

EXPLORING THE MEANING OF INFORMAL SOCIAL ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION RITUALS
IN PERFORMING MASCULINITY AMONGST MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Alcohol use amongst university students has received a significant amount of attention in different countries across the world (Dempster, 2011; Kobin, 2013; Maphisa & Young, 2018). The purpose of this study is to explore the meaning of informal social alcohol drinking rituals in performing masculinity amongst male university students. This study used a Social Constructionist approach to gender as theoretical framework. Thus, gender is understood as constructed through social interactions, where a person performs their masculinity before an approving audience (Butler, 2009; Sallee, 2011). This research employed a qualitative research approach. Four participants were selected for in-depth interviews which were analysed using Thematic Network Analysis (Attride-Sterling, 2001). Two global themes emerged from the data set. The first global theme focused on “Men and Alcohol” and concerns the facilitative role that alcohol use and tolerance plays in masculine performance, exploring how masculinities compete for the hegemonic position through excessive alcohol use. The second global theme concerns the “Wolf Pack” and focuses on how peer groups engage in informal social drinking rituals and how these rituals function within the group dynamic. Informal social drinking rituals appear to play a significant role in successful display of hegemonic forms of masculinity in this context, and also play a significant role in expanding one’s social network. However, the consequences associated with this social practice places one in the position of having to maintain participation in heavy drinking in order to feel secure, leaving one vulnerable to negative consequences associated with excessive drinking.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Context

1.1 Alcohol Consumption

People drink alcohol for many different reasons, some drink because they enjoy the psychoactive effects, others drink because of peer pressure, and/or some drink because of alcohol use disorder (Origins Behavioural Healthcare, 2018). The consumption of alcoholic beverages amongst men, of different age groups, has been the subject of numerous studies across different settings in different countries (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011; Hinote & Webber, 2012; Fawole, 2009). Several studies have made links between men's alcohol consumption and the pursuit of hegemonic masculinity; for instance the various ways that alcohol is used as forger of friendships, to perform masculinity, and/or how the social drinking context provides space to perform a type of masculinity (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011; Emslie, Hunt, & Lyons, 2013; Hinote & Webber, 2012). Various published articles also provide insight into drinking behaviour amongst male college and university students. These include: drinking motives; drinking patterns; social drinking; and masculine performance (Dempster 2011; Keough, O'Connor, & Stewart, 2018; Maggs, Williams & Lee, 2011; Maphisa & Young, 2018). Due to the alarming prevalence of excessive alcohol consumption amongst university students, internationally and nationwide, this issue has received a significant amount of attention (Keough et al., 2018; Maggs et al., 2011; Maphisa & Young, 2018). This leaves plenty of room for one to explore the possible reasons male students appear to be invested in the excessive use of alcohol. This research focuses on male university students who consume alcohol within a particular context and explores how informal social rituals related to drinking are significant in the achievement of hegemonic masculinity.

Throughout this chapter, the reader is introduced to the excessive use amongst South African young adults. This is followed by presenting various studies conducted on the research topic on an international level. This pertains to social drinking behaviour such as social and solitary drinking (drinking alone), pre-drinks and drinking games, drinking motives, alcohol consumption patterns and gendered difference in consumption patterns. The reader is then introduced to the excessive alcohol use in South African universities, Rhodes University in particular.

1.2 Excessive alcohol consumption in South African young adults

“SA has a particularly harmful pattern of drinking” (Vellios & Van Walbeek, 2018, p. 33). According to the statistical update from World Health Organization (WHO), South Africa is the third biggest drinking nation in Africa, and the 19th biggest drinking nation in the world (Writer, 2016). A comparison of drinking behaviour across South African provinces indicate that one in four women consume alcohol and that women aged 20 – 24 years old (9 % of women who drink) were reported as the age group that most commonly engages in risky alcohol consumption (Shezi, 2017). By contrast, six in ten men consume alcohol, and men aged 25-34 years old (36% of men who drink) are reported as the highest age group engaging in risky alcohol use (Shezi, 2017). Men aged 20 – 24 years old (31% of men who drink) are reported to be the second highest age group engaging in risky alcohol use (Shezi 2017). This suggests that, men are twice as likely to drink alcohol compared to women, and of the people who drink, a significant proportion fall into the 20-24 year age category, which places them at high risk of problematic drinking, especially for men (Shezi, 2017). Individuals of this age group form the majority of the university population (Arnett, 2000). Risky drinking was reported to be more common in urban areas compared to non-urban areas and riskiest drinking in the Northern and Western Cape provinces compared to other provinces with risky alcohol use (Shezi, 2017).

This research focuses on young (male) students. University students are young individuals entering into the world of tertiary student life and are faced with the challenges of entering into a significant transition period, which, along with significant external stressors, could lead to a vulnerability to alcohol use as a means of living up to expected behaviour that is deemed appropriate by social groups (Mphele, Gralewski, & Balogun, 2013). Mphele, Gralewski, and Balogun (2013) conducted a quantitative study on male and female undergraduate college students in Botswana, to assess the relationship between stress and alcohol use. Although a relationship was not found between stress and alcohol use, they found that students who do engage in alcohol use as a means of coping, also resort to dysfunctional coping styles. Therefore, drinking behaviour needs to be understood within the context of drinking patterns, which vary across societies (Peltzer, Davids & Njuho, 2011).

Research on consequences of excessive alcohol consumption in South Africa points to hazardous and harmful drinking that can result in physical disabilities caused by unintentional

accidents, violence, fighting and crime (Chauke, Van der Heerver & Hoque, 2015). Peltzer, Davids and Njuho (2011) conducted a study focusing on alcohol use, drinking patterns and harmful drinking. Harmful drinking refers to alcohol consumption in a manner that leads to adverse events such as physical or psychological harm (Peltzer et al., 2011). Other consequences linked to harmful alcohol use include risky sexual behaviour leading to unwanted pregnancies and/or the contraction of sexually transmitted illnesses (Fawole, 2009; Peltzer et al., 2011). Alcohol consumption is associated with risky sexual behaviour such as multiple partners and unsafe sex (Scott-Sheldon, et al., 2012). Scott-Sheldon et al., (2012) found that alcohol consumption prior to sexual activity was a significant predictor of condom use; people who drank alcohol before having sex were less likely to use a condom. Additionally, Fawole (2009) argues that socio-demographic characteristics such as age, race, sex and alcohol use play an influential role in sexual behaviour. He states that men engage in alcohol consumption for disinhibiting reasons such as a sex facilitator, a symbol of masculinity, a means of relaxation and recreation, socializing and to improve communication skills in social (drinking) settings (Fawole, 2009). He argues further that masculinity is often associated with the ability to have multiple partners, imbibe alcohol and engage in promiscuous behaviour (Fawole, 2009).

Chauke, Van der Heerver and Hoque (2015) conducted a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive study, on a rural secondary South African school, consisting of male and female learners aged 15 – 23 years old. Their study aimed to investigate alcohol use behaviour amongst learners and found that most learners who consume alcohol also engage in binge drinking. Binge drinking refers to the excessive and fast-paced rate at which alcohol is consumed within a short amount of time (Chauke et al., 2015). Chauke et al., (2015) argue that parental figures who consume alcohol play an influential role on the chances of their children engaging in risky drinking. Other findings of this study also suggest that age (older age groups consumed more alcohol), gender (male learners consumed more alcohol) and peer pressure also contribute to alcohol use amongst learners. Links were found between issues such as poor attendance and low academic performance and alcohol use (Chauke et al., 2015). Chauke et al., (2015) recommend that preventative campaigns should be implemented in schools, and also recommend that explorative research be done to explore why learners engage in risky drinking behaviour.

Recent studies aimed at university students in South Africa focus mainly on drinking patterns - highlighting the difference in drinking patterns amongst men and women students -

while some focus on drinking motives (Peltzer et al., 2011; Kyei & Ramagoma, 2013; Young & de Klerk, 2008; Mogotsi, Nel, Basson & Tebele, 2014). However, these studies do not focus on men university students' values and the meanings that they attribute to participation in social activities involving (excessive) alcohol consumption.

1.2.1. Gender differences in Alcohol Consumption

A group of international alcohol researchers worked collaboratively to conduct research consisting of cross-sectional comparative studies focusing on gender comparison within countries and cross-nationally, on drinking patterns and drinking related problems (Wilsnack, Wilsnack & Obot, 2005). These studies focused on eight different developing countries (Wilsnack et al., 2005). Wilsnack et al., (2005) state that men are more likely to consume more alcohol and experience more alcohol related problems. They argue that male drinking behaviour is most likely to be extreme or problematic; that recurrent alcohol intoxication is much more prevalent and more frequent among men than women (Wilsnack et al., 2005). According to Wilsnack et al., (2005), surveys in eight different countries indicate that men are much more likely than women to develop alcohol use disorders. Wilsnack, Wilsnack, Kristjanson, Vogeltanz- Holm and Gmel (2009) also conducted a study consisting of 35 countries. Findings from this second study also support that drinking and harmful drinking were consistently higher in men compared to women, abstinence from alcoholic beverages was more prevalent in women, and that female drinkers were more likely to discontinue alcohol use (Wilsnack et al., 2009). Mphele et al., (2013) also state the significant gender difference in alcohol use patterns amongst college students in Botswana between male and females. Their findings also support most international findings that male students drink more alcohol compared to their female peers (Mphele et al., 2013).

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) also provides a report on drinking patterns in different countries in the African region. The report points to male drinking patterns in most African regions sampled as significantly larger compared to women (WHO, 2011). This report also indicates that men constantly engage in heavy episodic drinking and hazardous drinking; this is not just in African regions, but all regions (WHO, 2011). These reported findings bear the implication that drinking patterns, internationally, consistently reflect a gendered pattern that suggest that men are more likely to suffer from alcohol related consequences as a result of excessive alcohol use (WHO, 2011). These findings are no different to the prevalent gendered drinking patterns within the South African context

(Writer, 2016). This stresses the importance of exploring the significance of alcohol use amongst men; which may provide some insight into the reason for the high prevalence of risky alcohol use and alcohol related problems in men both nationally and internationally (WHO, 2011)

1.2.2. Patterns of Student Social drinking

Drinking habits, and heavy drinking, in general have been reported to increase commonly during weekends, especially for men and early drinkers (Maggs, Williams & Lee, 2011). Maggs et al., (2011) conducted a quantitative study in Arizona to assess drinking patterns amongst first year university students. Men, people who started drinking from a young age and students with stronger fun-social motivations (drink to enjoy the party) were also found to drink more during weekends, compared to other students (Maggs et al., 2011). The same groups were found to also drink during weekdays (Maggs et al., 2011). Students who drink for fun-social motivation and early drinkers are at risk of engaging in heavy drinking during weekdays (Maggs et al., 2011). Lastly, students who are more concerned with experiencing negative physical and behavioural consequences associated with alcohol use, are less likely to drink during the week, when they have responsibilities, however, they engage in heavier drinking during weekends (Maggs et al., 2011). Although the general rule around drinking is that drinking commonly increases during weekends, there appear to be exceptions to this rule; this suggests that social drinking is a practice that appears to be valued by the student population (Maggs et al., 2011).

Keough, O'Connor and Stewart (2018) conducted a quantitative study in a university in Canada, to assess drinking behaviour in young adulthood. The study focused on solitary and social drinking amongst undergraduate students, and concluded that both forms of drinking have the potential to lead to the development of serious problems related to alcohol use such as risky drinking and blackout drinking (Keough et al., 2018). Solitary drinking is described as a developmentally atypical behaviour, which is associated with hazardous patterns of alcohol consumption and pathology, amongst university students (Keough, et al., 2018). Keough et al., (2018) explain two types of social drinking, social drinking at parties and social drinking at bars. They argue that the indirect impacts of social drinking are significantly associated with hazardous alcohol consumption, which results in alcohol related problems (Keough et al., 2018). Social drinking at parties seems to be more hazardous in terms of engaging in risky alcohol use, compared to social drinking at bars, due to the context

of being surrounded by friends and familiar peers with whom individuals might be more comfortable drinking heavily (Keough et al., 2018).

Students who drink alcohol do so because they are motivated by a desire to attain a certain affective outcome (Cox & Klinger, 1988). People make the decision to drink, or not to drink, based on their perception of how alcohol could influence, directly or indirectly, their affective experience resulting from alcohol use (Cox & Klinger, 1988). Four types of drinking motives are grouped either by positive reinforcement or by negative reinforcement (Cooper, as cited in Maphisa & Young, 2018). Enhancement and social motives are characterised by positive reinforcement, while coping and conformity motives are characterised by negative reinforcements (Cooper, Frone, Russell, Mudar, as cited in Maphisa & Young, 2018). Enhancement motives refer to the use of alcohol due to the positive affective experience from the direct psychoactive effect of alcohol (Cooper et al., as cited in Maphisa & Young, 2018). An example of enhancement drinking motives would be an individual drinking alcohol because they enjoy the psychoactive effect of alcohol and as a result; they drink to feel good (Maphisa & Young, 2018). Social motives refer to the use of alcohol due to the positive affective experience from the indirect effect of alcohol use (Cooper et al., as cited in Maphisa & Young 2018). An example of this would be an individual who drinks alcohol to enjoy the party (Maphisa & Young, 2018). Coping motives refer to the use of alcohol to have a positive affective experience by reducing negative affective experience (Cooper et al., as cite in Maphisa & Young, 2018). A person who drinks alcohol for coping reasons enjoys drinking because of the psychoactive effect of alcohol, whereby they feel relaxed or happier after drinking alcohol (Maphisa & Young, 2018). Conformity motives refer to the use of alcohol to have a positive affective experience from the indirect effect of alcohol use (Cooper et al., as cited in Maphisa & Young, 2018). For instance a person drinking for conformity reasons, drinks because they feel that they would fit in or gain approval from their peers (Cooper et al., as cited in Maphisa & Young, 2018). Maphisa and Young (2018) found that male students, in a South African university, Rhodes University, drink mainly for enhancement and conformity (keeping up with peers) reasons. These drinking motives are also what places them at a risk of developing alcohol use disorder (Maphisa & Young, 2018).

Read, Wood, Kahler, Madock and Palfai (2003) state that drinking motives play a significant role in the use of alcohol and the problems related to alcohol use among college students, however they are not the sole factor. Brook, Rubenstone, Zhang, Morojele and

Brook (2011) conducted a quantitative study focusing on South African adolescents, and found that there are other (psychosocial) factors that could contribute to alcohol use – such as environmental stressors and/or issues related to low wellbeing. Although these results pertain to South African adolescents, these findings do support the argument that alcohol use is influenced by external factors (Brook et al., 2011). Read et al., (2003) conducted a cross-sectional and longitudinal study at a mid-public university in the north-eastern United States to research drinking motives amongst students. Read et al., (2003) also support the argument that the social environment is significantly influential, either directly or indirectly, to alcohol consumption among college students. In other words, one's drinking behaviour can be influenced indirectly by their peer's attitudes and behaviour or influenced by the peer environment – for instance, being offered a drink (Read et al., 2003). Social influence factors such drinking for social reasons (drinking to keep up with social activity), are also believed to play a significant role through social reinforcement motives i.e. such as drinking to enhance enjoyment of the social occasion, drinking to facilitate social interaction, or as part of partaking in a shared activity (Read et al., 2003). Martins, Bartholow, Cooper, Von Gunten, and Wood (2018) explored the relationship between drinking motives, such as enhancement and coping, and executive functioning, including decision making processes, to predict alcohol use and alcohol related consequence. This study took place at the University of Missouri, by means of a quantitative method that involved administering a number of tests to participants. Martins et al., (2018) posit that alcohol use and alcohol related consequences can be predicted by assessing how affect driven motivation and cognitive control interact with one another. Martins et al., (2018) state that if a person does not have a pressing reason to regulate drinking behaviour, affect driven motivation to consume alcohol is a strong predictor of drinking. Martins et al., (2018) found that enhancement motives were strongly associated with drinking and heavy drinking, more than coping motives. Their findings indicate that people who drink alcohol for enhancement and coping are more likely to experience alcohol related consequences as a result of the amount of alcohol they consume (Martins et al., 2018). These findings provide one with insight regarding the motivations for the consumption of alcoholic beverages amongst students; this leads one to consider the drinking activities that take place in social drinking context that reinforce drinking motives.

Pre-drinking – which refers to drinking before a social drinking event – and drinking games – which refers to games that promote fast-paced drinking within a context where people adhere to a set of rules related to that game – have been found to be social drinking

activities that students partake in (Fairlie, Maggs & Lanza, 2015). Fairlie et al., (2015) conducted a quantitative study on a multi-ethnic sample of college seniors from The University Life Study; and found that students who engage in pre-drinking or drinking games were more likely to experience alcohol related outcomes. Fairlie et al., (2015) reports that pre-partying was more common compared to drinking games; pre-parties led to more consequences related to extreme drinking compared to drinking games, and that men were more likely to engage in extreme heavy drinking compared to women. Students who engaged in pre-drinks or drinking games were likely to consume 8+/10+ drinks, resulting in poor coordination (stumbling) and / or passing out. Pre-drinking and drinking games were associated with extreme drinking behaviour; extreme heavy drinking was reported to result from engaging in drinking games (Fairlie et al., 2015).

Although the gap between male and female students' drinking patterns is closing (Maphisa & Young, 2018), it appears that male students are highly involved in, and are socially motivated to engage in, social drinking activities that promote excessive drinking (Fairlie et al., 2015; Martins et al., 2018; Read et al., 2003; Keough et al., 2018; Maggs et al., 2011). The literature discussed above refers to different parts of the world. Before focusing on attempting to explore and explain the investment of male students in excessive alcohol use, let us consider literature on the alcohol use in South Africa and South African universities.

1.2.3. Drinking in South African universities

Binge drinking has become a serious problem in South African universities (Kalideen, 2011). In 2011 Rhodes University was identified as the university with the highest level of drinking amongst other universities in South Africa (Kalideen, 2011). It seems that excessive alcohol use has become the norm amongst university students, including Rhodes University students (Kalideen, 2011). Despite the implications of excessive alcohol use, physiologically and/or academically, it appears that students who partake in the drinking culture at university appear to be invested in maintaining or living up to the expectations of that drinking culture (Mogotsi et al., 2014). Kalideen (2011) states that students report that regardless of financial constraints, most students are able to ensure that the drinking culture is upheld. These behaviours seem to persist, despite students' awareness of appropriate and inappropriate use of alcohol and the negative consequences of excessive alcohol use (Mogotsi et al., 2014).

Men's Health blog also reports on the alarming drinking culture of most universities in South Africa (Davis, 2013). This article further explains how Rhodes University and Stellenbosch University were identified as the universities with the highest consumption of alcohol in South Africa. It states that binge drinking is perceived as normative behaviour in university life and points out the value placed on living up to this standard (Davis, 2013). Davis (2013) reflects on his personal experience of the drinking culture when he was in university and states that one's dignity was at stake should one fail to live up to the drinking standard.

A study done in Grahamstown on the alcohol consumption patterns of Rhodes University students indicates that 11% of students do not drink alcohol; the remainder drink at least occasionally and many drink excessively (Young & de Klerk, 2008). There appears to be a high expectancy around alcohol consumption amongst students (Young & de Klerk, 2012). Young and de Klerk (2012) argue that students have high expectations regarding drinking norms. These expectations are believed to influence one's own drinking behaviour (Young & de Klerk, 2012; Pengpid, Peltzer, & van der Heerver, 2013). An institution's drinking culture usually impacts on a student's drinking behaviours and impacts on their expectation of how much alcohol their peers consume (Young & de Klerk, 2012). Young and de Klerk (2012) argue that students usually overrate how much alcohol their peers consume and they believe that their peers do not hold intolerant attitudes towards the excessive use of alcohol. These high expectations of alcohol use amongst Rhodes University students maintain the unchanging Rhodes drinking culture (Young & de Klerk, 2012).

Pengpid, Peltzer, and van der Heerver (2013) conducted a quantitative study to assess the prevalence of alcohol use and associated factors using a sample of male and female South African university undergraduate students. Pengpid et al., (2013) point to a relationship between high drinking norms, weak beliefs related to the importance of limiting alcohol use, and the co-occurrence of other substance use; which could lead to further health complications. The relationship between weak beliefs and exaggerated perception of drinking norms suggests that students who engage in excessive alcohol use might be strongly motivated to do so and appear to value adhering to high drinking norms (Pengpid et al., 2013). Numerous studies reiterate the significant gender difference in relation to alcohol consumption (Kyei & Ramagoma, 2013; Mogotsi et al., 2014; Peltzer et al., 2011; Young & de Klerk, 2008; Young & Mayson, 2010). Male students appear to be at a particular risk of

excessive alcohol consumption compared to women, there also appears to be a relationship between excessive alcohol consumption and poor academic performance (Young & de Klerk, 2008).

Based on the literature discussed above, it appears that male university students, on a national and internal level, are highly invested in the excessive use of alcohol, despite the consequences associated with such excessive use (Failie et al., 2014; Keough et al., 2018; Maggs et al., 2011; Martins et al., 2018; Mogotsi et al., 2014; Read et al., 2003; Maphisa & Young, 2018). Male students at Rhodes University engage in alcohol consumption for enhancement motives and to keep up with their peers (Maphisa & Young, 2018).

