).

To summarise, masculinity is understood to be context specific, fluid and historically oriented. People in different locations tend to construct masculinity differently in different contexts and historical epochs. This suggests that we should talk of masculinities rather than masculinity. In view of the fact that acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours in men show gender attributes, a study of masculinity cannot take place outside the study of gender relations.

2.3 RELATIONS AMONG MASCULINITIES

Acknowledging the existence of multiple masculinities as discussed above (in section 2.2.2) is important but it is also important to acknowledge the relations among them. In this section I will look at the practices and relations that construct the main patterns of masculinity, as identified by Connell (1995) and later developed further; namely, hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities. These forms of masculinity are interconnected as they are all constructed through power relations.

In a study of masculinity construction, the relations among men along with their relations with women are of importance. Apart from understanding the relations among men themselves for their own sake, it also affects the relations between men and women. Connell (2013:256) points out that “[a] focus on the gender relations among men is necessary to keep the analysis dynamic, to prevent the acknowledgement of multiple masculinities collapsing into a character typology”.

In the following sections, I first give a general view of hegemonic masculinity and the origin of the term and then focus on the relations among men. While hegemonic masculinity is central in relations among masculinities, it is equally important in understanding gender relations between boys and girls or males and females in general.

2.3.1 Origins of the concept of hegemonic masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity is the most discussed concept in theoretical masculinity discourse (Connell 1995; Ratele 2008; Robinson 2008; Groes-Green 2009). Groes-Green (2009) points out that this concept has been used to describe various types of power exercised by men over women. These range from economic, social and physical dominance to cultural authority. While in South Africa the concept has been used extensively in an attempt to show the prevalent gender inequality and injustice as it affects young men (Groes-Green 2009; Morrell et al 2013), more research is still required on young boys of primary school age.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was first used by Connell in the early 1980s (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger & Hamlall 2013) who in turn had taken the term ‘hegemony’ from the writings of Antonio Gramsci. While Gramsci applied the concept in the analysis of class relations, Connell applied it to the study of relations between men and women, as well as between classes of men (Groes-Green 2009; Miller 2009). Gramsci (in Miller 2009:116) states that “hegemony is a contest of meanings in which the ruling class consent to the social order by making its power appear normal and natural”. Most people consent to the direction imposed by the dominant group. Connell (in Miller 2009:116) “applies this notion of consent through incorporation to gender relations, especially masculinity”. Men tend to dominate women in most facets of social life and this appears normal and accepted. Men are the dominant group in most societies but the question is whether they rule by naked force or through consent. Although many men have access to power, not all men benefit from hegemonic power. In fact, some are subordinated by and to it

(Connell in Morrell et al 2013). The domination of women by men is related to culture. Hegemonic masculinity thus has its roots in the cultural beliefs that hold that men are supposed to dominate women. Connell (1995:77) argues that “hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual”.

2.3.2 Masculinities are constructed through power relations

Connell (2013) looks at forms of masculinity that are opposed to and subordinate to hegemonic masculinities. In support of this view, Spade and Valentine (2011) argue that hegemonic masculinity is maintained within a hierarchy that is realised by only a few men, with everyone else subordinated to them. Those in subordinate positions include women, poor men, gay men and men from devalued ethnic and religious groups.

The definition of hegemonic masculinity seems to suggest that hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideals and institutional power. Men seem to still dominate different facets of life despite the feminist movements and dissenting men. Of great importance to this definition is that it embodies currently accepted strategies of male domination. Should a new group manage to challenge the status quo, a new hegemony will be constructed. Thus hegemony is a historically mobile relation of dominance between males as an entity and between males and females (Connell 2013).

Thus, although the dominant position of men and the subordination of women in most societies look natural, not all men have access to hegemonic power since some are subordinated by it (Morrell et al 2013). In most American, European and African societies the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men is common. In some African societies these men are chastised and relegated to an inferior status. In a study carried out in an inner-city school in KZN on Grade 7 boys and girls, boys indicated their fear of being thought of as “gay, lesbian or moffie¹” (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011:3798). Gay men are subordinated to ‘straight’ men in a number of material practices. They still suffer from political and cultural exclusion and abuse; thus homosexual men are placed at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men (Connell 2013). From a hegemonic masculinity perspective, a stereotypical gay man image emerges, one engaged in issues regarded as feminine such as home decoration, thus “gayness is easily assimilated to femininity” (Connell

¹ Derogatory Afrikaans word used to refer to homosexual men.

2013:258). In a study by Bhana (2005) of Grade 1s and 2s in KZN, some boys were not happy being rough and tough. They instead resorted to being gentle and thus were referred to as *yimvu* (gentle boys), with *yimvu* masculinity being subordinate to *tsotsi* hegemonic masculinity. *Yimvu* boys were often abused by *tsotsi* boys. In another local study on Grade 10 and 11 learners in Alexandra Township, *tsotsi* boys were more popular than academic boys (Langa 2010). *Tsotsi* is a term that can be used to refer to roguish people especially boys. Langa (2010) describes *tsotsi* boys in township schools as boys who miss classes, defy teachers' authority and perform poorly in their grades. Langa (2010:12) argues that “[i]n terms of the hierarchy of masculinities at school, *tsotsi* boys were at the top of the hierarchy and highly visible and projected an idealized form of township masculinity”. Young popular boys may use *tsotsi* language – a stylish way of talking mainly adopted by young men in the South African townships.

Hegemonic masculinity is built upon heterosexuality. It can be argued that heterosexuality constitutes the single structural fact that guarantees “the global domination of men over women” (Brittan 1989:140) and other men. This points to the concept of heteronormativity, which asserts that heterosexuality is the only sexual orientation or the only norm for doing gender. The foundation of this concept can be attributed to the feminist theories of the relationship between gender, sexuality and heterosexuality in the 1970s and 1980s, and to its coining by Michael Warner (Williams 2013). Individuals' attitudes and behaviours are attributed to cultural and societal prescriptions on heterosexuality and proscriptions on homosexuality. This perspective could have contributed to homosexual (or gay) activist groups challenging this oppressive gender relations practice. It is argued that as women began challenging patriarchy and gender hierarchy, “gay men and women started to contest another aspect of patriarchy – the perception of heterosexuality as the only legitimate and appropriate form of sexuality” (Berkovitch & Helman 2009:270).

All people within a society are expected to follow heterosexual norms or they risk being shunned by the community. In the United States, directly after World War II, homosexuals were regarded as destroyers of society and as security risks (Berkovitch & Helman 2009). Calhoun (in Young 2009:111) argues that “persons who transgress heterosexual norms have no legitimized place at all in political citizenship, civil society, or private spheres”. Structures of normative heterosexuality constrain lesbians and gay men by enforcing their invisibility. In other words, normative sexualities strengthen normative gender. This is compounded by the

fact that some social and cultural norms still continue to value and promote heterosexuality as the most natural, normal and healthy sexuality. It can thus be argued that “[t]he emergence of heteronormativity as an analytical category in gender and sexuality studies has therefore provided an important shift towards understanding the workings of cultures and societies beyond individual attitudes and behaviour” (Williams 2013:121).

As stated above, hegemonic masculinity is power related (Brittan 1989; Kaufman 1995; Wetherell 1996; Connell 2001; Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003; Ratele 2008) and is observed through the dominance of men over women and other men. Wetherell (1996:323) points out that “hegemonic masculinities are those that in a particular historical period or social situation have come to dominate or have come to be seen as the ideal masculine type”. Hegemonic masculinity thus generally serves men’s interests in relation to women and thus tends to maintain male collective power. Men occupying a position of hegemonic masculinity are asserting a position of superiority (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). They do this by winning the consent of other men and women through “subordinated, complicity, or marginalised relationships” (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003:10).

Not many men meet the ‘normative standard’ of hegemonic masculinity. Although many men benefit from hegemonic masculinity only a few may be participating in it (Connell 2013) – this is referred to as the patriarchal dividend. This points to what Connell refers to as complicit masculinity. Wetherell (1996:323–324) points out in this regard:

Complicit forms of masculinity are those which may reject the excess of the macho men, and which may not even come close to fulfilling the hegemonic ideal, but which do not challenge the hegemonic version either, and thus feed off dominant forms of masculinity.

Connell (2013) points out that masculinities that are constructed in ways that realise the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being in the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense. In other words, these men have some connection with the hegemonic project but do not embody hegemonic masculinity. They are thus benefitting from being men but not actively constructing hegemonic masculinity and hence are not necessarily directly challenged by feminists.

Hegemonic, subordinate and complicit forms of masculinity, as indicated in the discussions above, are indicative of relations internal to the gender order. Connell illustrates how poverty

and marginalisation of a social class tend to increase the use of violence and coercion (Groes-Green 2009). Wetherell (1996:323) points out that “marginal masculinities are those which are not directly persecuted but which are not held up as ideal either”. Groes-Green’s (2009) research on masculinities among poor young men in Mozambique tried to show that they were men through sexual performance and talk. Groes-Green calls this male power “sexual masculinity”. In the same study it is highlighted that poor men who could not afford to buy their girlfriends material things may resort to violence. Groes-Green argues that men’s violence on women is a sign that “hierarchy and hegemony is no longer stable and that the gender order is in a process of crisis and transformation” (Groes-Green 2009:289). Violence by men against women may also be a result of women in stronger economic positions who want to dominate men or who do not want to be dominated by men. Men, in turn, will want to show that they are in control by resorting to violence. According to this perspective, Ratele, Shefer and Botha (2011) argue that “[i]t appears as if the more women get powerful in a transitional rights-based developing society, the more the levels of interpersonal violence against women rise”. Men see their hegemonic power over women as being under threat, thus they resort to violence. This is however a simplistic statement as there are other reasons as indicated above.

Masculinity is often defined in relation to women (Wetherell 1996) and thus masculinity may even be defined as not being feminine. Michael Kimmel (2009) has argued that masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than what one is, thus being a man means not being like a woman. Historically and developmentally, masculinity has been defined as the flight from femininity (Kimmel 2009). Boys learn to devalue and despise all forms of femininity. ‘Real’ men won’t cry or admit to weakness for to do so will result in one being labelled a ‘wimp’ or a ‘sissy’. Hegemonic masculinity can be maintained through “emotional detachment, competitiveness, and the sexual objectification of women, in which masculinity is thought of as *different from and better than femininity*” (Bird in McGuffey & Rich 2011:167, emphasis added). While men cannot show their emotions by crying, crying is considered appropriate for women. Men can show that they are men and not women by being competitive and managing to provide for their families and girlfriends. Thus hegemonic masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity. Feminist theorists contend “that being ‘not feminine’ has become so important for men because *forms of masculinity are linked to power*” (Wetherell 1996:323, emphasis added). Connell (1995) also points out that men’s

relationships are shrouded in power. This is shown by his treatment of *hegemonic, marginal, complicity* and *subordinated* masculinities (Wetherell 1996; Hearn 2013).

2.3.3 The social construction of hegemonic masculinity amongst boys

A feature of hegemonic masculinity is the ability to draw attention to oneself. Since hegemony is sustained publicly, being able to attract positive attention is important. McGuffey and Rich (2011:167) point out that “the recognition the boy receives from his public performance of masculinity allows him to maintain his high status and or increase his rank in the hierarchy”. Most boys tend to support hegemonic masculinity, albeit subconsciously, in relation to subordinate masculinities and femininities. This gives boys power over girls and other boys of lower status.

Hegemonic masculinity is also maintained through name-calling, teasing, physical aggression or exclusion from the group of the boys who oppose it (Connell 2001; Miller 2009; McGuffey & Rich 2011). In research conducted on middle childhood, McGuffey and Rich (2011) in the USA identified a boy rejected by other boys for behaving like a girl. Hegemonic masculinity implies that there is a predominant way of doing gender relations. The social status of masculinity is raised above that of feminine qualities and over other qualities of masculinity. However, hegemonic masculinity has general qualities; as a form of social power it “may take on many valences and nuances, depending on the social setting and the actors involved” (Connell in McGuffey & Rich 2011:166). The position of the low status boys and the collective subordination of girls prohibit them from challenging boys of high status. Thus, as a social construction, masculinity is maintained through a hegemonic process that excludes femininity and alternate masculinities. By rejecting homosexuals or effeminate boys, boys are “defining their own heterosexuality, while collectively they are endorsing hegemonic masculinity.” (McGuffey & Rich 2011:171).

Boys also monitor the activities of girls and keep them out of the boys’ domain. In the research of McGuffey and Rich (2011) in the USA, girls who met the standards of boys were marginalised and thought of as ‘weird’. If they are adopted in the hegemonic masculine identity they are almost de-gendered (McGuffey & Rich 2011).

The above discussion has shown that hegemonic masculinity is not a result of hormonal or biological states but a product of fluid social and cultural performances. Connell thus suggests that hegemonic masculinity serves to sustain the inequalities which exist between

men and women and between different groups of men (Whitehead & Barrett 2001). Owing to its historical and contextual importance, hegemonic masculinity thus needs to be researched within a specific society or social setting before any meaningful statements can be made about masculinity in that society or setting.

2.4 DIMENSIONS OF GENDER RELATIONS AT SCHOOL

Schools are important institutions in the construction of masculinity (see Connell 2002b; Kimmel 2004; Morrell 2001; Bhana 2006; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). To understand gender in schools we must think institutionally. The organisation of a school as a whole must be understood because “[g]ender is embedded in the institutional arrangements through which a school functions” (Connell 2002b:213). Kimmel (2004) argues that through the “hidden curriculum” of the informal interactions with both teachers and learners, the learners become gendered. A gendering process begins as soon as the children get into school and this is observed in the way in which the school is organised. The organisation of the school, for example, may show who teaches which grades and what subjects or the hierarchy of the school.

Connell (2002b) refers to the totality of the school function in the school’s gender regimes. This entails looking at a school’s division of labour and authority patterns. Connell (1996) argues that learners participate in these masculinity constructions by entering the school and living within its structures. Relations among learners are observed through formal and non-formal interactions and such relations may differ between schools. However, learners negotiate or adjust to the patterns or rebel against them as they are not passive recipients of the socialisation process.

Gender regimes may differ between schools depending on “the limits set by the broader culture and the constraints of the local education system” (Connell 2002b:213). The amount of independence given to schools, by the Department of Basic Education in the case of South Africa, results in the construction of different gender regimes in schools. In some schools there are more female teachers than male, especially in the lower grades and schools also handle the issue of discipline differently. Morrell (2001:143), citing different scholars on disciplinary regimes in schools, points out that “particular disciplinary regimes are implicated in particular types of gender relations and identities that emerge in schools”. More information on discipline and masculinity construction is discussed in section 2.5.4 below.

Connell identifies four types of relationship in the construction of masculinity within the school, namely, power relations, division of labour, patterns of emotions and symbolic relations.

2.4.1 Power relations

The issue of power relations was mentioned above (under section 2.2.1) when defining gender relations, but a more in-depth understanding of power relations in society is required for this study.

It can be argued that gender relations are power relations. Kimmel (2009), for example, argues that manhood is equated with power. He says “[t]he hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power” (Kimmel 2009:184). This power is shown by men over women and other men. Power can thus be assumed to be a characteristic of being a ‘real’ man or boy. Giddens (1997:338) states that “[p]ower is the ability of individuals or groups to make their own interests or concerns count, even when others resist”. Wetherell (1996) points out that not being feminine is very important to men because forms of masculinity are linked to power – it is observed as the appropriate way of behaving. Power entails what is pleasurable to the one exerting it and painful to the one conforming to the wishes of others. Thus social analysis entails men and boys (males) as a dominant ‘gender class’.

Relations among men are also filled with power (Connell 1995). The dominant masculinity infiltrates the subordinate forms of masculinity such as gay identities. Connell, as discussed above in section 2.3, refers to this dominant masculinity as hegemonic masculinity.

Power can be observed through the organisation of the school. For example, discipline at the school can be left in the hands of some male teachers. The organisation of the school management team (SMT) can also reveal power relations with more men than women often being included in the SMT. Power relations may also be visible in the school between boys and girls as they interact both formally and informally. Boys tend to show power over girls in their attempt to prove to girls that they are different from them. In a study of children’s construction of sexism in a primary school in the United Kingdom, boys bullied girls and verbally abused them (Francis 1997). In this research girls complained that boys made fun of their hair and clothes and call them “stupid names”. When asked their response to this, one of the girls pointed out that they argued back but the boys seemed to win. The response made by

the girl “demonstrates that girls are severely restricted in their ability to chastise boys by the lack of vocabulary of insults relating to masculinity” (Francis 1997:523). Francis (1997) points out that most girls complained about male teasing based on female inadequacy. One of the girls in the study claimed that boys teased girls because they thought they were tougher. Girls also complained that boys just picked on girls and beat them for no apparent reason. Francis alludes to the fact that girls were entirely at the mercy of boys when it came to physical confrontation. In a similar study in the UK, a final-year primary school boy exhibited a form of heterosexual masculine power by dumping a girlfriend in public (Swain 2005). Both Francis’s and Swain’s studies acknowledge that boys in primary school exercise power over girls by dominating the playing space with their games of football (see section 2.5.2 below). In a similar study in KZN on Grade 7 boys and girls, it was observed that even if boys and girls had cross-gender friendships, boys wielded more power (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011).

2.4.2 Division of labour

The organisation of the school can uncover gender attributes. Division of labour includes the specialisations by teachers in the subjects they teach, for example female teachers teaching subjects such as Arts and Culture while male teachers teach subjects such as Mathematics and Natural Science. It also encompasses discipline within the school. Is it a male figure or a female figure that is responsible for maintaining discipline within the school or the principal of the school? In Morrell’s (2001) research in KZN many respondents expressed fear of the way the male teachers disciplined learners. Such disciplining shows a form of masculinity that can be experienced as violent and oppressive (see also section 2.5.2.4 below for detail).

Throughout history and across cultures different types of work have been assigned to boys and girls. Brittan (1989) supports this view by arguing that the socialisation thesis assumes that there is a clearly demarcated sexual division of labour which shapes male and female roles.

While the division of labour is common in the experiences of boys and girls, the division is not the same in different cultures or at different points of history. The way teachers assign duties to boys and girls at school may show a certain pattern. Connell (2002b:213) supports this by pointing out that this includes the informal specialisations among pupils, from the elementary classroom where a teacher asks for a “big strong boy” to help move a piece of

furniture, to the gendered choice of electives in vocational education at secondary and post-secondary levels. Moreover, boys may be given hard work while girls are asked to do light duties like cleaning the classroom.

From a social role perspective boys and girls have different roles in society. Francis (1997), in research on primary school learners in the UK, discusses an occasion when a boy was asked to mop up spilt water, whereupon he retorted that it was a woman's job. This account shows that in this boy's culture or society cleaning was a duty only for females. However, from a social constructionist perspective, boys and girls are always creating their roles as they interact, although they are guided by their cultural beliefs. Boys are not always passively socialised into sex roles but also participate actively and on their own terms.

2.4.3 Emotional relations

Emotional relationships are interwoven with power and the division of labour. Connell (2002a:63) points out that “[e]motional commitments may be positive or negative, favourable or hostile towards the object”. Prejudice against girls by boys is a definite emotional relationship. Boys may make prejudiced judgements as a result of their perceived power. In a study on primary school learners in the UK, for example, one boy was fond of making sexist statements such as boys had “real muscles” and girls had “paper muscles” (Francis 1997). This type of talk brings about a different form of gender relations between boys and girls.

Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003:65) point out that “[m]aking boys emotionally tough highlights the interrelated features of adulthood and manhood”. The way the boys are disciplined and physically handled in schools plays a part in masculinity construction. Normally, harsh methods are used in disciplining boys and this has an impact on their emotional growth. Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003:65) argue that “a key element of institutional masculinities in western societies circulates through the controlled and disciplined use or mastery of physical force”. With the abandoning of corporal punishment, other forms of physical coercion in the form of shaking, cuffing and pushing are commonly used to control boys in schools (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). However, in South Africa most learners, especially in the townships, are still subjected to corporal punishment (see Morrell 2001; Gauteng Department of Education Circular 3 of 2014).

2.4.4 Symbolic relations

All social practices involve interpreting the world. Cultural systems bear particular social interests and grow out of historically specific ways of life. Connell (2002b:214) alludes to the fact that “[s]chools import much of the symbolization of gender from the wider culture”. This applies to gender meanings as well. When we speak of a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’, “we call into play a tremendous system of understanding, implications, overtones and allusions that have accumulated through our cultural history” (Connell 2002a:65). If a boy is referred to as a girl, it has a certain meaning in that context. For example, in a study by Renold (2007) on primary school learners, boys who did not have girlfriends or who did not engage in masculine activities such as football were labelled “girlie” or “gay”. In a similar study by Francis (1997), a certain boy asserted that during their role play another boy should play the part of a nurse because he asserted that he was a girl.

Another particularly important aspect of symbolic structure in schools is the gendering of knowledge (Connell 2002b). Certain areas of the curriculum are defined as masculine while others are regarded as feminine. In a study in the USA by Grant and Sleeter (in Connell 2002b), it was observed at a certain school that there was gender segregation in some subject areas. Connell argues that these segregations did not arise by chance but the curriculum areas were culturally gendered. Historically, men went to work where they did manual work while women remained at home and thus most girls were relegated to home sciences, textile and design, while boys took subjects like physics and engineering. While this shows division of labour it also symbolises work along sex lines.

Schools thus create institutional definitions of masculinity, as was shown above where the intersecting structures of relationships were discussed. Learners participate in these constructions of masculinities simply by entering the school and living in its structures. However, since learners are not passive recipients in the socialisation process, they can participate in the process, modify it or rebel against the whole system.

2.5 IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY(IES) ON WOMEN

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used in the study of masculinities in South Africa and elsewhere. Understanding the concept of hegemonic masculinity in South Africa helps to broaden the understanding of the question of gender inequality (Morrell et al 2013).

Although equal rights are enshrined in the South African Constitution which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (Basu 2013), this does not manifest in the lived realities of many South Africans. Thus in this section I explore diverse studies that highlight the way in which the social construction of masculinity impacts on women. But first I give a general overview of masculinity in a social historical context in South Africa to help understand the current forms of masculinity experienced in different South African social settings.

2.5.1 Masculinity in social historical context: South Africa

Along with attaining political freedom, an increase in scholarly work on gender and masculinities has been seen in South Africa in the past two decades. However, some critical social analysts argue that men and masculinities have always been present in social and political activism in South Africa (Shefer et al 2005).

As pointed out in section 2.2.2, each historical epoch is likely to have a different form of masculinity. The apartheid era had its own forms of masculinity construction which could be different from the ones being experienced now. For example, in the context of apartheid South Africa, a white man was conceived of as inherently superior to a black man but the same black man was superior to his wife. While this alludes to gender hierarchy intersecting with race on the one hand and gender power relations in the household on the other, it also shows that various types of contexts allude to different types of masculinity. The black man's masculinity construction was in a subordinate position to that of the white man but in a superordinate position in relation to his wife. Morrell (2005:282) points out that “[t]he relationship of race to subordination and marginalisation is central to an understanding of gender in South Africa”. These forms of masculinity based on race have shifted with the advent of the new democracy. Masculinity is dynamic and as the social and political circumstances changed in 1994 with the advent of democracy, masculinities also changed (see for example Morrell 2001). In addition, the hegemonic superiority of white men over black men was now under threat and was thus formally abolished.