This research focuses on exploring the investment of male students in excessive alcohol use and to explore how this is linked to peer group acceptance. The following chapter sets out various theoretical lenses used to explore the investment in excessive alcohol consumption. The following chapter thus focuses on the developmental phase of late adolescence, understands the university space as a liminal one; explores how informal social rituals are used in the social drinking context; and highlights the link between all of these and the performance of hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives

2.1 Alcohol use and Developmental Psychological perspectives

Arnett (2000) describes the period of an individual's life, between the ages of 18 – 25, as the transitional period during which he or she is relatively independent from social roles and normative expectations related to certain adult roles. During this period, the individual is neither adolescent – they have left the dependency of a child/ adolescent – nor are they an adult – they have not yet entered the long-term responsibilities expected during adulthood (Arnett, 2000). This stage is described as the period during which the emerging adult goes through changes and explores a variety of life directions in different domains of their lives. This stage is not universal and absolute; it is influenced by cultural constructs and norms. Research has indicated concern for this age group due to the significant statistical difference compared to other age groups with regards to engaging in risky behaviour such as binge drinking, reckless driving while intoxicated, risky sexual behaviour, engaging in most types of substance use (Arnett, 2000). Arnett (2000) suggests that this could be due to the exploration of one's identity; the desire to experience a wide range of experiences before settling down; sensation seeking due to freedom from parental or authoritative monitoring; and not being constrained by adult roles and long-term commitments and responsibilities. Though this developmental understanding provides a reasonable explanation for engaging in risky behaviour, it does not necessarily touch on how the surrounding environment and one's individual position in society could be linked to participation in risky behaviour, including excessive alcohol consumption.

Van Gennep's concept of 'liminality' describes this particular phase of self-exploration while being in a different space and time, while also assuming a different role in society (Westerverld, 2010). This concept of liminality complements the notion of psychosocial moratorium coined by Erikson (1968), where he argues that each culture and/or society institutionalizes a certain moratorium on identity, mainly for the youth:

“A moratorium is a period of delay granted to somebody who is not ready to meet an obligation or forced on somebody who should give himself time. By psychosocial moratorium, then, we mean a delay of adult commitments, and yet it is not only a delay. It is a period that is characterized by a selective permissiveness on the part of society and of provocative playfulness on the part of youth, and yet it also often leads to deep, if often transitory, commitment on the part of youth, and ends in a more or less ceremonial confirmation of commitment on the part of society.” (Erikson, 1968, p. 157)

Thus, the period during which one spends his/her years in university can be considered as a liminal phase or a period of identity moratorium. Psychosocial moratorium refers to the period during which a young adult engages in role experimentation, through which, he/she may find their niche (Erikson, 1968).

Liminality is not only a period, it is also described as a rite of passage through and during which an individual is between two identities, between their past and future identities, where anything can happen (Westerveld, 2010). Erikson (1968) argues the importance of this period as it plays an important role in the process of identity formation. The liminality phase consists of three stages namely: separation, transition, and incorporation (Westerveld, 2010). The separation phase refers to when the person is removed from their normal social structure and are detached from their social position and previous social identities (Westerveld, 2010). Within the context of this study, one compares this phase to when a parent sends their child to university to further their education.

The transition phase refers to the ambiguous state of being where the individual/group has no identity and stand outside of the normal space and time frame of their society (Westerveld, 2010). The concept of liminality is centred on this phase, because this is the most important period that prepares the individual for their future role in society, while simultaneously being a period where exploration and gaining a deeper understanding of self is believed to take place (Westerveld, 2010). This phase takes place in the ‘neutral zone’ (Westerveld, 2010). The neutral zone is the in-between two worlds state; where the individual is between the two different identities (Westerveld, 2010); between adolescent identity and adult identity that Arnett (2000) refers to as the emerging adult. The neutral zone is understood to be the space where exploration, learning and growing takes place; this suggests there is room for one to make mistakes and to learn from them (Westerveld, 2010). “Societies offer, as individuals require, more or less sanctioned intermediary periods between childhood and adulthood, often characterized by a combination of prolonged immaturity and provoked precocity.” (Erikson, 1968, p. 156). Erikson (1968) supports this further by stating that this particular phase “may be a time for horse stealing and vision quests”, “a time for pranks” or “delinquency” (p. 157). This implies a sense of lenience and understanding from members of society because people who are in this particular phase are somewhat expected to engage in debaucheries; “where everything is unknown and almost anything can happen” (Westerveld, 2010, p. 10).

This transition period is also a time for obtaining new knowledge of the new role one would be expected to play in the outside world – where one assumes their adult role and identity (Westerveld, 2010). In the university context, the young student gains knowledge of their future occupation, a deeper understanding of themselves, of their preferred lifestyle etc. (Arnett, 2000). “It is a period of time where knowledge and doubt, activity and reflection, weakness and strength go hand in hand.” (Westerveld, 2010, p. 9). This is congruent with Arnett’s (2000) description of the emerging adult exploring their identity.

The last phase is the incorporation phase; where the individual re-enters their normal social structure, and fulfils a new but stable social position and identity from that moment onwards (Westerveld, 2010). This would be when the student has (successfully) completed their course and are ready to enter into the working world – to assume their adult role in society. If we consider the transition that takes place in and throughout the period during which a person is in university as a rite of passage, one then needs to also consider the rituals performed during this stage of life and the role they play during the transition period.

2.2 Informal social rituals

Rituals play a very significant role in human experience and in society; they give people assurance, they dispel their fears and they discipline members of social organizations (Homans, as cited in, Schroeder, Risen, Xygalatas & Inzlicht, 2018). There are numerous definitions and explanations for the term ‘ritual’ (Bell, 2009; Curzer, 2012). It has been defined in terms of enthusiasm (to foster a sense of cohesion), and/or as formalism (to foster the repetition of a traditional practice); though it has been mechanically used to separate and conceptualize sociocultural integration, appropriation, and/or transformation (Bell, 2009). In other words, rituals are not only performed they are also used as a means of conforming to and/or of expressing one’s collective identity (Bell, 2009; Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016).

Watson-Jones and Legare (2016) argue that rituals serve four purposes in group dynamics. Firstly, rituals assist with identifying group members; individuals find it easier to relate to people with similar interests and values through the types of rituals they perform and the value attributed to those rituals (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). Through the performance of rituals, a sense of trustworthiness is also established within a group (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). Secondly, rituals demonstrate commitment to in-group values; the more costly the ritual is, the stronger the sense of cohesion is formed (Watson-Jones, 2016). Thirdly, rituals facilitate cooperation with coalitions; people cooperate because they believe

that they are more likely to benefit from their participation (e.g. social support), individuals show their commitment to in-group values through ritual participation and are more likely to trust others through their efforts and participation (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). Lastly, rituals increase group cohesion, in that they allow social groups to remain cohesive while reducing the need for physical and social intimacy and physical proximity over time (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016).

A ritual can be designed by an individual with the intention to achieve a particular outcome, or it can spontaneously and unconsciously emerge from social group dynamics (Curzer, 2012). For example, a ritual of making the last person to join the drinking session drink (and finish) a can of beer within five seconds could initially emerge from a dare which then becomes part of the group's drinking ritual. Berne (1964) explains further that minor details concerning the rituals are subject to minor deviations, so long as the basic form of the entire ritual remains recognizable. Curzer (2012) states that rituals are generally known by members of society, and that only an outline of the ritual is necessary – one need not know the specific details of the ritual, minor deviations are allowed.

As Curzer (2012) states, some rituals are performed to achieve a particular outcome. This research aims to touch on how these rituals are understood to relate to the performance and achievement of masculinity in the university context. Before defining masculinity, it is important to explain the theoretical approach to gender and gender performativity adopted by this research.

2.3 Essentialist vs. Constructionist Understandings of Gender

Although this research leans more towards a social constructionist understanding of gender, it is deemed appropriate to touch on both essentialist and social constructionist notions of gender; this is to outline the dichotomous ways of understanding the concept of gender. DeLamater and Hyde (1998) explain that essentialism refers to the assumption that phenomena, in relation to sexual orientation or gender, are innate characteristics an individual is born with, in the form of genetics, hormones, personality traits, etc. DeLamater and Hyde (1998) emphasise further that the classical essentialist approach holds three important principles; “(a) a belief in underlying true forms or essences; (b) a discontinuity between different forms; and (c) constancy, that is, the absence of change over time.” (p. 13)

Essentialism holds a firm and rigid view of gender; for instance according to these principles, a person would either behave in a masculine manner because he is biologically a man or in a feminine manner because she is biologically a woman (Phillips, 2010). These opposite categories and characteristics can socially affect a person who does not possess/portray characteristics pertaining to their sex group negatively (Phillips, 2010). For instance, aggression is a characteristic attributed to men, thus if a man is not aggressive he is judged to not really be a man (Phillips, 2010). In an essentialist view of gender, irrespective of time, place, social or cultural context, men are believed to be inherently aggressive because they are men; therefore, if they are not aggressive they are not really men (Phillips, 2010).

Phillips (2010) points out that the essentialist approach to gender is problematic because of its attribution of certain characteristics to all people within a particular category. For instance, expecting all women to be (inherently) gentle and expecting all men to be (inherently) tough. The overgeneralization and stereotyping of gendered qualities leads to the development of blindness to characteristics that are outside of the preconception. The second issue Phillips (2010) points out is that those attributed characteristics are used to label particular categories in a naturalistic manner that reifies what might be socially constructed. In other words, characteristics are attributed to the category, as though the category is an entity on its own. The third issue Phillips (2010) points out is the appearance of a collectivity taking political action, in a move that seems to assume a homogenized and unified group. To explain this point, Phillips (2010) refers to protests driven by feminists protesting on behalf of women raising the issues of only certain groups of women being represented and certain types of problems faced being raised as if they represent the universal concerns of a homogenous social group/category. This carries the implication that all women, regardless of social, cultural and/or historical context, were faced the same problem – inadvertently and consequently also creating a sense of overgeneralization. Lastly, Phillips (2010) argues that essentialism is problematic because of how it regulates the collective category through dehumanizing an individual by identifying them by collective characteristics. This occurs when a rigid way of categorizing a group of people fails because of the unique differences between individuals, which leads to denying the person their right to define themselves, while also passing judgement on them. An example of this would be stating a woman is not really a woman because she does not desire to have children or is career driven (Phillips, 2010).

Social constructionists, on the other hand, understand gender as a concept that is external to the individual (Holmes, 2009). In other words, gender is seen as a phenomenon that is external to the individual and is informed by the interactions between people through the use of language and discourse of a particular culture (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; Brickell, 2006). Brickell (2006) explains gender from four approaches/understandings; historicism, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, and materialist feminism.

Historicism is social constructionism applied to history; it stands against essentialism and focuses on the processes that inform the distinction of gender (Brickell, 2006). This process includes continuity, intersections and growth in the organisation of gender; it allows one to explore the shifts in interpretations and organisation of gender (Brickell, 2006). Materialist feminism is an approach that combines Marxism with radical feminism. This approach focuses on the oppression of women by men through a capitalist and patriarchal system (Brickell, 2006). This approach focuses on the inequality between the two gender categories, and that the division between male and female is symbolic and political; and thus conditional. The difference here in gender is that it is shaped by hierarchical social processes.

Ethnomethodology and Symbolic interactionism are grouped together because they reflect the type of gender construction relevant to this research. Ethnomethodology also rejects essentialist notions of an authentic or natural maleness or femaleness (Brickell, 2006). It focuses on and explores how actions and interactions are used to achieve gender (Brickell, 2006). A person is taught how to do gender through social practices; one's body is also regarded as means of performing gender; rather than being naturally male or naturally female (Brickell, 2006). Gender is understood as the product of meaning related to sex difference and the social practices that reinforce these differences (Brickell, 2006). Symbolic interactionism focuses more on how meaning is linked to actions and expressions, how meaning is created, and how actions are translated (into meaning) (Brickell, 2006). Meaning arises from, is established and is expressed through social interactions amongst individuals or groups of individuals (Brickell, 2006). Gender does not exist outside of these interactions, because it is performed by people (Brickell, 2006).

Ethnomethodology and Symbolic interactionism both describe gender as performative through social practices and/or interactions, that bear a significant meaning, which are reinforced when people abide by or invest in them (Brickell, 2006). Context plays a

meaningful role because it provides a platform for interactions and performances, which carry important meanings, to take place (Sallee, 2011; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

2.4 Gender Socialisation, Performativity & Masculinity

Gender is defined as an achievable status constructed through social, psychological and cultural means, by people in order to categorize one another into sex categories (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This definition allows one to understand gender as an attainable property of situated conduct, and shifts one's focus towards the interactional and institutional domains (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This definition also allows one to explore how this construct is experienced through the different ways it is achieved and/or expressed (Sallee, 2011). Gender is performed by people in front of others, who are expected to be familiar with its norms and construction (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Sallee, 2011). Gender is the product of social interactions; it is equally the result of and grounds for various social gatherings and as a means of validating the most fundamental partitions of society (the division between man and woman, or male and female) (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Sallee, 2011).

“We contend that the ‘doing’ of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production. Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’.” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p.126).

This argument suggests that a man expresses his masculine nature by partaking in certain activities (Butler, as cited in Pace, 2015). Gender has been described as a powerful ideological device, when performed adequately can be sustainable and legitimizes institutional arrangements that are based on grouping people into sex categories (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Should an individual fail to perform gender adequately, they, rather than the institution, may be held responsible and are expected to account for their failure (West & Zimmerman, 1987, Sallee, 2011). Gender is a sustainable construct produced and reproduced by members of society; it is powerful enough to influence a person's choices and restrictions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Understanding how gender is produced in particular situations would provide clarity around the dynamics that are at play within social structures and the social processes governing them (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The more suitable means to understanding how gender operates can be accessed by considering theories of gender performance (Sallee, 2011).

While being guided by, and adhering to, existent gender norms, individuals are constantly in a process of defining and redefining gender and gendered practices (Sallee, 2011). West and Zimmerman's (1987) definition of gender captures the manner in which this research recognizes gender. Their (West & Zimmerman, 1987) definition focuses on three points that appear to be relevant to the area of focus of this research. The first point argues that gender is dependent upon context, that different forms of masculinity and femininity are performed in particular situations (Sallee, 2011). The second point states that gender is created collectively by the collaboration of people (Sallee, 2011). The third point focuses on men and women adopting certain ways of performing gender based on societal expectations; although gender is collectively produced, men and women know the expectations associated with each other (Sallee, 2011).

The first part of West & Zimmerman's (1987) definition suggests that gender is performed within particular contexts, in other words, one needs a platform to perform gender. Peer groups provide each other this platform to develop and perform their masculinities (Connell, as cited in Yang, 2014). This platform appears to play a significant role in the regulation of gender performance (Connell, as cited in Yang, 2014). Peer groups also provide a space where individuals hold one another accountable for their gendered behaviour (Sallee, 2011). It is believed that a deeper understanding of this space (situation) would provide one with a deeper understanding of the interactions, the meaning attributed to them, and how they govern gender (Sallee, 2011). One would argue that exploring the context within which gender is performed and the structures around it would provide a more detailed account of how masculinity is performed. Gender performativity can be understood within the context (Sallee, 2011).

The second part of West and Zimmerman's (as cited in Sallee, 2011) definition highlights the collective construction of gender by members of society. On a daily basis, individuals engage in activities and interactions that form part of the construction of masculinity and/ or femininity (Butler, 2009; Holmes, 2009). In other words, individuals' daily decisions to act or not act in certain ways reinforces the collective understanding of gender, while also contributing to it (Holmes, 2009). Therefore, it is not a fixed feature attributed to all men and women (Connell, as cited in Sallee, 2011). Because gender is created through interactions between groups of people, it is not a singular construct (Connell, as cited in Sallee, 2011; West & Zimmerman, 1987; Holmes, 2009). Thus, in the university context, male students establish their own norms associated with their form and

understanding of masculinity within their peer groups (Sallee, 2011). This means that each social (peer) group ascribes to their understanding and definition of masculinity, which is informed by each group member's past experiences, values, race, class, etc (Connell, 2005; Sallee, 2011).

The third part of West and Zimmerman's definition of gender, points to men and women adopting certain ways of performing gender according to societal expectations (Sallee, 2011; Holmes, 2009). It is believed that most men and women know the types of expected behaviours that display conformity (Sallee, 2011; West & Zimmerman, 1987; Howard, 2012). A person is more likely to act in accordance with gendered norms, to avoid finding themselves in a position that leaves them vulnerable to accusations of violating gender norms (Sallee, 2011). Howard (2012) also argues that the risk of transgressions against expected gendered behaviour, is associated with social isolation, harassment/bullying, and that this appears to be more pronounced for males than for females. The impact of transgressions also plays out during early and late adolescence when boys produce and reproduce notions of masculinity in their peer relationships (Howard, 2012; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). As Sallee (2011) states, "accountability may force individuals to choose between espousing gender norms with which they do not necessarily agree and being accepted by their peers." (p.196). One would argue that the consequences associated with failure to conform to expected gender behaviour has the potential to significantly and negatively impact one's experience of their surroundings; or institution.

Gender norms appear to play a significant role in how one is expected to use their body to conform to gendered politics and avoid experiencing consequences (Butler, 2009). Gender norms govern the manner in which people manage and maintain their public appearance; they also govern the manner in which people judge one another (Butler, 2009). Men use their bodies to express their masculinities and use them to compete amongst one another as a means of asserting their dominant masculinity (Pace, 2015).

Numerous researchers have used the theory of socialization to explore, understand and explain the process of learning gendered norms (Sallee, 2011; Pace, 2015; West & Zimmerman, 1987). From birth, boys and girls are socialized to assume the roles associated with their genders (Parsons, as cited in Sallee, 2011). Children are then awarded for adopting behaviour that is deemed socially appropriate by society (Parsons, as cited in Sallee, 2011). A considerable amount of literature suggests that messages on what is deemed appropriate and

inappropriate masculine behaviour (and characteristics) are constantly being taught to boys “throughout their boyhood” (Howard, 2012, p. 99). In other words, “masculine ideologies are learned by male human beings beginning from childhood,” (Uchendu, 2008, p. 15). These ideologies, learned from childhood and throughout lived experience, are what an individual enters an institution/organization with (Sallee, 2011). Sallee (2011) states that when a person enters an organisation, institution or social context, they go in with a set of expectations; their ability to adjust to this organization is largely influenced by the congruence between their values and that of the organization. Novice students learn from their interactions with more experienced students the different values and norms that influence expectations regarding gender (Sallee, 2011). In other words, they look to their seniors and peers for clues on how to behave (Sallee, 2011). It is believed that through, and as a result of, the process of socialization both men and women learn and internalize behaviours that are expected of them (Sallee, 2011).

Gender is understood as a performative and achievable construct governed by, interactions that take place between, members of society (West & Zimmerman, 1987). As stated before gender is understood as an ideological device that informs how one conduct themselves in the presence of other people (Butler, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 1987). From childhood, children are rewarded for displaying idealistic characteristics that align with their expected gendered norms, these norms influence how they experience the institutions they enter into during different phases of their lives (Howard, 2012; Sallee, 2011). Therefore, in relation to the aims of this research, the interaction between ideological understandings of masculinity in the university context is believed to portray an interesting dynamic that Connell describes in relation to hegemonic masculinities (2005).

2.5 Hegemonic Masculinities

Hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic, which is a product of society’s cultural ideals that sustains a particular group’s dominant place in social life (Gomez & Fernando, 2007). This group is usually regarded highly and recognized by members of society through the form of cultural ideals and institutional power (Gomez & Fernando, 2007). Hegemony also involves persuading the majority of members of society through social institutions in a manner that appears to be “normal”; for instance through media (Donaldson, 1993 p. 644).

Masculinity refers to features and practices associated with the male gender and expressions of maleness; these practices serve to validate a man’s sense of masculine self

(Whitehead, 2002 as cited in Uchendu, 2008). The notion of masculinity is influenced by one's culture, race, belief system and/ or religion, environment and historical impacts. This means that masculinities are society – specific (Uchendu, 2008).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to gender power relations that promote the male gender in a dominant and socially powerful position over the female gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept of masculinity permeates through different levels of class and social status, thus referring to masculinities rather than masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The plurality is significant because it takes into account the different socio-political statuses and class level, history, and culture one exists in; the plurality also highlights the existing hierarchy within the different masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state that hegemonic masculinity is a concept that presumes non-hegemonic masculinities, and that this is a process that has been documented across various settings internationally. This means that hegemonic masculinity is a type of masculinity, among other types of masculinities, and that social class grants men their ability to attain a particular type of masculinity within its hierarchy (Groes-Green, 2009). Reformulations of the concept of hegemonic masculinity should not only consider diverse forms of masculinity, but should also be more attentive to the production and construction of masculine norms by women (Brod, as cited in Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Connell (2005) emphasizes the importance of considering gender politics that take place between masculinities. Masculinities interact with one another in interesting ways (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is the 'currently accepted' gender practice regarded as the dominant form of masculinity (Connell, 2005). When looking at gender relations, one can then understand hegemonic masculinity as a contestable position between groups of men, rather than perceiving it as a fixed character type belonging to one a particular group (Connell, 2005). Connell (2000) states how other forms of masculinity are positioned in relation to the hegemonic masculinity. This positioning of other forms of masculinity, in relation to hegemonic masculinity, is mainly concerned with power relations associated with privilege, authority and respect (Connell, 2005; Groes-Green, 2009). There are subordinated masculinities, these are forms of masculinities that are not the same as the masculinity occupying the hegemonic position and do not conform to those norms, and thus are dominated by the hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000). An example of this would be the "gay masculinity" (homosexual men) and how it is dominated by the "straight" masculinity

(heterosexual men) (Connell, 2000, p. 30). There are marginalised masculinities, these are produced through the oppression of a particular group thus denying this group the means of having access to the hegemonic position (Connell, 2000). An example of this is ethnic minority groups, which may even have the same features and characteristics as the hegemonic masculinity, but are unable to occupy that position (Connell, 2000). Lastly, there are complicit masculinities, these are masculinities complicit with hegemonic masculinities but are not necessarily active agents ensuring and overtly protecting patriarchal privilege (Connell, 2005). An example of this would be men who respect women (and other men), are open to compromise and do not ascribe to complete “domination or an uncontested display of authority” (Connell, 2005, p. 258). These different positions are constructed in relation to the construction of hegemonic masculinity; and are all dominated by it (Connell, 2005). The masculine group occupying the hegemonic position is subject to being challenged by other masculine, or even feminine, groups (Connell, 2005). This means that hegemonic masculinity is not static or stagnant; it can be modified by new groups challenging old and existent solutions and create an innovative construct of hegemony (Connell, 2005; Sallee, 2011; Pace, 2015). A limited amount of research focuses on how gender operates within male populations at the university level (Sallee, 2011).