Previously a number of scholars presented the world from a male perspective only. However, in recent years “some scholars have included women in understanding constructions of masculinity and hence enabled the examination of women's roles in producing and maintaining hegemony” (Morrell et al 2013:7). A recent qualitative study of Grade 7 learners

in KZN by Martin and Muthukrishna (2011), tackling the discourse of gender equality, showed that masculinity is policed by both boys and girls and any deviation from the rules of masculinity was subject to questioning by both.

Over time and in different contexts in South Africa, some men have constructed masculinity through compulsory heterosexuality, being tough, violent, showing signs of not being feminine and being providers and competitors (Mfecane et al 2005; Sauls 2005; Bhana 2006, Sathiparsad, Taylor & De Vries 2010; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). These aspects of masculinity construction will be briefly discussed below.

2.5.2 Boys constructing masculinities in schools

Connell (2002a) states that previously children were not much discussed in gender research. It was assumed that children were socialised into gender roles passively but recent studies indicate otherwise. McGuffey and Rich (2011) argue that boys at school spend most of their time creating gender boundaries through which they construct and maintain a specific form of masculinity. By maintaining gender boundaries, “top boys” secure resources for themselves, such as playground space for informal games, social prestige and power (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003; McGuffey & Rich 2011). Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003) further point out that within the school there are particular spaces where masculinity construction appears more visible. Boys and girls negotiate gender relations differently depending on the social context.

Certain studies show that at times girls want to play on their own and boys also want to be on their own (see Francis 1997; Swain 2006; Renold 2007; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). Bird (in McGuffey & Rich 2011:167) says, “it is essential to understand how boys and girls organize themselves within each homosocial group to understand how they negotiate boundaries between the two”. While men can be in combative relationship with each other they also require the companionship of one another. Spending time with each other helps men to rediscover their masculinity (Buchbinder 2013). ‘Homosocial’ is the term used to refer to people of the same sex ‘hanging around’ together for social reasons. Sedgwick (in Buchbinder 2013:82–83) defines homosocial as “a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same-sex”.

In the sections that follow issues of heterosexuality, school playgrounds, having girlfriends and disciplinary measures at school will be discussed in relation to constructing masculinity.

In my discussion I will draw information from co-educational institutions since this study is based on a co-educational school.

2.5.2.1 Heterosexual masculinity

The importance of heterosexuality in the construction of masculinity was repeatedly found in the literature discussed in the preceding sections. Heterosexuality refers to sexual feelings by one person towards a member of the opposite sex. Heterosexual appears to be both desirable and manly in many contexts and apparently contrasting with homosexual (see Robinson 2008; Kinsman 2009; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011; Williams 2013).

Rubin (in Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stravropoulos & Kirky 2003) argues that heterosexuality is a vector of oppression since homosexuality is unacceptable in many societies. In this case homosexuals are bound to be oppressed by heterosexuals and are forced to toe the line of heterosexuals to avoid ridicule.

Heterosexuality is perceived essential in many societies. Renold (2007) even found that to be considered a “real” boy or girl would involve displaying recognisable heterosexuality. Prejudice towards homosexual behaviour is thus common in many societies and social settings. When a sexual practice such as heterosexuality is prejudiced as essential, it will have the power to construct those who do not practise it as non-essential. The non-essential group is thus not accorded the essential capacity of being viable human beings, and thus non-essential, to human society. For this reason, heterosexuality is rendered compulsory for all who want to participate in society (Cranny-Francis et al 2003). Therefore, to be a boy implies that certain aspects of social life must not be engaged in. Boys are thus not supposed to be sexually attracted to other boys, cry in public or even attempt trivial things such as using heavily scented soaps associated with the behaviour of women (see Wetherell 1996). As indicated above (see section 2.2.2), masculinity is defined more by what one is not rather than who one is (Kimmel 2009). Being a boy thus means not being homosexual. In its historical development heterosexuality is tied up with the institution of masculinity. From this perspective it is argued that “[r]eal men are intrinsically heterosexual; gay men, therefore, are not real men” (Kinsman 2009:166).

While gay men share with ‘real’ men the privilege of being in a dominant position in relation to women, they are themselves in a subordinate position in the institution of heterosexuality. This state of affairs seems to continue to prevail despite the opposition from gay liberation

movements that holds that heterosexuality is not the only natural form of sexuality but has instead been socially and culturally made the 'normal' sexual practice and identity (Kinsman 2009).

Since masculinity is socially constructed and negotiated in gender relations, its real expression should be embedded within a presupposed heterosexual context. In many cultures and sects of societies the issue of loving or being attracted to a person of the same sex remains taboo. Although some men have questioned aspects of male domination and privilege "in attempting to remake masculinity they have not questioned the institution of sexuality" (Kinsman 2009:165). This shows that even if many men have been influenced by feminism and pressure groups for gender equality, the issue of loving a person of the same sex remains a challenge. A 'real' man thus must be sexually attracted to a woman not another man. The views of Kinsman can however be argued, as the entire queer theoretical approach is about this challenge and the questioning of heterosexual sexuality.

Sathiparsad et al (2010), in their study of masculinity identity and HIV prevention among male youth in rural South Africa, found that having sex and being able to handle many women or having multiple female sexual partners was equated with manhood. Sauls (2005) in another local study echoes the same sentiments. In line with this view, in a study on reflections on violence among Xhosa township youth it is argued that "[m]ultiple sexual partners, by all accounts virtually universal among boys, was said to be an important defining feature of 'being a man'" (Wood & Jewkes 2005:97). From this perspective a 'real' boy or man has to have many girlfriends and female sexual partners.

Heterosexual masculinity in the school context

In recent years there has been a growing amount of research that considers heterosexual relations (being boyfriend and girlfriend) in the last years of primary school (see Swain 2005; Renold 2007), yet locally very little has been done. The concept of heterosexuality is of paramount importance in the study of gender relations. Swain (2005:85) argues that "it is impossible to develop a full understanding of gender relations in schools without examining them in the context of compulsory heterosexuality".

Heterosexual masculinity among boys can transcend age boundaries. In a study by Swain (2005), a certain boy accrued status by dating older girls. He also showed heterosexual masculine power and control over women by dumping them. It is argued that this boy in

Swain's study gained a certain amount of honour and distinction from the boys when he dumped the girl in public after she refused to kiss him. In a related study to that of Swain is a study by Renold (2007), in which a certain boy was also found to be in the habit of picking up and dumping girls. Serial relations of this nature show heterosexual masculinity accompanied by power relations among primary school children.

Kissing or holding hands among boys and girls at primary school is found to be important markers for heterosexual relations but, more specifically, Renold (2007:293) revealed that most boys defined their "heterosexuality through sex talk, sexual fantasy, misogyny, (hetero) sexual harassment, antigay behaviours, and policing and shaming other nonhegemonic masculinities".

The South African context

Men can be seen as masculine in different ways in different settings or even in one area at the same time. However, there mounting literature on the idea of the successful male identity being centred and dependant on heterosexuality (Mfecane et al 2005; Sauls 2005; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). This notion is repeated by a 12-year-old boy in a South African study who believed that to be a man is to have sex with a woman (Shefer et al 2005). This hegemonic construction of manhood is referred to by Holloway, "as the 'male sexual drive discourse', the notion of male sexuality as biologically driven, impulsive and uncontrollable" (Shefer et al 2005:77). In the South African context this is the way numerous boys and men position themselves and the way girls and women understand male identity.

Research conducted in Manenberg in Cape Town showed that "a real man was supposed to be *heterosexual* and preferably either engaged in some form of 'respectable' employment or alternatively, a gang member" (Sauls 2005:112, my emphasis).

In a study carried out by Mfecane et al (2005) in Soweto, homosexual men were mainly rejected as being "not men", being regarded in this research as "mad men". However, one participant indicated that he was not concerned about homosexuals, he only got upset with them when they started showing interest in him. Seidler (in Mfecane et al 2005) argues that for men sexual activity is not only about receiving pleasure but also serves as a way of showing manhood. There is also a belief that a 'real' man has multiple sexual partners (Sauls 2005; Sathiparsard et al 2010). More information pertaining to this characteristic of masculinity has been pointed out above in this section.

A boy's position in the male hierarchy largely determines gender relations. A boy who is able to dominate and control those boys in subordinate position to him is also mostly liked by girls. In a study of Grade 7 boys and girls by Martin and Muthukrishna (2011), girls 'liked hanging around' a certain boy who was popular among the boys. Martin and Muthukrishna (2011:3806) argue that "[t]he achievement of this status is an accepted form of masculinity". Masculinity among these boys was constructed according to "compulsory heterosexuality" notions. Homosexuals and boys who behaved like girls were given derogatory names, alienated, mocked or laughed at.

In a study on primary school boys in KZN crying was associated with girls. Boys feared crying because they would be associated with girls and labelled gay thus "being relegated to an inferior status" (Martin & Muthukrishna 2011:3809). Masculinity was thus being constructed along the lines of what the boys were not or did not want to be labelled as. The dominant understanding of masculinity was thus constructed in opposition to femininity and being gay.

In the same study by Martin and Muthukrishna (2011), a certain boy was placed in a quandary; he did not know whether to associate with the boys or the girls for fear of being labelled. If he socialised with the boys most of the time, then the girls would think he was homosexual and if he associated with the girls most of the time, the boys would think he was gay. To avoid being labelled, then, one had to associate with both boys and girls. The fear of being homosexual still exists and is omnipresent.

2.5.2.2 Constructing masculinities on school playgrounds

Children spend considerable time in the playground playing under relatively minimal control of adults. It is during such times that gender relations can be observed more clearly. Epstein et al (2001:158) argue that as children play and interact they "will use the means available to them to construct gender in their playgrounds and that this will frequently involve the reproduction of hegemonic cultural identities and relations of power".

A number of studies carried out in primary schools show that boys dominate the playing fields with their games, for example football (invariably soccer) (see Francis 1997; Epstein et al 2001; Connell 2002b; Swain 2005; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). In a study by Epstein et al (2001) in north London in the UK, it was found that masculinity is constructed by playing football as well as knowing how to talk about the professional game knowledgeably. The

knowledge of football can also cut across ethnicity. The dominance of football can marginalise not only the girls but also those boys who are not interested in or good at football. Connell (2002b:217) reiterates this by pointing out that “the game directly defines a pattern of aggressive and dominating performance as the most admired form of masculinity, and indirectly marginalizes others”.

In a study carried out by Thorne (in Connell 2002a) in two primary schools in North America the boys not only occupied most of the space in the playground but also disrupted the girls’ play, making aggressive moves and claims to power. Swain (2005) sheds more light on this by pointing out that boys prefer rough, physical games. As boys construct masculinity they tend to exclude girls from their activities. In a study in London primary schools, Francis (1997) observed that most boys refused to allow girls to play football. The boys gave the reason that girls could not play football because they were girls. In a similar study by Epstein et al (2001), for the boys the rule was that football was for boys. For them football was a major signifier of successful masculinity.

Epstein et al (2001) and Swain (2005) show in their studies that even if girls were excluded from a game of football some tried to join in or form their own games. In Swain’s study girls who tried to join the boys who were playing soccer were driven away by the boys by kicking the ball at them. In the study by Epstein and colleagues, the girls were pushed out of the game by the boys’ refusal to pass the ball to the girls as well as playing rough or physically pushing them out of the game. It can be argued that “[t]he boys categorized the girls along with the subordinated boys as ‘incompetent’ (without skill), physically weak and frivolous who were incapable of taking the games seriously” (Swain 2005:81).

If girls started their own game of soccer the boys would join in and push them out (Epstein et al 2001; Connell 2009). In a study in London of primary school children of seven to 11 year age group by Francis (1997), one girl reported that when she refused to let a boy join in her game he responded by banging her head on the wall. In the same study another girl pointed out that she wanted boys to join them in their games but they would not, saying their games were too “girly-girly-girly”. In a study in KZN of grade 1s and 2s by Bhana (2005), boys disrupted the girls’ games of *ije* (a game of rhythmic clapping and song). The behaviour of boys in these studies are an example of how boys can wield power by either controlling every aspect of the girls’ activities or dismissing them as not worthy of their attention.

The girls do not always accept passively what the boys say nor do they follow them blindly. They often challenge the boys to let them join them in their activities. Francis (1997) supports this view by pointing out that there is persistent conflict between boys and girls as children play in the playgrounds. In his research, Francis observed that girls often went and asked boys to let them join them in their soccer games. Occasionally, some individuals or groups of girls were accepted into the games which the boys considered as a favour and privilege. However, once in the games the boys often focused on themselves and belittled the girls. If the boys lost a game, they would blame the girls in their team.

Although there is extensive separation by gender in the playgrounds, boys and girls at times come together and play together. Thorne (in Swain 2005:78) points out that “boys and girls separate (or are separated) periodically, with their own spaces, rituals and groups, but they also come together to become, in crucial ways, part of the same world”. In this study boys and girls were neither in permanent separate spheres nor permanently enacting opposite sex roles. Despite the fact that there are many activities done by boys and girls separately, they still remain part of the same school domain and spend considerable time in close physical proximity. In the schools Thorne studied, boys and girls were often seen playing together and chasing each other. While boys and girls at times want to keep their homosocial groups there are times when they play together. However, the salient point which should be understood “is that the amount of interaction varies considerably between times, activities and contexts” (Swain 2005:78).

2.5.2.3 Having a girlfriend

As I outlined above under the subheading ‘Heterosexual masculinity in the school context’, it is impossible to understand gender relations in the school context without focusing on heterosexuality per se.

Renold (in Swain 2005:85) points out that “having a girlfriend was a common occurrence amongst the boys peer group culture”. This emanated from the desire to reinforce dominant versions of masculinity. In Swain’s study boys didn’t do more than desire to have a girlfriend. Amongst the boys, claiming a relationship with a girl was a status symbol as discussed above (see section 2.5.2.1).

Having a girlfriend is regarded as a manifestation of heterosexual masculinity, and thus failure to have one may lead one to being labelled gay or a girl (Renold 2007:284). In

Renold's study boys who were regarded as alternatively masculine were boys who disliked football or who were quiet and studious. Alternatively, masculine boys were boys who did not subscribe to the dominant form of masculinity. In this study, at two different primary schools in a small, semi-rural town in the east of England, dominant boys seemed to define their masculinity almost entirely through their hyper-heterosexual status as "professional" boyfriend. The intimacy between the boys and their girlfriends only extended to spending time together at playtime, usually holding hands and cuddling. Boys also gained popularity among girls by being sensitive and having the ability to talk and listen to all the girls irrespective of whether they were potential girlfriends (Renold 2007).

2.5.2.4 Discipline and masculinity construction

Discipline is linked to power relations. The way schools instil discipline may impact on masculinity formations (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). Punishments given to learners of different sexes are often different. Boys are normally given harsher and tougher punishments than girls (Humphreys 2006). Connell (in Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003:64) argues that "schools that adopt violent teaching practices generate schoolboy masculinities based upon a competitive machismo". In such a context 'real' boys are thus supposed to be powerful, authoritative and competitive.

In some schools more responsibilities are placed on the shoulders of the boys. Connell (2002b:217), in line with this view, argues that "[w]here the hegemony of the school is secure, boys may learn to wield disciplinary power themselves as part of their learning of masculine hierarchy". In the olden days, boy-prefects wielded more power than any other learners. However, where this type of hegemony is lacking, masculinity may be constructed through defiance of authority (Connell 2002b).

During different periods masculinity was constructed differently. In South Africa during the period 1850–1920 harsh disciplinary methods were used in schools (Morrell 2001). Teachers believed that boys had to be beaten to make them 'tough' which was believed to be a masculine attribute. The boys themselves favoured corporal punishment to other forms of punishment. Corporal punishment is still used in many South African schools despite the South African Schools Act 108 of 1996 banning it. The use of corporal punishment undoubtedly influences constructions of masculinity (Morrell 2001).

Circular 03/2014 of Gauteng Provincial Department of Education states that “corporal punishment is defined as any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him/her”. This circular came in the wake of an increase in the use of corporal punishment by a large number of educators in the province in the periods 2011/2012, 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. The use of corporal punishment is not, however, confined to Gauteng province but is found throughout South Africa. Statistics South Africa (2015) showing figures from the General Household Survey 2011 indicates that 16.7% of learners had been subjected to corporal punishment in South Africa. The General Household Survey 2014 however shows a decline to 12.4%. The use of corporal punishment is however still high despite its ban and punitive measures being taken by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to eliminate it. Since 2011 according to GDE, however, there has been an increase in the number of learners being subjected to corporal punishment. The statistics could be a drop in an ocean since most incidents of corporal punishment in rural and township schools go unreported. Most learners do not report corporal punishment for fear of victimisation by teachers, while teachers and parents collude because of their belief in its effectiveness in disciplining learners.

The use of corporal punishment goes back to the period before democracy in South Africa when both boys and girls were subjected to corporal punishment (Morrell 2001). The use of corporal punishment on boys was meant to teach them to be tough and uncomplaining while in girls it taught them to be submissive and unquestioning. Corporal punishment was not only confined to schools for black children² but also to white English and Afrikaans speaking schools. This shows that the use of corporal punishment in these schools transcended racial lines (Morrell 2001). It can be argued that “the purposeful and frequent infliction of pain by those in authority in a formal and ritualised way in an institutional setting historically promoted violent masculinities among black and white, ruling and working-class men” (Morrell 2001:140).

Violence in the eyes of children can result in negative gender relations in the school environment. The use of violence in controlling children can result in children thinking violence is a legitimate way of managing conflict. Bhana (2006:174) points out that

² During the apartheid years children attended racially segregated schools, a practice that continues to a large extent long after the advent of democracy even though it is not regulated as such. There is great competition to gain entry to former ‘white’ schools since they are believed to have better resources, but the majority of black children attend schools in townships where they live.

“[c]orporal punishment has an impact on the shaping of identities and it reduces positive relations and affects what is considered appropriate behaviour”.

The way teachers discipline learners in schools can have a bearing on the construction of masculinity by boys. In research carried out by Morrell (2001) on high school boys in KZN, it was observed that corporal punishment was still prevalent especially in township schools. Most respondents in the research acknowledged that male teachers were stricter and disciplined learners more severely than female teachers. The male teachers in this research presented a model of masculinity which seems to have been emulated by the boys because many boys seemed to regard fear as a necessary condition for effective discipline. In other research carried out on boys and girls in Grades 1 and 2 in a township school in KZN by Bhana (2006), it was observed that one of the teachers was violent in the administration of his class. The teacher beat the children on the head, the face, back and legs. The teacher showed physical power in maintaining discipline. It was also observed that the boys in the class used violent means in their relations with girls. In line with Bhana’s views, Kenway and Fitzclarence (in Morrell 2001:143) point out that “[a]ggressive and violent masculinities arise in schools with harsh and authoritative disciplinary systems”.

2.5.2.5 Male violence and masculinity

Masculinity as a social construct does not take place in a vacuum. Thus masculinity is constructed in the presence of other men and women (Bourdieu in Mfecane et al 2005). The concept of hegemonic masculinity looks at “the unequal relations between females and males *as groups*” (Ratele 2008:516, emphasis in original) where men generally want to dominate women.

Power relations in South Africa are commonly manifested in sexual violence, coercion and assault (Wood & Jewkes 2001; Lindegaard & Henriksen 2005; Shefer et al 2005; Sauls 2005; Ratele 2008). Research in South Africa shows that many women report that men use violent strategies in initiating sexual activities. Women give in to male pressure for sex because of ‘love’ or fear to lose a relationship (Shefer et al 2005). Male sexuality is thus privileged and dominant while that of women is responsive and subordinate. A study that was carried out in Cape Town showed that 60% of the girls in the study had been beaten by their partners. In one case an 11-year-old girl who was forced into sex was told by a friend not to cry as it was common for girls of her age (Wood & Jewkes 2001). This shows that girls are socialised to

accept the violent nature of boys and men. The concept of ‘culture’ has thus been used to justify gender inequalities and male power in dictating sexual acts.

Studies in South Africa point to the notion that “there are direct links between violence and conflict with the way that manhoods or masculinities are controlled” (Barker & Ricardo in Ratele 2008:519). Dominant forms of masculinity are therefore centred on violence, which tends to sustain the power relations dichotomy between men and women. In accordance with this perspective, Harvey, Gow and Moore (in Lindegaard & Henriksen 2005:119) point out that “violence is used to assert masculinity amongst groups of men”. In a study carried out by Lindegaard and Henriksen (2005) in Cape Town, violence seemed like the norm and transcended racial and class lines. Men tend to use violence to instil fear and thus force women and inferior men into subordinate positions; this begs the question of whether men in a hegemonic position rule by force or consent.

In the school environment violence can be fuelled by a number of factors. These include unemployment, poverty, lack of recreational facilities and overcrowding (Ncontsa & Shumba 2013). Learners from poor backgrounds may resort to violence to acquire basic things from other learners at school. They may also resort to violence to acquire the few resources at school such as furniture and playing space. Such violence may affect the learners negatively.

Apart from violence, hegemonic masculinity is also associated with sporting prowess, being tough and being a competitor (Bhana 2005; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011).

2.5.2.6 Tough, provider and competitor

The traditional notion is that ‘real men’ should be tough, fearless and strong. Only strong and tough men would be able to provide and protect their families or their girlfriends. For example, Campbell’s study of mine workers in South Africa showed that men were expected to be fearless and strong (in Mfecane et al 2005). Only tough men would go underground to do mining activities despite the dangers associated with them.

In a study carried out in Soweto, hegemonic masculinity was shown by being a *iauty/mjita* [stylish man] (Mfecane et al 2005). An *iauty* was described as a boy who knows about township life and its survival strategies. The boys were supposed to be able to support their parents and girlfriends. The respondents also talked of engaging in criminal activities to provide for their families and impress their girls and their peers. The behaviour of men was

reported to be mainly influenced by women. Closely related to the notion of a man being a provider is that of a man being a competitor in how well he can provide. In this study in Soweto, boys and men competed for girls by using assets like clothing, expensive cell phones and cars as ‘bait’ or proof of their ability to be providers.

In a study in Manenberg, Cape Town, men were also expected to be ‘tough’ and ‘masculine’ (Sauls 2005). This means men were supposed to be able to defend themselves and even be violent if need be. In Manenberg the seriousness of toughness in men is explained in these words: “Men are under pressure to conform and be tough regardless of whether or not they prefer to act this way, and at times their actions are shaped by these expectations” (Sauls 2005:111). In Manenberg, being a ‘real man’ is also related to belonging to a gang. Gangs are made up of tough violent boys and men who seem to have power within the community (Sauls 2005).

2.6 CONCLUSION

This section looked at the construction of masculinity in general and specifically in the South African context. It has been observed that there are hierarchies of masculinity in different locations and at different times. The dominant group of men expects acceptance of domination from subordinate men and women. Social constructionist theories of masculinities recognise that gender is achieved through people’s interactions in a particular context. It is along this line that I adopted a social constructionist perspective to guide this study. It has been observed that while there are different masculinities, there is a discernible dominant masculinity that Connell (2012) refers to as hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity is a fluid concept. Research carried out in different locations in South Africa has indicated different masculinities.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section I will give an overview of the research methodology. The term ‘methodology’ entails a set of rules and procedures to guide research. Babbie (2010:4) refers to methodology as “procedures for scientific investigation”. In the sections that follow I will therefore outline my research design, explain how I recruited the participants, collected and analysed the information and explain my rationale for using these methods. In conclusion I will discuss the ethics of the research process.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In the empirical world research design “means connecting the research questions to data” (Punch 2006:47). From the literature discussion above the fluidity of masculinity is apparent. Moreover, masculinity was found to have both historical and contextual links. It is against this background that I decided to locate my research in a qualitative paradigm. Marshall and Rossman (2011:3) point out that qualitative research takes place in the natural world and focuses on context. Qualitative researchers thus seek to understand the context or setting of the participants by visiting the context and collecting the information personally (Creswell 2009:8).

This research took a social constructionist perspective that recognises that masculinity is arrived at through people’s interactions in a particular context. Social constructionist perspectives are qualitative and interpretive and concerned with meaning. Guided by Connell’s social constructionist theory of hegemonic masculinity, I explored the way boys in Grade 7 interact with each other and girls and how they understand the world around them in the context of gender relations.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Two approaches were used to collect data in this research. Firstly, focus group discussions were used to solicit discussion and observe gender relations in boys and girls in the construction of masculinity in the presence of others. Participants were, secondly, also asked

to keep individual diaries to explore gender relations in masculinity constructions at both home and school. Cronin (2008) points out that focus groups can either be used on their own or in conjunction with other methods; however, the use of multiple methods of data collection will increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Nieuwenhuis & Smit 2012). In this research study, reading information in the diaries that research participants may also have discussed in group discussions verified my understanding and helped to ensure a correct interpretation of the data. The use of two data gathering strategies also helped to crystallise my findings. This crystallised reality is credible, as my data and analysis show the same emerging patterns, thus adding to the trustworthiness of my study.

If the research participants did not feel comfortable about revealing their opinions on a topic in a group setting, then the use of a method focusing on the individual, such as a diary, are more effective. While focus groups explored the social face of gender identity construction, diaries gave insight into its private face.

3.3.1 Focus group

3.3.1.1 What is a focus group?

A focus group is a small group of selected individuals who gather to discuss or express their views on a particular topic or subject. A focus group can be made up of any number between four and fifteen participants. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011:136) define a focus group discussion as “an interactive discussion between six to eight pre-selected participants, led by a trained moderator and focusing on a specific set of issues”.

Kitzinger (in Liamputtong 2011) points out that the group is focused because it involves some form of collective activity. A focus group is dependent on the interaction between participants and it gives an opportunity to view social interactions in process. Creswell (1998) is of the opinion that focus groups are particularly useful for understanding shared and common knowledge.

Focus groups produce qualitative data. Gomm (2008) points out that focus groups provide an understanding of the range and depth of opinion, attitudes and beliefs, rather than a measure of the number of people who hold a particular view or opinion.

The fundamental data that focus groups are used to produce involves transcripts of the group discussions. Thomas (2009:161) states that a transcript is “a written form of something that

was originally in spoken words". I transcribed the discussion as soon as possible after each focus group session.

3.3.1.2 Why use focus groups?

May (2011) maintains that since most of our lives are spent interacting with others, it is no surprise that they are modified according to the social situation in which we find ourselves. For this reason, group interviews can provide valuable insight into gender relations in the masculinity construction of boys. Focus groups help to get as close as possible to real-life situations where people discuss, formulate and modify their views and make sense of their experiences, such as in peer groups or professional teams (Barbour & Schostak 2011). This technique thus allowed me to develop an understanding of how boys construct masculinity in the company of others and the impact this has on gender relations. Bryman (2012) points out that the major reason for conducting focus groups research is that it is possible to study the process whereby meaning is collectively constructed within each session. The strength of the focus group method of interviewing is that it allows an interactive relationship to develop between researchers and participants. Focus groups also allow the latter to voice their concerns in a manner they are comfortable with, as there is little interruption from the researcher(s).

Focus groups have the advantage of being flexible. They also produce speedy results and are low in cost. Information can be gathered from many participants at one time thus saving time and money (Savin-Baden & Major 2013).

3.3.1.3 Size and composition of focus groups

A focus group can have four to 15 members as pointed out in section 3.3.1.1 above. In this research, each group had a maximum of ten participants. David and Sutton (2011) point out that groups of six to ten people work best. Focus groups with very few participants will lead to participants having more to say and they may end up agreeing with whatever is said by another participant. Larger groups will lead to problems of control.

The focus groups were heterogeneous. David and Sutton (2011) point out that if young men spend most of their time interacting with other young males then a homogenous group is appropriate and if they spend most of their time in mixed groups then a heterogeneous group will be more appropriate. Since the primary school concerned is coeducational and the

learners spent most of their time together, heterogeneous groups consisting of boys and girls were more appropriate.

3.3.1.4 Venue and location

The venue where a focus group will meet and discuss is very important. It should be comfortable enough to sit and talk for the duration of the time required and should comply with the following conditions: Participants should sit in such a way that they will be able to see and hear each other; the room chosen should be free from interruptions; and participants should sit in such a way that recording can be carried out easily (Cronin 2008). Thus, in this research the school computer laboratory was chosen for the venue for the group discussions.

3.3.1.5 Running a focus group

It is good practice to put the participants at ease before the group discussion begins. In this research participants were asked what they thought of being in Grade 7 as an ice-breaker (see Appendix K for the focus group interview guide).

Since focus groups allow researchers to view social interactions in progress there are likely to be disturbances within the group. Therefore, ground rules should be made known to the participants before the session commences (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). In this research the ground rules were made by myself in conjunction with the participants. The following ground rules were agreed on and written on a flipchart in front of the group for everyone to see and to act as a reminder:

- All group discussions are confidential (no one is allowed to say what has been said by other participants after the group discussion). A confidentiality form was signed to this effect (see Appendix I).
- All cell phones must be switched off.
- Only one person talks at a time.
- Keep the conversation 'in the group', since side conversations can interrupt the flow of conversation.
- Everyone should participate since there are no right and wrong answers.
- Name tags with pseudonyms must be displayed at all times.

In focus groups you come across people who are outspoken and people who may be more withdrawn. The researcher should thus develop ways and means to reduce dominant

behaviour by specific group members because their behaviour may lead to a false sense of consensus. The quiet ones may be the thoughtful ones and so can provide some compelling information and therefore all participants should be encouraged to provide information (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). In this research I therefore developed the habit of asking for contributions from the quiet ones and also asking the vociferous ones not to dominate the discussions.

Focus groups hold a danger in that the researcher may lead participants into agreeing with his or her own views. To prevent this in this research I avoided a high-level moderation position. According to Gomm (2008), high-level moderation means that the researcher assumes a high degree of control over the direction and nature of the discussion. In this research I took the mid-level moderation position. In mid-level moderation the researcher avoids both a higher degree of control and a lower level of control that leads participants astray. In mid-level moderation the researcher can maintain a greater degree of control over the direction of the discussion, hence ensuring that the data remain relevant to the research question.

An active group is more likely to veer off the topic than a less interested group. In this research I used guiding questions to help me to keep the participants on track. It is also possible for individuals to pull away from the main group and to begin a private conversation. This can lead to vital information being lost, may complicate the note-taking process and may also disturb the audibility of the recording mechanism (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). The outlining of ground rules helped a lot in curbing this problem. In this research I also discouraged side talk using gestures.

3.3.2 Diaries

3.3.2.1 Nature of diaries

Tonkiss (2012) points out that in social and cultural research, a focus group can be combined with other methods to produce different forms of data. In this research I also decided to use diaries to collect data. Kramer (in Berg 2009) states that numerous studies have used focus groups yet few have used the methodology to complement diary research.

There are different types of diaries. Thompson and Holland (in Braun & Clark 2013) identify the following formats: handwritten diaries, typed online or emailed electronic diaries and

audio-recorded diaries among others. In this research participants were asked to keep handwritten diaries owing to their age and their social setting.

While focus groups explore the social face of gender identity construction, diaries give the private face. A diary can provide an outlet for expressing things that one may not mention in public. Bernard (2011:294) points out that “a diary chronicles how you feel and how you perceive your relations with others around you”. Diaries have an advantage in that they give first-person descriptions of social events, written by an individual who was involved in or witnessed those happenings. I requested participants to record what they experienced each day which included gender talk, work, play and relations of any kind. Participants were given explicit instructions and a model of a completed section of a diary was provided together with a checklist of items participants needed to observe. Guidelines on how to complete a diary and a sample of a completed diary are found in Appendix L.

3.3.2.2 Why use diaries?

Diaries are used by social scientists to answer a wide range of qualitative questions. These may be “about experiences, understandings and perceptions, accounts of practice, influencing factors and construction” (Braun & Clark 2013:147). In this research I asked participants to give an account of what happened in their life and also to express their feelings about it. Accordingly, the participants outlined their experiences, understandings and perceptions on the construction of masculinity by boys. This helped to highlight everyday issues that were taken for granted and thus could not be unearthed using other methods. This was made possible because participants recorded the information as soon as it happened, that is, whilst they still remembered the details. Multiple entries recorded in diaries over time also helped to understand the contexts surrounding particular experiences and activities in the construction of masculinity.

3.3.2.3 Challenges in the use of diaries

The use of diaries may be expensive and cumbersome. One has to source diaries and travel regularly to the site of the research to check them to see whether they are being completed properly. Another disadvantage of diaries is that “diaries can suffer from a process of attrition, as people decide they have had enough of the task of completing a diary” (Bryman 2012:243). Participants may also fail to record details timeously, so that memory recall problems set in. Despite these disadvantages diary researchers such as Coxon and Sullivan (in

Bryman 2012) argue that the diary is more accurate than the equivalent data based on interviews or questionnaires.

3.3.2.4 Managing diaries

Braun and Clark (2013) suggest having a meeting with the participants before the research to outline the task of diary keeping. In this research I gathered all thirty participants before I started the research. At this meeting I explained how they were going to keep the diary and I handed out A5 exercise books which were used as diaries. In the diaries all the instructions on how to complete the diary were clearly indicated and an example of a diary entry was also pasted in.

Participants were asked to keep diaries for a period of one month and I collected the diaries once a week to assess the progress. Collecting diaries regularly during the course of the research “can help maintain motivation and provide participants with an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any areas of confusion” (Braun & Clark 2013:149). By collecting the diaries on a regular basis I was able to ask about issues that were not clearly stated in diaries during a group discussion, thereby increasing the trustworthiness and validity of my research findings. Thus, using two strategies of data collection simultaneously helps in ensuring that what is presented as research findings is credible and authentic.

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

This study was carried out in Gauteng East District in Ekurhuleni, formerly known as the East Rand, in the Gauteng province of South Africa. There are about 126 primary schools in Gauteng East District. Within the district there are fee-paying schools and non-fee paying schools, depending usually on where the school is located. My study was carried out at a primary school in a township where they do not pay school fees. Such schools mainly consist of learners from impoverished backgrounds.

Bokamoso (the pseudonym used to refer to the school in order to protect the identity of the participants) is a primary school in Wattville in the Gauteng East District. It draws its learners from this township and the surrounding informal settlements. I carried out the study at this school because, as a former educator at the school, I was aware of some of the social relations among the learners there but I was not directly involved in their lives anymore.

In choosing this school for my study I used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling can be used “when a researcher wants to identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation” (Neuman 1997:206). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy in which the participants are selected on the basis of the researcher’s expert judgement about which participants will be the most useful or representative of the population (Babbie 2010; Royce, Singleton & Straits 2010). Bryman (2012) points out that the aim of purposive sampling is to sample participants strategically, so that that the participants selected are suited to giving answers to the research questions. These individuals should have certain attributes that are required by the study. In this research participants were selected on the basis of their ability to write, since they were going to complete diaries, and their ability to engage in debates, since they were going to be involved in group discussions. In grade 7 in South Africa an expectation of some form of literacy is expected but in township schools it is a common thing to come across learners who cannot read. Participants were also selected on the basis of how they interacted with members of the opposite sex and their knowledge of the characteristic forms of behaviour expected of boys and men. These participants also had knowledge of the gender segregated boundaries between them. The educators of the Grade 7 learners helped me in sampling the participants.

Focus group research is generally based on purposive sampling (Tonkiss 2012), as was also the case in this study. Focus groups allow researchers to explore the way selected groups of individuals define, talk about and account for given issues. It was against this background that I used a purposive sampling method to select the boys and girls to participate in this study. Although girls participated in this research, boys were in the majority as they were the focus of the study.

The school had a total of 46 Grade 7 learners, of which 35 were invited to take part in the study. Some of the learners were left out because they were unable to read and write, thus it would have been embarrassing for them when it came to completing the diaries. Some were also left out because they could not meet the other criteria stated above. The number of learners eventually selected was more than the desired number; this was done deliberately in case some did not turn up or stay the course (Savin-Baden & Major 2013). Eventually, a total of 30 participants took part in this study, of which 17 were boys and 13 were girls. Five of the invited learners did not return consent forms from their parents/guardians thus they could not be part of the study despite being willing to do so. Of these five, three were girls and two

were boys. These two boys were among the oldest learners and were referred to by many research participants as bullies and always challenging authority.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Of the 30 participants, 28 returned the diaries. The collected data were analysed and interpreted bearing in mind the two primary criteria for assessing a qualitative study, namely, trustworthiness and authenticity. The concept of trustworthiness implies that the quality of the qualitative research is evaluated on the basis of four concepts, namely, credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole 2013). Bryman (2012:717) defines trustworthiness as “a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research”. Gray (2014) points out that authenticity relates to analysis and interpretation to the meanings and experiences that are lived and perceived by the research participants. Thus in this study I will be aware of the multiple voices contained within the data.

After each focus group discussion session recordings were transcribed verbatim in the original language so that a written text was produced. Transcription conventions took the following formats. Throughout, I (Luckmore Chimanzi) as the interviewer am represented by **LC** and Vusi Mtetwa (the interpreter) is represented by **VM**. Short pauses are indicated by a hyphen (-), while pauses of more than a second are given numerically, for example (3) means a three-second pause. An equal sign (=) shows two people talking over each other. Elongated words which seem to show some emotional significance are shown by putting two colons in between, for example bu::lly. Coughing, laughing and so on are signified in parentheses, for example (sneeze). (Laughing) indicates one person and (laughter) several people laughing (see Frosh et al 2002; Renold 2007). Strong emphasis is represented by capital letters, for example “Boys are BULLY”. Where research participants used actual names of other participants these were removed and pseudonyms written in italics in square brackets ([]). Quotes carrying these transcriptions will be found in the collected data as they were analysed and interpreted for trustworthiness. Bless et al (2013:237) point out that “when a researcher describes exactly how data was collected, recorded, coded and analysed, and can present good examples to illustrate this process, one starts to trust that the results are in fact dependable”. Dependability is a concept that shows the trustworthiness of a research study.

The focus groups were held in English but since learners at the school mixed IsiZulu with English in their everyday speech, contributions made in IsiZulu were translated into English with the assistance of the fluent IsiZulu-speaking person who also formed part of the group discussion as an interpreter. At the end of the information gathering each group transcript was analysed and the presence of material relating to each of the themes identified. The themes which occurred most often in the three focus groups regarding the construction of masculinity and gender relations were selected for interpretation.

Thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is a form of qualitative content analysis which gives strong emphasis “to the need to spend considerable time with the data, working out what themes actually emerge from the data rather than can be imposed upon it from the researcher’s own beliefs” (David & Sutton 2011:365). Thematic analysis entails using deep-rooted codes that emerge from the data itself.

Diaries were collected on a regular basis during the research to check whether participants were still on track. At the end of the data collection process common themes from the diaries were identified for interpretation alongside those from the focus group discussions.

A comparative analysis across and within the individual research participants and focus groups was undertaken to find themes and patterns in the data. Considerable excerpts and quotes from the group discussions and diaries were used to provide evidence for the analysis, interpretations and conclusions of my research. Verbatim quotations are tools for increasing research trustworthiness. On the use of verbatim quotations, Bless et al (2013:239) say, “[b]y including many direct quotations from the original data in research reports, the researcher allows the reader to hear exactly what respondents said and how the researcher interpreted that information”. This helps in producing thick and detailed descriptions (Gast 2010; Kawulich & Holland 2012; Gray 2014). The use of quotations shows the connections between data and my interpretations which ensures conformability. After analysing the data it was interpreted, which entailed drawing conclusions from the results for answering the research questions and interpreting the larger meaning of the results (Creswell 2009). An explanation of the results was based on social construction theory as explained above.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are important in any research to ensure the protection of all participants involved in the research process. In this research I had my participants’ welfare at heart and

thus ensured that no harm befell any participant or member of the society at large. Issues of confidentiality, informed consent, debriefing and counselling are thus addressed in this section.

3.6.1 Confidentiality

Participants were assured that they would remain anonymous and whatever they said would remain confidential. To ensure anonymity the research participant's identity is protected by being given a fictitious name and location (Neuman 1997). Research participants were thus assured that only pseudonyms would be used throughout the research to protect their identity. However, they were made aware that direct quotations might be reproduced and the essence of their contributions reported. These could not, however, be traced to their true identity for confidentiality reasons. Babbie (2010:67) points out that “[a] research project guarantees confidentiality when the researcher can identify a given person's responses but promises not to do so publicly”.

Participants were also assured that all voice recordings would be kept in secure locations and that only the researcher and his supervisor would have access to them once the study was completed. During group discussions participants were discouraged from discussing what had happened in their group discussions with third parties. A confidentiality agreement document was signed by all participants (Appendix I). Issues of confidentiality help in achieving high levels of trustworthiness.

3.6.2 Informed consent

Neuman (1997) points out that social research may harm participants both physically and psychologically. It was therefore of paramount importance for me to obtain informed consent before the research commenced. Berg (in David & Sutton 2011:43) alludes to the fact that “[i]nformed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from an element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation”.

Participants in this research participated voluntarily and they were not offered any compensation for their participation. I made them aware that there would be no obligation of any nature on them to participate and that there would be no reward or punishment for either participation or non-participation. They were thus given the leeway to withdraw during the

course of the research if they decided to do so, since they were not being forced or coerced to participate. This is clearly outlined in the consent letter (see Appendix A).

Assent forms were issued and signed by the participants prior to the start of the study, and the consent forms were signed by their parents/guardians (since they were all younger than 18 years) as well as the principal of the school concerned. In these forms, issues of confidentiality and their right to withdraw from the study at any time were clearly outlined. I also included a brief description of the purpose and procedure of the research, including the expected duration of the study. The GDE also issued a research approval letter for the research to commence and the Unisa Department of Sociology gave ethical clearance for the study. For more details see Appendices A–H.

3.6.3 Debriefing and counselling

Participants can be unknowingly harmed psychologically during research so a debriefing process is advisable. Babbie (2010:70) says “[d]ebriefing entails to discover any problems generated by the research experience so that those problems can be corrected”. In the event of any psychological effects being experienced by the participants as a result of participating in the research, they would be counselled to avoid any lasting damage from the experience. The school where this research was carried out has experienced and competent counsellors. I therefore worked closely with them in debriefing and counselling the participants although no research participants seemed to have experienced any distress as a result of taking part in the research.

3.7 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

It is important for social researchers to practise reflection if qualitative research methods are used. Savin-Baden and Major (2013) talk of the notions of reflection and reflexivity as two oft-conflated concepts in qualitative research. These two concepts bring the experiences of the researcher into the research process. The reason for this is that the researcher’s direct involvement in the research may have a bearing on its shape and outcome (Madhok 2013).

In addition to the effect the researcher’s socio-cultural background can have on a study, as Babbie (2010) argues, a researcher is also, in turn, likely to be moved by the participants’ problems and crises. A researcher may thus respond to the interviewees in particular ways and showing particular emotions (Frosh et al 2002). In this section I therefore reflect on

potential problems that could have affected the study and how I tried to minimise their impact.

Reflection in a study entails revisiting the study and trying to unearth potential problems and implicit elements that could have affected it. In a qualitative study, “reflection involves thought and meditation about process and products associated with study” (Savin-Baden & Major 2013:75). Reflection is important because it transforms the researcher’s perspectives.

On the other hand, reflexivity is “self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researchers” (Savin-Baden & Major 2013:76). The researcher in this case looks critically at himself or herself and sees if she or he has imposed meanings on the research process because their characteristics affect what they see and how they interpret it (Babbie 2010). The difference between reflection and reflexivity, as seen in the above definitions, is blurred and thus they are often combined in qualitative research.

The above definitions make the social researcher aware of the potential impact their values and life experiences can have on the research process. In this study I was thus aware of how my gender as the researcher and that of my interpreter could have affected the research participants’ responses. It is possible that the female research participants failed to disclose some of their accounts of masculinity owing to the fact that the interpreter and I were both men. I was also aware that my lack of a deep understanding of IsiZulu, which is the home language of most research participants, could have had an impact on the study. Lastly, I was also aware that as a former educator at the school some participants could have withheld some information, especially where it concerned their sexual relationships. I was therefore vigilant in relation to these problems and in so doing attempted to minimise their negative effects on the accuracy of the data collected.

In view of the above mentioned obstacles, I aimed throughout the group discussions to be sensitive to these matters and not to allow my assumptions to interfere with the participants. Since the interpreter and I are both men I engaged participants in a relaxed, encouraging and non-judgemental atmosphere. This allowed the girls to relax and become engaged in the focus group discussions on an equal level with the boys, although at first they seemed tense. I tried not to show any bias in my treatment of the boys and girls. However, at one time I felt the boys wanted to draw me onto their side when they stated that did not blame male teachers

but castigated female teachers. They pointed out that female teachers favoured the girls because they were also ‘girls’.

I made the participants aware that I was not coming with any preconceived ideas on their experiences. Thus there were no right and wrong answers in our discussions. This helped the participants to engage in lively discussions. As a former educator at the site where this study was conducted and well known to most, my fear was that they would not engage in lively discussions on highly sensitive issues like sexuality. To counteract this, participants were reminded that everything they were going to say was confidential. This was also clearly outlined in the letter inviting them to take part in the study and the form they signed to keep the information confidential (see Appendices A and I for details). The participants were also reminded that I was no longer their teacher and after the study I was not going to come back to the school. As a former educator I knew the age of the participants so it was not difficult to encourage them to enter into lively debates. As discussed above, diaries were also introduced to allow the participants to write down issues they were not comfortable discussing in public.

Owing to my poor understanding of IsiZulu, I was assisted by an eloquent Zulu speaker, Vusi, a 24-year-old man. He was a total outsider and thus was not known to any of the participants. However, bringing him in for translation did not help as much as anticipated because the participants wanted to express themselves in English and the simple IsiZulu terms they used I was already familiar with. This relegated the interpreter to the position of recorder during most of the group discussions. In this study there was no attempt to correct the grammar of the children in the verbatim quotes in order to make their voices heard as they express themselves and to demonstrate their world of multilingualism. In addition, I was also aware that my participants were coming from various socio-cultural backgrounds so I encouraged them to respect each other’s views in our discussions.

The issue of using pseudonyms and maintaining confidentiality relaxed the atmosphere thus contributing to both boys and girls narrating their experiences in the focus groups. To achieve high levels of trustworthiness, therefore, I made sure that the situation within which data were collected was safe and non-threatening and the relationship with the research participants was open and relaxed and trusting. Glesne (2011:211) says in this regard, “[c]ontinual alertness to your own biases and theoretical predispositions ... assists in producing more trustworthy interpretations”.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter looked at the rules and procedures guiding this research, which adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the context in which their participants operate. Therefore, as masculinity construction takes place in the natural world a qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study.

In this chapter, issues concerning the way data were collected in this study, using focus groups and diaries, were discussed. It was explained that the focus groups were heterogeneous and the group discussions produced transcripts which were analysed along with the diaries. The way the collected data were analysed and interpreted was also discussed.