In pursuit of occupying the hegemonic position, hegemonic masculinity is experienced as “exclusive, anxiety-provoking“, brutal and violent, however it also benefits most men who practice it due to its social sustainability and its connection with institutions that reinforce male dominance (Donaldson, 1993, p.645; Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). This construct bears a significant impact on a man’s body; it can appreciate and/or undermine a man’s body, and could also categorise, impose, deform and/or harm his body as well (Donaldson, 1993).

2.6 African Masculinities

Literature discussing masculinity in African countries point to the hierarchical positions related to gender and highlight different masculinities (Uchendu, 2008). This highlights the existence of different types of masculinity (Ratele, 2008). Within the African continent, there are countless constructs of masculinity, each society/country has a particular form of masculinity occupying the hegemonic position (Ratele, 2008; Uchendu, 2008). In order to understand what might be socially accepted as the hegemonic masculinity within South African gender relations, one needs to have an understanding of its historical

influences (Ratele, 2008; Ratele, Shefer & Botha, 2011). Uchendu (2008) states, while referring to Kelly's (2008) study, that Colonialism played a central role in embedding privilege in South Africa, although it was not the only factor that led to unequal social status, economic and political power. Racism and the oppression of black people by white people played a role in gender relations resulting in the assignation of superior and inferior status to particular *raced* masculinities (Uchendu, 2008; Kelly, 2008). The dismantling of the Apartheid system, to some extent, dissolved boundaries separating black and white racial divisions within South African society (Uchendu, 2008). This begs the question of which form of masculinity currently assumes the hegemonic position in South Africa?

A content analysis research conducted on media representations of masculinities and race in South Africa found that the representation of masculinities in television advertisements are significantly different depending on race (Luyt, 2012). Luyt (2012) argues that white men were portrayed as exemplars of hegemonic masculinity such as sexuality (sexual prowess), toughness (emotionally contained and never shows fear), status (successful career and lifestyle), and independence (dominating, competitive, confident). Whereas black men were portrayed as marginalized and were more often portrayed as failing to achieve hegemonic masculinity (Luyt, 2012). These representations reflect the unequal distribution of political, economic and social power within South Africa (Luyt, 2012). This suggests that one's race influences their chances of having access to occupying the masculine hegemonic position within the South African context (Luyt, 2012).

A study on the South African Police Services (SAPS) was conducted in the attempt to investigate hegemonic masculinity within the South African context (Viljoen, 2015). The police service is regarded as a traditionally masculine occupation; whereby police officials respect those in higher ranks and those who portray and achieve the ideals of masculinity (Viljoen, 2015). Viljoen (2015) found that hegemonic masculinity consists of characteristics such as endurance, being tough or toughness (physically and emotionally), resilience, leadership and dominance, decisiveness, aggressive and violent.).

Ratele (2008) contends that hegemonic masculinity in South Africa is a heterosexual, patriarchal, capitalist masculinity. Although in providing this description of South African hegemonic masculinity, he points to the struggles related to South African masculinities as facing difficulties in establishing their role in the post-apartheid South Africa. Ratele (2008) argues that these significant changes in South Africa leave men in confusion because what

was previously accepted as normative is now different, where traditional roles such as the breadwinner, the man of the house/ head of the family and the provider and protector are no longer reserved to men (Ratele, 2008; Viljoen, 2015).

Literature focusing on hegemonic masculinities in South Africa have attempted to unpack how violent practices by men towards other men, women, and children could be linked to hegemonic masculinities (Ratele et al., 2011). Studies aimed at the HIV epidemic in South Africa, point to South African hegemonic masculinity also having to do with sexual prowess, violent and risky behaviours, misogynist attitudes, and poor health-seeking behaviours that function in driving the HIV epidemic (Jewkes and Morrell 2010; Stern & Buikema, 2013; Stern, Clarfelt, & Buikema, 2015). However, in contrast to this, Howard-Payne and Bowman (2016) argue that South African men appear to be embracing meanings of masculinity that are diverging from their traditional alignments with risky health attitudes and behaviours.

These different studies on hegemonic forms of masculinity within South Africa, appear to present similar characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity, while also indicating a shift in constructions of hegemonic masculinity (Jewkes and Morrell 2010; Ratele, 2008; Ratele et al., 2011; Stern & Buikema, 2013; Stern et al., 2015; Viljoen, 2015). These characteristics are important to consider, particularly in the context of alcohol use, as it pertains to the focus of this research.

The excessive use of alcohol, in relation to masculinity, is deeply embedded within South African history (Mager, 2010). Drinking rituals provided the space for sociability, where in this particular context, the use of alcohol was associated with togetherness and a sense of camaraderie (Mager, 2010). Although, alcohol use was not the sole facilitator that brought men to drink together, Mager (2010) also emphasized the influence of masculine competitive sports spectatorship. Soccer and rugby provided a context where excessive (beer) drinking took place and sociability was easily accessible (Mager, 2010). Both sport and alcohol (beer) played significant roles in social drinking amongst men. Where sports provide context for the celebration of masculine performance and beer allows for a sense of camaraderie to be experienced; this is also a space where men validate one another's masculinity (Mager, 2010)._As Bourdieu points out (cited in Mager, 2010) that the investment in aggressive masculine sports is a means of expressing the excitement in observing idealistic masculine traits being demonstrated through such sports. Men validate each other's

masculine performance, and that masculinity is constructed in opposition to femininity (Mager, 2010). Thereby reinforcing hegemonic constructions of masculinity and asserting dominance over women. Mager (2010) explains this as she states, “Masculine camaraderie re-created primary bonds of friendship between men and reinforced men’s exclusive access to power and authority over women” (Mager, 2010, p.8). This indicates the significant role that alcohol use played in reinforcing beliefs associated with masculine hegemony and validation of each other’s masculinity in this context. This relates to the hierarchal power relations that Connell (2005) explains in the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Mager, 2010).

2.7 Masculinities and alcohol consumption

Numerous articles that partake in the discourse regarding men’s alcohol consumption, have found links between excessive alcohol use with the achievement of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity in particular (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011; Emslie et al., 2013; Hinote & Webber, 2012). Fugitt and Ham (2018) argue that there is an overlap between Cooper’s conformity motives and masculinity confirmation. Although these two factors are similar in that they are both an effort to conform to group behaviour and expectation, they are also different in that, with masculine conformity, alcohol is used as a means of performing and confirming their status as a man by specifically performing gender-normed behaviours associated with alcohol (Fugitt & Ham, 2018). Fugitt and Ham (2018) found in their study that men who consumed the most amount of alcohol were men who, in a social context, felt that their masculine status was threatened. Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver (as cited in Fugitt & Ham, 2018) state that it is highly probable that men, in the same peer group would challenge one another’s manhood, and that this challenge will mostly likely result in the demonstration of masculinity – dependent on the context. Fuggit and Ham (2018) argue that this might be one of the reasons that men experience higher rates of alcohol use and alcohol related problems. This indicates that the use of alcohol amongst men plays a significant role in men’s lives. Pajumets (as cited in Kobin, 2013) states that masculine drinking behaviour is informed by masculinity, and that masculinity is informed by cultural norms and ideas in relation to the masculine ideals held within that culture.

There are studies that have indicated the role of alcohol amongst men as a forger and maintainer of friendships (Emslie, Hunt & Lyon, 2013). Within the context of alcohol drinking in groups, the forging and maintenance of friendship is practiced through drinking etiquette – whereby members of the group take turns to buy the next round of alcohol. The

same context also provides room for social support groups to take place – whereby men are able to relieve themselves of the stress and tension by means of verbal and nonverbal expression (Emslie et al., 2013). This friendship and social support makes room for turning a blind eye on non-hegemonic behaviour such as buying “nonmasculine” drinks and by openly discussing their emotions and mental health (Emslie et al., 2013). Emslie et al., (2013) state that verbal sparring between men while drinking together reflects their expression of intimacy through humour. It is evident that alcohol consumption amongst peers plays a meaningful role in people’s interactions and interpretation of those interactions.

Excessive alcohol consumption among men has been described as one of the traits a man should possess in order to portray his hegemonic masculinity (Dempster, 2011). Studies indicate that there is a relationship between men and alcohol consumption related to performing masculinity (Dempster, 2011). Campbell (2000) argues that masculinity is performed publically in settings that renders it subject to scrutiny, yet remains undisputed. It appears that informal social rituals need to be performed in order to secure one’s hegemony (Campbell, 2000).

Several studies reporting on the findings regarding men’s alcohol consumption in relation to the attainment and expression of hegemonic masculinity often only touch on social rituals involved in alcohol consumption such as: conversational cockfighting, verbal sparring, buying the next round, preparation for more drinking (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011; Hinote& Webber, 2012). These briefly mentioned informal social rituals are described in research articles pertaining to how men in New Zealand, Britain, and in Russia perform their hegemonic forms of gendered identity in the context of alcohol consumption (Campbell, 2000; Demspter, 2011; Hinote& Webber, 2012).

One would argue that these are interesting rituals that give life to the setting and that these rituals bear significant meaning in relation to masculinity. These rites are discussed in a descriptive manner throughout the published articles, however the subjective interpretation and experiencing of them have not quite received enough attention (Campbell, 2000; Demspter, 2011; Hinote& Webber, 2012). My research interest focuses mainly on these rituals in order to explore them, what they mean, and how they are interpreted by male students.

2.8 Rationale for study

As stated previously, binge drinking in university has become a serious concern globally. The excessive use of alcohol amongst university students has received attention as it highlights an area that needs intervention. Although this area of research has received attention across various countries, this particular research interest is believed to make a significant contribution to the gap within South African literature pertaining to this topic. The findings of this research would also be used to suggest methods of intervention regarding the drinking culture at Rhodes university, in particular among male students.

As stated in the preceding chapter, most literature on alcohol consumption amongst students in South Africa, focus mainly on the prevalence of excessive alcohol use, drinking motives, the difference in drinking patterns between male and female students (Peltzer et al, 2011; Kyei & Ramagoma, 2013; Young & de Klerk, 2008; Mogotsi et al., 2014), and are often quantitative in nature. This suggests that the values and meaning attributed to excessive alcohol use has not received much attention, especially amongst male university students. Maphisa and Young (2018) found that male, Rhodes University, students drink alcohol for enhancement and conformity reasons. It is arguable that exploring alcohol use amongst male university students, from a more qualitative approach, would provide insight into the value and significance attached to excessive alcohol use. This exploration would also shed some light as to why alcohol consumption appears to be so significant in young men's lives.

Based on the literature discussed above, it is evident that there is a significant gender difference related to excessive alcohol consumption and that it appears to be evident across many countries and nationally. This dynamic accentuates the importance of researching and understanding underlying themes and issues that might be perpetuating the excessive use of alcohol amongst male university students and how this could be linked to masculine performance and conformity to gendered ideals of masculinity. Thus, the focus of this study is concentrated on male students.

It appears that despite knowledge of the negative consequences of excessive alcohol consumption physiologically, psychologically and academically, alcohol appears to play a significant role in male student's lives. Exploring factors that contribute to the importance related to excessive alcohol consumption at social drinking events would provide insight into excessive drinking taking place amongst students. In other words, looking at the meaning and value attached to informal social drinking rituals, would help understand this phenomenon.

This research would allow the researcher to explore the significance attributed to partaking in pre-drinks and/ or playing drinking games; that lead to harmful and extreme drinking behaviour.

Social settings are the platform upon which drinking practices take place. This setting provides space in which students interact with one another; where alcohol is used as a means of conforming to social expectations, drinking norms, and is also used as a way of socializing. This study would explore drinking norms / expectations, how they experience the drinking setting, and meaning attributed to social drinking

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Aim of the study

This study aims to explore the personal significance of informal social drinking rituals in performing masculinity amongst male students, at Rhodes University; in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these rituals are perceived to relate to the achievement and performance of particular forms of masculinity. This research also aims to explore how male students make sense of these rituals, while also exploring the relationship between drinking rituals and the excessive use of alcoholic beverages amongst male students. Findings of this research can potentially be used for consideration in addressing the drinking culture at Rhodes University (Young & de Klerk, 2008).

3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research looks into the meanings that people make out of certain events and experiences (Given, 2016). It allows the researcher, through various methods, to explore and gain a deeper understanding of individuals' reasons for certain actions and thoughts (Given, 2016). Qualitative research grants the researcher the platform to explore "why questions" linked to various phenomena (Given, 2016, p. 2). These "why questions" help tap into "why people do what they do and think what they think" (Given, 2016, p. 2).

The qualitative research approach provides the researcher the opportunity to find out how participants make sense of and define situations from their point of view (Neuman, 2011). This approach allows the researcher to explore how social context and the meaning attached to social action within that context are made sense of by participants (Neuman, 2011). Without social context for an event, social action or conversation, meaning can become distorted; which could lead to altering its social significance (Neuman, 2011). Neuman (2011) states that social context includes time context, spatial context, emotional context and socio-cultural context. These overlapping contexts provide the platform for social processes to take place, where meaning is attributed to interactions in a particular place, at a particular time, for a particular reason (Neuman, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach to research is suitable for an inductive style of research that focuses on individual meaning and appreciates the importance of representing the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2014). Ritchie Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston (2013) argue two processes of knowledge acquisition. The first process is called *Induction*; where knowledge is acquired

through a bottom-up process of identifying patterns in behavior through observation. This research relied on the bottom-up process where data was collected, patterns in the data set were observed, then linked to existing theory. The second process is called *Deduction*; where knowledge is acquired through a top-down process of first having a hypothesis, then using behavior to test it in order to confirm or reject it (Ritchie et al., 2013). The deductive approach does not accommodate an appreciation for participants' personal account of the meaning of behaviour in particular contexts, instead it shifts the researcher's focus towards testing a particular theory/concept. It is partly for this reason that the inductive approach was employed, and because an inductive approach was deemed more appropriate as is more suitable for an exploratory type of research.

The kind of approach, design and method, used in qualitative research is largely influenced by the philosophical perspective from which one approaches their research (Creswell, 2014). This research, influenced by the previously outlined theoretical perspective on gendered identity, takes a social constructionist orientation (Lock & Strong, 2010). This perspective regards meaning and understanding as a significant part/aspect of human experience (Lock & Strong, 2010). Social interactions form the basis for a mutual agreement regarding how "symbolic forms" are/should be made sense of (Lock & Strong, 2010). Meaning and understanding are influenced by socio-cultural dynamics and processes, while also being subject to context, place and time (Lock & Strong, 2010). Thus, there are various ways of understanding certain events and the meanings behind those events, which vary across different situations (Lock & Strong, 2010). As Hibberd (2005) states, what is social in origin, is not fixed and has no inevitability, rather it is subject to change, to be redefined or replaced, by social groups (Hibberd, 2005). This perspective rejects the notion of a true single reality, it rejects essentialist notions, but rather is of the understanding that reality is socially constructed through language (Losantos et al., 2016). Thus in sum,

"Research from a social constructionist perspective is concerned with identifying the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace their implications for human experience and social practice." (Willig, 2008, p 7).

Therefore, this particular research identifies with the social constructionist perspective as this would allow the researcher to explore how male students construct their masculine identity in the context of alcohol consumption (Willig, 2008). It would also allow the researcher to explore how these constructs are used to make sense of the drinking context and

how it relates to their construction of masculinity (Willig, 2008). The implications involved in the social practice of social drinking, and how this experience is made sense of, would be explored through this perspective (Willig, 2008).

There are numerous approaches to qualitative research (Ritchie et al., 2013). The manner in which research is carried through and conducted is dependent upon a number of factors including, the researcher's beliefs related to the nature of the social world (ontology), the nature of knowledge acquisition and knowledge itself (epistemology), the aims and purpose of the study, research participants, and the researcher's environment (Ritchie et al., 2013). This research is influenced by a constructionist understanding of the social world, where reality is constructed through language and that knowledge is constructed through social processes (Losantos et al., 2016). Thus, both the ontological and epistemological orientations of constructionist research methodologies appear to take on a relativist position (Willig, 2008). In that, there is more than one (correct) knowledge, but rather there are knowledges (Willig, 2013). That there are countless and diverse ways of making sense of the world, and various ways of applying this understanding to it (Willig, 2013). This also acknowledges the researcher as a significant feature in the research process because of her constructions of the findings (Willig, 2013).

3.3 Research design

This research adopts an exploratory design. Given (2016) states that the exploratory research design is used when an area of interest has not received much attention, and/or when one seeks to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding within a particular context or setting, with certain types of research participants. This also includes exploring areas of interests that have largely received quantitative research providing quantitative results (Given, 2016). This design is suitable for exploring participants' dominant constructions of gender, particularly in the drinking context (Given, 2016). As mentioned in the previous chapter, most research focusing on university students in South Africa explores the prevalence of excessive drinking patterns/ behaviour. It is believed that this design would provide the researcher with the flexibility required to explore the use of informal social drinking rituals in performing masculinity. This design would also be appropriate for exploring how male students construct and make sense of informal social drinking rituals, masculinity, excessive drinking, and exploring how these are constructed in relation to one

another. Therefore, the research design for this study is informed by both a constructionist paradigm, discussed above, and qualitative exploratory research.

3.4 Sampling

In quantitative research, the use of a large sample size is encouraged because the findings suggest generalizability, whereas this is not the main objective in qualitative research (Marshall, as cited in Slabbert, 2010). In qualitative research, smaller sample sizes are regarded as effective and appropriate; they allow for rich, in-depth, knowledge and data to be acquired by the researcher (Given, 2016). Thus, the inclusion criteria for participating in this study only required a small sample of male student participants who engage in social drinking, are between the ages of 18-25, and are willing to share how they make sense of informal social drinking rituals in relation to masculine performance.

The recruitment process involved placing advertisements for the research on various notice boards on campus; stating the aims of the study, participants' involvement in the research, and the researcher's contact details. Word of mouth was also used to explain the aims of the research, to prospective participants who showed interest in the study. The sampling method used to obtain participants was by means of purposive convenience sampling. Bryman (2012) states that this type of sampling essentially has to do with selecting units (people) that directly reflect on the research question. Purposive sampling is a strategic way of sampling participants, which ensures that the behaviour and/or characteristics relevant to the research can be explored by the researcher (Gray, 2014; Bryman, 2012). Although the findings of this type of sampling cannot be used for generalization (Bryman, 2012), it does allow the researcher to delve deeply into the issue being researched (Given, 2016). However, it is important to state and acknowledge that generalizability is not a goal for qualitative research, particularly not for social constructionist perspective this research employs. Convenience sampling is a method of sampling where people of the target population were within proximity to the researcher, were accessible/available, within a given time (David & Sutton, 2004).

As stated before, this is a qualitative research, therefore only four Rhodes University male students were selected as the participants. All the participants consume alcoholic beverages and are within the ages of 21-24 years. As a result of convenience sampling, all four participants are black African male students. Two participants are postgraduate students and the other two are undergraduate students. Although post-graduate students were not

initially considered for this research, they were later considered as suitable participants whose participation would benefit the interests of this research. Post-graduate students were invited to share their experience, as an undergraduate and as a post-graduate student, of the same context. As stated before, Rhodes University's drinking culture is significantly alarming (Kalideen, 2011); the experiences of both university residence students and off campus (Oppidan) students is believed to contribute interesting findings that could provide insight into the drinking norms. All participants in this study were volunteers who expressed their interest in participating in this study.

3.5 Data collection and procedure

Lawthom and Tindall (2011) argue that the qualitative approach to research can be used to “gain the richest possible account of subjective experience from participants in order to enable the depth and complexities of their experience” to be shared through “one-on-one in-depth-interview” (p. 13). Runswick-Cole (2011) highlights the similarity between interviews and daily verbal discussions that allow an exchange of views between two people or more. Interviews are different in the sense that they are usually recorded conversations that have been organized in a certain way, by the researcher, to focus on a particular theme, which is analyzed and disseminated (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were used as a means of data collection as they shape the interaction between researcher and participant in a way that provides room for the participant to share their views, thoughts, experiences, interpretations and meanings (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Parker (2005) states that interviews provide the researcher an opportunity to investigate the dissociation between individuals and contexts, in order to contextualize personal experiences. In other words, interviews can be used as tools that allow the researcher to explore how participants make sense of their experiences of certain contexts (Parker, 2005).