Sampling techniques also formed part of this chapter. In this study, a purposive sampling method was used to select the respondents from a primary school in Gauteng East, a district of Ekurhuleni formerly known as the East Rand. Ethical considerations were also considered when handling the recruited participants. Issues of confidentiality, consent and debriefing and counselling were thus discussed and the chapter concluded with a discussion on reflection in the research process.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In-depth data were collected from six focus groups and diaries. Common themes were identified using thematic coding, which was drawn from both the focus groups and the diaries. The themes and the sub-themes that featured most are noted in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Predominant themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Sexuality	Heterosexuality Homosexuality Sex talk Having girlfriends
The sturdy boy	Toughness Sexual violence and sexual harassment Gender boundaries Corporal punishment
Homosocial	Male conformity to group Problem sharing
Sex roles	Cleaning of classrooms Hard work at school
Defying authority	Disrespecting teachers Gambling and other anti-behaviours
Comedian	

Each theme and its sub-themes identified in table 4.1 will be presented and discussed below. This chapter begins with an overview of the research setting. A brief description of the set up of the school where the study was conducted will form part of this chapter. It will also give the demographic details of all the research participants. A table containing the names, gender and ages of the research participants will be included, and the composition of the focus groups be delineated. A detailed discussion of the predominant themes and their subthemes follows and the chapter ends with concluding remarks on the major themes identified.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SETTING

This research was carried out at a township primary school. Therefore, before presenting and analysing the collected data, I will briefly describe the school set-up. As indicated in chapter 3, information for this research was obtained through focus groups and diaries, so it is also important to give a brief description of the sample. In addition, I describe the composition of the focus groups and the way in which the diaries were returned.

4.2.1 The school premises

Bokamoso³ Primary School, the school where this study was carried out, is situated in Wattville Township in the Gauteng East District. The school includes Grade R up to Grade 7, has 17 educators and an enrolment of about 400 learners. Twelve of the educators are female and five are male. Seven educators teach Grade 7 at the school. Of these, two are female and five are male. This means that most of the female educators teach the lower grades while all the male teachers teach Grade 7. The principal of the school and the head of department (HOD) for Grade 7 are both male. The school does not have a deputy principal.

Bokamoso Primary School does not have designated playgrounds like most former black township schools. During break children at this school play behind the classrooms and the school hall. Owing to the shortage of playing space learners are always fighting for space.

Wattville is a township of black people only. Around Wattville there are a number of informal settlements and, owing to the fact that Bokamoso is situated on the outskirts of Wattville, it draws most of its learners from these informal settlements. Many of the children come from single parent headed families, mainly women who live with their matrilineal extended families. A few of the learners live in middle-income houses in Wattville with both of their parents. English is the language of instruction at the school while IsiZulu is the home language of many learners. The learners come from diverse ethnic backgrounds; many are South African but there is also a good number of learners from Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 Description of the sample

A total of 30 Grade 7 learners took part in this study. Of the 30 participants who took part, 17 were boys and 13 girls, ranging in age from 12 to 17. Table 4.2 lists the names of the participants, their sex and age.

³ This is not the actual name of the school. A pseudonym was used to avoid tracing the research participants.

Table 4.2: Names, sex and ages of participants⁴

	Names	Sex	Age in years
1	Ntombi	Female	13
2	Diana	Female	13
3	Samantha	Female	13
4	Colleta	Female	12
5	Prudence	Female	12
6	Precious	Female	12
7	Nandipha	Female	13
8	Dineo	Female	13
9	Jadagrace	Female	14
10	Tyra	Female	13
11	Noxolo	Female	12
12	Ayesha	Female	12
13	Palisa	Female	12
14	Lucky	Male	12
15	Sandile	Male	13
16	Pleasure	Male	14
17	Kagiso	Male	13
18	John	Male	14
19	John 1	Male	13
20	Eminem	Male	13
21	Andy	Male	12
22	Kenny	Male	13
23	Mpho	Male	14
24	Ngamla	Male	13
25	Gift	Male	16
26	Lungelo	Male	14
27	Sibusiso	Male	17
28	Prince Charmer	Male	14
29	Sibusiso 2	Male	13
30	Lesekego	Male	15

4.2.2.1 Size and composition of focus groups

The focus groups were heterogeneous. Owing to the fact that the study was carried out after school hours, the focus group discussions did not always constitute more boys than girls as

⁴ All names of research participants used in this research are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the research participants.

had been anticipated. Some of the participants left school after lessons, that is, before the commencement of the discussions of the focus groups or were absent from school on the days earmarked for the focus group sessions. This also resulted in the focus groups not being made up of ten participants every time as initially arranged, with some group discussions having fewer than ten participants. Generally speaking, the focus groups had between six and ten participants each; however, this did not compromise the study because the representations were within acceptable limits and maintained group heterogeneity (see David & Sutton 2011). Research participants were placed into three heterogeneous groups. Each group met twice, thus six focus groups were held over a period of three weeks. Each focus group discussion session took between 30 to 60 minutes. Table 4.3 below shows the composition of focus group discussions by gender.

Table 4.3: Group discussions by sex

Group discussion	Sex	Number of participants
1	Male	5
	Female	5
2	Male	5
	Female	4
3	Male	3
	Female	3
4	Male	5
	Female	5
5	Male	4
	Female	5
6	Male	5
	Female	4

4.2.2.2 Diary management

Thirty diaries were distributed to participants in the study. Of these 30, 28 were returned. Two boys did not return the diaries despite repeated follow-ups. These boys also attended only one focus group discussion, so they can be considered to be research participants who withdrew during the course of the study. One of them was reported by some participants to be a bully, and was already 17 years old at the time of the research. I later learnt that these two research participants besides being much older than the others were unable to read and write. This could have been part of the reason why they did not return the diaries. If they could

indeed not read or write then they would have been mistakenly included in the research since one of the criteria for participating was adequate reading and writing skills.

Having given a general overview of the research setting I will present and discuss each theme and its sub-themes as identified and tabulated in the introduction above.

4.3 PREDOMINANT THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

4.3.1 Sexuality

Sexuality is a term that “refers to the sexual characteristics, and sexual behaviour, of human beings” (Giddens 1997:595). It is impossible to complete a study on gender relations without talking about sexuality, and specifically heterosexuality as a component of sexuality (see Swain 2005). Boys and girls in this study discussed the issues of heterosexuality and homosexuality extensively. In this regard the issue of boys having girlfriends was also discussed. It was also observed that many boys spent a lot of time talking about their girlfriends or girls in general. A number of boys and girls also highlighted issues of sexuality in their diaries.

Sexuality has been divided into a number of sub-themes for this discussion, namely, heterosexuality, homosexuality, sex talk and having a girlfriend. The issues of heterosexuality and homosexuality will also be discussed by focusing on their interrelationship.

4.3.1.1 Heterosexuality versus homosexuality

During three focus group discussions the issues of heterosexuality and homosexuality were talked about at length. Some research participants also wrote about them in their diaries. In all discussions and diary entries feelings of heterosexuality predominated feelings of homosexuality.

Most boys in this study preferred to play with other boys because they were afraid of being labelled gay if they played with girls. When I asked the research participants whether they liked playing with boys or girls, one of the popular boys was quick to disassociate himself from girls: “I like to play with boys because when I play with girls they think I am a gay” (Pleasure). When I asked the girls to comment on Pleasure’s view, Ntombi said it was a bad thing to be gay. She elaborated by pointing out that boys were not supposed to behave or act like girls. According to her, boys had specific roles to play which are different from those of

girls. A number of research participants expressed their total disgust at gays because they “take not their part”. This shows that the participants believed that boys and girls have different ‘parts’ to perform in society. A number of research participants said that they hated gays because they pretended to be girls. They must stop pretending and play their part in society. One participant argued that if they want to be girls then they should use the girls’ toilet. To show that their behaviour was not welcome, if they did that the school principal would punish them. The discussions by these research participants show that it was believed that boys must not behave or act like girls. It is clear from the above that the participants confused sexual orientation with being male or female; for them the two appeared to be the same thing.

Even if boys wanted to play with the girls, the fear of other people associating them with homosexuals made them rather play with other boys. One male research participant pointed out that at times he tried to do “boys’ stuff” such as playing soccer to please other boys and not to be labelled gay. Lesekgo confirms this view:

Sir, like me Lesekgo I want to be heard that I am a boy because sometimes sir when you don’t do boys stuff like playing soccer, like boys do sir, they will call you a gay sir, because if you don’t do nothing sitting when you go to a girl and say can you borrow me a lunch box I want to go and eat at the kitchen sir, they say you are a gay, or that is our girlfriend then sir the news will go all over the school. That is why I want to be with boys sir, even if today I don’t want to play soccer, I will go just to impress the boys sir which is not good for me.

Since Lesekgo played soccer even if he did not feel like it, the performance of masculinity is demonstrated, suggesting social construction and endorsing a perception of hegemonic masculinity. John 1, a boy in another focus group, pointed out that if their mothers heard about them behaving like girls it wouldn’t go down well. He claimed his mother would beat him. This boy lived alone with his mother in a backyard shack. His views introduced the importance of the family in policing heterosexual masculinity.

A very quiet boy called Sandile sat looking pensive and vexed when some of the participants said positive things about gay people. When asked for his views, he said:

Sir, I hate them because, *e-ish* the things they are doing is improper sir ... *Eish* sir, *ayijwayelekanga ukuthi umfana nomfana bashade, ayiko. Abantu Bayakuthola*

kanjani sir? BAZOKUTHOLA KANJANI? Awungowabo. (Eish sir, you cannot get used to the issue of boys wedding boys, there is nothing like that. What will people think of you, sir? How will they consider you? You don't belong to them).

Homosexual acts are regarded as inappropriate in Sandile's community. The fact that some of the research participants were so vehement in their dislike of gay behaviour implies that they believed their views were in accordance with those of the dominant society. Thus the boys at this school constructed masculinity according to the norms of their understanding of society, which regarded heterosexuality to be "more manly" than homosexuality. These findings concur with the literature (see Robinson 2008; Kinsman 2009; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011; Williams 2013).

Many research participants pointed out that they did not like boys who behaved like girls thus relegating boys who were gay to an inferior status. By behaving like females they were hated. One boy, Lucky, had this to say: "I hate bo gays. (I hate gays) ... I hate gays because they must be (2), they must be what they are. They must be boys. They must stop to pretend that they are girls".

Nandipha, a girl in a different group from Lucky's, cutting short another participant said: "No sir! They need to accept, if you are a boy you must accept that you are a boy, if you are a girl you must accept, not to do FUNNY things." When I asked her what she would do if a gay wanted to play with her Nandipha said, "I run away. I don't want to play with gays sir". Another girl, Diana, seemed to be furious about the issue of gays: "Ngifuni gays! (I don't like gays!). Why do they have to be treated like girls when they are not? I ha::te them. (3) They are not girls!"

The above views seem to suggest it is unmanly for a boy to behave like a girl, which in their view is the same as being gay. Many of both the male and the female research participants indicated that they did not like to play with gays. While most girls in this study did not like playing with gays they did not mind playing with 'real' boys. Masculinity was thus being policed by both boys and girls and consequently any deviation from the norms of heterosexual masculinity was subject to questioning by both boys and girls. These views were also observed in another study in an inner city primary school in KZN by Martin and Muthukrishna (2011).

Boys who fail to tow the heterosexual line are often laughed at and teased. Mpho, one of the male research participants, wrote in his diary that he had noticed a gay being teased and laughed at in class. Other boys referred to him as a “*stabane*” (gay). Lesekgo, another male research participant, pointed out during a focus group discussion that if you show signs of “girlish behaviour”, such as crying, girls would call you “*masabasabayo*” (gay). Thus this name calling is a way of making boys behave according to a heterosexual norm or confirming heteronormativity. Name calling (a type of stereotyping) oppressed homosexuals.

Homosexuals and bisexuals were ridiculed in order to force them to toe the line of heterosexuals. Cranny-Francis et al (2003) point out that heterosexuality is a vector of oppression. While the dominance of heterosexuality in the broader society has been challenged by homosexual organisations and other civic groups, the boys in this study were still rooted to the dominance of heterosexuality and endorsed hegemonic masculinity through heterosexuality.

It was also argued that ‘real’ boys must love ‘natural’ girls and not do ‘funny’ things. This aspect cropped up when the issue of gays dating both girls and boys was highlighted. Many of the research participants repeatedly pointed out that gays wanted to kiss both boys and girls. Nandipha, a female research participant, went even further pointing out that a Grade 7 boy at this school loved her and also loved another boy in the same class. Another research participant who seemed not to have a problem with gays highlighted the fact that a gay family friend was also involved sexually with both boys and girls. To show total disdain, one male research participant punched another boy who had professed his love for him at school. The boy who was punched also professed his love to a girl in the same class. Nandipha described this as follows:

He wants to play with Ngamula and Ngamula does not want. The gay always say, Ngamula I love you, Ngamula I love you. It’s not a fine thing because Ngamula does not love him. Ngamula loves girls, NATURAL GIRLS sir! ... Like Andy’s friend sir, he wants Ngamula, he wants me too sir ... he loves girls, he loves boys. That is why I don’t like gays⁵.

Whilst most research participants were against any form of homosexual behaviour, a few sympathised with gays. During one focus group discussion, Palisa, a female research participant, argued that gays like any other citizen of South Africa had their rights so they

⁵ The term ‘gay’ is used to refer to both gays and bisexuals in this context.

should be allowed to act the way they wanted. Andy, a popular boy, asked if the discussion on homosexuals could be dropped. The members of the focus group then pointed out that he wanted the discussion to be dropped because he had a gay friend although Andy was not gay. Asked to comment on the issue of homosexuals he said that he felt nothing about them since they were just human beings like anyone else, thus demonstrating a sympathetic approach to homosexuals. Andy in this case is contesting heterosexual dominance yet he remains popular against his peers. This boy's views and continued respect he received from his classmates may have been influenced by his social upbringing which was economically secure compared to that of most Grade 7s at the school. He brought money to buy lunch everyday unlike the other children and he also lived with both parents. This boy also had many girlfriends at the school. The way children behave can have a bearing on the family's social class. Andy, unlike the boys from impoverished backgrounds, treated girls nicely and befriended gays although he was not one without being chastised by his classmates.

A good number of research participants stated that gays knew how to dress fashionably. However, all of them were quick to point out that although they appreciated the way gays dress, they did not like their homosexuality. Although this may be a positive stereotype, it is still a stereotype. Their views could have been influenced by the majority's negative approach to the issue of gays. A few other research participants acknowledged that homosexuals were less violent than 'real' boys, although this was disputed by most research participants.

Precious, a female research participant, argued that there was nothing wrong with gays. She had most likely been influenced by her grandmother who had a gay friend. Although the girl argued against discrimination against homosexuals she portrayed herself as heterosexual. It seems in this case that the experience of having a relative who thinks it is normal to have gay friends helps to overcome prejudice.

The debate on heterosexuals versus homosexuals shows that many in this study subscribe to the notion of heterosexuality as a characteristic of being a 'real boy/man'. Most boys and girls in this study seemed to concur that a 'real' man should show heterosexual attributes. In this study being heterosexual appeared to be both desirable and manly in contrast to being homosexual. This is in line with what has been observed by other researchers (see Robinson 2008; Kinsman 2009; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011; Williams 2013).

4.3.1.2 Sextalk

Both boys and girls in this study indicated that boys spent a considerable amount of time talking about girls. This talk indicated heterosexual masculinity and may be due to the fact that the boys were approaching adolescence. When I asked why Grade 7 boys liked girls, one boy pointed out that it was the stage.

When I asked what most boys spent their time doing, one girl was quick to point out that boys spent most of their time talking about girls. One boy, Kagiso, also said that they spent most of their time talking about beautiful and attractive girls. Lucky added: “Sir, they most time talk about girls. Let’s say I want Diana and sir, some of them sir talk about many girls they want.”

When I asked the research participants if this meant that boys wanted many girlfriends there was a chorus of “Yes”. I then asked if this meant that for one to be a ‘real boy’ one needed to have many girlfriends; again the male research participants chorused “yes”.

One of the boys, Pleasure, tried to explain what boys want from girls when they talk about them.

Pleasure: These boys want to talk about girls because they say e-eh they must go deep there, (3) they must make sex *wabona* (you see).

LC: Ok, so boys talk about girls because they want sex?

Pleasure: They don’t love girls. They love sex.

For Pleasure, to be a ‘real’ boy meant to have sex with a woman. In this case sex is not about pleasure or a way of showing love but a way of showing manhood. Along the same lines, Shefer et al (2005) in a local study with young men noted that to be a man is to have sex with a woman. Other local studies, although with young men only, revealed that having sex and being able to handle multiple female sexual partners was equated with manhood (Wood & Jewkes 2005; Sauls 2005; Sathiparsad et al 2010).

Diana added flavour to the discussion by pointing out how deceiving boys can be. She said boys always say they wanted to marry them. When I asked her why she thought boys always talked like that she said: “Because he is always begging you like Pleasure (laughter) ... He always talks [like that] to me, tomorrow is the day. Like, I will take you out.”

When I asked Pleasure if he had a girlfriend he said he did not, although he used to have one. In the group discussion he said he no longer wanted a girlfriend and that he wanted to be a good boy, however, in his diary he wrote that he wanted a girlfriend. The following excerpt from Pleasure's diary shows the talk of boys and the desire to have a girlfriend.

Every time when I go [out] with my friends [they] always talk about girls they say are beautiful, intelligent, talented, charming and hot. Me I don't have a girlfriend. I am always quiet and I wish I have a girlfriend. My mother tells me that I am too young to have a girlfriend I must choose friends. I felt so bored [frustrated] because every time they talk about their girlfriends.

Not having a girlfriend made a boy feel unhappy because they could not join in the conversation with those who had girlfriends. In fact, these boys lacked the vocabulary of 'sex talk'. Real boys were thus supposed to talk about girls: how they walk, their legs, their 'bums' and their mini-skirts. However, this talk by the boys disappointed girls. Girls complained about the lack of sensitivity in the way boys talked about them. Below are some excerpts from girls in a focus group discussion.

Nandipha: Some boys when we are sitting together talk about girls, how they wear, how they talk ... They say we are wearing short skirts ... They say look at this girl's legs.

Precious: Sir, what I like to add e-e, Nandipha said is that boys also look at our bums sir (laughter), they talk about how we walk sir and sir I don't like what they are saying sir.

Colletta, another girl from a separate group, wrote in her diary that: "[Themba] was saying I am ugly and I **don't have a step**. I felt very angry and felt like clapping⁶ him". This sex talk by boys has a negative impact on girls. It would seem that the boys regard girls as sex objects that are under scrutiny and discussion, as boys parade their talk of heterosexual masculinity. Boys also want to use sexy terms when talking to girls. One of the girls, Diana, noted in her diary how she felt when she was described by a boy in her class:

⁶ Afrikaans word for hitting or smacking someone.

I was standing outside with my friends and then a boy called [Ngamla] called me **beautiful** and I did not like that because only my mother calls me that. I felt angry and very bad because I don't like boys calling me that.

From the boys' perspective this type of talk shows that you are a 'real' boy. Describing a girl using sex names boosts the boy's status in the eyes of the other boys. However, this form of masculinity construction in this instance also affected the girls negatively.

Prudence wrote repeatedly in her diary how boys fooled girls. In one entry she stated that she had heard boys talking about how they make girls pregnant. For the boys this talk about making girls pregnant shows you are a 'real' boy and demonstrates heterosexual masculinity. In another entry Prudence said she was angry when she heard a group of girls "talking about how boys treat them well". She expressed disappointment because she thought most girls did not know that the boys wanted to make them pregnant.

4.3.1.3 Having a girlfriend

Having a girlfriend was a theme discussed extensively by all three groups and also noted in the diaries of many research participants. During the group discussions many of the boys did not accept that they were dating or liked to have girlfriends despite other research participants pointing out that they had girlfriends. Their relationships or desire to have one were mostly recorded in their diary entries. The use of diaries in this study thus helped to understand the feelings boys were hiding when with their peers. Girls also made entries about their relations with boys, most of whom were in the same class, that is, in Grade 7 at this school.

According to the responses given a 'real' boy needs to have a girlfriend. Most boys seemed to agree unanimously on this. As pointed out in section 4.3.1.2 above on sex talk, Pleasure was always begging Diana to be his girlfriend. In his diary he also indicated that he did not feel good when he was with his friends who had girlfriends and so wished he had a girlfriend. One boy who had no girlfriend pointed out during a group discussion that he felt 'jealousy' when he saw his friend with his girlfriend seated in the park talking. This desire to have a girlfriend was shown by a number of boys in their diaries. Girls also wrote in their diaries how boys were always telling them how much they loved them. One boy, Mpho, made occasional entries about Tyra, a girl he liked very much. One of the entries runs:

Today we were choosing where we sit for exams. I sat in the front desk and then the girl of my dreams came to sit behind me. I was so happy she is so beautiful and she made me lose my concentration her name is Tyra and I will keep trying to get her now, tomorrow, when we are grown up and forever and I know I will get her one day is one day. She told me she doesn't love me because she thinks that she is a fool when she loves a boy but she doesn't know that I am different from other boys and I don't love her because of what she has or her private parts. I love her because of what she looks like and who she is and I love her attitude and behaviour. She makes me feel good about myself even when she tells me that she doesn't love me.

Tyra, on the other hand, made an entry in her diary about how Mpho was pushing his "loving" on her. The entry runs:

Mpho always say that he love[s] me and he don't [doesn't] love me. I always tell him that I don't love him and he forced to hug me and I don't like that. I felt I can go to another school because he always tell me that he love me.

In his endeavour to win Tyra's heart, Mpho does not take her feelings into consideration. He is obsessed by fulfilling his desire of being a 'real' boy by having a girlfriend. He shows his power by forcing Tyra to hug him to such an extent that Tyra feels she should transfer to another school. This shows how the construction of masculinity by boys impacts on gender relations in schools. The use of diaries thus enabled the girls to reveal their inner feelings, which they could not do during focus group discussions. The boys may not be aware of the anxiety they cause in girls as they try to achieve boyhood.

During discussions many boys denied having girlfriends but sometimes conceded that they had had girlfriends in the past. Only one boy, Andy, talked freely about his girlfriends. He clearly stated that he had three girlfriends but at the time of the study he had dumped one because he had seen her sitting with other boys. After dumping the girl, Andy reported without any remorse that he had started to sit with different girls. He maintained he did this to "pay revenge". Multiple relations of this nature show heterosexual masculinity accompanied by power relations. In this case, the boy demonstrated his power by dumping his girlfriend when he found her socialising with other boys.

Many of the boys indicated that they did not like their girlfriends hanging around with other boys because they might end up loving them. During a focus group discussion, another boy,

John, told of how he played with girls so as to make his previous girlfriend angry and jealous. In another a focus group discussion, Precious, the girl who was dumped by Andy for sitting with boys, started arguing that it was not a bad thing to sit with boys. However, Eminem, a boy she was believed to be having a relationship with, joined in the discussion and pointed out that he did not like his girlfriend “to sit with other boys”. At the school there is an area with benches outside the classrooms reserved for Grade 7s to sit and relax on or do their reading. The discussion by these research participants shows that boys wanted to relate with many girls but they did not want the girls to associate with many boys, thus showing that gender relations are entrenched in power relations. In this case the power was being wielded by the boys over the girls by denying them multiple partners but seeing it as normal for boys. The boys wanted to possess and control the girls. For example boys showed heterosexual power by forcing themselves on girls and hugging them. Many of the girls mentioned this during the focus group discussions and some indicated it in their diaries. Among some of the children physical power can thus be assumed to be seen as a characteristic of being a ‘real’ boy.

Masculinity is a social construct and is often displayed to gain the approval of others. Pleasure, who was popular with both the boys and the girls, pointed out during a focus group discussion that he had had a girlfriend but did not have one at the time of the study. He claimed he wanted to be a good boy by not having another girlfriend. In his diary, however, he confessed that he wanted a girlfriend like his friends but his mother thought he was still too young for a girlfriend. The use of diaries in this instance helped in unveiling the boys’ inner feelings that they did not want to share publicly. Acting against the wishes of his mother Pleasure shows that boys are active participants and not passive recipients in the masculinity socialisation process. His desire to have a girlfriend was corroborated by a certain girl during a group discussion. The girl told him to his face when he said he did not want a girlfriend that he was always begging her to love him. He was always promising the girl that he would take her out and marry her. This boy’s strong desire to have a girlfriend was as a result of the fact that his friends had girlfriends. In a different discussion group, a boy called John felt jealous when he saw his friend with a girlfriend because he also wanted to have one, thus this shows a strong desire to have a girlfriend. Having a girlfriend in this case shows that you are a ‘real’ boy. The display of masculinity in this instance is socially oriented. Boys wanted girlfriends because their friends had girlfriends they could talk about and sit with and chat. While Andy had multiple relationships with girls, other boys were in

serial heterosexual friendships or relationships (see Renold 2007 on serial monogamous relationships among primary school children).

The boys were persistent in their endeavour to establish friendships with girls, as entries in the boys' and girls' diaries showed. Mpho, as indicated in the responses above, made numerous entries in his diary about a girl he loved very much despite the fact that the girl had made it clear to him that she did not love him. The boy kept patiently persisting in the hope that something would work out one day. His unwavering persistence is shown by these words in his diary: "I will keep on trying to get her now, tomorrow, when we are grown up and forever and I know I will get her one day is one day". Nevertheless, Mpho was trying to be persuasive in his approach, unlike some of the other boys who used violence when they were rejected by girls. However, the girl complained in her diary that he hugged her forcefully. Mpho's behaviour in this regard is portrayed differently depending on which of the two is narrating. The boy considered himself patient while the girl portrayed him in a bad light saying that he forced his hugs on her. Violence and masculinity construction will be discussed in more detail below when I address the sub-theme of violence.

Boys assign worthiness to the girls they love. In one of her diary entries, Prudence wrote about how some boys were fighting over a girl and she managed to stop them. This shows that the girl was worth fighting for. On the other hand, the girl who stopped the fight was worth listening to. This aspect shows a respect for the girls. The girls nevertheless complained that while they respected the boys, the boys did not respect them in return since they kept on bullying them. Some of the boys however argued that they respected and cared for girls. For example, Andy and Pleasure said that they helped the girls and this may be the reason why they were considered the most popular boys at the school. Andy pointed out that he respected girls by buying them "stuff". By 'stuff' he meant anything the girls wanted. Girls were free to ask for whatever they wanted from him. Andy was able to bring money to school every day because he came from a relatively affluent family. Accordingly, his socio-economic background helped him to gain popularity among both the boys and the girls at this school. However, he was also liked for the respect he showed towards the other boys and girls.

The fighting over a girl referred to by Prudence brings up the issue of physical power which is a characteristic of masculinity. A 'real' boy must have power and this is manifested through fighting. A good fighter will be able to protect his girlfriend. The wielding of power

when it comes to love was also shown by one research participant (Mpho) in his diary. Although the girl did not love him, whenever he saw her, even if he was angry, he would smile. The love he had for the girl made him think that it was another girl who was influencing Tyra not to love him. The following excerpt from his diary supports this:

There is a girl in my class when I am angry and then she smiles I smile too, her name is Tyra. She is more than beautiful but Diana is the problem because she is not as pretty as Tyra. She always lie about me at Tyra and Tyra always believes her and that is wrong. Diana makes me sick and I love Tyra (Mpho).

This need to have a girlfriend shows hyper-heterosexual desire in the construction of masculinity. In addition, the desire to have one or many girlfriends leads to some boys claiming a non-existing relationship. Tyra made an entry in her diary complaining about how Andy had told the class that she was his girlfriend. The following excerpt illustrates this:

[Andy] always tell the class that he loves me and he is dating with me and he like to come to me and chat with me and the class really think that I am dating with him and [Andy] has his own girlfriends elsewhere. I always tell the class that [Andy] and me we live in the same place in KZN and that why they think we are dating. I am not feeling happy because [Andy] is not my boyfriend. So I don't care what ever they say to me.

Some boys claimed to have many girlfriends so that they could command respect from the other boys; they also claimed to possess a girl, which was seen as a status symbol. Andy was one of the boys who commanded a lot of respect from the other learners. This may have been the result of his many relationships or his socio-economic background, which was better than that of most participants. Apart from the boys claiming to have girlfriends, it was also generally supposed that if a boy and a girl spent time together they were boyfriend and girlfriend. These views were echoed by many participants in both the focus group discussions and in the entries in their diaries. However, these could have been strategies by boys to claim non-existing relationships. These views show that most of the boys and girls at this school subscribe to the concept of heterosexual masculinity.

Heterosexual relationships among the Grade 7s at this school required that the boys should be able to give their girlfriends money or gifts. During the group discussions many of the boys pointed out that the girls wanted money to maintain relationships. The girls, however, argued

that the boys were the ones who gave them money and they ended up taking it. The following excerpt from one of the group discussions indicates how the boys try to manipulate the girls into loving them.

Sibusiso 2: Girls like money (Sounds of disapproval from girls).

LC: Really?

Boys: Yes.

LC: If you give them money what will happen?

Sibusiso 2: They will like you.

LC: Ok, so if you like girls to love you, you give them money?

Sibusiso 2: Yes sir!

LC: Nandipha.

Nandipha: Sir, it's not that we love the money, if you say no to boys they will say we will give you the money. E-eh we are silly because we at times love the money.

LC: So if you say you don't love them and they give you the money everything will be ok? Nandipha: Yes but my heart loves the money.

LC: So you love the money not him?

Nandipha: Yes .

Andy: Nandipha loves money sir. If you don't give him [her] she, she will be angry sir and when you give her she will say she loves you, sir.

Nandipha: Like I said.

In a separate group discussion another boy pointed out that girls often tell the boys that they love them but once they have been given money they run away. The use of money by boys to lure girls into a relationship reveals the financial aspects of heterosexual masculinity. This also shows the early signs of 'man the provider' and money allowed the boys to have many girlfriends. In this study Andy had many girlfriends which could be put down to the fact that

he brought money to school every day and shared it with the girls. The following excerpt supports this:

Andy: Sir, I respect girls sir, such that I buy them stuff. I treat them in such a way that I buy them stuff sir.

LC: What?

Andy: Food sir, I make them choose sir. Anything they want sir, they just choose sir.

The following is another excerpt from another group discussion on the issue of boys giving girls money.

Pleasure: Sir, girls like money, Sir if you don't give them money they don't love you (Laughter).

LC: E-eh Pleasure so do you at times give your girlfriend money?

Pleasure: No sir.

LC: You don't give her money?

Pleasure: If I have money sir, I give her if I don't have it (2) she understands.

Diana: I disagree with Pleasure sir, they are the ones who give us money. We don't ask for that money.

Sandile: Girls like to seduce boys like Kagiso, they say they love him, but they don't love him, they love his money.

LC: Ooh, so you are saying Kagiso is loved by many girls because he gives them money?

Participants: Yes! Yes!

Ayesha: And we don't like them for their money. But if they give us money sir I will take it.

In this case, Andy and Kagiso used money to gain respect from girls. Gender relations in this case intersect with social class. Andy and Kagiso were loved by most of the girls because they could afford to buy them what they wanted. Sibusiso 2, another boy in the study, indicated in his diary that he had scored a goal in front of his girlfriend and she promised him a kiss. He felt thrilled and gave the girlfriend two rand. This shows that girls are proud of boys who can play soccer. In contrast, boys were of the opinion that what girls like is money which is why Sibusiso 2 decided to give his girlfriend two rand.

The participants had observed that men provided for their families and girlfriends. When I asked what it meant to be a boy, Diana pointed out that boys must be helpful, that is, boys are expected to help other children like men do. Pleasure, who was popular among the girls, joined in the discussion at that point, saying that boys must show respect and be helpful to their loved ones. He also gave Ayesha fifty cents after winning at gambling. This shows that, in the girls' eyes, Pleasure fitted into the group of 'real' boys. This may also have added a feather to his cap as he was liked by many girls and respected by a good number of boys. Thus boys were supposed to grow up strong and, most importantly, be different from girls so that they would be able to protect and provide for their loved ones. The girls in this study pointed out that a 'real' boy should take care of others, be friendly, intelligent, clever, helpful and organised.

Because a 'real' boy is expected to be in a relationship with a girl, the boys always tried to encourage each other to have girlfriends. At times boys teased or used derogatory terms in an endeavour to push their friends into finding girlfriends. One boy, Sibusiso 2, recorded in his diary how his friends had tried to coerce him into dating a girl:

Today me and my friends we were playing the soccer and two girls came. My friends say go and date her and I say no and they say to me I am an idiot because I am scared of the girls. I run and cry alone on the way back home. **I felt angry and lonely** because my friends say I am an idiot. I did not like that word and I felt like I can hit them with rocks [stones].

The above entry shows how the research participants could record emotional responses in their diaries, something they couldn't do during group discussions. On the other hand this also shows that the boys tried to encourage each other to have multiple partners. This boy went and cried secretly alone. Crying is a way of showing emotion but it is regarded as

shameful for boys to cry in public because it is a feminine characteristic. He also felt very lonely. The teasing by other boys in this case was aimed at forcing boys into having many girlfriends or it was a way of shaming alternative forms of masculinity. Therefore, the dominant groups of boys at this school regarded having many girlfriends as one of the characteristics of being a real boy.

The intimacy between the boys and their girlfriends extended only to spending time together, hugging and kissing. To show affection, Pleasure was always promising to take Diana out. In a separate group discussion, Andy reported that he often took his girlfriends to the park where he would sit with them talking about movies among other things. Andy also pointed out that he often hugged and kissed his girlfriends. One of the girls, Noxolo, mentioned in her diary that Andy loved her and liked to hug and kiss her on the side of the nose. This pleased her so much that she thought it was the right thing to do. Many of the girls' diary entries concerned the boys and their girlfriends who they saw cuddling and kissing behind classroom doors which, these girls felt, was not the right thing to do. Cuddling and kissing between the boys and their girlfriends heterosexualised their relationships. In this study having a girlfriend was not only about receiving physical pleasure but also a way of showing boyhood. These findings concur with those in the literature (Swain 2005; Renold 2007).

4.3.1.4 Concluding remarks on sexuality

Most participants in this study subscribed to the concept of heteronormativity. They believed that there are certain norms of doing gender. Boys are expected to play soccer and be sexually attracted to a person of the opposite sex, but they should play with other boys. A few participants acknowledged the rights of gays and pointed out that gays knew how to dress fashionably and that they were non-violent. While these research participants saw something good about gays they nevertheless did not want to be gay.

Considerable time was spent on sex talk. Both boys and girls pointed out that boys spend a considerable amount of time talking about the girls they loved or would like to have. Many girls expressed disappointment that boys spent their time talking about them and not doing their school work. Girls questioned why boys judged them when they did not do the same to them. The talk and actions of boys showed that 'real' boys should have many girlfriends, as well as indicating their construction of heterosexual masculinity.

Many boys talked about having girlfriends previously but denied that they still wanted to have one. However, this was merely putting on a public face because in their diaries they wrote about their girlfriends and their prospective girlfriends. Accordingly, it would seem that the boys showed their boyhood by having a girlfriend. Many boys believed that in order to be a 'real' boy one should have many girlfriends. By contrast, girls were not happy about the boys' desire to have many girlfriends. This notion of having many girlfriends emanated from the boys' desire to reinforce their dominant versions of masculinity. Sathiparsad et al (2010) point out that having sex and being able to handle many women is equated with masculinity and the male participants in this study show early signs of such behaviour. Boys who were afraid to ask a girl out were ridiculed. Some boys never gave up proposing to a particular girl, while others resorted to violent means in their attempt to have girlfriends. Other boys claimed a non-existent relationship, as having a relationship with a girl was seen as a status symbol. In this study the boys showed their affection in these intimate relationships by hugging, cuddling and kissing.

4.3.2 The sturdy boy

The issue of a 'sturdy boy' is inherent in sex role theory. As indicated in chapter 1 section 1.6, sex role theory focuses on the cultural expectations for men. In most cultures men are supposed to be tough and powerful. A 'real man' is expected to be strong, competent, knowledgeable and self-reliant. Men in most societies, although this may become less salient in the future, are seen as providers and protectors of their families and girlfriends (see Mfecane et al 2005; Sauls 2005).

From childhood boys are thus introduced to manhood through tough activities like learning to fight and engaging in strenuous games. However, boys are not passive recipients of these tough and power creating activities from adults but are actively involved in the construction of what it means to be a 'real boy'. Thus, the adult agenda in masculinity construction could differ from that of the boys. In this study the 'sturdy boy' theme was divided into four sub-themes, namely, toughness, power, gender boundaries and punishment, some with further subdivisions.

4.3.2.1 Toughness

In this study toughness was observed through sport, fighting, physical strength and the fear of femininity. Punishment is also believed to create tough boys. In view of the gravity of the

practice of corporal punishment at this school, punishment will be treated as a separate sub-theme.

The games played by the boys involved physical strength. Studies available on the games boys play at school support this finding (Swain 2005). When I asked what it meant to be a 'real' boy, most research participants pointed out that boys must be involved in sporting activities such as soccer, rugby and karate. The following excerpt shows how one of the boys responded to this question:

Gift: You must do things that boys do.

LC: What are the things that boys do?

Gift: Like playing soccer and rugby.

When I asked participants whether they preferred same sex groups or mixed groups one of the boys had this to say:

John: Boys.

LC: Why boys?

John: Because boys want to play soccer.

The above excerpts show the importance of soccer in being a real boy. Boys who did not play soccer were marginalised along the same lines as girls. In line with this, in section 4.3.1.1 above, one of the boys, Lesekgo, pointed out that soccer was boys' stuff and if you don't play it, you may be called a gay. Another boy highlighted the fact that they enjoyed a game called *umagijimisana* (chasing each other game). In this game boys chased and kicked each other. These games are believed to build strong tough boys. Thus the Grade 7 boys at Bokamoso Primary School were constructing masculinity by engaging in these tough games.

Most boys also enjoyed talking about soccer but did not like to do so when girls were present since they lacked knowledge of the game which in any case was only for boys. The boys were thus constructing their masculinity by talking about the professional game of soccer knowledgeably. Playing soccer and talking about the game of soccer knowledgeably in this study was a major signifier of successful masculinity. Similar results were found at two primary schools in North America (Connell 2002b).

Many of the boys indicated that they did not include girls in their games because it was not good to play with girls. The dominant boys also categorised some other boys as incompetent. Their perception was that these games were designed to be played by boys and even if some of the girls claimed to know how to play them, the boys said they did not. The boys also maintained that even if they were to teach the girls to play the games, it would take too long for them to master them. The girls however argued that they could understand how the games are played faster than the boys. Consequently, the girls, and some of the boys, agreed that the actual reason why they did not play these games together was that boys were rough and the girls would get hurt. It was reported that some boys would deliberately kick the girls and not the ball. When asked why they did that, the boys said they wanted to be perceived as being strong and tough. Some of the boys said they played rough because they wanted to take revenge on the girls who had rejected them. These views show the relationship between violence and masculinity construction. They also portray the school play grounds as opportunistic places for boys to reproduce the hegemonic cultural identities that are enshrined in the unequal power relations between boys and girls (Epstein et al 2001). The following excerpts substantiate the above discussion, illustrating Grade 7 boys' and girls' relations on the sport field in a township school.

LC: Do boys like girls in their games? (5) Do boys allow girls to join in their games?

Prince Charmer: No.

LC: Why?

Prince Charmer: Because it is not good to play with girls.

LC: (Nods heard encouraging him to speak on).

Prince Charmer: Because some of them, some of the girls don't know the games that we are playing.

LC: Why not teach them?

Prince Charmer: They take long.

Tyra: Not all girls sir, abanye bayashesha ukubamba ukundlula abafana. (Some learn faster than boys).

LC: So uPrince Charmer ukhuluma manga? (So Prince Charmer is talking lies?)

Tyra: Yes, because sir, boys are rough sir.

Mpho: Girls sir, are weak and boys are rough, so if you play with them they can get hurt and get injured.

LC: In which way are boys rough?

Mpho: Sometimes they kick them not by mistake.

LC: Do boys do that?

Boys: Yes!

Mhpo: So that they can show that they are boys.

The girls stated that when they got injured they would go and tell the teachers or their parents. This would result in the boys being punished. The boys thus saw fit to exclude the girls from their games.

Boys were reported to be always fighting among themselves when the teachers were not in the classroom. At times they also fought with and hit the girls. Fighting is a way of proving how tough one is. One of the boys, Mpho, pointed out that the boys fought to show who was the strongest. Boys also use fighting to show how tough they are. This is shown by the following excerpt from one of the group discussions:

Noxolo: They like fighting when the teacher gets out of the class.

LC: O-oh is that so?

Noxolo: Yes.

LC: Why do they fight?

Noxolo: They beat other children when the teacher goes out.

LC: Ok, so do they fight among themselves or they fight with girls?

Noxolo: They fight themselves.

However, in her diary Noxolo wrote this:

Boys like to fight with girls when they speak a small word about them. They just want to fight with you. I just feel bored [angry] because they are irritating me so badly.

Mpho: They always try to show that who is the strongest.

LC: Yo-o, by fighting?

Mpho: Ya-a, by fighting or swearing.

One girl, Ayesha, noted the following in her diary:

[Khapela] is a bully boy he always want me and him to fight every day and he is a boy but he always want to fight with girls. I feel very scared but I don't want to leave him I fight him back.

These complementary views from the group discussion and diary entries tend to crystallise the view that certain boys are bullies and that they like fighting. Although some of the girls were afraid of the boys, others fought back. One of the girls, who was reported to be a bully by the boys, said she had been taught to fight by the boys. In this research Pleasure was one of the boys who was very fond of fighting. This meant that he was disliked by some of the boys because he bullied them but he was nevertheless admired by others. In spite of this behaviour, most girls confided that they liked him. When I asked whether this popularity was as a result of the fighting, the responses were as follows:

Lucky: Some boys don't like Pleasure because Pleasure likes to fight sir.

LC: Maybe that is why he is liked by girls because he fights a lot.

Participants: Yes!

LC: So girls like boys who fight?

Participants: Yes!

The above extract shows that while some boys detested boys who were fighters most girls liked them. The boys who showed prowess in fighting bullied other boys, resulting in them

being unpopular among the other boys. Pleasure's fighting prowess meant he was able to provide girls with protection.

'Real' boys in this study were defined as being different from girls. Boys were not supposed to be soft and cry like girls. This may be the reason why Sibusiso, one of the male research participants, cried in secret when hurt by the other boys. Crying in public could result in him being relegated to an inferior status. Boys also despised the games played by girls. Kimmel (2009) points out that historically masculinity has been defined as a flight from femininity. It can thus be argued that in this study boys were constructing masculinity by shunning feminine attributes. Diana participant pointed out that in whatever they did the boys wanted to be seen as boys and not as girls. Masculinity is described by what one is not rather than what one is in this respect. In this case what was important in order to be considered a 'real' boy was not to be like a girl. Ayesha's views also show that masculinity is a social construct because boys wanted to draw attention to themselves. She had this to say in a group discussion:

Ayesha: The problem is with boys is that they WANT TO BE SEEN, TO BE HEARD THAT THEY ARE BOYS sir, and IF YOU DON'T ACT LIKE A BOY, YOU CAN BE SEEN LIKE A GIRL sir, because a boy pretends like a boy sir, like a REAL BOY, you cannot be like a girl and they are the ones who taught me to fight.

Masculinity is thus constructed in public. A feature of hegemonic masculinity is to draw attention to one's self. McGuffey and Rich (2011) argue that the recognition boys receive through their public performance of masculinity allows them to maintain their high status and/or increase their rank in the hierarchy. Diana supported the view that boys were supposed to behave like men not women. When I asked what it meant to be a boy, Diana said: "To be a boy is to be a man. You must man up." Ayesha's and Diana's views show that the social status of masculinity lies above that of feminine qualities. Their views also show that in their community girls are socialised to accept boys' and men's violent nature.

4.3.2.2 Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Power is a characteristic of masculinity. In chapter 2 power was defined as the ability of individuals or groups to make their own interests or consent count, even when others resist. In this study it was also shown that to be a boy means to have power. When asked what it meant to be a boy, the issue of being powerful was brought to light in all group discussions

and in a number of diaries. Some of the views of the research participants on what it means to be a boy are noted below.

Sandile: Boys must have power.

Eminem: It means boys are bully.

Noxolo: We can see them by the beat girls [We know them by the way they beat girls].

Noxolo was of the opinion here that most of the boys hit the girls. This abuse of girls is a way of proving that they are powerful and thus different from girls – in the words of Mpho: “They want to beat girls to show that they are boys.”

This power wielded over girls by the boys as they try to prove to the girls that because they are boys they are different from them. The word ‘bully’ was used repeatedly by many of the girls as they narrated their encounters with the boys. The girls complained that the boys were always beating them. The reason for this is given above by one of the boys as wanting to show that they are boys. This brings to the fore the notion that boys are different from girls. The difference was thus shown in this case by the presence of a dominant group and a subordinate group. The boys tried to dominate the girls through violence, which in this case was bullying. One girl pointed out that boys wanted to show that they were boys by bullying them, shouting at them and doing all sorts of things the girls did not like. The relationship between the boys and the girls in this regard was frowned on by the girls. Precious had this to say during a group discussion: “I think to be a boy is not a good thing because boys they want to show that they are boys. They want to bully us, shout at us, do things we don’t like.”

One girl, Colleta, wrote in her diary that one of the boys had forced her to give him money and bread. The girls felt pain and anger about what was being done to them by the boys. This shows that the use of power is pleasurable for the ones wielding it and painful for those on the receiving end. This girl pointed out that being a boy was a bad thing. Girls thus observed boyhood in a negative light because of the boys’ bullying nature. Below are a number of diary entries made by some research participants. Dineo made the following two entries in her diary:

A boy wants money with force. He beats us because he wants money, he touch us in private things. I feel unhappy and I feel scared. Boys think that they are powerful and strong.

[Sibusiso] who is my classmate always want money from girls or bread he forced us, he say if we don't want he will beat us after school. I felt very unhappy because they hurt us they don't care whether the teacher beat them or not they keep beating us.

The issues of poverty, age and masculinity intersected in this scenario. Owing to a lack of resources, boys like Sibusiso use their power to demand food and money from girls. Morrell and Makhaye (2006) add to the issue of masculinity and poverty in the South African context by pointing out that a lack of resources can dispose boys to demonstrate masculinity in a violent way, often against girls.

In this regard, Mpho made the following entry in his diary about boys abusing girls:

There were two boys today who were touching a girl were she doesn't want to be touched and the girl tried to tell the teacher but the boys threatened her. I felt very bad. I didn't like it at all.