Therefore, this research is guided by the explorative research design in order to obtain data by means of the use of in-depth interviews. The use of interviews alone was believed to be the best and most suitable approach as it also compliments constructionist perspective (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006).

The research took place at Rhodes University campus, situated in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. Participants were interviewed in an office at the Counselling Centre, which allowed privacy and confidentiality. Participants were provided with consent forms to sign. The informed consent forms contained information about procedures, risks of participating, a

brief description of the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and contact details of the researcher and supervisor. Once the forms were discussed and signed by participants; the recorder was switched on and the interview process began. In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants in an agreed upon location. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain primary data; which allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the topic and thoroughly probe further into responses to certain questions (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

3.5.1 Interview schedule

The first few questions focused on alcohol consumption, such as favorite type of alcoholic beverage, what they enjoy about that particular drink compared to others, and how often they enjoy drinking. These questions were used as a means of easing into the interview process, while also creating a sense of rapport with participants (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Participants were then asked what they enjoy most about drinking alcohol and why they think others consume alcohol. These type of questions were used to explore drinking motives (Maphisa & Young, 2018). Questions related to how drinking alone is experienced, compared to social drinking, were used to explore attitude towards social and/or solitary drinking (Keough et al., 2018). These questions also allowed for social drinking expectations/norms and drinking culture to be explored (Young & de Klerk, 2012). These questions also allowed for attitudes towards intoxication to be explored, while also allowing for further probing into social drinking rules that govern drinking behaviour and informal drinking rituals (Kobin, 2013). The questions that followed were around how participants understand/construct masculinity (Connell, 2005). Participants were also asked about how they experience masculinity and the expectations associated with it (Butler, 2009). Questions following these sets of questions were to explore if and how the drinking context could be linked to masculine performance (Dempster, 2011; Hinote & Webber, 2012).

3.6 Data analysis

The data analysis process was guided by Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within captured data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) describe it as “a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis” (p. 82). It is argued that Thematic Analysis provides the researcher flexibility and is a potentially useful tool that could be used to gather substantial and detailed explanation of complex data, through its theoretical freedom (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This

approach to data analysis allows the researcher to use its guidelines to analyse data without necessarily prescribing to a certain theoretical framework in order to benefit from its use (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was used to examine the ways in which societal expectations and contexts influence how participants talk about events, meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was decided that this analysis method would be suitable to identify and categorise themes of dominant constructs of gender, particularly as it pertains to social drinking. Also, for identifying and categorising how informal social drinking rituals are regarded in light of masculine performance. This approach to analysis granted the researcher the ability to identify similar and different/ contradictory themes shared by the different participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that “a theme captures something important about data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.82). An important feature regarding a theme is that it highlights significant issues related to the overall research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.6.1 Thematic networks

Thematic network analysis is a technique to analysing data that aims to explore the understanding of a particular issue, instead of focusing on the contradictory definitions of an issue (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

“The technique provides practical and effective procedures for conducting an analysis; it enables a methodical systematization of textual data, facilitates the disclosure of each step in the analytic process, aids the organization of an analysis and its presentation, and allows a sensitive, insightful and rich exploration of a text’s overt structures and underlying patterns.” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 386)

It provides the researcher with an analytic tool that allows one to methodically analyse material (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This tool draws on fundamental characteristics that are popular to numerous qualitative analytic approaches. It guides the researcher through the analysis process by stating steps for breaking up text and finding “explicit rationalizations and their implicit signification” (p. 388). Thematic networks are summarized main themes consisting of extracts from text; these themes are arranged in a manner that illustrate how they are linked to one another. Thematic networks complement thematic analysis in that they provide the researcher with guidelines on how to demonstrate, to the reader, how initial codes are linked to themes, and how those themes, patterns, and their interpretations reflect data.

Therefore, thematic networks are a practical manner of arranging thematic analysis of qualitative data. It is a systematic procedure that facilitates the data analysis process (thematic analysis) through the use of its structuring and illustrating salient themes identified and explored (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Attride-Stirling's (2001) six step process of thematic network analysis is designed in a manner that is similar to the six steps in the traditional thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (Slabbert, 2010). Although the thematic analysis process and thematic network analysis process are similar, they do differ significantly in that the *Familiarisation and reading phase*, in traditional thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), is not mentioned or emphasised (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This phase of Thematic Analysis was used by the researcher, after transcription. The reason for this was to become intimately familiar with the content that lies within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher listened to the recordings of the all the interview sessions with participants; this allowed issues of interest to be identified, along with contradictory statements, and similar experiences amongst participants regarding the significance of informal drinking rituals in performing masculinity. The researcher read and re-read the content of the transcribed interviews. She made notes of the impression she had from these interviews. The researcher then read thoroughly through each interview, line by line. During this phase, thoughts and ideas elicited by certain statements were noted by the researcher. This phase also provided the opportunity to actively read the data in an analytical and critical manner (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

3.6.1.1 Stage A: “Reduction or breakdown of text” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 391)

Step 1: Coding the material

This first step focuses on condensing the data into text that is more manageable and comprehensive text segments, through the use of a coding framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The researcher created clearly defined coding framework by relying on theoretical interests linked to the research question, by identifying recurrent or salient issues within the text itself. This was followed by using the coded frameworks on the transcribed text to break it down into manageable text compartments (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Step 2: Identifying themes

This step is about the extraction of salient themes within the coded text segments, in order to identify themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The purpose of this step is to abstract

themes from the coded text segments. This is done by reading the coded text within the classification of its framework; this step allows for the identification of underlying patterns and structures, which inform the different themes. The second purpose of this step is to also ensure that the identified themes are refined. This part involves paying close attention to theoretical detail within the identified themes and doing some interpretive work. This is done by going through selected themes and refining them into themes that concisely and sufficiently represent the broader text segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Step 3: Constructing the networks

This step focuses on drawing from the identified and refined themes as the original source of the thematic network (Attride-Stirling, 2001). During this phase, the researcher arranges themes into clusters, which are grouped together by coherence and similarities. These ultimately formed thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). These clustered themes were the basic themes. Basic themes are themes that were derived from the text, then assembled into groups (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once the Basic themes are established/connected, they are used to form Organising themes. This involves the clustering of the Basic Themes, then identifying and naming the underlying issues with each cluster. In other words, Organising themes are formed by finding connections between Basic themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This process is then followed by drawing from Organising themes to deduce Global Themes. This involves summarizing a main claim or argument pertaining to each of the Organising themes. This where one makes a statement, for each Organising theme, that forms the basis of one's argument (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This is then called the Global Theme. Once all the different types of themes are prepared, a non-hierarchical web-like representation is used to highlight how they are linked (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This is also done to demonstrate how the different themes are linked together to create a broader overarching theme. The final part of this step focuses on verification and refining of the network. This involves a process of going through the text segments related to each Basic Theme to ensure that the larger themes generated from them reflect the data, and to ensure the data supports the all the themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

3.6.1.2 Stage B: “Exploration of text” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.391)

Step 4: Describe and explore the thematic networks

This step leads to another level of abstraction in the analysis process (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Themes from the previous step are used to gain a deeper understanding into the meaning of the texts. The networks generated from step 3 are then used to interpret the original text. This is done by describing the network and exploring the network. This involves describing the contents of each network and support the descriptions with text segments. This is followed by exploring and taking note of underlying patterns that emerge from descriptions as they are being described (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Step 5: Summarize the thematic network

During this step the researcher summarizes the descriptions of the networks and highlights the emerging patterns from the exploration of networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This is a way of presenting to the reader, in a succinct manner, the analytic process (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Step 6: Interpret patterns

The last phase focuses on joining the deductions from summaries of all the networks with relevant theory to explore significant patterns and themes that emerged from the text (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This is done in order to return to the research questions and theoretical interest supporting it, to discuss arguments that are grounded in patterns that arise from the exploration of texts (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

3.7 Process of analysis

I referred to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) and Attride-Stirling’s (2001) guidelines for the analysis process. I first read and re-read through the different interview transcripts to familiarize myself with the data, this was accompanied by making notes of issues that stood out in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I then read through the interview transcripts, one after the other, to identify codes and establish coding frameworks. The coding frameworks were also informed by literature reviewed, as it pertains to the research question (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once the coding frameworks were established, I read through the interview transcripts again to ensure that the codes captured and represented the data set (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The codes were then used to read through the interviews

to identify themes. Fifteen Basic themes were found from the data set. Once the basic themes for all interviews were identified, I then found links between the basic themes, these links were formed based on how they relate to one another. These links were either stated by participants, and/or the links were constructed by myself by drawing on theoretical literature. The links between Basic themes were used to create clusters of broader themes, which represent these clusters. Those broader themes are called Organising themes. I constructed five Organising themes. Observing the relationship between these five organising themes lead to the construction of two Global themes. The first Global theme emerged from observing the relationship between three Organising themes. This Global theme is labelled “Men and Alcohol” (see in Figure 1: Informal Social Drinking Rituals). The second Global theme emerged from observing the relationship between two Organising themes. This theme is labelled “The Wolf Pack” (see in Figure 1: Informal Social Drinking Rituals).

3.8 Ethical considerations

“A researcher who acts with integrity adheres to ethical principle and professional standards that are essential for practicing research in a responsible way. It is a commitment to act in a trustworthy and respectful way, even in the face of adversity.” (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014, p.262).

I conducted myself in a manner that is in line with the ethical principles in social research. These principles include respect for participants, informed consent, voluntary participation, avoiding harm, confidentiality and anonymity, honesty and transparency (du Ploy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Ethics involve conducting oneself in a manner that is “responsible and morally defensible” (Gray, 2014, p. 68). Ethics do not only focus on the appropriate methodological approach, but also include the theoretical assumptions, ontological and epistemological approach of the research (Gray, 2014).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Rhodes University Psychology Department’s Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC). Prior to signing their consent forms, participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the research and their right to withdraw from the research study at any time. They were also informed of their right to maintain their anonymity, and their right to provide or withhold their consent. Throughout the interview process, participants were treated with respect. Participants were informed of their right to withhold their consent from having their interviews transcribed by a third party. During the process of the research study, I took the appropriate means to ensure that

participants' identities were hidden. This was done by ensuring that I was the sole interviewer. Although transcription services were used for the transcription of interviews, the transcriber signed a confidentiality contract ensuring that they would respect the participant's wish to remain anonymous, should identifiable information be inadvertently be revealed during the transcription process. Once the transcription was completed, the recordings were deleted. All copies of the transcripts were deleted after they were provided to me. The use of transcription services was also approved by the RPERC. All data was treated in a respectful manner and with confidentiality. Therefore, the only existing material in relation to participants' identities was solely in my possession, all of which were securely filed and kept locked away; either through use of password protected documents and/or keeping printed documents in a secured location.

Parker (2005) states the importance of ensuring that the result of research should not lead to harming participants in any way; that behaviours that are discussed should be understood in a manner that does not seek to pathologize it. The importance of treating participants with the utmost respect throughout the research process is also highly stressed (Parker, 2005). This also speaks to the differences identified amongst participants' experiences and interpretations that should not be treated as 'errors', but rather regarded and appreciated as the different lived experiences and realities of participants (Parker, 2005). This informed the research design and method of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting on research findings (Parker, 2005). Concerning risk mitigation, I communicated to all participants that in the event that they experience any emotional or mental disturbance due to their involvement in the research I would ensure that I assist with access to mental health care services. Any risk related to participation may involve a participant divulging embarrassing information at their own accord. However, as previously stated, all information would be handled respectfully, and participants would not be forced to discuss what they do not want to. In also ensuring my commitment to protecting participants' identities, transcripts of the interviews would not be released along with the electronic copy of the research report to be made available on the University's electronic research database. The interview transcripts make it possible for participants' identities to be identified by the general public. I believe that this request would be my best attempt at securing the anonymity of participants. I also ensured that the extracts used in the results and discussion chapter did not contain any identifiable information.

With regard to the public reputation of the institution of Rhodes University, I was aware that identifying this particular institution as the research context could potentially impact negatively on the public reputation of the university. To this end, it is important to clarify that the issue of problematic drinking and the culture of drinking at this institution that are discussed in this research are not viewed as inherently part of the particular institution that was the context and setting for this research. Instead, these social phenomena are argued to be relatively typical of a more general drinking culture at universities. Furthermore, prior research has also established that such a drinking culture exists at the institution in question (Maphisa & Young, 2018; Young & de Klerk, 2008; Young & de Klerk, 2012; Young & Mayson, 2010). As such, the identification of the particular university context as one where a drinking culture exists amongst the student body is neither a new assertion, nor one deemed to do particular reputational damage to the university. On the contrary, the qualitative investigation undertaken in this study is arguably useful in providing insights into the meaning of and student investment in this drinking culture that may be put to use in developing interventions to address problem drinking amongst the student population. It was therefore not the intention of this research to name and shame, or to discredit the institution, but rather to focus on a particular social phenomenon that takes place in universities, generally, and at Rhodes University specifically.

3.9 Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research study I used qualitative research methods in a methodical manner during the collection, analysis, and interpretation of textual material derived from conversation (Malterud, 2001). I ensured reflexivity by introspecting on how my own constructions surrounding the research topic might influence the research process, and addressed this by adjusting my attitude in a way that systematically attended to the context of gaining a new understanding and knowledge throughout the entire research process (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, Caricativo, 2017). I do acknowledge that my identity as a young black woman, together with my own understanding of masculine constructions, impacted on the manner in which I approached and conducted this research and the analysis. However, the constructionist perspective appreciates knowledge as actively being constructed by people in social action or social interaction (Willig, 2008). In other words, my position as a black female interviewer could have influenced how participants constructed accounts of their drinking behaviour and masculine performance in respect to how gendered identities were positioned in relation to one another in the interview context and setting. One potential

advantage of this, however, is that participants were called upon to reflect on and account for their taken-for-granted assumptions and practices in relation to social alcohol consumption.

In addition, supervision meetings also served as a reflexive space for me, through his guidance and support; this also allowed issues concern validity to be interrogated and addressed. In spite of my background knowledge and understanding related to the particular topic being studied, I referred to the theoretical guidelines of conducting a research study (Creswell, 2014). Theoretical literature was also referred to throughout the research process in order to support and strengthen foundation and purpose of the study. I also made use of peer debriefing space (writing-circle); whereby the researcher's thesis was reviewed and addressed questions about the study (Creswell, 2014).

3.10 Potential research bias

Literature referred to throughout the research process played a role in informing the manner in which data was analyzed, interpreted, made sense of and reported on. This leaves room for the researcher's objectivity to be influenced by it; which could have resulted in the researcher's understanding to lean towards idealized and/or theorized reporting of the experience of the significance of informal social rituals regarding the masculinity. The social constructionist approach considers the researcher as an active agent in the research process, in that she constructs the discussion (Willig, 2008). This bears the implication that my own constructions pertaining to the research topic influenced how I reported on the findings.

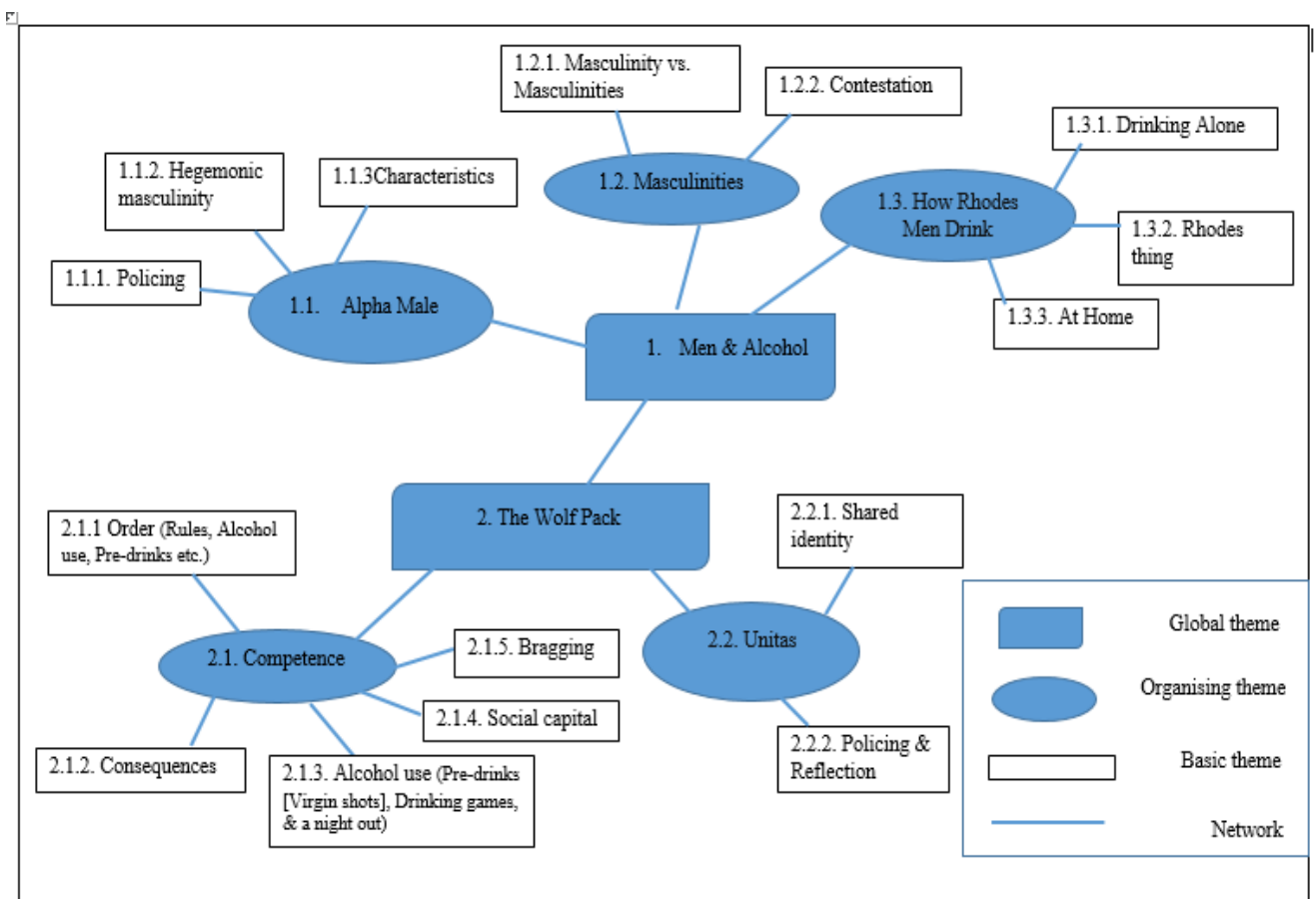
3.11 Limitations

As a female researcher exploring the significance of informal drinking rituals related to alcohol and masculinity, this uncontrollable variable could have influenced the response styles of the male participants. Even though the qualitative approach accommodates a small sample size, this research only reports on the small number of participants' subjective experiences and interpretations. Which could be representative of a limited population of male university students' experiences. This research also focused only on Rhodes University students, its exploration of drinking culture could only be relevant to Rhodes students. Due to the qualitative exploratory research design, findings of this research cannot be used to make generalizations regarding Rhodes drinking culture. Limitations and the means taken to counter potential research bias will be discussed in the Conclusion chapter. This chapter will also speak to the means taken to ensure that the findings of this study are valid.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the qualitative analyses in an attempt to provide insight into how informal social drinking rituals are constructed. Informal social drinking rituals amongst male university students can be understood in terms of the two global themes of “Men and Alcohol” and “The Wolf Pack”. These global themes were identified through the data analysis process (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Attride-Stirling’s (2001) Thematic Network Analysis was used to identify the following themes about to be discussed (see in *Figure 1: Informal Social drinking rituals*). The “Men and Alcohol” global theme will be discussed first, which will then be followed by discussing how it relates to “The Wolf Pack”. These themes are discussed from a broader perspective, which provides the context for other themes as they emerged, in relation to the research question. The figure presented below serves as a visual aid/guide for the reader to observe the network of themes and how they are linked to one another.

Figure 1: Informal Social Drinking Rituals



4.1 Global Theme 1: Men and Alcohol

This global theme emerged from observing the relationship between the organising themes of “The Alpha male”, “Masculinities” and “How Rhodes men drink”. As Pace (2015) states, men use their bodies not only to perform their masculinities, but also to assert their dominance and challenge one another. This global theme is about how men use their bodies, by drinking copious amounts of alcohol, as a means of asserting their masculine dominance.

Extract 1: “... I’m taking tolerance is probably something that is used as a symbol of masculinity like especially among drinkers [...] I know also with women and stuff you, to an extent in some circles they will, women also do this try drink enough type thing but I think it’s more of, ja I think it’s a masculinity thing. I don’t think there are girls that brag about being able to drink with guys [laughs] so it is a masculinity thing. So I guess drinking is quite informed by masculinity.” (*Tinotenda*)

The first statement in this extract suggests alcohol “tolerance” as a demonstration of masculine performance. Alcohol tolerance refers to the decrease in response to the psychoactive effects of alcohol, which is usually found in experienced drinkers (Miller, Hays & Fillmore, 2012). Having a higher tolerance for alcohol means that higher doses need to be consumed in order for the psychoactive effects to take effect (Miller et al., 2012). This suggests bodily use of consuming large quantities of alcoholic beverages as a means of demonstrating masculine capabilities. This supports research articles reporting on links between the excessive use of alcohol and the performance and/or achievement of hegemonic masculinity (Cambell, 2000; Dempster, 2001; Emslie et al., 2013; Hinote & Webber, 2013). This extract appears to serve as an assertion proclaiming that the social practice of drinking alcohol as more of a masculine practice. This is emphasized when he states “to an extent some circles”, this statement gives the impression that (excessive) drinking amongst women is an anomaly, however, studies indicate that the gap between male and female drinking is closing (Kobin, 2013; Maphisa & Young, 2018). The statement “women also do this try drink enough type thing”, also bears the implication that women try to drink but don’t actually engage in proper drinking done by “real men”. Lastly, this extract also points to bragging as more of a masculine trait, which seems to form an important part of the social drinking rituals; which will be discussed later. It appears that the purpose of this quote is to affirm that “drinking is quite informed by masculinity”.

Although it has been established that there is a link between (excessive) alcohol use and masculinity, it is worth exploring how masculinity is constructed. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, masculinity is mostly discussed from a conjoined perspective, in that essentialist notions of gender are intertwined with constructionism (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). The following extract illustrates this:

Extract 2: “its annoying because I’m a man by having the sex organs that I got [laughs] I can perform the same way that any other man can perform uhm, and so to just have, just to be socially accepted is the issue man like you don’t owe anyone anything uhm now this issue of perception is one that uhm I think men are constantly battling with I think you don’t wanna be perceived as weak. So it is annoying that you always have to, again be pretentious. You are not okay with mowing the lawn but you have to be okay with it because you want to be seen as strong uhm and so I do find it annoying. I do think it’s unfair” (*Sizwe*)

The statement “I’m a man by having the sex organs that I got” illustrates an essentialist perspective of masculinity, by pointing out that he is biologically a man, and suggests that this should be enough. The statements “just to be socially accepted” and “now this issue of perception” point to a more constructionist notion where society plays a role in acknowledging and validating one’s masculinity (Butler, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This extract points to a frustration of having to perform and/or prove to society that he is a man. It points to the perceived expectation to use his body in a particular way to perform a particular form of gender (that is a strong man); to use it to perform certain actions that bear significant meaning in certain contexts, situations and interactions (Brickell, 2006). This gender is the product of its meaning as it relates to sex differences and social practices (Brickell, 2006). Different objects grant their user the means to demonstrate competence as gendered beings (Brickell, 2006). In this context and in relation to the research question, alcohol (is an object) used to show one’s achievement of a competent and ideal masculine figure. This appears to cause frustration in the performer because, in spite of the believed inherent/essentialist biological maleness, participants appear to feel the need, resulting from societal expectations, to portray a particular type of man, who is not weak. Weakness is not associated with being masculine (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016; Viljoen, 2015).

Extract 3: “I think its just the nature of men. Like anything that makes you look weak is horrible uhm so you don’t want to be in a position particularly when this person is making a public announcement, like let’s say you guys are talking about the night before, you could punch his teeth off his mouth...” (*Sizwe*)

Weakness, or the association with it, is described as undesirable and/or awful; as though it were alien to “the nature of men”. The statement “it’s just the nature of men” also assumes an essentialist understanding of masculinity, therefore suggesting that weakness is not essentially a part of masculinity. The statement “it’s just the nature of men” not only implies that men are inherently masculine and strong, it also suggests that should another man/person question his manhood he is placed in the position to disprove that by displaying/using his masculinity (Fuggit & Ham, 2018). The quote “when this person is making a public announcement” suggests that the humiliation of publicly being emasculated bears a significant impact and that one is placed in the position to defend himself. *Sizwe* refers to the use of violence, as an example, as a way of reasserting one’s dominance and/or redeeming oneself after being humiliated and challenged (Viljoen, 2015). It appears that the resistance against any form or association with weakness is important because, as *Sizwe* alludes, men are not weak.

Throughout the analysis process, the term “weak” has emerged repeatedly as a punitive function in the policing of how men perform their masculinity.

Extract 4: “as guys we are very prideful so it’s very embarrassing when someone says to you you can’t hold your liquor that’s weak”. (*Sizwe*)

Extract 5: “you constantly trying to improve your intake to make sure that you are-you not a mess that will be the topic of the day tomorrow but ah, it does touch a spot when someone says you weak” (*Sizwe*)

Extracts 4 and 5 demonstrate the use of the term “weak” as a policing agent in the social drinking context. These extracts also hint at the significant role that tolerance plays in how one is assessed and judged by his peers. In that, people with a higher tolerance are able to consume large amounts of alcohol and not show signs of intoxication while those with a lower tolerance would appear intoxicated, while drinking the same amount of alcohol as their peers (Miller et al., 2012). As stated before, having a higher tolerance for alcohol means that higher doses need to be consumed in order for the psychoactive effects to take effect (Miller

et al., 2012). Those who have a lower tolerance appear to be more intoxicated than their peers and may be regarded as unable to keep up with the others, and therefore weak. The inability to hold one's liquor suggests that one has a low tolerance to alcohol.

Extract 6: "tolerance I guess is something you expected to build over time because everyone supposedly drinks a lot we can handle (our) your liquor we'll drink more than people should ordinarily drink because we can handle our liquor and ah yeah it could be a bragging thing at some point like ja I drink a lot"
(*Tinotenda*)

This illustrates the relationship between tolerance and the ability to "hold your liquor". Being able to hold your liquor means being able to maintain your composure while drinking alcohol, it also means having a high tolerance. This extract also highlights an expectation that a person should build their tolerance over time in order to drink more than their peers (or at least keep up). This suggests that if one is able to keep up with others or he performs better than others he would not be seen as weak. Therefore, the use of alcohol appears to serve as a means of demonstrating masculine traits such strength/toughness, endurance and tolerance (Viljoen, 2015).

Expectations inform the policing of masculine performance, which appears to play a powerful and influential role in ensuring that male students adhere to and meet expectations (Butler, 2009; Howard, 2012). Although it plays an influential role, the governance of masculine performance impacts on how men experience their manhood (Howard, 2012). The following extracts illustrate how expectations, in relation to gender performance, are experienced:

Extract 7: "People look down upon you because I won't lie there are very masculine people out there that's the truth and if they perceive you as less of a man they make you feel like you are some burden of some kind you know. Ja it's a reality we live in especially in Africa." (*Kudu*)

Extract 8: "society puts so much pressure on guys to act strong, mom is watching you, big brothers are watching you and so it's tough but I do think, it's how the man feels being, obviously if they not comfortable being masculine then that's not okay" (*Sizwe*)

Extracts 7 and 8 both state the expectation associated with appearing masculine and the ability to demonstrate masculine traits such as being strong. They both acknowledge the pressured expectation of adhering to gendered norms, both allude to facing serious and unpleasant social consequences should one fail to conform. The quote “that’s the truth” after stating “I won’t lie there are very masculine people out there” serves as an acknowledgment of the powerful ideological device that governs gendered performance in society (West & Zimmerman, 1987). *Kudu* emphasizes the reality of experienced pressure in and from society to adhere to expectations. The statement, “obviously if they not comfortable being masculine” is stated after acknowledging the difficulty with always being/appearing strong; this statement appears to be an attempt to dispel any form of weakness that could have been displayed throughout extract 8. The same line from extract 8 is an illustration of rejecting/undoing of (unintentionally) appearing weak, in front of the female researcher. As extracts 7 and 8 demonstrate, society plays a regulatory role in ensuring that gender norms are adhered to and are performed adequately (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The following extract suggests that a person assumes a governing role once they are deemed competent by members of society, to ensure that others perform gender accordingly:

Extract 9: “it’s more of a cycle so [...] when you a senior it’s now your job to make sure that the juniors coming after you also grow up the same way, become tough you know like what I mean” (*Tinotenda*)

The responsibility of assuming a governing role in regulating masculine performance is spoken of in a manner that seems natural. The quote “it’s more of a cycle” is suggestive of the gendered socialization process (Sallee, 2011). The frustration (expressed in extract 2) associated with the burden of having to prove one’s masculine nature, could be dealt with in various ways. I argue that assuming a governing role in society is one of the many ways of addressing that frustration. Only competent members of society play a regulatory role in society, therefore policing is also a way of performing and regulating gendered norms (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This could also be linked to the expectation of building one’s tolerance in order to be an exceptional/competent drinker. The use of alcohol has repeatedly appeared as a means through-which one performs their masculinity (Campbell, 2000; Demspster, 2011; Hinote & Webber, 2012). Alcohol plays a significant role in masculine performance; its use has been described as a symbol of masculinity (Fawole, 2009). Alcohol is a beverage that has psychoactive (affect mental processes) effects on those who consume it, it is symbolised as a sign of masculinity because those who demonstrate an immunity to its

effects, displaying toughness, are regarded as masculine. As *Zac* points out in Extract 10 below, a man who consumes large amounts of alcohol and survives the effects or is immune to the effects of alcohol is regarded as an “alpha” man.

Extract 10: “the guy that drinks the most alcohol, actually he drinks the most alcohol and also able to maintain themselves while drinking alcohol. So it’s you can drink as much alcohol as you want yet you still able to maintain a level of sober element to your character, to your person. Sounds weird but the person who is immune to alcohol, the one who can, you can give them a whole case of beer and they can drink it and they will still have meaningful conversation with the other person or just not be a blabbering mess that’s falling all over the floor” (*Zac*)

This is a description of what an alpha male is. The “Alpha male” was mentioned numerous times by participants. There appears to be a large overlap between the alpha male and the use of alcohol. This appears to be an ideal masculine figure that one aspires to become, through perseverance and building a high tolerance. This extract describes masculine ideals in the drinking context, where one demonstrates toughness, strength and immunity against the effects of a psychoactive substance. In other words, a higher tolerance means using the body through risk taking, competition, prowess, and overcoming the effects of alcohol to demonstrate mastery; which are features of hegemonic constructions of masculinity (Fawole, 2009; Mager, 2010; Viljoen, 2015). Alcohol is used as the means of demonstrating masculine characteristics, assert dominance and challenge one another’s masculinity (Fuggit & Ham, 2018). Thus, alcohol is the means through which men use their bodies to compete for the alpha male status, in this particular context.

4.1.1 The Alpha male

This is an organising theme that consists of the basic themes of “Policing”, “Hegemonic masculinity”, and “Characteristics”.

4.1.1.1 Policing

This basic theme, as discussed under the “Men and Alcohol” global theme, focuses on the role that surveillance plays in masculine performance within the context of alcohol consumption, and in broader terms. The experienced pressure, from societal members, to conform to gender norms plays a significant role in how one experiences their manhood and

how they perform it (Butler, 2009; Howard, 2012). This theme focuses on the impact of governed masculine performance in general and in the context of alcohol consumption. Within the alcohol consumption context, the term “weak” is used punitively in governing masculine drinking. This theme, is quite significant in how one experiences their manhood and seems to be the basis upon which they assess their masculine performance and judge other’s performance (Butler, 2009). “Policing” as a basic theme played a significant role in weaving together the other themes in more apparent ways (as incorporated into the “Men and Alcohol” global theme) and in more subtle ways throughout this section.

The concept of the “Alpha male” has received attention in evolutionary theories in explaining social dominance (Hawley, Little & Card, 2008). The concept emerged repeatedly across the dataset, all participants mentioned this in relation to hegemonic masculinity.

4.1.1.2 Hegemonic masculinity

This is a basic theme that focuses on hegemonic and/or the ideal form of masculinity. There are various understandings of masculinity, which are influenced by culture, race, belief system and environment (Uchendu, 2008). A consistent theme that has emerged repeatedly across the dataset, as it relates to masculinity, is the notion of the “alpha male”.

Extract 11: “An alpha male in terms of like if we having an honest conversation it’s in relation to other human beings. So it’s on this hierarchy where do you fit in and it’s different when you with different types of people and especially with sex and sexuality uhm you’d find that in spaces like in our social spaces even when we chilling with let’s say females right? There’s no female who is going to make decision so like chief you do not get to dictate the terms of our engagement” (*Zac*)

The “Alpha male” is described as a hegemonic social construct of masculinity, as it relates to social interactions; where the person or group of people occupying this social position regard themselves and are recognised by others as assuming a dominant position (Connell, 2000; Gomez & Fernando, 2007). The statement “it’s different when you with different types of people” suggests that different types of social groups construct what is hegemonic, and how this position is occupied, differently (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). *Zac* mentions sex and sexuality playing a role in who has access to this position, he emphasizes this further by stating that a female could not “dictate the terms”, thereby

implying that she does not qualify to occupy the position. This not only speaks to dominance over women, but also suggests the gendered politics between men (Connell, 2005). The “Alpha male” is respected, though his position is persistently challenged by other men who want to occupy it (Connell, 2000; Groes-Green, 2009). This position exists and can be contested for in different contexts:

Extract 12: “And then going to an all-boys school where is generally just males and we all have our different understandings of being a man and I guess we all just kinda at our own competition of being the alpha male” (*Tinotenda*)

Extract 13: “I’m gonna talk again from my high school experience that informs a lot of [...] it’s definitely the highest achiever, the guy who is not a push over not afraid to speak his mind I guess fights for what he believes, I think that for us in high school is where everyone would have ideally wanted to be that’s what there they called the alpha male [laughs]” (*Tinotenda*)

The quote “where everyone would have ideally wanted to be” points to the ideal masculine figure that *Tinotenda*, and his peers, aspire to become. Thus, the alpha male is not only about the dominant position one competes for, but it is also held to a high standard of perfection.

Extract 14: “I wouldn’t say a particular who, but there are particular types of people so, uhm I’ll use the same name or title of the alphas so the idea of the alphas, number one, whoever’s house you at probably has the most decision-making power on that particular pre-drinks or on that particular night and that’s just respect that person made their house available for you to use and enjoy yourselves” (*Zac*)

Extract 14 describes the shifting position of the alpha male status as it relates to place, time and context. The statement “I wouldn’t say a particular who” is a reminder that the alpha male is not necessarily a person, but rather a social position occupied by a person. This extract also hints to the significant role played by the alpha male within the group dynamic, for instance, in this context, the alpha male is the person allowing for pre-drinks (an important social drinking ritual) to take place in his house. The statement “that’s just respect” is spoken out of respect for the role that the alpha male plays and respect for the group dynamics. Group dynamics allow for the alpha status to be (socially) dominant by

acknowledging its role and position, and by acknowledging the person occupying the alpha status.

4.1.1.3 Characteristics

The alpha male portrays idealistic characteristics of strength, physical and/ or emotional toughness, leadership, endurance and possessing physical and social dominance (Viljoen, 2015). These are common characteristic as described by participants. Although the alpha male seems to be the idealistic version of the masculine construct, it might be used as a means of assessing one's own achievement/performance of masculinity. The ideal masculine figure could be approached and/or negotiated in opposing ways, the following extract suggests this:

Extract 15: “if you can use it positively uhm ja I think if you're a strong person and you tougher than everyone else if you use it in a way that is you know, if you gonna protect people and speak out when people can't speak out if that's what you understanding masculinity as that then its fine. But I think it's only a problem when you use it as [...] as a way of pushing everyone else below you so you fighting constantly, you angry, type of thing” (*Tinotenda*)

Tinotenda describes two ways of being masculine and using one's masculinity, it can either be used from a secure and socially responsible approach, or from an immature and inconsiderate approach. This extract refers to how one decides to use the social authority that is associated with being recognized as being socially dominant.

The alpha male is a hegemonic form of the masculine construct, this position is recognized as socially dominant and authoritative (Connell, 2005). The alpha male is not an essentialist feature associated with masculinity, rather it is a socially constructed position acknowledged by other people who conform to gendered norms (Connell, 2000). This also suggests that the position cannot be claimed without an acknowledging audience. This position is earned, respected and always contested for, because of the social power/authority that is granted with the hegemonic position (Connell, 2005). The implications of a competed for position highlights the plurality in masculinity, thus making it masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The following organising theme focuses on this plurality and the complexities that come with it.

4.2.1 Masculinities

This is an organising theme that consists of a number of subthemes relating to “Masculinity vs. Masculinities” and “Contestation”. This organising theme is about variations, approximations and the strain associated with expected gender performance and/or the pressures to conform.

4.1.2.1 Masculinity vs. Masculinities

There is tension that speaks to recognising the difficulties inherent in conforming to one’s understanding of masculinity in the presence of other men with their various understandings of masculinity, and how this is negotiated. This is resonant with Connell’s (2005) emphasis on the importance of gender politics that arise from the interactions between masculinities. This basic theme explores the impact and implications of gender politics. This subtheme emphasizes on the plurality in masculinities and how they are made sense of. Various experiences inform one on how masculinity is/should be performed.

Extract 16: “I think everyone kind of has different interpretations of being a man, they more socially informed” (*Tinotenda*)

Extract 17: “I think the concept itself is fluid in that it’s always changing depending on what society you in or what context” (*Kudu*)

Extract 18: “it’s a very difficult question to answer, tell you what, I’m personally very ignorant to gender I guess, I think the typical things” (*Sizwe*)

Extract 19: “I think masculinity is relevant to the space you in” (*Tinotenda*)

Extract 20: “we all have our own understandings of being a man and I guess we all kinda at our own competition of being the alpha male” (*Tinotenda*)

These extracts acknowledge the complexity in providing a clear definition for the construct of masculinity. It appears important to acknowledge the existence of other masculinities, to be socially/politically correct, however it also seems important to distance oneself from committing to a definitive construct of masculinity. The same distancing is not used when describing the ideal masculine figure, which suggests that it is simpler to define the ideal masculine figure than defining masculinity in broader terms. This suggests an ease that comes with defining an ideal construct of masculinity, that one might aspire to become,

and suggests a sense of difficulty in defining what masculinity actually is. This could be linked to the frustration expressed in extract 2, of having to prove or perform one's masculinity. As mentioned before there are various ways of dealing with the frustration, the distancing of oneself from actually defining masculinity could be one of them. Or this could be indicative of the struggle inherent in the conjoint understanding of masculinity, the struggle arises from the tension between an ideal construct that one is expected to aspire to become, and not needing to define oneself because one is inherently a man irrespective of his actions (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). In either instance, this could be done to ensure that one does not fail at being masculine. Because failure would be regarded as a sign of weakness. Easing the frustration of having to constantly prove one's masculinity could also be one of the reasons that men challenge one another.

4.1.2.2 Contestation

Men constantly challenge each other's masculinity, thus placing each other in the position to perform their masculinity (Fuggit and Ham, 2008).

Extract 21: I: Are there certain things that a man needs to do to prove or perform their masculinity?

P: "Definitely uhm I think as a guy you're constantly in challenge, you challenging every other guy who is around you, you know? Uhm [sigh] and so you constantly do everything like when the opportunity comes to look stronger than everyone else you will grab it." (*Sizwe*)

Extract 22: "even though the challenge hasn't been declared [laughs] you know it's just a mental thing" (*Sizwe*)

There appears to be a committed investment in performing masculine traits and proving that one is masculine, especially when one is challenged to do so. There also appears to be an investment in challenging other men's masculinity even though it is a "mental thing". Challenging one another appears to serve an important function in masculine performance. The following extract strengthens this argument in that:

Extract 23: "there's always contestation even with the weakest of the weak, the reason why keep challenging is that they can say ah I beat this person tonight and yeah man hold the level and it takes one day for you to fall off. You tired after

a long day after two beers you pass out oh! It's over for you, back to the bottom of the turn-up pole, you'll build your reputation back up its okay"
(Zac)

Zac explains that competing serves the purpose of evaluating one's own masculine performance. This extract also explains competing in the social drinking context, where failure and loss are normalised and that one would eventually be able to build back their reputation. This extract normalises the concept of loss and failure, and making it sound inevitable that one will improve their performance. Extract 23 extract describes a realistic situation where a person passes out after having "two beers", although this appears to come from an empathic place, the underlying assumption is that one will definitely ensure that they redeem themselves. The quote "back to the bottom of the turn-up pole" is an indication of how social drinking works and the hierarchal nature of this context. However, competition doesn't only function as a means of assessing one's own masculine performance, in comparison to others, it also seems to play a significant role in pursuit of the "alpha male" status. In that, a person assumes the alpha status for a reason, this position is assumed by either serving a particular function for the group, or it is earned by performing better than the other males in that particular context.

Extract 24: "I think its competition because I mean even from man enough in high school like who is more of a man to drinking games, because who can take more alcohol, to wealth you know? I have more money so I'm supposedly more of the man because, I'm the man and I spent the most money, I drive the nicest car. Like it's all competition. I think competition plays a big place in defining masculinity cause obviously you want to compare it to something like 'I'm the man because' compared to other men you know? 'I'm tougher than the rest' you know?" (Tinotenda)

This dominant position is constantly contested for, therefore its occupation is not fixed, it is constantly changing (Connell, 2005). This extract emphasizes the significance of competition and earning one's claims to the hegemonic position.