Precious recorded the following entry in her diary:

There was a boy who came to me and wanted to talk to me but I ignored him, then he told me not to be serious but I kept on ignoring him then he started to kick my chair disturbing me. He kept on doing it. I felt very sad.

Another girl, Prudence, made the following three entries in her diary:

When a boy wanted to sit with me, I did not want to, then he pushed me by head. [The boy held the head of the girl in his hands and started shaking it]. I felt very sad because he disgusts me.

A boy who is busy telling another girl that I love you, the girl said I don't love you, then the boy gave the girl a hot slap on her face. I felt angry because the boys always beat the girls and they don't care about it.

A boy was trying to date the girl. The girl did not agree, then the boy said you are ugly you think I can date someone like you, he started teasing her. I felt angry because boys always play girls.

The above diary excerpts show that the desire by boys to show that they were 'real' boys resulted in them bullying the girls, shouting at them, taking their things by force, and even touching their private parts. The views of Mpho, Dineo and Prudence concur with what has been revealed by the Human Rights Watch (2001) that girls are fondled and subjected to aggressive sexual advances at school. The use of diaries in this case helped in unveiling salient forms of abuse on girls by the boys, which are generally swept under the carpet in the public domain. Power relations in this study thus could be observed through sexual violence, coercion, assault and domination. Studies carried out elsewhere in South Africa on young men revealed similar results (see Wood & Jewkes 2001; Lindegaard & Henriksen 2005; Shefer et al 2005; Sauls 2005; Ratele 2008).

Boys tried very hard to dominate girls during play time. When girls were playing during break, boys would come and try and chase them away from their play area. This annoyed the girls and Nandipha pointed out that it affected her whole day. Once that had happened, she complained, she could not concentrate in class for thinking about how the boys bullied them. In her own words: "I feel very angry, even if I was happy in the morning, but when break time they come and disturb us, which means sir they have spoil[ed] my day [and] I can't concentrate in class sir, because sometimes boys bully us I also think about that sir".

The girls complained that the boys took up all the space in which to play and bullied them as a way of showing off. One girl had this to say during a group discussion:

Precious: Sir, I feel very very annoyed sir because boys always want to show off sir and when you tell them that we are playing here they just want to beat us, they bully us.

This shows that masculinity is constructed in front of others by, among other things, showing off. Accordingly, boys show off to other boys and girls in general in order to show that they are in control and by so doing they become popular. The boys in this study can thus be regarded as the dominant gender class.

One boy, John, supporting the views on the abuse of the girls during a group discussion, pointing out that this was mostly done by the bigger boys. He stated that the girls would run

around the class making a noise when they were beaten by the bigger boys. If the girls threatened to tell the teachers the boys tried to bribe them by giving them money or threatening them in turn. The girls were told that if they told the teachers, the boys responsible would wait for them at the school gate when the teachers were not there. The girls showed anger at the way boys tried to control their social lives. They did not understand why boys always used violence to resolve issues.

Whilst most of the boys enjoyed hegemonic masculinity in their relations with girls, some were subordinated by it. Whilst most boys tried to dominate the girls, the so-called bigger boys in Grade 7 also bullied the younger boys. This was revealed by Nandipha, one of the girls, during a group discussion. Eminem also made numerous entries in his diary telling of the times a bigger boy would come to him when he was with his girlfriend and disrupt their conversation. At times he would take the smaller boy's cell phone from his girlfriend and start to play games or would start to touch the girl in full view. He felt that this big boy was 'silly and bully'. Below are some of the excerpts from his diary recorded on different days:

There is a big boy in my class that is a bully and he is making me to be scared I was busy playing with a phone that boy came and take my phone then he said I owe him. I felt like I was old and hit that boy and I sat down busy thinking of how old boys at my school are very bully.

Today I was playing with my friends and I borrowed my girlfriend my phone then there was a boy who took the phone and played games and now my girlfriend is angry. I felt very angry and jealousy.

Today I was going with my girlfriend after school, there was a boy who came to me and started touching my girlfriend then I became angry. I felt angry and started to think that how boys are silly and bully.

The issue of the bigger boys abusing the girls and the smaller boys shows the intersection of gender and age and hierarchies among masculinities.

Young masculine identities at school can have a bearing on the family in which the boys are raised. One of the smaller boys, Andy, who was respected by many research participants both boys and girls seemed to be able to control the bigger boys. He pointed out during a group discussion that he often asked the bigger boys to let the girls play in peace. Other boys

corroborated this, saying that the bigger boys generally listened to him because he often gave them money. Many of the research participants perceived this boy to be financially better off than most based on the fact that he brought money to school every day. Bhana (2005) points out that the social location of a family can play a part in the process through which early masculinities are formed at school. The above mentioned boy shared his money mainly with the girls, except for Colleta, who was the only female Zimbabwean learner in Grade 7. She lived with both her parents in one of the informal settlements on the outskirts of Wattville. She did not speak fluent Zulu, which was the home language of most of the other learners. Most of the Grade 7 learners in this school were South African with a few from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Whilst Andy seemed to understand the plight of most girls, Colleta reported that he was a bully. Andy's relationship with the other Grade 7 learners demonstrates the intersectionality of gender with other oppressive social relations. He probably accrued respect from the other learners because of his affluent background. His relationship with Colleta, a Zimbabwean, however demonstrates a socially constructed different relationship based on gender, class and ethnicity, while his relationships with all the other Grade 7 learners were based on social class and gender. It might have been that his more affluent economic background meant that he was never chastised by the other learners for having a gay friend. He could control the bigger boys because of his economic power base. Together with all the other boys he tried to dominate the girls using male power although he used economic power to gain more favours from the girls as an individual. These views show that gender cannot be viewed as an individual entity but only in conjunction with other social relations. These findings concur with the literature (see Weldon 2008; Spade & Valentine 2011; Collins 2011).

The girls in this study pointed out that the bigger boys even disrespected the teachers. The use of force by teachers who beat them may also have created tough and powerful boys. These boys may also have learnt by example that force could be used to get what they wanted. A shortage of vital resources such as food and money played a part in the boys' violence towards girls, with the bigger boys abusing the girls and demanding money and food from them. Morrell (2001) and Morrell and Makhaye (2006) also argue that the lack of important resources results in boys constructing violent masculinities against girls. It can thus be argued that ending violent gender relations cannot be separated from ending social and economic inequalities. This study thus reveals that masculinity in school can extend to the family and to the family's social location.

The boys in this study used force in their relationships with girls. If the girls did not want to sit next to them or talk to them they resorted to violence. One girl, Samantha, reported that Gift, one of the boys, had held her head in his hands and shaken it when she did not want him to sit next to her. Precious, another girl, complained that a certain boy started to kick her chair thus unnerving her when she had been busy with her schoolwork.

Many of the ordeals were revealed by the girls in their diaries because they were afraid of the boys and of speaking out publicly during group discussions. Some issues were sensitive and involved naming certain of the bigger boys. Generally, the boys did not like to be challenged by the girls. This was evident during the focus group discussions as boys tried to dominate the girls. During one focus group discussion one of the boys threatened to break a girl's teeth because she had pointed out that when the boys take their playing space, she felt like fighting them. When I asked her why she could not fight the boys the following discussion resulted.

Precious: Sometimes I am scared, I think they will beat me and take out my eyes like Andy is saying.

LC: What is Andy saying?

Precious: *Uthi uzongikhipha izinyo* (He said he will break my tooth).

LC: Why Andy?

Andy: They always say stories sir.

This violent construction of masculinity by boys keeps girls toeing the boys' line. The subordination of girls is thus often the result of fear, not desire.

The desire to show that they were boys resulted in the boys bullying girls, shouting at them, taking their things by force, and even touching their private parts. Power relations in this study could be observed through sexual violence, coercion, assault and domination. Studies carried elsewhere in South Africa on young men revealed the similar results (see Wood & Jewkes 2001; Lindegaard & Henriksen 2005; Shefer et al 2005; Sauls 2005; Ratele 2008).

4.3.2.3 Gender boundaries

The daily timetable of Bokamoso Primary School included two breaks. During this time, children left the classrooms and played outside. No teachers were visible at these times so

learners played unsupervised. However, after school the play was orderly with the GDE appointed coaches helping them in the different sporting activities.

Boys generally liked to play football and to run around the school kicking each other, while girls enjoyed netball and skipping games. The problem at this school was limited space because the school did not have a designated playground. The small area in between and behind the classrooms was used to play on by the learners during break. Consequently, problems arose concerning how the small space should be used and who should use it.

During break, play was generally homosocial. Learners of the same sex liked to play on their own and did not like to include members of the other sex in their games. This helps to create social bonds. However, at times the girls wanted to join the boys in their game of football but they were not welcome. Below is an exchange between the researcher and one of the female research participants during a focus group discussion.

L C: Do boys like girls in their games?

Palesa: No.

L C: They don't want to play with you?

Palesa: Yes.

L C: What do they do if you join them?

Palesa: Bayakuxosha (They chase you away).

Along the same lines, Mpho made the following entry into his diary:

The 5 boys were playing soccer and 2 girls wanted to join them but the boys refused and chased them away. I told them it was wrong not to play with others.

This shows that there were some boys who are sympathetic to the plight of girls and who displayed a non-violent way of being a 'real' boy. The similarity between the group discussion and the diary entry crystallises the findings on the issue of maintaining homosocial groups during playtime.

While girls at times wanted to play with the boys, the boys had no desire to join the girls' games although some girls claimed otherwise. One boy pointed out that they only came to take the ball away from the girls and then run away, not to play with them.

However, the girls were not passive recipients of the boys' domination on the playground. While some girls reported that, when chased by the boys, they would go away to look for another playing space, some would go and report the boys to the teachers. However, one research participant boy called Lesekgo argued that when they told the girls to go away they at times refused and then they ended up playing together. The Grade 7 learners at this school were thus actively constructing gender relations. The research participants also pointed out that at times they played together especially if a coach requested them to.

Sometimes the boys also played indoor games such as marbles and chess. Gambling was also reported to be rife among the boys. These games were played in a classroom that was no longer in use. In all these games girls were again not welcome. If girls were allowed to enter the classroom where boys were playing, they were just supposed to watch. One boy, Prince Charmer, pointed out that girls must only watch and not take part. The same sentiments were aired by another popular boy when talking about soccer. This boy pointed out that he did not like his girlfriend to join him in playing soccer. He preferred her to sit and watch him play. This shows that the boys wanted to dominate and pacify the girls in their relationships with them.

In all the focus group discussions there was extensive talk about why boys and girls preferred to keep to their homosocial groups during play. Girls argued that they did not like to play with the boys because they did not know their games and because the boys were rough. One girl pointed out that girls liked skipping which boys were not supposed to do because it is a girls' game. It would thus seem that at this school there were feminine and masculine games. When I asked the girl if she would allow the boys to join in if they wanted to she replied yes. However, one of the other girls rejected playing with the boys stating that the boys would 'rob' them and also break the skipping ropes. This shows lack of trust in the way boys play.

Boys had their own reasons for not allowing girls into their games. One boy, Ngamla, argued that it was not a good thing to play with girls. He complained that if they touched the girls by mistake while playing they would rush off to tell the teachers, which meant the boys would be punished. For this reason it was better that they were excluded from the very beginning.

Both boys and girls seemed to agree that boys played rough. Many of the boys argued that it was not good to play with girls because they would end up hurting them and then they the girls would run and tell the teachers. A good number of boys from all three discussion groups pointed out that boys were strong and girls were weak so it was not good to play together. Below are some of the contributions made by the boys during a group discussion on why boys did not like to play soccer with girls.

Lungelo: We can hurt them.

Mpho: Sometimes if we play with them we can hurt them, they are weak.

LC: A-ah weak? Why do you say that?

Gift: Because boys are stronger than girls. (3) Because we can hurt them or injure them.

The girls admitted that they ended up crying when boys hurt them, which meant that the boys did not accommodate girls in their games. Swain (2005), in a study with final year primary school learners in the UK, found similar arrangements. Boys' play was reported to be rough, and boys used the fact that they regarded girls as incompetent and physically weak as a reason for not wanting to play with them.

When I asked about the way in which the boys play was rough I was told that when playing football together boys would kick the girls on purpose. When I asked why boys would do that one of the boys said that they wanted to show that they were boys. A good number of boys agreed that at times it was a way of taking revenge on the girls who had dumped them. One of the boys said the following during a group discussion:

John 1: Sir, I agree sir, when we take space because the girls are playing with my ex-girlfriend, I want to or my girlfriend to say or to do something then I will get angry then I will beat her or punch her.

LC: But why because now she is your ex-girlfriend?

John 1: Sir, is that sir, my heart feel cruel sir when I see her with other boyfriends sir. I think if I can pick up something and beat her.

This excerpt shows how violent boys were in their interactions with girls. The boys wanted to dictate how everything should be done and expected the girls to be submissive. Accordingly, when girls dumped them they felt that their masculinity was being threatened.

The girls also pointed out that the boys did not do their school work and, as a result, many of them were failing. Outside the classroom boys would accuse the girls of being clever in class so they would seek to pay revenge. Following a heated debate on the boys' violence during play time one of the girls said:

Nandipha: Sir, what I want to say is there is no one who is *dom* (dull) sir. Why they say always sir they are *dom* (dull) is that they are always playing when the teacher is teaching us, even if the teacher say we must come to morning class they don't come. They think they are bully, they are clever enough so that's why they mustn't play revenge outside, they must prove us wrong by doing their work.

While the boys tried to engage the girls physically the girls wanted to outdo them academically. The boys felt their masculinity was being threatened because the girls outperformed them in class thus they resorted taking revenge outside the classroom to regain their power. The issue here was the hierarchy of gender power that was under threat and thus the boys resorted to violence. It can therefore be argued that the use of violence on girls in township schools is a sign that the hierarchy and hegemony are no longer stable and that the gender order is in a process of crisis and transformation. These findings concur with findings in the literature (see Epstein et al 2001; Groes-Green 2009).

The issue of playing space was discussed extensively in all three groups by both the boys and the girls. Diary entries to this effect were also made. Many of the girls complained about the boys taking up too much space with their games of football (see Francis 1997; Epstein et al 2001; Connell 2002; Swain 2005; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). However, the boys argued that they always arrived at the place first and then the girls would arrive and try to claim the space. The girls denied this, pointing out that the boys were stronger than them and were bullies so they wouldn't do that. In fact, the boys would chase the girls from wherever they were sitting and if they moved to another place the boys would follow them and again chase them off. In their diaries, some of the girls outlined the way in which they had been chased away from their play area by boys who wanted to play football there. This often led to the boys being reported to the teachers who would beat them or give them some other form of

punishment such as cleaning toilets. After the teachers' intervention the girls would get their playing space back, leaving the girls feeling happy at the teachers' intervention. The children in this study thus used the means available to construct gender in the playground. Through the teachers' interventions the girls could play their games without being bothered by the boys, whilst the boys could also get on with playing theirs.

However, the girls mentioned that they were willing to share the playing space. During one of the group discussions, one girl pointed out that if they arrived first at the play area and the boys arrived later and asked for space they would share it with them. However, if the boys arrived earlier they would refuse to share the space with the girls. The boys thus tried to keep the girls out of the boys' domain. Kagiso argued that he always negotiated with the big boys on behalf of the girls not to take their space. As discussed under the heading of power above, Kagiso used his relatively strong financial resources to control the big boys. Generally, by maintaining gender boundaries boys were securing scarce resources such as the space for their games, as well as social prestige and power for themselves. Studies available on children playing in school grounds support the above findings (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003; McGuffey & Rich 2011).

While boys and girls tried to maintain their gender boundaries, at times they found themselves playing together. Similar results were obtained in a study of 10 to 11-year-old boys in schools around Greater London by Swain (2005).

4.3.2.4 Corporal punishment

It is illegal to use any form of physical punishment in schools but it is, nevertheless, not unusual in the South African context. Most boys reported that the punishment they received from the school staff was different from that meted out to the girls. The boys complained that they were beaten more severely than the girls. Girls received fewer lashes than the boys and reportedly were also 'soft'. In addition, girls were smacked on the hand whilst boys were beaten on their buttocks. Below are some excerpts from a group discussion on how boys were punished at this school.

LC: How do you see the punishments given to you by the teachers? (5) Is it the same for boys and girls?

Lungelo: It is not the same sir.

LC: Can you explain?

Lungelo: Sometimes the teachers beat the boys hard and the girls (3) little.

Mpho: They beat us and the girls, they beat us maybe the girls 2 and then they beat us 5. [The girls are given two (2) lashes while boys are given five (5) lashes].

LC: Really! So boys how do you feel about it?

Prince Charmer: We feel bad about it because she is choosing the side of the girls every time.

LC: Why do you think they beat the boys more?

Mpho: Because boys are stubborn, they are stronger than girls.

Prince Charmer: Yes, sir it's true because the teachers beat us on the bums and the girls on the hands sir.

Some girls argued that they received the same punishment as the boys. However, as the girls gave their reasons for why the boys were beaten more often it was revealed that the punishment was not the same. Girls pointed out that boys were disrespectful. The assistant for homework had asked learners to attend classes on Saturday but most of the boys had not attended and this resulted in her beating them. Many of the boys complained that their Mathematics teacher favoured the girls because she was also a female. Below are some excerpts from a group discussion to support this:

John 1: Sir it's not, our ma'am for Maths, when we tried to answer the question sir she said no, but when the girls answer she says yes. She beat us too strong but they did not get it correct, but she did not beat the girls strong. We cry but she didn't do anything she just laugh and carry on speaking with the girls.

LC: But why do you think she does that?

John 1: She is ma'am sir she favours because she is a girl. She chooses the girls.

Below are some of the entries made by four boys in their diaries.

- Sandile wrote: “We were learning at school then the teacher asked us a question, the whole class did not answer then the teacher beat all the boys. I felt like killing the teacher.”
- Sibusiso wrote: “Today teacher hit boys but did not hit the girls because she is not a boy and boys answer wrong question but girls did not try even a single answer. I felt very bad because we tried but the girls did not try to answer.”
- Mpho wrote in her diary in this regard:

Today the teacher punished us with corporal punishment and the girls only get two strikes [lashes] on the hands and the boys got seven strikes [lashes] on the bums but we were all making noise. I felt angry because the teacher is in favour of the girls and I think the teachers hate the boys because they are stronger than the girls.

- Pleasure made the following two entries on two different days:

We were learning at school then the teacher asked us a question the whole class did not answer then the teacher beat all the boys then she leave all the girls. I felt very angry because the teacher tolerates girls.

Today the teacher was beating all the boys because the girls lost a broom and mop, she say that we must be responsible for things. I felt like being a girl because every time the teacher likes to beat the boys, which make me angry every time when I see her.

The boys complained that they suffered a lot at the hands of this female teacher although the girls stated that they deserved it because they had no respect. When they were both beaten girls would be quiet but boys would make nasty comments about the teacher including comments such as she favoured the girls, she is ugly and other derogatory remarks about the way she walked and her buttocks. Because she heard some of these comments, she punished the boys even more severely.

There was a shortage of cleaning material at the school so the boys were supposed to look after the classroom brooms. Presumably, as the boys were believed to be strong and tough this may have been why they were given the responsibility of seeing to it that learners from the other classes did not steal the brooms. The boys complained of being beaten when the brooms disappeared from the classroom.

Diana pointed out that boys deserved harsher punishment because they were not girls. She said that girls were soft and therefore deserved leniency when they were being punished. She pointed out that the boys must “man up” and not be treated like girls because they were not. Mpho agreed with her, saying that boys were beaten more severely because they were more stubborn and stronger than girls.

The use of corporal punishment on boys may have been creating ‘tough boys’. The violent relations between the boys and girls may thus have been a result of these frequent beatings. Through such punishment boys may have learnt to solve their own problems using violent means and the frequent use of corporal punishment at this school may have promoted violent masculinities among them. Many of the girls complained about boys being bullies. Although the bigger boys were often beaten for bullying the girls this did not seem to deter them as there was no change in their behaviour. Aggressive and violent masculinities at this school may be reinforced by the harsh and authoritative disciplinary systems in the school (see Morrell 2001; Bhana 2006).

4.3.3 Homosocial

Homosocial is a term that refers to the social interaction of people of the same sex (especially used when referring to men). The relationship is based on friendship and not associated with romantic or sexual acts. In this research the boys and girls were found to prefer to keep to their homosocial groups (see Francis 1997; Swain 2006; Renold 2007; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011). Sub-themes of male conformity to a group and problem sharing were identified in this theme.

The fear of being labelled homosexual or gay made boys want to hang around with other boys. Although at times boys wanted to be with girls they feared being labelled. Boys also wanted to move around with other boys because of their passion for soccer. Thus they spent their time together both playing and discussing soccer. One boy, Lesekgo, pointed out that he could not talk about soccer to the girls. However, John responded that if the girl knew about soccer then they could talk to her.

Lucky, a male participant, pointed out that he enjoyed playing with other boys but had to choose the type of boys to play with. He said that he did not want to play with boys who were bullies or who were rough or who beat girls. Eminem maintained that he preferred to play

with both boys and girls, stating in addition that some boys were a bad influence. Precious responded that boys must play with girls because girls influence them to do the right thing.

Many girls indicated that they preferred same-sex groups. Generally, girls confided that they did not enjoy playing with boys because they were rough. They preferred to hang around with other girls because they made them feel happy.

Mpho stated that playing with other boys made him comfortable. He said that he could share his problems with other boys, something he could not do with girls. He said that he had some problems at home, and apart from sharing his problems with the other boys could also talk to them about “boys’ stuff”. During a discussion with one of the groups the following was said when I asked whether the boys liked playing on their own or with girls:

Mpho: I play with boys. I feel comfortable. I tell them my problems.

LC: So, you don’t want to share problems with girls?

Mpho: Yes, because I always talk with boys, boys’ stuff.

LC: Which stuff?

Mpho: Like, like problems at home.

Mpho encouraged gays to play with other boys so that they could also be familiar with boys’ stuff. This would help them discover their masculinities. Buchbinder (2013) argues that spending time together helps men to rediscover their masculinity. During a group discussion on gays one boy research participant had this to say:

Mpho: E-eh I want them to play with all the people because if they only play with girls and not boys they won’t know boys’ stuff.

LC: What do you think of being gay?

Mpho: It’s a bad thing.

LC: Why is it a bad thing?

Mpho: They must also play with the boys.

Some of the girls pointed out that it was nice to play with both boys and girls, as they could also learn new things from the boys. While boys and girls preferred to keep to their homosocial groups, at times they also mixed and played together. This refers back to section 4.3.2.4 (Gender boundaries). Although the children fought at times they played together especially when there was a coach present.

4.3.4 Sex roles

Traditionally, each sex has its own roles that differ from those of the other sex. The duties allocated to boys and girls in any society thus differ. However, with gender equality the roles played by boys and girls in different societies are changing. In this study the boys and girls outlined the division of labour in the cleaning of the classrooms and how hard work was done at this school. These two aspects will be dealt with as a unit under the sub-theme of ‘division of labour’ because they are interrelated.

4.3.4.1 Division of labour

The teachers divided the duties and the punishments according to the learners’ sex. Boys and girls were both supposed to clean the classroom but most of the boys mentioned that they did not like to clean because it is girls’ work. When asked what it meant to be a boy, one of the girls pointed out that to be a boy meant not to clean the classroom. However, she argued that boys were also supposed to help to clean the classroom. The following extract is taken from one group discussion:

LC: What does it mean to be a boy?

Nandipha: Sir to be a boy it means that boys, always if we clean, they always say its girls’ work.