4.1.3 How Rhodes men drink

This organising theme emerged from observing the relationship between the basic themes of "Drinking alone", "Rhodes thing", and "At home". This organising theme

concerns/explores gender performativity, socialization and contexts that provide the platform for masculinity to be performed, as it is informed by Rhodes drinking culture.

Social gatherings are the platform for evaluating, validating and/or policing of gender performance (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In the drinking (clubbing/ night life) context, students (peer groups) use this space as a platform to assess one another's competence and hold each other accountable should a person fail to meet normative social expectations (Sallee, 2011). Thus, this platform plays a significant role in the policing of gender performance (Sallee, 2011). Drinking alone is not only constituted as problematic it is also regarded as pointless, because there is no audience to observe one's performance. Without an audience to observe a person perform their masculinity, consuming large amounts of alcohol is regarded as problematic, regardless of one's ability to survive the psychoactive and physiological effects of alcohol.

4.1.3.1 Drinking alone

Extract 25: "I don't think there's much value in drinking alone." (*Zac*)

Extract 26: "it would be really weird if you were drunk alone" (*Sizwe*)

Drinking alone is a basic theme that focuses on the participants' disinterest in and disparagement of drinking alcohol alone. Drinking alone is described by participants as unpleasant, pointless and problematic. Drinking is associated with social activity, where people drink together, have conversations, listen and dance to music. Whereas drinking alone is regarded as a waste of time, useless and "absolutely boring" (*Sizwe*).

Extract 27: "if you are drunk alone, you really are suffering, okay, you either really depressed or you really love alcohol to the extent that ja you can't deal without it" (*Kudu*)

Extract 27 supports Keogh et al., (2017) links between severe alcohol problems including risky drinking and blackout drinking with solitary drinking. Getting drunk alone is regarded as an indication of alcohol dependence (Keogh et al., 2017), which could be regarded as a weakness and, thus be rejected as it does not fit with the idealist characteristics associated with masculinity. Drinking a small quantity of alcohol alone is however not problematic in that alcohol is enjoyed as a beverage. Getting drunk while drinking alone is regarded as problematic and indicating alcohol dependency. The statement "you either really

depressed or you really love alcohol” equates getting drunk alone to suffering from a psychological disorder; Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Psychological problems like MDD could also be viewed as an inability to “deal” and therefore a sign of weakness, and for that reason un-masculine. This suggests that experiencing the psychoactive effects associated with excessive alcohol use, in the presence of other people in a similar state is the norm and appears to serve a particular purpose. In other words, the act of drinking copious amounts of alcohol in the presence of others engaging in the same activity, is a display of one’s achievement of masculinity and a display of their competence. While doing so alone is not, because there is no audience to observe and evaluate performance.

4.1.3.2 Rhodes thing

This basic theme concerns the high expectation of having a high tolerance towards alcohol and the drinking culture at Rhodes University (Young & de Klerk, 2012). The following extracts refer to the pressure in under-grad to conform to drinking norms and standards.

Extract 28: P: “I think you know being in Grahamstown for long I think my tolerance level has increased incredibly” (Sizwe)

Extract 29: I: How much are you expected to be able to drink?

P: “I think because of Rhodes and how I’ve known the general social setting [...] a lot ja as much as you can. I mean the general culture even as far back as O’week people drink to get drunk type thing and so [...] lets drink a lot and get drunk eventually but I think that’s the general social expectation more than anything” (Tinotenda)

Extract 30: P: “the amount of alcohol you’re expected to be able to drink is ridiculous” (Zac)

In extract 28, *Sizwe* mentions being in Grahamstown for a long period of time and adds to this by stating that his “tolerance level has increased incredibly”, this implies that drinking alcohol is a normal social practice in Grahamstown (Rhodes University), where one’s tolerance to alcohol (inevitably) increases. This extract normalizes social drinking and excessive alcohol use. The statement “because of Rhodes”, in extract 29, suggests that

Rhodes University does indeed have a strong drinking culture. The statements, “as much as you can”, “people drink to get drunk” and “lets drink a lot and get drunk eventually”, highlight the investment in drinking excessively in order to keep up with peers and maintain the drinking culture. Extract 30 points to the awareness of the high expectation to drink excessively, which is an expectation that appears to be adhered to. The following extract is an illustration of a participant’s thoughts around Rhodes drinking culture:

Extract 31: “I didn’t anticipate, I didn’t, in high school we heard that, I mean this is from a white boy whose brother was here, that they get pissed (drunk) and all that stuff and so ah [sigh] I didn’t think I would be drinking as much as I am drinking here in my entire life, I didn’t think I would be drinking here in my life so I’m grateful for the experience” (*Sizwe*)

This is an interesting extract, in that *Sizwe* initially states his amazement when he heard about the drinking culture, and now that he is part of the Rhodes drinking culture he is “grateful for the experience”. This appreciation for the experience and participation in upholding the drinking culture highlights the value associated with the ability to drink copious amounts of alcohol. However, it seems that with the Rhodes drinking culture, being able to drink excessively is not important, but rather being able to drink excessively and maintain composure is important and highly valued:

Extract 32: “if you going to drink ten litres of alcohol and just be a blabbering mess you just as useless as someone that’s drank two and is a blabbering mess”. (*Zac*)

Extract 33: ”its weird, I can feel that what I’m saying is weird but it’s the truth. When you drink, regardless of the quantity, there’s certain expectations placed on you right. And once the amount of alcohol you drink affects you to a point where you can no longer act within that certain specific behaviour, then you will be labelled weak, you then would go to the bottom of the turn-up pole because what are you doing? Why are you embarrassing us? You fall with the masses, what is this?” (*Zac*).

The quote, “I can feel what I’m saying is weird but it’s the truth” is an acknowledgement or hints at the unrealistic expectation of expecting a person to drink large quantities of alcohol and maintain a level-headedness/composure. Extract 33 illustrates an underlying importance attributed to being an exceptional drinker. The quote “You fall with

the masses” implies that what is normal, which is being intoxicated after drinking a lot of alcohol, is regarded as a sign of weakness and as embarrassing to observe. Extract 33 highlights the importance of being an exceptional drinker at Rhodes University.

4.1.3.4 At home

This basic theme is called “At home” because the drinking is experienced differently where participants are from. Alcohol bears a different meaning in different contexts (Mager, 2010). This basic theme is about the importance of context and it captures the difference between drinking in Grahamstown and drinking at home. Drinking at home is experienced differently compared to drinking in Grahamstown for instance, the “brown bottle stigma” at home, does not exist in Grahamstown. The stigma is against the consumption of brown bottled beer, irrespective of the brand, because the assumption is that poor people can only afford to buy brown bottled beer. Clubbing is also experienced differently at home:

Extract 34: “there’s definitely more rules because at home it’s how are you dressed? Uhm are you wearing cologne? Are you coming in a fancy car? Are you going I mean is there a bouncer escorting you? Are you guys going to VIP? Just how do you guys present yourself. Do you look old enough? Are you clean? Are you clean cut and are you, like it’s a lot. Here in Grahamstown I could wear slippers and go to Prime you know what I mean? And so there are a lot of rules at home and because there so many rules, it impacts the way you drink as well cause now you constantly feel like the spots that on you” (*Sizwe*)

Extract 35: “alcohol is a status symbol especially in public spaces like clubs uhm [...] ja I know that it’s a thing in Joburg especially premium clubs I think alcohol is a symbol and buying a whole lot of alcohol says a lot about you as a man and your social status and I mean for some men that is to attract women and stuff because it’s a masculine thing. People compete about who has the most money.” (*Tinotenda*)

Drinking “at home” is very different to drinking in Grahamstown. The surveillance at home is done differently compared to Grahamstown. A person is judged by the type and quality of alcohol they drink, one’s appearance and wealth. Thus, this context recognizes a particular kind of masculinity that seems to be different to the construct in Grahamstown (Rhodes University). Another significant social ritual that forms part of the drinking culture

at Rhodes includes pre-drinks. Pre-drinks are drinking before a social drinking event (Fairlie et al., 2015). Pre-drinks do not form part of the night life experience at home, as they would be purposeless. Displaying wealth includes buying expensive alcohol at the club, surviving the effects of alcohol are also important though they are not as emphasized as displaying one's wealth. Therefore, pre-drinks are unnecessary in performing masculinity in the context at home.

Extract 36: P: Is pre-drinks a thing at home?

I: "not at all, it is not a thing in Jozi. In fact I looked crazy when I proposed it to them like I do, like they gonna get, you see it's that thing of gunning to flash your money, people must see how many bottles there's on the table because if you do pre-drinks then there is no need to buy as many bottles as you'd buy at the club but because the competition in the club is how many bottles are on the table you'll go forgo pre-drinks and have everything at the club" (Sizwe)

This extract reiterates the concept that different places, times and/or contexts provide the platform for different constructs of gender to be constituted and performed differently (Butler, 2009). Moreover, that the significance attributed to social informal rituals differ across contexts. Drinking "at home" still has social significance but seems to be more about the display of conspicuous consumption signifying status (excess of wealth) as opposed to display of drinking prowess (excess of alcohol consumption) signifying status. "At home" young adult men are having to compete for alpha status with older, better resourced men (and will therefore lose). Whereas in the Rhodes context, they compete with peers on a different playing field, with different rules. This could also be linked to the concept of the liminality phase, where students are in the in-between phase of life, where they might not have the financial independence to compete at home, but are able to compete with their peers in the neutral zone (Westerveld, 2010).

In summarizing the "Men and Alcohol" global theme, the excessive use of alcohol is regarded as a masculine practice, one that allows for idealistic masculine traits to be demonstrated before an audience (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011). Context plays an important role in shaping how hegemonic masculinity is constructed (Butler, 2009; Connell, 2005; Sallee, 2011). The Rhodes drinking culture and context provides the platform for the "Alpha male" to demonstrate his drinking competence. Context is important as it provides

the platform for a particular form of hegemonic masculinity to be performed. This context also provides the space for the liminality phase referred to earlier, during this in-between phase, where male students are provided the platform to perform/achieve hegemonic ideals of masculinity, as it pertains to the drinking context. This hegemonic position is constantly competed for by drinking excessively and increasing one's tolerance to alcohol. Tolerance, in this context, is regarded as a symbol of masculinity. A person with a low tolerance is regarded as weak; weakness is a trait that is foreign to masculinity, thus suggesting that those with a low tolerance are not masculine. Thus, one is assessed by not only the quantity of alcohol consumed, but also maintaining composure after excessive alcohol use. Therefore, the performance of masculinity is facilitated through alcohol consumption.

4.2 Global Theme 2: The Wolf Pack

Extract 37: I: You drink as much as you do so that you appear as the alpha male?

P: "within the context yes. And it's not necessarily via for sole alpha male it's that you can keep up with the pack if I'm going to use the wolf as the metaphor. It's the idea that you need to be able to drink as much, if not more as everyone else, be on the same level sort of, same drinking level." (Zac)

Extract 38: P: "in terms of ways because via association I have very strong alpha males around me so people challenging my masculinity is almost impossible because they know of the pack, they know that I am not an entity on my own but I am part of a bigger broader group and there are alphas in that group. If now we must compete, we will compete and one of the two of us will lose." (Zac).

"The Wolf Pack" is the second global theme, which emerged from observing the relationship between the organising themes of "Competence" and "Unitas". This global theme was named "The Wolf Pack" because participants stated this analogy both explicitly (extracts 37 & 38) and implicitly (the alpha male concept) in relation to how masculinity and alcohol use are constructed. Based on this, I believe that it is the perfect analogy for describing the group dynamics that take place and the informal social drinking rituals that ensure that the group functions/performs the way it does. Wolves are generally known for living and hunting in packs (Muro, Escobedo, Spector & Coppinger, 2011). One could relate the drinking context to wolves hunting in the wild. In that, the social drinking context provides the platform for masculine traits to be demonstrated and to use one's competence as

a means of “hunting”. The following extract is suggestive of what can be regarded as the “prey”, within the drinking context:

Extract 39: “...it’s as if it’s an untold secret that the girls know and the guys know that I’m here for them and we go home...” (*Sizwe*)

One would argue that this extract presents females as the “prey”. The statement “it’s as if it’s an untold secret” hints to how women are constructed, by men and themselves, within this particular context. This quote is also suggestive of the normalized understanding/expectation associated with sexuality, in that both males and females are aware of an underlying assumption related to potential sexual interests. That one hunts and the other is hunted, in relation to this extract, the women are hunted. Therefore, *Sizwe*’s statement, “the girls know and the guys know that I’m here for them and we go home”, bears the implication that women are constructed as “prey”, for sexual pleasure, in the social drinking context. Thus, the “Wolf pack” is about social drinking amongst a group of friends, who engage in social drinking activities as a means of demonstrating ideal masculine characteristics and as a means of hunting. The “wolf pack” is a self-regulating system that ensures that group members are competent drinkers in relation to Rhodes drinking culture. All members of this group regard themselves as Alpha males who are competent drinkers and competent in performing masculinity. This can be related to the ideal masculine characteristics ascribed to the alpha male; being tough (emotionally and physically) and strong, sexual prowess, have a high tolerance (competence), mastery, and a survivor (Jewkes & Morrell, 2011; Stern & Buikema, 2013; Viljoen, 2015).

4.2.1 Competence

“Competence” refers to a drinker’s ability to drink large amounts of alcohol and maintain a level of self-composure, while also adhering to drinking rules. “Competence” is an organising theme that consists of the basic themes of “Order”, “Consequences”, “Alcohol use”, “Social capital” and “Bragging”. These sub-themes are all interlinked and form part of the self-regulating system that ensures that the alpha group maintains its reputation, of being exceptional drinkers and alpha males. An important part of social drinking is about rules and adhering to these rules. Rules shape expectations, and if one fails to adhere to the rules and expectations, they face the consequences.

4.2.1.1 Order

“Order” is a basic theme that focuses on the function of various drinking rules. Rules bring a sense of order to the informal social drinking rituals/context where the loss of inhibition is encouraged. Drinking rules are unwritten and generally unspoken, they ensure that drinkers engage in “responsible” drinking rituals and ensure that drinkers are not at risk of embarrassing themselves and their friends. In relation to the wolf pack metaphor, wolves hunt in a certain way, adhering to particular rules of hunting (Mirjalili, Mirjalili & Lewis, 2014; Muro et al., 2011). In the same way, drinking rules are important in ensuring that things are done correctly. The unwritten rules mainly focus on conducting oneself when drinking with others:

Extract 40: “when you drink you shouldn’t completely lose your sense of control” (*Kudu*)

Extract 41: “don’t chase” (don’t be greedy with the alcohol), “don’t be mess”, everyone contributes” (*Zac*)

Extract 42: “don’t pass out”, “drink cleanly” (don’t vomit everywhere) (*Sizwe*)

Extract 43: “you share what you drink”, “handle yourself and handle your liquor”, “don’t embarrass yourself” (*Tinotenda*)

Extracts 40 – 43 mainly concern being in control, decorum (maintaining a particular ideal of “manly” conduct), drinking etiquette, and pacing oneself. These rules govern drinking behaviour, they may differ across context, place and/or time, although they appear to share a core fundamental rule. That is drink responsibly (enough), which means do not drink beyond your limit, or to the point where you “lose your sense of control”. Although Rhodes drinking culture encourages excessive alcohol use, these rules play an important role in ensuring that there is a level of order to the social drinking context. Participants seem to value these social drinking rules.

Extract 44: I: Are these rules and expectations important to you?

P: “The rules and expectations are important to me because they both, they both regulate behaviour but they also protect us strangely enough. Uhm because I don’t think these rules are, they not arbitrary. Like some of them may seem silly like I’ll give you an example, so like the idea of a person that has alpha status or whatever uhm that person can let’s say hold a large

quantity of liquor so at the end of the night who would you trust to drive us home? I'm not gonna trust the person who is a blabbering mess to drive me home. We might have all drank the same amount but I know there is a person here that can hold their liquor. I am risking my life yes but I am taking less of a risk allowing that person to take me home than just some person who is a blabbering mess..." (Zac)

The statement "they also protect us strangely enough" and "they not arbitrary" indicate the value placed on these rules. The quote "We might have all drank the same amount but I know there is a person here that can hold their liquor" could be linked to the concept of alpha male. Where the alpha male is a person with a high alcohol tolerance and thus plays an important role and responsibility in ensuring the "safety" of his wolf pack. Therefore an unspoken rule of the wolf pack taking care of one another and the alpha male protecting his pack (Muro et al., 2011). These rules do not only operate in the broader social drinking context, they also govern drinking behaviour in the drinking games and pre-drinks context. There are many other rules that were not listed directly by participants, they were however identified during the analysis phase. For instance, there are various drinking games (games that promote fast paced drinking) which are all governed by sets of rules that ensure that all members engage in excessive social drinking. There are rules that govern drinking behaviour during pre-drinks, for example, the rule ensuring that members do not miss the pre-drinks has serious consequences should one fail to adhere to it:

Extract 45: "you try hard not to do that (miss pre-drinks) because you get there and everyone is here (intoxicated) and they expect you to play catch-up, now the danger of catch-up is that they were drinking at a steady pace to get them there and now you expected to down this bottle or drink so quick that it skyrockets you ja. So you do complete your assignments before it, otherwise you will be expected because everyone is drunk and everyone wants to see you drunk so everyone wants to throw shots in your mouth and drink all of these things you there like Jesus [laughs] quickly gonna die" (Sizwe)

Although this extract focuses more on the punishment of missing a pre-drinks session, one can assume that there is an unspoken rule that one must never miss pre-drinks and if they do they must take their punishment (like a man). This extract also points to academic activities being structured around drinking, in order to participate in social drinking. The

quote “you complete you assignments before it” is indicative of how pre-drinks/drinking seems to be prioritized and that the consequences of missing a drinking session are taken quite seriously.

4.2.1.2 Consequences

The “Consequences” basic theme is about consequences one faces should they fail to meet social drinking norms and rules. Should a person fail to adhere to social drinking rules and fail to meet expectations/ drinking norms they will be called “weak” and their behaviour will be called out, should the person continue failing to abide by drinking rules he would eventually be excluded from further drinking experiences, by his friends.

Extract 46: “the only thing that we can do is socially exclude you. So the highest sanction would be literally not to hang with you, you not invited to drink ups, finding any means necessary not to be in the same spaces with you because you don’t know how to conduct yourself.” (*Zac*)

Extract 47: “you’ll be stigmatised in a way and people won’t wanna be around you because you tend to get too drunk and stuff and to some people that can really be a problem. To me right if I’m drinking with someone even though they my friend they always take it over board and they always get themselves into trouble hayi I would like slowly move out of that like ja that person’s life activities”. (*Kudu*).

In extract 46, the quote “the highest sanction” indicates that social drinking is taken quite seriously and that those who fail to abide by social drinking rules would be excluded from the group. The social ostracism, as “the highest sanction”, bears the implication that the social security within the group might be of a transient nature, in that, so long as one abides by the rules their sense of belonging and status would be secure. Thus, association is also taken very seriously, because it impacts on how one constructs their social identity in relation to their social group. Extract 45 and 46 represent how all participants do not want to be associated with “weakness”. *Kudu* emphasizes this as he states:

Extract 48: “like I mean if you associate yourself with imbeciles, like people will think that you too are one” (*Kudu*)

In other words, if you associate yourself with a person who is a poor drinker, therefore is perceived as weak, you too will be perceived in the same light, by association. This means that even if you are a competent drinker, if you are associated with a person who constantly fails to conform to drinking norms, as *Kudu* states in extract 47, “that can really be a problem” especially to one’s reputation. Participants take pride in their drinking competence and ability to occupy the alpha position, thus a threat to their reputation is removed from the group. However, exclusion seems to be the last resort, this suggests that a group member’s misconduct can be overlooked, depending on the degree of the transgression. In order for the group to overlook the misconduct some form of reparation needs to be done by the person who embarrassed the group.

Extract 49: “we’ve actually gotten to a point where in my experience of Rhodes University at some stage we’d fine people at the party. So if you do something untoward we like uhm if you want to come back you have to come with a bottle” (*Zac*)

This extract illustrates how (some) reparations are done, as informed by Rhodes drinking culture. *Zac* also points to how alcohol is used, in this instance, as a form of atonement. He emphasized that the bottle needs to be “hard liquor”, this could be because “hard liquor” is usually more expensive compared to other types of alcohol and has higher contents of pure alcohol. This hints to the one of the different ways alcohol is used in maintaining friendships (Emslie et al., 2013)

4.2.1.4 Alcohol use

Extract 50: “[laughs] well people who drink call it a social lubricant and I think it makes sense in the sense that [laughs] when people drink they just generally become less withheld, reserved. People are a lot more outgoing when they drinking so I think that’s probably the main thing for most people” (*Tinotenda*)

The “Alcohol use” basic theme encompasses social drinking in different forms from drinking at pre-drinks, drinking games, posties, and a night out. The “Alcohol use” basic theme concerns the role of alcohol use in the informal social drinking rituals. All participants constructed alcohol as a “social lubricant”; this does not only suggest a social drinking motive (Cox & Klinger, 1988), but also hints to benefiting from the psychoactive effects on others. In relating this to the “wolf pack” and the analogy of wolves hunting, alcohol plays a

role in that its effects on those who consume it “become less withheld” and therefore easier to hunt. This points to the various ways that alcohol use is made sense of, especially in relation to context. This theme focuses on how alcohol use is constructed and ritualized in the context of pre-drinks (which include virgin shots), drinking games, and a night out.