LC: O-oh, cleaning is girls’ work not boys’ work?

Nandipha: It’s normal sir. It’s not girls’ work.

LC: Ok, so boys are also supposed to clean?

Nandipha: Yes, but they beat us then, then they say, say when we want to clean they, they don’t want to clean. They always say its girls’ work.

Another girl, Ntombi, was of the opinion that boys should respect girls and should do girls' work like cooking, thus demonstrating that cleaning and cooking are women's responsibilities. Despite the girls wanting the boys to engage in those activities the boys resisted strenuously. In a diary entry, Pleasure complained that his mother always told him to clean both his room and his sister's. For him cleaning is women's work. He would thus seem to be subscribing to sex role theory, modelling himself as a 'real' boy.

The cleaning of the classroom was divided along sex lines. Girls were supposed to sweep and mop the floor whilst the boys were supposed to move the desks and clean the windows. Boys and girls were also given different forms of punishment. One boy pointed out that, for punishment, girls were told to scrub the floor of the classroom while the boys were told to go and clean both the boys' and the girls' toilets. Apparently it was believed that working in a filthy environment would create emotionally hard tough boys.

Boys were generally given harder work than the girls. For example, they were told to carry bricks even when it was raining whilst the girls remained in the classroom. The girl who made this contribution pointed out that although it was not fair the boys seemed to like hard work. Precious pointed out that the girls could not carry desks because they were heavy, which meant that work had to be divided according to sex.

Many of the boys complained of unfair treatment by the teachers and wanted the girls to do the same work. According to these boys the girls even laughed at them as they worked. One boy maintained that the girls were strong because they did not flinch when getting hot porridge on their hands. If they could stand hot porridge then they could clean the classrooms, wash windows and move desks without the boys' assistance.

Below is an entry made by Ayesha in her diary:

The teacher bit [beat] us girls because we did not clean the class but it were boys who were supposed to clean it, when we explained she said she do not want excuses.

The fact that the teacher beat the girls for the dirty classroom when it was the boys who were supposed to clean it shows that the teacher placed the responsibility for the cleanliness of the classroom on the girls. On the other hand, the teacher expected the boys to safeguard the brooms against theft. By not punishing the boys for not cleaning the classroom, the teacher

endorsed traditional masculinities: boys are not responsible for the cleanliness of the home or other indoor environments. In fact, cleaning such places is considered women's work.

4.3.5 Defying authority

All the group discussions revealed that most boys defied authority. This was mainly demonstrated by disrespecting teachers and gambling at school.

4.3.5.1 Disrespecting teachers

Most research participants pointed out that the boys disrespected the teachers. The responses indicated that the boys did so by not doing their homework, not attending extra lessons, coming late to school and making jokes while the teachers were teaching.

Most boys, irrespective of age, were reported not to be doing their homework and some only did their homework in class in the morning. Many girls complained that the boys took their books from their bags by force and then took them behind the toilets or into one of the classrooms that was not in use and copied their homework. The girls did not like this because they did their work at home and the boys subsequently wielded their power to copy the homework before school. Below are a number of excerpts from one of the group discussions:

Precious: ... boys do not want to do their work sir.

LC: E-eh, what type of work?

Precious: Like writing their homework. When they arrive here at school they go to spare class and write their home work there. Sometimes they open our bags and take our books.

LC: Taking your books?

Precious: Yes, then they go to the toilets or the other class and then they write the homework. Even if we tell the teacher the other boys don't agree with us because we are girls, they agree with other boys.

LC: O-oh, but how do you feel about it? (3) E-eh Nandipha.

Nandipha: Sad, I feel sad because I write at home then when I come here because of boys, BOYS ALWAYS, because they are stro::ng and (5) (shakes her head)

LC: Because they are strong they have power.

Nandipha: Yes, then they take our books and if we tell the teacher sir, other boys agree with them.

Andy confirmed that if the girls complained about them taking their books they would beat them up. He pointed out that although the boys were prepared to mete out certain behaviour to the girls, they were not prepared to be treated in the same way in return. Whilst they forced the girls to toe the line and tried to dominate them they did not expect the girls to behave in the same way. The girls were not happy about this, thus reporting such to the teachers. In response, the boys demonstrated male unity by supporting each other. By taking the girls' books by force, the boys were showing power. When I asked the boys if it was the 'fashion' not to do their work, they responded that it was not but it made them different from the girls.

The school organised extra lessons for the learners but most boys were not attending or arrived late. Mpho stated that when teachers told the learners to come early in the morning for extra support most of the boys arrived late. Their homework assistant also asked the learners to report for lessons on Saturdays but most of the boys did not attend. One girl, Jadagrace, wrote in her diary that when one of the boys arrived late one morning, he was very cheeky to the teacher when asked why he was late. His response showed that he did not care what the teacher was asking about. In fact he was constructing masculinity by challenging authority. When I asked the boys why they behaved this way in response to school initiatives to support them, Mpho pointed out that was "so that people can know we are boys". The desire to be 'real' boys and be different from girls thus led the boys to behave badly. In reacting to authority in this way the boys were constructing masculinity against femininity; thus defying authority while the girls were being submissive. This poor behaviour by the boys is regrettable, as it would ultimately end in failure; however, for them it portrayed boyhood.

The boys liked to disturb the learning process by being noisy, which they did when the teacher left the classroom, and they also made jokes and comments while the teachers were teaching. Eminem noted in his diary that he was disappointed by the behaviour of the bigger boys and wished they could go and learn at an adult school. In her diary, Noxolo wrote about boys running around in the classroom disturbing her while she was writing at her desk. The

following contribution on how boys disrespected teachers was made by John during one of the group discussions.

John 1: Some of my friends are talking about their girlfriends. They are saying after school they will be playing paper mix it, playing when the teacher is teaching, sending messages and playing games.

In the above extract, John tells of how the boys were talking about what they wanted to do after school while the teacher was teaching, consequently showing total disrespect for the teacher. By being rebellious the boys are creating a certain type of masculinity. When I asked a boy in another group whether being a boy meant talking and doing funny things while the teacher was talking, he said yes. The boys challenged the teachers' authority thus showing that for them being a 'real' boy is to defy authority. However, there were a few boys who were obedient and who did not conform to this badly behaved male stereotype.

4.3.5.2 Gambling and other deviant behaviour

Gambling in this study refers to the spinning of coins with the primary intent of winning more money. The boys at this school were found to be in the habit of gambling. Every time I arrived at the school to start my group discussions, I would find the boys in the unused classrooms gambling.

Two groups debated fiercely about boys gambling at school. Other antisocial acts were also highlighted during group discussions and in the diaries of both boys and girls. The responses given by the research participants showed that most of the boys gambled. One boy, Ngamla, indicated that they chased away girls who gambled when they were gambling. This points to the concept discussed earlier that boys don't like to play share their games with girls. During the discussion on gambling the boys maintained that girls also gambled. However, one girl, Ayesha, pointed out that when the girls threatened to report the boys for gambling to the teacher, they responded by accusing the girls of gambling.

All the girls denied that they gambled and during this group discussion the boys agreed that very few girls gambled. Even the two boys who were very vocal about girls gambling in the end admitted that the boys were the ones who mostly gambled in class.

Traditionally, boys are supposed to take care of girls by providing them with what they want. In this study, this was demonstrated by Pleasure, who gave Ayesha fifty cents after he had

won at gambling. This gambling could have been a way in which the boys at this school obtained money to share with their girlfriends. Providing and caring for a girlfriend is a way of showing that you are a 'real' boy.

Linked to the concept of gambling is being playful. One boy indicated that being playful is a sign of being a 'real' boy. The concept of being playful can also be linked to the issue of not being respectful towards teachers. While the girls were doing their homework the boys were busy gambling and playing other games. In her diary, Prudence stated that she was chased away by a group of boys who were gumboot dancing. She wrote:

A boy accused me for getting into a classroom where other boys were doing gumboot dance. Then he started to push me and chase me away. I felt very sad.

It seems boys did not like girls nearby when they were involved in these 'masculine games'. Gambling and gumboot dancing were ways of showing boyhood.

To disassociate themselves from the girls, the boys engaged in activities that undermined authority. One girl, Palisa, wrote in her diary about a certain boy who had gone into the girls' toilet. The girls told the principal immediately and the boy was punished. In this regard it may be inferred that 'real' boys are attention seekers, with masculinity construction taking place in the presence of other boys or girls. This boy may have been constructing masculinity through attention seeking by going into the girls' toilet, which was strictly against the rules.

At this school career days are organised and learners are asked to come to school dressed according to the career of their choice. However, many of the boys defied authority by coming dressed any old way. In contrast, the girls were submissive and obeyed the instructions in this regard. Mpho had the following to say in his diary:

Today is the career day and we are wearing what clothes you want to be when you grow up and the girls are wearing career clothes and only 5 boys are wearing career clothes. I felt so terrible because I am a boy and the boys have bad behaviour/attitude and girls have a good behaviour/attitude.

Boys were thus constructing masculinity by disobeying authority. They were also trying to show that they were different from girls.

4.3.6 The comedian

Boys often want to draw attention to themselves by playing the role of the class comedian. Pleasure was clearly identified by his classmates as being a comedian. He liked to do funny things or make a noise when the class was praying in the morning. When I asked whether Pleasure was popular among the Grade 7 learners, the answer was a yes. One male research participant pointed out that Pleasure did the funny things at times to impress the girls. Another boy stated that lots of the girls would ask Pleasure to tell them jokes. The girls agreed that he told funny jokes that made them laugh. However, Diana pointed out that just because they laughed did not mean that they loved him. The research participants in this study had a simplistic view of love since almost any interaction that includes affirmation was deemed to be “love”. Two girls were reported to have dated Pleasure. When I asked the participants whether Pleasure was popular because he was a comedian, the whole group agreed. Lungelo was also popular among the girls because of his jokes. It seems that the boys who felt they were complying with the criteria for being a ‘real boy’ liked to draw attention to themselves. Accordingly, they were performing gender in a particular way in the belief that it made them popular.

Another of the research participants, John, pointed out that some boys did not like Pleasure because he liked fighting. He could have been drawing attention to himself by bullying these boys. In Swain (2006) from the girls’ perspective boys ‘showed off’ much more and they were generally less well behaved. When I asked the group whether Pleasure was loved by many girls because of his fighting prowess they said yes. This suggested that girls liked boys who could make jokes and were able to fight. Girls liked laughing which is why they liked comedians and it would seem that they liked boys who could fight because they could protect them against bullies. However, in her diary Noxolo complained that Mpho tried to make himself popular by making jokes at other people’s expense. Whilst the whole class would be laughing at the person at whom the jokes were directed, that person would be feeling unhappy. In this case, boys would seem to construct masculinity by mocking people and laughing at them.

4.4 CONCLUSION

I started this chapter by giving the numbers of learners who took part in the group discussions and who returned diaries. A list of research participants, together with their sex and age, was also given and I also described the composition of the group discussions.

In this chapter the findings were presented in the form of six predominant themes with related sub-themes (where applicable). The predominant themes identified were sexuality, the sturdy boy, homosociality, sex roles, defying authority and the comedian.

The first theme on sexuality addressed issues of heterosexuality, homosexuality, sex talk and having a girlfriend. It was consequently found that issues of heterosexuality dominated issues of homosexuality; thus 'real' boys were supposed to be heterosexual. It was observed that boys spent a considerable amount of time talking about their girlfriends or prospective girlfriends. The heterosexual nature of boys was also shown by the fact that they dated girls. Boys in this study thus constructed masculinity through heterosexuality, sex talk and having girlfriends.

The second theme identified was 'the sturdy boy'. In this theme, issues of toughness, power, gender boundaries and punishment were raised. Toughness in boys was observed through their passion for soccer, rugby and karate. Boys who were also good at fighting were admired by the girls and commanded respect from the boys although some of the boys did not like them. Toughness in boys was also observed through physical strength and fear of being thought feminine. Many of the girls complained that the boys abused them by wielding their power over them. Being a 'real' boy thus meant to be powerful. Boys tended to dominate the playing space with their games as they tried to maintain their homosocial groups. Corporal punishment was commonly meted out to the Grade 7 learners but mainly to boys. The use of corporal punishment could be perceived as a way of creating tough boys.

The third theme highlighted the way in which the boys constructed masculinity through homosocial groups. The boys preferred to play on their own although at times they did join the girls for a game. Boys wanted to play sports such as soccer, which they did not think the girls could play, and also enjoyed talking to each other about the sport. Boys also wanted to spend time together because they felt it was nice to be with other boys rather than with girls. This allowed them to learn boys' 'stuff' and also to share problems. 'Real' boys were thus supposed to keep company with other boys.

The boys in this study also constructed masculinity by observing sex roles, which is the fourth theme. The cleaning of classrooms was divided into girls' work and boys' work. Nevertheless, the boys complained that cleaning classrooms was girls' work. The boys thus

perceived cleaning as being beneath them, which might have been reinforced by the fact that the boys were also asked to do most of the heavy work at school.

Masculinity construction among the Grade 7 boys in this study was also observed through their disobedience in the face of authority. This theme revealed that certain boys did not do their school work and had a liking for gambling, as well as making negative remarks about the teachers. Many of them also rejected school directives such as attending classes before and after school and on career day they had not complied with the dress requirements. One boy pointed out that they did this to show that they were boys because being a boy meant undermining authority, unlike the girls who by and large tended to conform.

In the main, the girls enjoyed being entertained by the boys and hence they liked the 'comedians'. This was the sixth theme treated in this chapter. The boys who acted as comedians drew the attention of both boys and girls.

In the focus group discussions some of the girls gave their own definition of what it means to be a 'real' boy. Whilst they were aware of how the boys at the school constructed masculinity, they felt 'real' boys should be friendly, intelligent, clever, organised and prepared to take care of other people.

The next chapter, which is the final chapter in this dissertation, reflects on these findings and makes a number of recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters of this study presented a descriptive account of a study undertaken to unearth the way in which the construction of masculinity by Grade 7 boys has an impact on gender relations in a township school.

The first chapter introduced the study by pointing out the purpose of the research. Accordingly, the research problem was stated and the research questions together with their objectives were specified. In South Africa, girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school which impede the realisation of their right to education. An understanding of the girls' problems at school would therefore seem to require an understanding of masculinity construction. In addition, in South Africa topics on issues of masculinity are generally dealt with at high school in the subject Life Orientation. It was thus the purpose of this study to gather and document personal experiences and views on the construction of masculinity by boys and girls in Grade 7 at a township primary school in Gauteng East. The following objectives were listed in chapter 1 at the beginning of the study as part of the purpose of the study:

- To explore the way in which masculinity is constructed amongst peers in the school environment.
- To explore the boundaries constructed by the boys as they interact among themselves and with girls.
- To explore the way in which young boys understand their masculinity.
- To explore the way in which young girls perceive the construction of masculinity by boys.

The study was approached within a social constructionist theoretical framework which is qualitative in nature. The major findings of the study will thus be related to this theoretical framework.

Chapter 2 looked at the social construction of masculinity generally in different parts of the world and specifically in South Africa, while the methodology applied in carrying out this study was discussed in chapter 3. In chapter 4, the data collected were presented, analysed and interpreted. During this analysis and interpretation, major themes pertaining to the social construction of masculinity were identified. In the sections that follow, the major themes identified in chapter 4 will be highlighted after which conclusions will be drawn and a number of recommendations will be made. The limitations of the research design are also discussed in this chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Masculinity construction, as identified in chapter 1 under the definition of key terms, refers to the ways of self-presentation expected from a male in any given context (Haywood & Mac an Ghail 2003). In view of the fact that masculinity construction is relational, in this study I looked at the boys in relation to the girls, thus seeking out the experiences and feelings of both boys and girls in order to ascertain how the boys constructed masculinity. Wetherell (1996) points out that masculinity is defined in relation to women, as this relationship is based on power. Connell (1995) argues that men's relationships are shrouded in power. Among the boys in this study, elements of power were discernible in their relations with girls and were evident in their social encounters at the school where this study was conducted.

In this study, themes were identified in the data obtained from the participants in order to analyse the social relationships between the boys and girls. These themes, as stated in chapter 4, are sexuality, the sturdy boy, homosociality, sex roles, defying authority and the comedian. In the following section each of these themes will be summarised and then the findings will be related to the existing literature where possible.

5.2.1 Sexuality

Sexuality is a term used to describe the sexual characteristics of and behaviour among people (Giddens 1997). In this study the sexual characteristics and behaviour of Grade 7 boys were investigated. It was found that the boys in this study constructed masculinity through being heterosexual, having girlfriends and sex talk.

All three of the discussion groups discussed the issues of homosexuality and heterosexuality extensively. Both boys and girls argued that it was not proper for boys to be sexually

attracted to other boys. The word ‘hate’ was used by many boys and girls to express their disdain of gays or homosexual acts. During the group discussions the research participants reiterated the belief that such behaviour is not approved of by society. Thus the boys at this school constructed masculinity along the norms of their understanding of society, which regards heterosexuality as being ‘more manly’ than homosexuality. The following quote from one of the group discussions captured such views: “*Eish sir, ayijwayelekanga ukuthi umfana nomfana bashade, ayiko. Abantu bayakuthola kanjani sir? BAZOKUTHOLA KANJANI? Awungowabo.*” (Eish sir, you cannot get used to the issue of boys wedding boys, there is nothing like that. What will people think of you sir? WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF YOU? You don’t belong to them) (Sandile).

Girls also contributed to the construction of masculinity by boys through their rejection of “homosexual boys”. While some boys and girls appreciated the way identified homosexual boys dressed, they did not welcome them as sexual partners. In this study being heterosexual appeared to be both desirable and manly in contrast to being homosexual. This is in line with what has been observed by other researchers (see Robinson 2008; Kinsman 2009; Martin & Muthukrishna 2011; Williams 2013). Along these lines, Swain (2006) argues that it is impossible to have a full understanding of gender relations in schools without examining them within the context of compulsory heterosexuality. At the school where this study was carried out there were reportedly also bisexual boys. Both male and female research participants expressed their disdain for homosexuals. Masculinity in this study was thus policed by both boys and girls through abhorrence for homosexual and bisexual behaviour.

The issue of name calling (a type of stereotyping) with regard to homosexuals was revealed in the group discussions as well as in the diaries. Name calling oppresses homosexuals. Both homosexuals and bisexuals were ridiculed in an attempt to get them to fall in line with the norms laid down by the heterosexual males in the school. Cranny-Francis et al (2003) point out that heterosexuality is a vector of oppression. In this study it was found that although homosexual organisations and other civic groups have challenged the dominance of heterosexuality in the broader society, the boys in this school were still rooted to the institution of heterosexuality, thus endorsing hegemonic masculinity through heterosexuality.

Heterosexuality in boys was also demonstrated through sex talk. The boys in this study spent a considerable amount of time talking about girls and especially about the girls they liked. Pleasure, one of the more popular boys, pointed out that the boys’ talk did not mean they

loved the girls but they only wanted sex with them. According to this boy to be a boy means to have sex with a woman. In this case sex was not about pleasure or a way of showing love but a way of showing manhood. Shefer et al (2005), in a local study with young men, noted that to be a man is to have sex with a woman. Not having a girlfriend made a boy feel unhappy because he could not then join in the discussion with those who had girlfriends. In fact, in reality these boys lacked the vocabulary for 'sex talk'. Real boys were supposed to be able to talk about girls: the way they walk, their legs, their 'bums' and their mini-skirts. However, the girls did not like being talked about in this way, believing that boys should spend their time more profitably reading and doing their homework. In their diaries some girls noted how disgusted they felt at some of their classmates' behaviour, such as kissing behind classroom doors. In this vein, Prudence made repeated entries in her diary pointing out how boys mistreated girls by making them pregnant. It has to be emphasised here, however, that in this study there was no indication of sexual intimacy among the Grade 7 learners. Prudence's views were based simply on what she had heard the boys talking about.

From this study it would seem that boys demonstrated their boyhood by having a girlfriend. Most of the boys believed that to be a 'real' boy, one should have many girlfriends. However, girls were not happy about this. The notion of having many girlfriends emanated from the boys' need to reinforce their dominant versions of masculinity. Sathiparsad et al (2010) point out that having sex and being able to handle many women is equated with masculinity. Boys who were afraid to propose to a girl were ridiculed. Some boys never gave up in proposing to particular girls while others resorted to violent means in their attempt to attract a girlfriend, while still others claimed a non-existent relationship. This would seem to show that a relationship with a girl was regarded as a status symbol. The boys in this study demonstrated their affection for girls by going out with them and hugging, cuddling and kissing them.

The boys in this study thus displayed their masculinity or boyhood by being heterosexual, talking about sex and having a girlfriend.

5.2.2 The sturdy boy

In this study the theme of the 'sturdy boy' encompassed toughness, power, gender boundaries and punishment.

To be a 'real' boy means to be tough. In this study boys demonstrated their toughness in the games they played, by fighting, by displaying their physical strength and in the punishment

they received from the teachers. While most boys talked of games such as *umagijimisana* (chasing each other game), rugby and karate, a passion for soccer was common to almost all the boys. The issue of soccer brought with it gender segregated boundaries and power relations, as soccer was regarded as a boys' sport and if a boy did not play it he could be labelled gay. Boys thus constructed heterosexual masculinity through sport. Playing soccer in this study was associated with being tough and not being soft like girls.

Many of the boys reported that they did not like to play with the girls and although some of the girls wanted to play with the boys they were not welcome in their games. Boys did not consider it a good thing to play with girls and to reinforce this aversion and drive home their point they played rough when girls joined them resulting in the girls getting hurt. Mpho maintained that they played rough to show that they were boys. In this context, the boys, besides showing that they were tough, were also constructing masculinity in opposition to femininity, which caused them to despise the games played by girls. Diana pointed out that boys were supposed to 'man up' and that they should not be treated like girls. While both the boys and the girls mainly played in their homosocial groups there were times when they played together especially when a sports coach was present.

Some of the boys in this study were inclined to fight not only with other boys but also with some of the girls, which caused many of the girls to complain about this behaviour in their diaries. Such power-seeking behaviour can also be seen as a way of constructing their masculinity.

The boys tried to wield their power over the girls. However, this power was constantly challenged by the girls on the playground. They tested the gender boundaries by attempting to join boys in their games and running to the teachers for help when the boys forced them from their playing space. However, in most cases the boys prevailed and continued to dominate the girls.

The desire to show that they were boys resulted in them bullying the girls, shouting at them, taking their possessions by force and even touching their private parts. Power relations in this study could be observed through sexual violence, coercion, assault and domination. Some of the boys wielded power by disturbing the girls' play during break and chasing them away from their playing space. This affected the girls both emotionally and academically. One girl, Nandipha, pointed out that once she had been disturbed by the boys during break she could

not concentrate in class. Certain boys tried to dominate girls outside school as a way of taking revenge because the girls outshone them in class. Violence perpetrated by the boys on the girls who outperformed them in class demonstrates that hierarchy and hegemony were no longer stable and that the gender order was in a process of crisis and transformation.

Not all boys enjoyed having power over girls. Many of the smaller boys were also dominated and bullied by the bigger boys. However, Andy, who was small compared with some of the other boys, managed to have control over the big boys because of his financial resources. He had no difficulty in finding partners and consequently acquiring status with his peers.

Although he had a gay friend, he was not chastised by other learners for this; instead they liked and respected him. This shows that masculinity construction in young boys at school is influenced by family background (see Bhana 2005).

However, Andy did not want to share his money with a Zimbabwean girl. This girl complained in her diary about the way she was mistreated by certain boys. In this case, the issue of gender cannot be separated from ethnicity and the intersection of gender and other systems of oppression is clearly illustrated here. The difference between the boy's relations with this girl and those with his classmates demonstrates the intersectionality of gender with other oppressive social relations, such as ethnicity and social class. A shortage of vital resources such as food and money played a part in the boys' violent display of masculinity to the girls, with the bigger boys abusing the girls and demanding money and food from them.

The most common form of punishment at the school in this study was corporal punishment. The use of corporal punishment favoured girls as the boys were beaten more often and more severely than the girls. However, the use of corporal punishment had probably ceased to be a deterrent for the boys as their poor behaviour would seem to have persisted. It could have been that they perceived this type of punishment as a way of demonstrating masculinity. The use of corporal punishment at this school may also have contributed to the violent behaviour displayed by many of the boys in their relationships with girls, as violence may consequently be regarded as a legitimate way of managing conflict. This is supported by Morrell (2001), who points out that the use of corporal punishment influences masculinity.

5.2.3 Homosocial

The natural groupings of Grade 7 learners at this school may be regarded as homosocial. Girls reported not enjoying playing with boys because they said boys were rough, a characteristic which is associated with masculinity.

Boys tended to maintain homosocial groups because of their common interests, for example playing soccer together or talking about soccer to each other. Epstein et al (2001) point out that masculinity is constructed through playing football and talking about the game knowledgeably. Boys could also discuss their problems and boys' 'stuff' among themselves, something they could not do with girls.

5.2.4 Sex roles

In this study work done by boys and girls was divided along gender lines. When cleaning the classroom, the girls would sweep and mop the floor while the boys carried the desks out of the classroom and cleaned the windows. When boys were asked to sweep the classroom they complained that it was girls' work. For them, cleaning was not supposed to be work for 'real' boys. Girls, on the other hand, felt that cleaning the classroom was the responsibility of both boys and girls. At the school the boys were expected to do the hard and dirty work such as carrying bricks and cleaning toilets. Thus, by dividing work and punishment along sex lines, educators were endorsing perceptions of traditional masculinities.

5.2.5 Defying authority

The boys at this school were found to be anti-authority. Both boys and girls in the study concurred that boys did not do their school work. The girls complained that the boys would take their books by force and hide behind the toilets or in disused classrooms and copy the girls' homework. This angered the girls because they did their homework at home while the boys merely copied what they had done the next day before school. When the girls reported this to the teachers, the boys would cover for each other, thus demonstrating what I would term 'gender solidarity'.

The boys were also reported not attending extra lessons in the morning and at weekends. Diary entries by some participants revealed that the boys, especially the bigger boys, did not respect the teachers, making jokes about them and generally disrupting lessons. On career day, when required to dress up, many of the boys deliberately came to school in normal

clothes. I refer to this behaviour by the boys as ‘rebellious masculinity’. Accordingly, boys did not want to show the ‘feminine’ characteristic of obedience.

Boys also constructed masculinity by gambling. At the school, gambling was against the rules and generally limited to the boys. Pleasure mentioned that he had given Ayesha fifty cents after winning a gambling game. This act, although defying authority, does demonstrate a caring form of masculinity.

5.2.6 The comedian

Masculinity is a social construct. In this study the girls pointed out that the boys wanted to draw attention to themselves. Pleasure, who was a popular boy, considered himself a comedian. John, however, pointed out Pleasure was actually making jokes to impress the girls. Nevertheless his antics seemed to have had the required effect because many of the girls said they liked him because of his jokes. This boy and others constructed masculinity through comedic behaviour as well as making fun of other learners.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Masculinity in this study was constructed through power relations. Boys tried to dominate girls by bullying them and abusing them. Both boys and girls endorsed the construction of masculinity by policing heterosexuality. Having girlfriends and engaging in sex talk were also common. In addition, the boys were seen to construct masculinity by defying authority and eschewing all forms of femininity. Boys were popular with the girls if they were nice and if they gave them money. In this way, masculinity was constructed as being caring and friendly.

Boys tried to put up boundaries in their interaction with girls. The boys dominated the playing field when playing soccer, also chasing the girls away when they tried to join in. Boys and girls generally maintained their homosocial groups in their informal play although at times they played together especially when there was a coach present. This was supported by both the boys and the girls during the focus group discussions and by the diary entries of a few research participants (boys and girls).

The boys thought that to be a ‘real’ boy one must have girlfriends and must shun all forms of femininity. When I asked whether having many girlfriends meant being a ‘real’ boy, many of the boys responded in the affirmative. Eminem also noted in his diary that his friends were

forcing him to 'date' a girl although they knew he had another girlfriend. The boys also believed being a boy meant not doing 'women's' work such as cleaning. Some girls pointed out during a group discussion that boys did not want to clean the classroom because they felt it to be girls' work. The same views were echoed by some of the boys during a group discussion and by one boy in his diary. The boys also pointed out that disobeying authority showed that you were a 'real' boy'. Although they admitted that disobeying authority was not fashionable behaviour they did feel that it did make them different from the girls.

Girls perceived the construction of masculinity by boys in a negative way. They accused the boys of bullying them and forcing them to do what they wanted. To the girls being a boy meant being a bully and not doing girls' work. Many of the girls pointed out both during the focus group discussions and in their diaries that boys were 'bullies'. The girls also remarked that boys wanted to draw attention to themselves. One girl pointed out in a group discussion that the problem was that boys wanted to be *seen* to be real boys. Lesekgo, in a group discussion, admitted that they played soccer to identify with the other boys. Other boys became comedians and ended up being admired by the girls and the other boys. Pleasure, who was one of the popular boys, was liked by many of the girls and respected by a good number of the boys because he joked around in class. Diana mentioned in this regard during a group discussion that they liked Pleasure because girls generally liked to be made to laugh. Thus masculinity is a social construct and is performed in front of others to gain popularity.

The girls in this study had their own definition of what they expected in a real boy. To them real boys were supposed to be friendly, caring, intelligent, clever, helpful and well organised. However, these characteristics were not common in the boys at this school. Girls complained that the boys did not do their school work and had no respect for girls despite the fact that the girls respected them, although they did complain about the bullying they were subjected to by the boys. It would seem that the girls were forced into a form of submission by the boys bullying as the respect was not reciprocal.

Thus the boys would seem to construct masculinity through violence. However, there were a few boys who showed respect, caring and affection for girls by giving them money.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is subject to a number of limitations. Firstly, not all Grade 7 learners at Bokamoso Primary School were involved in the study because it was limited to those who could write.

Secondly, the study was carried out after school which meant that learners who were reliant on public transport could not be part of the study. Of those who did participate, some elected not to attend some of the focus group discussions.

Another limitation pertains to the data collecting techniques used. Focus group discussions were held concurrently with the keeping of diaries. While group discussions may have shed light on the topic of the study, it may also have allowed participants to reflect on some group discussions in their diaries. In order to enhance the findings the keeping of diaries could also have been followed up with individual interviews to shed more light on what was written in them.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the expected and unexpected data received call for some recommendations to be made. These recommendations can be divided into two categories, namely, policy recommendations and research recommendations. The sections below outline and discuss these recommendations.

5.5.1 Policy recommendations

Children spend a considerable amount of time at school so teachers should strive to create an environment that is conducive to learning and social development. Schools should therefore prepare boys for a satisfying and non-violent adulthood whilst instilling the norms and values of gender equality. Violence thrives in environments where gender and social inequality exist. Through the use of corporal punishment educators continue to socialise learners into violent behaviour; it is therefore imperative that educators who continue to apply it face the full consequences of their actions.

Girls at school are still exposed to violence perpetrated by their male counterparts, which could partly be as a result of the boys' exposure to corporal punishment. Accordingly, boys learn that violence is an acceptable way of gaining what they want from the weak, in this case girls and younger boys. The GDE should endeavour to make township learners more aware of their right not to be subjected to corporal punishment. The worrying part is that information on corporal punishment is communicated to the educators with very little if anything being done to inform the children who are at the centre of this abuse. The DBE on

its part should also come up with gender-sensitive forms of punishment for disciplining learners.

The South African government has done a commendable job in ensuring that the girl child attend school. However, that is not enough. The DBE must make it safer for girls both when travelling to and from school and at school itself to ensure effective learning. The girls in this study revealed that boys took their things such as books and food by force, hit them, forced their attentions on them and even fondled their private parts. The boys also dominated the playing space, chasing the girls away. The girls were generally afraid to report all this as they could expect retribution after school. In addition it was found the younger and more vulnerable boys needed to be protected from the older rougher boys.

More clubs should be established at schools that focus on gender equality. The introduction of the Soul Buddyz Club⁷ at primary schools is commendable but more monitoring of its implementation is called for. Boys must be brought on board in this respect and need to speak out frankly in support of girls. In this study only one boy was identified who used his financial power to protect the girls against harassment from the bigger boys.

The provincial education departments must work together with local communities and other stakeholders such as the police to change the traditional forms of masculinity, starting with the younger boys so that they see girls as their equals and not rivals. In this study the boys tried to dominate the girls outside the classroom as a way of ‘revenge’ for outshining them academically. Boys still believe they are the dominant gender.

School authorities should be encouraged to listen to both girls’ and boys’ concerns no matter how trivial they may seem. In this study many girls and younger boys suffered at the hands of the older boys. It was striking how boys bullied girls and always spoke for each other to conceal their violence.

In the school in this study, the boys’ record of doing homework was deplorable. Accordingly, ongoing counselling and individual assistance with school work is required to inculcate a culture of learning in them. These boys were old enough to be at high school but as a result of their poor academic performance had not been promoted. Instead of showing positive forms

⁷ Its intervention creates a platform where all South African children between the ages of 8 and 15 years can learn and develop skills that will facilitate mobilisation around children’s rights, and issues that affect children and their surrounding schools and communities.

of masculinity these boys were engaging in ‘rebellious masculinity’. Accordingly, in conjunction with the parents of these boys, schools need to devise intervention programmes for these learners.

More heterogeneous sporting activities should be encouraged in township schools under the guidance of adults so that gender equality can become an everyday occurrence. This study shows that redefining ‘boys’ work’ or ‘girls’ work’ is not only important in promoting gender equality but also in redefining the core elements of masculinity. The violent behaviour demonstrated by the boys towards the girls may be a manifestation of poor gender identity and insecurity on the part of the boys. If boys are made aware of positive male identities they may be more likely not to despise things identified as feminine.

5.5.2 Research recommendations

Although the research was based on a small sample, the boys and girls who took part in the study shared many of their experiences, opinions and thoughts both in the focus groups and in their diary entries. The information provided was useful in describing the way in which masculinity is constructed by Grade 7 learners in a township school in the Gauteng East district in Ekurhuleni. Given the high rate of abuse of girls at the hands of boys it is recommended that more studies be conducted with a larger sample size, using different methodologies.

While most participants in this study came from impoverished backgrounds, the popularity of one boy who came from a better socio-economic background requires that masculinity construction be researched in conjunction with socio-economic background. One’s socio-economic background seems to have an influence on masculinity construction among Grade 7 learners. Since many of the more difficult boys in this study were too old for primary school it is important that masculinity construction among primary school children be linked to age.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This study sought to ascertain the way in which masculinity is constructed among Grade 7 learners in a township school and how it impacts on gender relations. While I acknowledge and appreciate what has been done by the government in ensuring that the girl child attend

school, more still needs to be done to make the school an environment that is conducive to learning for the girl child.

Although this study sought to investigate masculinity construction among boys and how it impacts on gender relations, rich information on boys' poor academic performance was uncovered. Boys try to 'pay revenge' by bullying the girls outside the class. At one of the schools in Swain's study girls were "maligned and disparaged ...if they were thought to be either working too hard, or attaining (academically) too well" (Swain 2006. internal brackets in original text). Some boys seem reluctant to put much effort into their school work, which results in them repeating grades, thus learning with children much younger than them. These boys as observed in this study tried to defy authority by not doing their work to create an identity different from girls. There would also seem to be a negative spiral in terms of the communication between the boys and their educators and other female members of staff.

As they construct masculinity, some boys interfere with the girls' learning process and that of other boys of an inferior status. Boys must therefore be helped to develop forms of masculinity that are gender sensitive. With the challenges experienced by some of the boys and many of the girls being exposed by this study, I hope that it will prove useful in both schools and society at large to highlight the importance of masculinity construction when attempting to solve some of the problems faced by township primary schools.

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Appendix A: Invitation to participate

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

Dear Potential Participant

My name is Luckmore Chimanzi and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a master's degree in Sociology at the University of South Africa. My research project focuses on what it means to be a boy today. The data to be collected will enrich the field of gender studies. I am therefore kindly inviting you to participate in my study.

Taking part in the research will require doing two things. First you will be asked to attend two focus group sessions. These focus group discussions will last between 45 minutes and one hour. The discussions will be held after school hours in the school computer laboratory. These discussions will be tape recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysing data. Participants in your group will be asked to sign an agreement to keep the discussions confidential. The focus group discussions will be based on general questions surrounding your beliefs, values, experiences and ideas concerning boys. Secondly you will be asked to keep a diary for a period of one month. In this diary you will be asked to record all issues that you encounter relating to boys talk, actions, play or work both at home and school. You will also be asked to express your feelings with regards to these activities.

All your contributions to this research will be kept confidential. Besides me, only my supervisor will have access to the data. Pseudonyms will be used and all other identifying characteristics changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. However direct quotes from the discussion or diaries maybe cited in my research report but this will be without any identification of the source of the comment. Participation in this research is voluntary and thus you can withdraw during the course of the research should you wish to.

If you choose to participate in this study please read carefully the following form, if you agree to take part, write down your name and surname and then sign it. Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Luckmore Chimanzi

Appendix B: Assent form from participants

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

I _____, hereby grant permission to Luckmore Chimanzi (32095651) to audio record and use my focus group discussions and also use the information in my diary for the sole purpose of his research, provided it is not in direct violation of what he stated in his above letter.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Parents information letter

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

Dear Parent

My name is Luckmore Chimanzi and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a master's degree in Sociology at the University of South Africa. My research project is on the construction of masculinity by young boys and how this impacts on gender relations. The data to be collected will enrich the field of gender studies. I am therefore kindly asking you to give permission to your son or daughter to participate in this study.

The principal of the school has already given me permission to approach the learners at the school. Your son or daughter has also shown that he or she is interested in taking part in the research.

Participation in the research will require your child to do two things. First he or she will be asked to attend two focus group sessions. These focus group discussions will last between 45 minutes to one hour. These discussions will be tape recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysing data. Participants in your child's group will be asked to sign an agreement to keep the discussions confidential. The focus group discussions will be based on general questions surrounding your child's beliefs, values, experiences and ideas around masculinity construction by boys in grade seven and how this impacts on gender relations. Secondly your child will be asked to keep a diary for a period of one month. In this diary he or she will be asked to record all issues that he or she encounters relating to boys talk, actions, play or work at home and school. He or she will also be asked to express his or her feelings with regards to these activities. Please do not read or help them with their diaries as I would like to gain their honest opinions.

All contributions to this research will be kept confidential. Access to the collected data will be limited only to my supervisor and me. Pseudonyms will be used and all other identifying characteristics changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. However, direct quotes from the discussions or diaries maybe cited in my research report but this will be without any identification of the source of the comment. Participation in this research is free and thus your child is free to withdraw during the research should he or she wish.

If you are willing to give permission to your child to participate in this research, please sign the following form and return it to school with your child. Your child's participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

Luckmore Chimanzi

Appendix D: Parents' consent form

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

I _____, in my capacity as the parent / guardian of
_____ hereby give my consent to his/her participation
in the research to be conducted by Luckmore Chimanzi.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Appendix E: Principal's information letter

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Luckmore Chimanzi and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a master's degree in Sociology at the University of South Africa. My research is on the construction of masculinity by young boys, especially grade sevens and how this impacts on gender relations. The data to be collected will enrich the field of gender studies. I am therefore kindly asking for permission to carry out the study with your grade seven learners. I am also asking for permission to use the computer laboratory for my focus group discussions.

Learners who take part in the research will be asked to do two things. First they will be asked to attend two focus group sessions. These focus group discussions will last between 45 minutes and one hour. The discussions will be held after school hours. These discussions will be tape recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysing data. Participants will be asked to sign an agreement to keep the discussions confidential. The focus group discussions will be based on general questions surrounding the learner's beliefs, values, experiences and ideas around masculinity construction by boys in grade seven and how this impacts on gender relations. Secondly they will be asked to keep a diary for a period of one month. In this diary they will be asked to record all issues that they encounter relating to boys talk, actions, play or work both at home and school that show masculinity construction. They will also be asked to express their feelings with regards to these activities.

All their contributions to this study will be kept confidential. Access to the data will be limited only to my supervisor and me. Pseudonyms will be used and all other identifying characteristics changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. However, direct quotes from the discussions or diaries maybe cited in my research report but this will be without any identification of the source of the comment. Participation in this research is free and thus the learners from your school are free to withdraw during the course of the study should they wish to do so.

If you allow me to carry out this research at your school, please sign the consent form attached to this letter. Your school's participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

Luckmore Chimanzi.

Appendix F: Consent form from school principal

Department of Sociology

University of South Africa

P O Box 392

Pretoria

Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

I _____, in my capacity as the principal of school, consent to allowing Luckmore Chimanzi to conduct his research, with those learners at this school who consent to participate and whose parents give assent to their participation.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Appendix G: Gauteng Department of Education information letter

Department of Sociology
University of South Africa
P O Box 392
Pretoria
Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Luckmore Chimanzi and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a master's degree in Sociology at the University of South Africa. My research is on the construction of masculinity by young boys, especially grade sevens and how this impacts on gender relations. The data to be collected will enrich the field of gender studies. I am therefore kindly asking for permission to carry out the study with grade seven learners at the selected school in Gauteng East District.

Learners who take part in the research will be asked to do two things. First they will be asked to attend two focus group sessions. These focus group discussions will last between 45 minutes and one hour. The discussions will be held after school hours. These discussions will be tape recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysing data. Participants will be asked to sign an agreement to keep the discussions confidential. The focus group discussions will be based on general questions surrounding the learner's beliefs, values, experiences and ideas around masculinity construction by boys in grade seven and how this impacts on gender relations. Secondly they will be asked to keep a diary for a period of one month. In this diary they will be asked to record all issues that they encounter relating to boys talk, actions, play or work both at home and school that show masculinity construction. They will also be asked to express their feelings with regards to these activities.

All their contributions to this study will be kept confidential. Access to the data will be limited only to my supervisor and me. Pseudonyms will be used and all other identifying characteristics changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. However, direct quotes from the discussions or diaries maybe cited in my research report but this will be without any identification of the source of the comment. Participation in this research is free and thus the learners are free to withdraw during the course of the study should they wish to do so.

If you allow me to carry out this research at this school, please sign the consent form attached to this letter. Your school's participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

Luckmore Chimanzi.

Appendix H: Consent form from Gauteng Department of Education



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2014/285

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	1 November 2014
Validity of Research Approval:	10 February to 3 October 2014
Name of Researcher:	Chimanzi L.
Address of Researcher:	2539 Dabula Street
	Wattville
	Benoni
	1501
Telephone Number:	078 469 8330
Email address:	chimanzilc@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Masculinity construction: Grade 7 boys relations with girls at a township primary school in Gauteng East
Number and type of schools:	ONE Primary school
District/s/HO	Gauteng East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Makhado
2013/11/04

1

Making education a societal priority

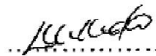
Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Dr David Makhado
Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2013/11/04

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Making education a societal priority

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Appendix I: Agreement form to keep information confidential

Department of Sociology

University of South Africa

P O Box 392

Pretoria

Email: chimanzilc@gmail.com

I _____ voluntarily take part in this research and agree to keep all the information from the group discussions confidential. To protect my group members, I shall not discuss or tell anyone whatever is discussed in these meetings once we are outside the computer laboratory.

Signed _____

Dated _____

Appendix J: UNISA sociology department ethical clearance



UNISA 
university of south africa

Department of Sociology
College of Human Sciences
27 August 2013

Proposed Title: *Masculinity construction: Grade 7 boys' relations with girls at a township primary school in Gauteng East.*

Principle investigator: Mr. Luckmore Chimanzi (Student number: 32095651)

Reviewed and processed as: Class approval (see paragraph 10.7 of the Unisa Guidelines for Ethics Review).

Approval status recommended by reviewers: Approved

The Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Sociology in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa has reviewed the proposal and considers the methodological, technical and ethical aspects of the proposal to be appropriate to the tasks proposed. Approval is hereby granted for the candidate to proceed with the study in strict accordance with the approved proposal and the ethics policy of the University of South Africa.

In addition, the candidate should heed the following guidelines,

- To complete and sign a Supervisor-Student Agreement form, which is a code of conduct guiding the research process,
- To start the research study only after obtaining the necessary Informed Consent,
- To carry out your research according to good research practices and in an ethical manner,
- To maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and maintain safe procedures for the protection of privacy and when storing such data,
- To work in close collaboration with the assigned Supervisor and to ensure the way in which the ethical guidelines as suggested in the reviewed proposal has been implemented in your research,
- To notify the Committee immediately in writing if any change/s is proposed to the study and await approval before proceeding with the proposed change,
- To immediately notify the Committee in writing if any adverse event occurs.

REGARDS,

Dr. Chris Thomas
Chair: Department of Sociology
Tel: 0027 (0)12 429 6301



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Appendix K: Focus group interview guide

Ice- breaker

What do you think of being in grade seven?

Provisional discussion questions

1. What does it mean to be a boy?
2. How do boys behave at school to show that they are boys and not girls?
3. Do you prefer same sex groups or mixed groups?
4. How do you perceive boys who play with girls? (Will bring in the issue of homosexuality and heterosexuality here.)
5. What do you spent most of your time talking about when not in class?
6. Do the boys talk exclude the girls?
7. Do boys pick on girls just because they are girls?
8. During break which games do you play? Where do you play these games?
9. What games are usually played by boys? Do boys like girls in their games?
10. How do the girls feel about the boys' play?
11. How do the girls feel about the talk of boys?
12. How do the girls feel about the use of playing space by the boys?
13. How do you see the punishments given to you by you teachers? Is it the same for boys and girls?

Wrapping up

Is there anything you would like to add about what we have been discussing? Anything about what boys do or their behaviour that shows what it means to be a boy that we have not talked about.

Appendix L: Diary completing guidelines

- You are going to keep a diary for 30 days.
- You should try not to let the diary keeping influence your behaviour.
- Record all important events about being a boy or being a girl as soon as possible after they occur.
- You should pay particular attention to the following:
 - What it means to be a boy.
 - Boys' behaviour that show that they are boys and not girls.
 - How boys play and their attitude towards girls.
 - Boys talk which relates to girls.
 - Issues of homosexuality and heterosexuality.
 - The way boys and girls play.
 - The work that is given to boys and girls that is different.
 - Different forms of punishment given to boys and girls.

Below is an example of diary entries:

Date	Events-What happened	Feelings
30-06-2013	We, the girls were playing our games during break. The boys came and started to kick balls at us. They wanted to use the space themselves. We stopped and went to sit in class talking about how boys are bullies.	I felt angry because the boys always want to show that they are powerful. Boys also bore me because they want to show off.
03-06-2013	Today my friends after school were talking about their girlfriends. I was quiet because I don't have a girlfriend.	I felt like a girl because I don't have a girlfriend, but I did not tell my friends. I was afraid they would laugh at me.