4.2.1.4.1. Pre-drinks

On the surface pre-drinks are just having drinks before a night out (Fairlie et al., 2015), however, they seem to play a very important role in preparing for the night-out. Pre-drinks are a very important ritual that plays various significant roles in informal social drinking rituals. As Curzer (2012) states, some rituals are performed to achieve a particular outcome. This section focuses on the different functions that the pre-drinks ritual serves.

Extract 51: “we start with pre-drinks so we’ll go to Pick-n-Pay before they close. Thank God they close at nine. Grab some pre-drinks, so your spirits, because that usually gets you there (intoxicated) quicker right, uhm and also just to cut costs in the club, because clubs have airport fares in that so at the bottle store it’s cheaper and it gets you there quick and so pre-drinks happen we drink we drink we drink and we shower-up, dress-up, and hit the club.” (*Sizwe*)

The pre-drinks ritual is a way of saving money, this is important for a student who is financially dependent on parents. Pre-drinks take place after agreeing to go out, where members first buy the alcohol then enjoy the alcoholic beverages at a person’s place. During pre-drinks people drink together, they share the alcohol, listen and dance to music, and hold conversations with one another. This is done to pass the time in order to go the club at the appropriate time; going to the club too early is shunned, because it is an unspoken rule. The statements “gets you there quicker” and “we drink we drink we drink” not only point to an enhancement drinking motive (Cox & Klinger, 1988), but also to the preparatory function of pre-drinks where members arrive at the club in a tipsy or intoxicated state. This preparatory function could also be understood in relation to the “wolf pack” metaphor, in that pre-drinks happen at a friend’s place (away from the clubs), similar to wolves living in a den (in a safe space) that is separate from the hunting grounds (Muro et al., 2011). The following extract represents how participants feel about going to the club sober:

Extract 52: “I can’t go out and be sober uhm ja [...] like having drunk people around me is not very comfortable because everyone [...] is in a different world [laughs] for a lack of a better word. Yeah nah being sober? I actually envy people that can go out and not drink and just sit down and drink soda and have a good time. I just think the way the night time is set up doesn’t really allow being sober so [laughs] ja” (*Tinotenda*)

This particular extract illustrates an interesting way that alcohol use is constructed, in that alcohol is needed to tolerate the public drinking space. The quote “I actually envy people that can go out and not drink” is suggestive of how intolerable *Tinotenda* experiences the drinking space when he is sober. This presents a paradox in that one would need to consume alcohol in order to tolerate and enjoy the social drinking setting, when one drinks they also become part of the “different world” where everyone, including oneself, is drunk. Therefore, alcohol makes the drinking context more enjoyable, thus drinking for both enhancement and social drinking motives (Read et al., 2003; Maphisa & Young, 2018). The following extract highlights a different meaning associated with pre-drinks:

Extract 53: “Pre-drinks that’s where we establish everything that is monetary because from pre-drinks that’s where we buy the alcohol and it’s a collective effort if you are repetitively unable to contribute we have given you the chances man can’t conform to social norms bye. Its over for you. Even where you establish the even the romantic aspect to it, because that’s where you invite the people that you would like to go to the club with and you actually get to speak to them without the noise and that’s where you can actually see that this guy is useless in terms of pulling or is he well is he okay is he able to do the things?” (*Zac*)

Although this extract points to the “monetary” purpose of the pre-drinks ritual, it also hints to “collective effort” as an in-group value that members take seriously and hints to the disciplinary role it plays within the group, based on this shared value. Pre-drinks are also constructed as a space where prospective members are assessed and evaluated (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). *Zac* explained further that “pulling” refers to a person’s social skills; getting along with others outside of the group, and especially with making a good impression on potential sexual interests for oneself or for members of the pack. This is important for the group because, having members who are good at “pulling” is valued as it indicates status and

desirability, to people who outside of the group. however, this also reinforces adversarial sexual beliefs underpinning the construction of sexuality linked to particular ideals of hegemonic masculinity in this context, i.e. desirability and sexual prowess (Fawole, 2009). The statement “you actually get to speak to them without the noise” suggests that pre-drinks is also constituted as a private and more intimate space. Thus, pre-drinks rituals are an intimate part of the drinking ritual as it fosters a strong sense of coalition and cohesion, it makes it easy to identify potential group members, establish a sense of trustworthiness, and increases group cohesion (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). The following extracts speak to the intimacy that pre-drinks provide:

Extract 54: “at least we spend time together as friends is important so it’s that pre-party that pre-VIP with your friends”. (Sizwe)

Extract 55: it’s not for everyone” (Zac)

Extract 56: “the party before the party it’s, because it’s our party it’s our type of engagement. We dictate the music, the alcohol, all of that type of stuff whereas when you get to the club you can’t tell the DJ what to play, he’ll play what he plays whether you enjoy it or not is dependent on other factors, whereas at the pre-drinks we will enjoy it because we are in control of the factors” (Zac).

Extracts 54- 56 illustrate how participants construct pre-drinks, as a private party where the environment is favourable and controllable. Pre-drinks are not only a context, but also a ritual that is regarded as a very important practice/ritual that prepares one for the night out and acts as a forger and maintainer of friendships (Emslie *et al.*, 2013; Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016). Another ritual that plays a significant role in the drinking rituals involve taking virgin shots. A virgin shot refers to drinking a shot from a bottle that has just been unsealed. This is done to start-off the night and is for group members only, a person who has recently been sanctioned does not partake in the virgin shot. A stranger brought to pre-drinks by a member, without consulting members prior to the occasion, would also not receive the virgin shot. This is indicative of the level of intimacy shared during pre-drinks and virgin shots. This also indicates the significance of the pre-drinks ritual and could be part of the main reason that members avoid missing a pre-drinks (as mentioned in extract 45). This could be linked to accepting the punishment for missing pre-drinks is not only a display of commitment to group values (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016), and performing one’s

masculinity in front of members, by not showing weakness and accepting the challenge (Fuggit & Ham, 2018). Thus, the rules governing the pre-drinks ritual serves, firstly to protect the integrity of the group gathering, secondly to ensure a sense of uniformity.

4.2.1.4.2. *Drinking games*

Aside from alcohol being used differently in the same context (pre-drinks) it is also used as a means of socializing with people outside of the group of friends:

Extract 57: “...Drinking games uhm so we’ve got a whole-we’ve got broad drinking games, we’ve got card drinking games and we’ve got just drinking games that we know uhm [...] we play these-drinking games you play when you wanna meet other people so say for instance we going to OB’s house and OB has her friends from class and your normal-your everyday friends come and you just want us to vibe or whatever so we play drinking games and so it gets us to know each other quick. Killing two birds with one stone so now we getting to know each other and we getting drunk so uhm [...] I think it-it makes, it’s good in the sense that it creates friendships-other friendships you know what I mean? Now you connecting with other people and ah and we go out and we drink and we have fun so it’s really killing two birds with one stone on the social aspect.” (*Sizwe*)

Extract 57 informs one of the two ways alcohol is constructed in the social drinking context. Firstly, it lowers people’s inhibitions, thus making it easier to interact with one another and to “have fun”. Secondly, it allows people to get to know each other and socialize while expanding one’s social network. This is important for popularity and social status, which increases one’s social capital; which will be discussed later on. Drinking games also appear to be a ritual practiced as a means of creating a fun atmosphere while also creating a space for people to become familiar with one another (Curzer, 2012). The following extract also illustrates how drinking games are made sense of:

Extract 58: “debauchery, that’s what you get up to because the thing about drinking games, ninety percent of the time the alcohol is just a catalyst to a certain type of behaviour so with drinking games more than anything you trying to get rid of people being shy and that’s where you’d say alcohol is a social lubricant because the more they drink the looser they get or the more comfortable they

get. That's when people start speaking freely people can actually start speaking to other people or people can dance people can do whatever. People can make out because that's something else that happens at drinking games and it's, for me, or what I identify from drinking games is it's not about the alcohol, it's about the social effects of alcohol." (Zac)

This extract explains the role that alcohol plays in drinking games, that it "is just a catalyst to a certain type of behaviour" and "debauchery". This explains the function of drinking games in a different light, not just focusing on the socializing aspect, but rather focusing on the loosened inhibitions where engaging in "a certain type of behaviour" is the norm. The quote "people can make out because that's something else that happens at drinking games" demonstrates how this particular context normalises and encourages people to pursue and be pursued by their sexual interests. In relation to the "wolf pack" and wolves hunting analogy, members of the wolf pack demonstrate their competence (of drinking and displaying sexual prowess) by engaging in fast paced drinking and also using this context to hunt for sexual interests who's inhibitions are loosened.

4.2.1.4.3 Night out

The night out happens in a systematic manner, it usually follows a certain structure that is common in participants' description of a typical night out:

Extract 59: "typical night out? Uhm pre-drinks. You come by everyone's around you start drinking. You go to the club you party and ja you drink more there obviously and then you just come back home." (Kudu)

Kudu's description of a typical night out represents how other participants described a night out. This suggests a conformity to Rhodes drinking culture; that this is how drinking is done at Rhodes. None of the participants mentioned going to the club without first doing a pre-drinks session/ritual. This also points to the preparatory role during the pre-drinks ritual; that one should arrive at the club at a certain time, not too early, and in the right state, not sober. The structure concerning the night out also hints to the night out itself as a ritualized practice; this particular structure, which is consistent throughout the entire data-set, can be related to Curzer's (2012) explanation of informal rituals. The night out ritual is designed and practiced in accordance with expectations and rules informed by the drinking culture and follows a certain pattern (pre-drinks, drinking games, and then the night out). Regardless of

who hosts the pre-drinks, or which drinking games are played, the night out ritual maintains a certain sequence of activities. This means that although there may be minor differences in how participants describe a night out, the ritual remains recognized as a night out drinking ritual (Curzer, 2012). The structure of the night out ritual involves different unspoken rules, there also appears to be unspoken rules in the club:

Extract 60: “usually two people I think when you’ve decided we usually get just two people to carry the drinks” (*Tinothember*)

Although this extract does not directly state a rule, the term “usually” bears the implication that this is how buying drinks in the club works. This suggests an unspoken rule pertaining to buying drinks in the club that not everyone in the group goes to the bar to buy their own drink, but that “usually” two people go to the bar and buys on behalf of their friends. The reason for this is that the rest of the group secures the groups seats. Although not explicitly stated, this appears to be ritual that emerged from group dynamics that take place in the club (Curzer, 2012). The cooperation within the group appears to be what contributes significantly to making the night out successful, much like how cooperation amongst wolves in a pack while hunting increases their chances of catching prey (Muro et al., 2011). It appears that adhering to the social drinking rules is important in order to display competence, in the drinking context. Therefore, it is not enough to be an exceptional drinker, but it is important to also adhere to drinking rules to demonstrate competence.

4.2.1.5 Social capital

The “Social capital” basic theme focuses on the dynamics within a group of friends, for instance, how members persuade one another to join the drinking ritual. One’s participation in informal social drinking rituals, as a means of masculine performance, plays an important role in one’s social capital. Social capital basically concerns the relationship networks in one’s life that allow them to gain access to (intangible) means in order to satisfy certain needs; this also allows social groups to function effectively in society (Field, 2008). Extract 61 demonstrates how participants make sense of group dynamics in relation to the concept of social capital:

Extract 61: “In terms of who dictates when things happen and how things happen is just a contestation of personalities uhm it’s who’s able to use whatever social capital they have to sort of sway the vote in their favour. Uhm you, it gets quite interesting because you can even see things like there are people who are influencers so if one person in the group doesn’t want to go out they know who to speak to, to make that person want to go out. So there’re certain buttons that they know how to push, what to say, when and how to speak to particular types of people, cause some people wanna feel special so you like ah I won’t have a good time without you please come through like you know?” (*Zac*)

This extract illustrates how one can use their social capital to convince a group member to join the drinking session. The statement “there are people who are influencers” points to a resource that can be used when one wants his friends to join the drinking session, because this resource knows the “certain buttons that they know how to push”. This is important because drinking alone is constituted as very problematic in Rhodes drinking culture and is constructed as a form of weakness. In this particular context, social capital operates on two levels; it can benefit a person on an individual level and can serve to benefit a group on a broader level. Extract 53 mentions pulling, this also linked to social capital in expanding one’s resources as a means of gaining access to broader options in terms of potential sexual interests. In the context of hegemony, one who associates himself with male students with similar constructions of masculinity, would have resources available to him. These resources include being associated with a group of alpha males who share the same values and are able and willing to, for instance, drive people home after a night out, or even validate one’s alpha male status. This not only benefits the individual, it also benefits the group, in that the group is perceived as achieving ideal constructions of hegemonic masculinity. This also includes the context of pre-drinks, where social bonds in friendships are strengthened, thus securing one’s source of social support on an individual level, and being associated with the alpha male group on a broader level (Field, 2008). Therefore, the participation in informal social drinking rituals does contribute to the development of one’s social capital.

4.2.1.6 Bragging

The “Bragging” basic theme focuses on the use of bragging, about one’s alcohol tolerance, as a means of asserting their dominance and/or redeeming oneself after being called “weak”. In relation to the “wolf pack”, the alpha male has a certain way of asserting his dominance within the pack; bragging can be understood as one of the ways of asserting dominance (Mirjalili et al., 2014). Participants regard bragging as a symbol of masculinity and as a badge of honour:

Extract 62: I: Is there an expectation around being able to brag about how much you are able to drink?

P: “oh definitely, it’s a badge of honour. People that think they can drink a lot brag about it all day, every-day, drunk, (or) sober. It’s as if you had two beers yesterday and you were out of it, trust me someone is gonna tell you I had twelve you had two you so weak wa wa wa, and at least I can feel that I’m being redeemed because I am constantly hearing it so like ha no, its pure bragging. I also brag don’t wanna lie cause I can hold my own in relation with other people but there are always levels to this thing that are people that are just tanks, don’t know how its humanly possible, but they can consume a lot and we fall underneath in rank” (*Zac*)

Extract 63: “I don’t think there are girls that brag about being able to drink with the guys [laughs] so it is a masculinity thing” (*Tinotenda*)

The quote, in extract 62, “it’s a badge of honour” suggests that bragging is associated with a great achievement, that only those who “can drink a lot” have the bragging rights. This is indicative of the value placed on excessive alcohol use, and that those who drink the most deserve the “badge of honour”. The quote, “I had twelve you had two you so weak” illustrates how one asserts their dominance, through bragging, while also assuming a policing role by using the punitive term “weak” as a means of ridiculing his friend for his “poor” masculine performance. This is done because Rhodes drinking culture encourages excessive alcohol use and building one’s tolerance, also in this context, hegemonic masculinity is constructed as a man with a high tolerance. Thus, being intoxicated after drinking only two beers is regarded as “weak”, and therefore un-masculine. Extract 62 also demonstrates a more subtle form of bragging where *Zac* states “I can hold my own in relation with other people”,

this served to inform me, a woman researcher, that he is not weak, but rather those who drink more than he can are “tanks”, therefore not human. Extract 63 illustrates how *Tinotenda* makes sense of bragging; that bragging is a masculine practice and the thought of women bragging as amusing. Therefore, bragging is a “badge of honour”, reserved for men, for displaying competence in social drinking and in masculine performance. However, bragging is not only a means of asserting dominance, it also plays a validating role with regards to achieving particular ideals of hegemonic masculinity. For instance, bragging as “a badge of honour” indirectly acknowledges one’s claims to what is regarded as a great performance, and bragging in front of one’s peers serves as validation for masculine performance. Therefore, bragging before an audience is a form of validation of masculine performance, in that the audience also plays a validating role. In relation to the concept of rituals, bragging could be considered as a ritual that one practices after successfully performing their masculinity, where one asserts their dominance within their peer group and his claims of success are validated by his peers.

“Competence” therefore mainly concerns one’s adherence to social drinking rules. Rules are important as they ensure order in a context where the loss of inhibitions is encouraged. The loss of inhibitions allow people to have fun with one another, create friendships, tolerate and enjoy the drinking context, and to display masculine characteristics such as “pulling” and competence, especially, through obeying drinking rules. These rules are taken quite seriously, should a person fail to adhere to them they would face undesirable consequences. The highest sanction is exclusion, where individuals are excluded from the group’s drinking activities; this is mainly because they don’t want to be associated with a person who conducts themselves in a manner that is inappropriate or humiliating for the group. This is an unpleasant punishment to experience, because alcohol use is associated with social drinking, having fun with people, and as a facilitator in strengthening friendships. Therefore, the highest sanction would result in a loss of friendships. Thus, consequences play an important role in reprimanding one for failing to adhere to drinking rules and norms. Drinking rules are respected because they also ensure that informal social drinking rituals such as pre-drinks, drinking games and the night out ritual, are performed successfully. These informal social drinking rituals play a significant role in performing masculinity in the drinking context. Performing these rituals adequately, with adherence to drinking rules and expectations, is regarded as successfully performing one’s masculinity and successfully displaying competence. Competence is linked to one’s social capital; being associated with competent

male drinkers allows one to gain access to resources that could potentially benefit one on various levels.

4.2.2. Unitas

This organising theme emerged from observing the relationship between the basic themes of “Shared identity” and “Policing and Reflection”. Unitas focuses on the sense of unity and uniformity shared amongst group members. The term “Unitas” is derived from the Latin word *unus* which means “one” and *i;tas* meaning “ness”, and thus Unitas refers to oneness/sameness/unity (*WordSense*, 2018).

4.2.2.1 Shared identity

Extract 64: “...the people I associate with, we still have shared identity around drinking culture to be honest. So when we in the club, we’ll be at the club together. When we arrive, we arrive together. When we sit, we sit together. When we drink, we drink a common thing or common things together.” (*Zac*)

Extract 65: “...drinking together in a common space there is protection in numbers and that comes from the fact that in those settings that alcohol is consumed, in the clubs there is a tendency towards crimes and in those spaces if you are alone you are more likely to be a victim where as if you are in a group, there’s certainly security obviously it might be a snag but there’s security in being with people that have your back.” (*Zac*).

Extract 64 provides a perfect illustration of unity within the group, where they appear to function as an organism. This is similar to the coherence and cohesion within a wolf pack, where wolves work together and are well co-ordinated when hunting (Muro et al., 2011). The statement “we still have shared identity around drinking culture” suggests a sense of belonging to the group of friends, who share the same values. The quote “the people I associate with” and the consistent use of the pronoun, “we”, is indicative of the shared investment and pride in the group’s identity. Which suggests that he takes pride in the people he is associated with, in relation to the drinking culture. The statement, in extract 65, “there’s security in being with people that have your back” hints to the sense of camaraderie experienced in his group as opposed to being alone and vulnerable. This can be related to the wolf pack metaphor, in that wolves hunt and forage through the wild in packs, aside from

making it easier to take down larger prey, this is also important for safety from other wolf packs (Mirjalili et al., 2014).

Extract 66: “Cîroc boys, so Cîroc is a brand of vodka, it’s very expensive and they don’t have individualised entities in the social space they are just known as the Cîroc boys so if you referring to seeing one of them out, you refer to seeing a Cîroc boy not a sir john or peter or whatever” (Zac)

This extract demonstrates how a group with a shared identity is described from an out-group perspective. This also demonstrates how a group member is not recognised as an individual, in the drinking context, but he is identified as a member of the group he associates himself with. This means that a member’s competence and masculine performance reflects impacts on the group’s reputation. Therefore if one person fails to adhere to drinking norms and embarrasses himself, he embarrasses the entire group. Association appears to play an important role in the drinking context, any form of weakness is shunned, and thus all participants shared their strong disinterest in being associated with a man who constantly fails to meet drinking standards.

Extract 67: I: What do you think when you see a man fail to meet expectations and rules?

P: “I’m just like oh shame, oh shame uhm and I think just simply by the person I am or I’ve got arrogant friends, I’ve got friends that will laugh at the person like ah shucks what a weak bastard you know what I mean? And I like, oh shame in my heart I really feel for you because like one you don’t have good friends and you just lying there, it’s tough for you see you and so [...] oh shame again because everyone is watching you and they can see you and you talk of the moment you know? Uhm I do feel, I pity the person, but I mean obviously there is nothing I can do because you’ve got your own group of friends ah, ja.” (*Sizwe*)

In this extracts, one can sense the sympathy felt by *Sizwe* when he sees a person who failed to survive the effects of alcohol, however there also appears to be a disavowing of any responsibility to assist this person. The statement “you don’t have good friends” suggests that only his friends should be the ones helping him. Which can also be related to the wolf pack metaphor, in that wolves only take care of members from their own pack (Muro et al., 2011). This extracts demonstrates a clear boundary that he does not wish to overstep; as though he is

avoiding the breach of an unspoken rule. Thus *Sizwe* is not obligated to assist this person because he does not belong to his group; aside from having no obligation to assist this person, this extract also illustrates the indifference to associating himself with this display of weakness. The disparaging and laughing at the person's failure is a way of rejecting and ridiculing the sign of weakness. This belittling of the other is also a display of their alpha male dominance. Lastly this extract points to the surveillance that is taking place in this context where "everyone is watching you and they can see you and you the talk of the moment". One can assume that being the topic of discussion is undesirable, because people are talking about how intoxicated this person is, which may be embarrassing. Because failure to survive the effects is associated with weakness. It seems that, as part of society's regulatory function, in this particular context, members do not assist such a person, instead they ridicule and laugh at them, which could be seen as a form of punishment (West & Zimmerman, 1987). As though indirectly reprimanding them for not adhering to drinking rules and gendered drinking norms (Kobin, 2013). However, policing of gender performance is not only done in a public context.

4.2.2.2 Policing and Reflection

The reason the Wolf Pack is referred to as a self-regulating system is because of the policing and regulation, within itself, of expected gender performance in the social drinking context. The following extracts demonstrate how group members keep one another in check:

Extract 68: P: "we always have these reflections impromptu sessions and [...] ja you called out on it because you've let the guys down. ... it really brings down the team emotion because we like this thing of collective doings, like let's do it together so you do like, for instance, you feel it when someone's not here it really impacts the dynamics uhm, that frustrates people so people call you out on it." (*Sizwe*)

Extract 69: I: What are the consequences for failing to adhere to drinking expectations?
P: "... its embarrassing, its something we'll definitely talk about and make you feel shit about it [laughs] and then we move on really" (*Sizwe*).

In extract 67, *Sizwe* mentions the "reflections impromptu sessions" where group members and talk about their performance sometime after the night out. During these informal reflective discussions, members reprimand those who performed poorly for

displaying incompetence. This could also be done by calling them “weak” while bragging about their own performance. As discussed before, weakness is not associated with masculinity therefore un-masculine, if one is referred to as weak, he is being told that he is not masculine or not a man. Should the same member of the group continue to appear weak and embarrass the group, he would eventually be excluded from drinking events:

Extract 70: “the only thing that we can do is socially exclude you. So the highest sanction would be literally not to hang with you, you not invited to drink ups, finding any means necessary not to be in the same spaces with you because you don’t know how to conduct yourself.” (*Zac*)

This illustrates how the self-regulating system gets rid of members/parts (weak links) that threaten the appearance and integrity of a coherent competent drinking wolf pack. This self-regulating system is believed to be generated by the long existing drinking culture at Rhodes University, and thus is not unique, but rather a feature/product of the broader Rhodes drinking culture.

The “Wolf Pack” is a type of drinking group amongst various drinking groups at Rhodes University. The use of alcohol at Rhodes University is multifaceted. On a broader scale it is used to relax and unwind, and also as a “social lubricant”. It is also used, through informal social rituals (Watson-Jones & Lagare, 2016), as a forger and maintainer of friendships (Emslie, Hunt & Lyon, 2013). The drinking context provides the platform for competent alpha males to perform and demonstrate their alpha status, by consuming and surviving the effects of alcohol use. The alpha status/position is constantly contested for amongst groups of friends and in the broader Rhodes drinking context. Consistent displays of weakness are rejected, because weakness does not fit with masculine ideals. The endurance displayed of constantly rising to the challenge is a characteristic bridging the gap between success and failure, in relation to the achievement of masculinity and the drinking culture.

4.3 Conclusion: Men and Alcohol and The Wolf Pack

The global theme “Men and alcohol” is about how men use their bodies to demonstrate their masculine traits (Campbell, 2000). In the contexts of alcohol consumption, male students use their bodies by consuming copious amounts of alcohol to demonstrate competence (Pengpid et al., 2013). The broader “Men and Alcohol” thematic context speaks to the relationship between masculine performance and the use of alcohol. That there is an

investment in drinking excessively. It also includes how the hegemonic position is constructed and the requirements of occupying that position (Connell 2005). It touches on the difficulty of living up to that idealistic understanding of masculinity and the frustrations associated with societal expectations to conform/perform. That acknowledging the existence of other forms of masculinity and the value placed on challenging other masculinities as addressing this frustration (Pace, 2015). It lays the foundation for the significant impact of “weakness” and the investment in fighting against it (Bhana & Mayeza, 2016). Lastly, it introduces the influence of context and Rhodes drinking culture.

The global theme “The Wolf Pack” fits with the “Men and Alcohol” in that it focuses more on the informal social rituals, more on how masculinity is performed in Rhodes context. It focuses more on the interpersonal relationships and how they reinforce the drinking culture. The metaphor represented the social dynamics that take place within the group and how the alpha male fits in the wolf pack concept. The first global theme acknowledges the investment in excessive use, whereas the second global theme explored the social structures that sustain the drinking culture and the benefit of investing in this culture. The gain is that one develops a social network that shares similar values, and thereby satisfying the need to belong, and also having a group of friends who “have got your back” (Field, 2008). The “wolf pack” allows the performance (and validation) of hegemonic masculine ideals as constructed by participants. The implications of this however, is that there are consequences of excessive alcohol use (Maggs et al., 2011). Excessive alcohol use impacts on one’s health, it normalises risky behaviour such as drinking and driving, and implicate other areas of one’s life (Maggs et al., 2011). The findings of this research confirms that social drinking does have the potential of leading to the development of serious problems related to alcohol use (Keough et al., 2018).

There appears to be positive consequences associated with participating in informal social drinking rituals, such acceptance, belonging, security, social capital, and status. In relating this to the developmental phase of early adulthood, informal social drinking rituals allow one to experiment and explore a wide range of experiences; which plays a role in identity exploration (Arnett, 2000). Within this liminal phase, the ambiguous state of having no identity, between adolescent and adult, one constructs, learns about and is preparing for their (adult) role outside of the neutral zone (Westerveld, 2010). During this exploring and learning period, one is free to make mistakes and conduct themselves in a manner that they

learn from (Westerveld, 2010). Thus, the university context provides the space for one to go through the psychosocial moratorium (Erikson, 2010).

Society plays an important role in governing gender performance (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The pressure to perform gender is not only experienced from peers in university, it is also experienced from society in broader terms (Butler, 2009; Sallee, 2011). Therefore, the adequate performance of masculinity is very important. Hegemonic masculinity, the alpha male position, is constantly contested, not only because of the recognition that comes along with it, but also because of the respect and authority it grants one (Connell, 2000). In this context, the position is competed for by using one's body to consume copious amounts of alcohol. In other words, one is expected to use their body to perform a practice that bears significant meaning related to constructions of an ideal form of masculinity (Brickell, 2006). If one fails to perform in accordance with drinking norms/expectations, one is labelled "weak". The governing and punitive role that society members play, including the social drinking context, could potentially impact negatively on a person's sense of (gendered) identity. This then places one in the position constantly having to prove themselves to others, to avoid failure and (especially) the consequences associated with failure.

Conforming to these drinking norms might also be one of the ways that one eases the tension and frustration caused by having an essentialist understanding of masculinity (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). The frustration comes from the burden of having to prove that one is a man, where he feels that he doesn't need to because of his biological/inherent maleness. The association between excessive alcohol use and masculinity has existed for many years in South Africa, I believe that this association continues to influence how some forms of hegemonic masculinity are constructed in various institutions across the country (Mager, 2010). Thus, informal social drinking rituals do indeed play a significant role in masculine performance, amongst male university students.

Aside from providing a context for masculine performance, social drinking rituals also allow one to expand their social network, thus increasing a great resource for social support and validation of masculine performativity. However, this context also provide space for adversarial sexual beliefs to be produced and reinforced, which might be problematic in how others are constructed in relation to hegemonic masculinity. Although social drinking presents many positive consequences and increases one's social capital, the consequences

associated with failure to adhere to drinking rules and expectations implies a transient and conditional social capital dependent upon one's competence. The positive consequences associated with participating in informal social drinking rituals can be easily threatened and jeopardised in that the negative consequences associated with failure threaten the stability of one's social identity, thereby placing one in the position of having to constantly prove and perform their masculine identity secure their position in the social group. This suggests a fragility to masculine gender identity and an impermanent/precarious social identity and status associated with social drinking. This bears the implication that one would have to place a priority on social drinking in order to feel secure in their (social) identity. This sense of masculine identity seems to be dependent on a drinking culture that encourages excessive alcohol use, which could potentially have consequences for other aspects of life (academic work and/or health). This might negatively impact on being able to participate in social drinking. Therein, lies a dilemma of locating identity and belonging in social drinking activities; which appears to be dependent upon an unstable and unsustainable harmful drinking culture, which is linked to a sense of gendered identity.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary of findings

In exploring and analysing the constructs of masculinity in relation to masculine performance through the use of informal social drinking rituals, it was found that there is indeed an investment, among male students in the sample, in the excessive use of alcohol. The drinking culture at the university provides the platform for the construction of a certain form of hegemonic masculinity to be performed. The analysis showed how participants make sense of the informal social drinking rituals and how these rituals relate to masculinity in ways that both enable and affirm the performance of socially valued forms of masculinity, and which simultaneously provide the social context in which such performances can be scrutinised and policed for ‘failure’. Consequently, participation in informal social drinking rituals becomes the vehicle through which hegemonic masculinity in this particular context must perpetually be enacted and validated.

Using Thematic Network Analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001), the emergence of two global themes from the dataset was identified. The first global theme was named “Men and Alcohol”. This theme focused on excessive alcohol consumption as a means of demonstrating and performing masculinity. The concept of ‘alcohol tolerance’ is used as a means of assessing masculine performance. This is congruent with studies linking excessive alcohol use with the performance of hegemonic masculinity (Campbell, 2000; Dempster, 2011). The University drinking context also plays a significant role in defining ideal constructions of (hegemonic) masculinity. A theme that emerged repeatedly in relation to this is the ‘Alpha male’ concept. This notion refers to ideals of hegemonic masculinity, particularly within the drinking context. Having a low alcohol tolerance is constructed as weakness. Weakness is regarded as a trait that is not inherent in masculinity, thus, a person with a low tolerance is regarded as not masculine. Therefore, the use of alcohol facilitates masculine performance, in this particular drinking context. Although the quantity of alcohol one consumes plays a significant role in the achievement/performance of hegemonic masculinity, it is also very important that one “survives” the psychoactive effects of alcohol. This is a display of mastery, in the sense that a “real” man drinks a lot of alcohol and maintains their composure. This display of “control” is regarded as an excellent demonstration of drinking competence.

The second global theme, named “The Wolf Pack”, focuses more on the informal social drinking rituals that govern how the group functions, how they maintain drinking competence, and operate as individual group members within the specific context of in-group dynamics. Alcohol consumption is not only used to display masculine competence, it is also used as a “social lubricant” that facilitates in-group cohesion and cements group membership status. Its use is generally enjoyed for enhancement, drink to enjoy the psychoactive effects of alcohol, and social drinking motives, drinking to enjoy the party (Maphisa & Young, 2018). In other words, alcohol is used to enjoy the social drinking context and for its disinhibiting effects. This speaks to how circular the drinking culture is and how it is maintained; that alcohol use is needed in order to enjoy the social drinking context. This makes it easier to have fun, make new friends, expand one’s social network, and/or pursue one’s sexual interest.

Alcohol use is also constructed as a forger and maintainer of friendships. However, should a group member continuously fail to adhere to drinking norms, he would face unpleasant consequences; the “highest sanction” being exclusion from further drinking rituals. This is done to ensure that the group is not associated with poor masculine performance or any form of weakness. Therefore, these consequences are taken seriously, and it seems that academic work (and possibly other aspects of student life) are structured around drinking, suggesting that drinking is prioritized. Social drinking groups seem to play an important role in validating one’s performance of masculinity and masculine identity. However, the ostracism, as a consequence of failure, suggests an impermanence to one’s social identity. This context does offer one many benefits in terms of social capital and expanding one’s social network which include security, belonging, support, social resources, validation, etc. However, these are available to those who are competent, on the condition that they do not fail to maintain the drinking culture.

5.2 Reflection on the Research Process

Initially, my assumption in relation to this research was that gender is performative, and that there is a relationship between masculinity and alcohol consumption. I was expecting to find certain things that men do, that bear significant meaning, to prove and perform their masculinity. I assumed that there would be tension between constructionist and essentialist understanding of gender. Another underlying assumption I had in relation to this research, was that this kind of alcohol use was problematic and impacted on a person’s physical

wellbeing and academic work. Going into this study I was aware of these assumptions, and my attempts to counter them were to focus on what participants were communicating to me. Throughout the process of analysis, I was guided by my ethical principles and the reflexivity I stated in the Methodology chapter. These principles mainly concerned treating participants' with respect from the interview process through to the discussion of results (Parker, 2005). The ethical principles stated in the Methodology chapter mention informed consent, voluntary participation, avoiding harm, confidentiality and anonymity, honesty and transparency (du Ploy-Cilliers et al., 2014). I presented and discussed the results and analysis with honesty and transparency, without seeking to present them in a manner that pathologize it (du Ploy-Cilliers, 2014; Parker, 2005).

It was interesting for me to see how the emergent themes from the dataset could closely be related back to existing literature. Reviewing the literature before conducting this study only presented a theoretical understanding of masculine performativity in relation to alcohol use. Conducting the research, through interviews, analysis and discussion, educated me on how serious this issue is and awakened me to this reality. This experience also educated me on the benefits associated with social drinking, in fulfilling one's need for belonging, acceptance, validation and social support. Through this research process, I learned how influential an institutional culture is.

In communicating with the participants, it was interesting to hear them state how the questions encouraged them to think about informal social drinking rituals and masculinity. This allowed us to talk about how they experience gender norms and allowed them to share their thoughts regarding gender governance. I believe that this was the strength of this study. Participants also stated enjoying the interview and how it evoked reflexivity regarding alcohol use and masculinity.

5.3 Validation

In relation to the validity of this research, my attempts to ensure the validity of this study was through continually checking, interrogating, and theoretically interpreting the findings (Kvale, 1996). I also refer to the three interpretive communities for validation which include; the person interviewed, the general community, and the scientific community (Kvale, 1996). The persons interviewed provided a communicative validity, where knowledge is constructed through conversation and "conflicting knowledge claims are argued in a dialogue" (Kvale, 1996, p. 244). The writing-circle group served as both the general

community, because the researchers within the group are from various fields of study, and the scientific community, because they are also a group of researchers who reviewed my research (Kvale, 1996). In this context, the writing circle created the platform for an interrogation of the research method, data analysis and findings by fellow researchers who reviewed different chapters of the thesis. I also include my supervisor and the examiners as members of the scientific community (Kvale, 1996). In relation to generalizability, although I mentioned in the limitations that findings of this research cannot be used for generalization, I would also like to leave it to the reader in assessing the generality of this study (Kvale, 1996). Although generalizability is an important factor when considering the trustworthiness of a study, it is important to acknowledge that the constructionist paradigm which this research employed appreciates the plurality of practices and constructions of reality (Willig, 2008). As a result of this constructionist orientation, assertions regarding the authority of any one version or interpretation of a social phenomenon being ‘the’ truth of the phenomenon are difficult to maintain. As such, generalising the findings of such a study are, as with all research of an inductive and qualitative nature, not the primary goal of the research. Instead, a focus on the trustworthiness and credibility of the analyses presented is recommended.

Smith (2003) refers to the importance of having a sensitivity to the context. I believe that throughout the discussion of results and discussion of the analysis, the significance of the context was constantly stressed to understand behaviour and interpretations of that behaviour within that particular context (Smith, 2003). The literature reviewed, pertaining to the focus of the research, informed the research method; for instance, the use of interviews as a means of data collection was regarded as a suitable means of inquiring and exploring constructions of gender performance in relation to alcohol use (Smith, 2003). In respecting the sensitivity to the context the interviews took place in, I acknowledge that being a female researcher interviewing male students about masculine performance in relation to alcohol use might have influenced participants’ responses (Smith, 2003). During the write-up process I provided an outline of steps stating how the research was conducted, I believe that this speaks to the coherence of this study (Smith, 2003).

5.4 Limitations of the study

To reiterate the limitations of this study mentioned in the Methodology chapter, the small sample size selected for this research suggests non-generalizability of results. Participants of this research are all Rhodes University students, between the ages of 21-24

years, this suggests that results of this study could only be relevant to Rhodes drinking culture. The age range within the sample also presents a limitation, in that they are a relatively homogenized sample, thus representing only a portion of the targeted population and does not represent the breadth of the university. The younger students (undergraduate students) might be more susceptible to engaging in the drinking culture, particularly those who might be in the residence and are exposed to it, whereas older post-graduate students might not engage in the drinking culture to the same degree. A more diverse sample could have produced alternative views. However, the sample in this research is drawn from a significant portion of the population of the institution, in that undergraduate students form a larger part of the university population compared to post-graduate students. Furthermore, the age range of this sample forms part of the 18-25 year old age group identified with risky alcohol use (Arnett, 2000), and therefore, were an appropriately selected sample for the purpose of this study. It is important to also acknowledge that the sample presents a gendered and racial homogeneity. However, this study focuses on masculinity amongst male students, thus the sample, although small, is nevertheless appropriate. Although there is a racial homogeneity, this study focused on the phenomenon as it is informed by the institutional drinking culture. Selection of the sample was primarily based on participant familiarity with the drinking culture; the focus was therefore on representing a sector of a particular culture and students who engaged in the institutional culture, irrespective of race or ethnicity. In terms of the convenience sampling strategy used and considering the volunteer characteristics, I believe that more systematic and randomized sampling strategies might result in possibly more diverse responses to interview questions. However, due to time constraints, this research employed a sampling method that allowed me to access participants within a limited amount of time. The possibility of additional or alternative sampling strategies will be discussed below.

Additionally, my own social identity as a woman researcher may also have impacted on the quality of information that participants shared. Exploring the significance of informal social drinking rituals on male students' sense of masculinity and social belonging/competence may have presented the young male participants with either a threatening situation, or an opportunity to exaggerate the performative aspects of masculinity, and as such, may have influenced their response styles and their decisions regarding what kinds of information to share.

5.5 Implications of the research and suggestions for further research

This study explored the social meanings of drinking for men, how these meanings are reproduced and reinforced through social drinking, and the relation of social drinking activities to performing specific types of masculinity. The excessive use of alcohol bears serious implications for a student's health and academic performance (Young & de Klerk, 2008). Although the consequences of unhealthy drinking patterns were not the focus of this study, it is important to acknowledge the physiological and academic consequences that could result from excessive drinking. It is important to consider the social consequences associated with a heteronormative masculine drinking culture, where one constantly has to prove oneself before an audience. When masculine identity is tied to the ability to drink large quantities of alcohol, this reproduces an unhealthy and potentially toxic type of masculinity, where other responsibilities and activities may become structured around social drinking. The implications of this do not only bear social consequences, but may also impact negatively on an individual level. Young male university students might experience a range of psychological stressors as a consequence of ascribing to and reinforcing specific hegemonic forms of masculinity (Donaldson, 1993; Howard, 2012; Sallee, 2011). For instance, excessive alcohol use could ultimately result in Alcohol Use Disorder; or social rejection from peers as a result of failure to conform to social ideals of masculinity, which could impact on other areas of a person's wellbeing, including social, emotional and/or mental wellbeing (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Therefore, this research provides some evidence in support of developing intervention strategies that are aimed at engaging with and addressing the social/cultural level and/or individual level. Focusing attention and efforts on highlighting and critically examining the institutional culture and contextually located practices that reinforce problematic and underlying assumptions linked to heteronormative masculine performance as it is linked to excessive alcohol use and social acceptance. For example, developing preventative strategies or programs that target first year students entering into the institution and informing them of the consequences associated with conforming to certain toxic forms of masculinity. Similar programs targeting students who are not new to the institution may also provide platforms that allow for constructions of gender performance through substance use, or other potentially harmful activities or practices, to be questioned and discussed. Such programs could also potentially be used to encourage students who might have been affected negatively, particularly those who ascribe to identity constructions associated with excessive alcohol use

in relation to masculine gender performance, to access assistance. Such programs could be a platform for psychoeducational activities that disseminate information on how to access the appropriate support services, should one experience psychological problems that could result from risky drinking behaviour. Such programs would not only address the institutional drinking culture but would also address the consequences of this drinking culture on an individual level.

Further studies could collect a larger sample for in-depth interviews and conduct focus group discussions where participants would be encouraged to share their constructs of masculinity and how they make sense of the drinking context. The small sample size does bear the implication of an unintentional bias. Therefore, the use of a larger and more systematically selected sample minimizes the possibility of a response bias. Further studies could also interview female students and explore how informal social drinking rituals are made sense of, also in exploring their perspective on the drinking culture at this particular university, as well as at other South African institutions of higher education. This would potentially provide insight into the increase of excessive alcohol use amongst female students. It would also provide interesting insights into how female students construct femininity and masculinity in relation to excessive alcohol use. Findings of this research could be applied to similar research conducted on different campuses, therefore assessing its transferability. Findings of this research can be used as a means of developing and monitoring interventions, thereby indicating the fruitfulness of this study.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical clearance



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Where leaders learn

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RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

28 September 2016

Obakeng Makgale
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Obakeng

ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF PROJECT PSY2016/50

This letter confirms your research proposal with tracking number PSY2016/50 and title, 'Exploring the meaning of informal social alcohol consumption rituals in performing masculinity amongst male university students', served at the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 22 June 2016. The project has been given ethics clearance.

Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jacqui Marx'.

Dr Jacqui Marx
CHAIRPERSON: RPERC

Appendix B: Permission letter to Registrar

Flat no. 5 Little
Rose
Rose Street
Grahamstown
6140
11 January 2017

The Registrar, Rhodes University
Rhodes University
P.O. Box 94
Grahamstown
6140

Dear Dr Fourie

Permission letter to the Registrar

My name is Obakeng Makgale, I am a Masters student in Counselling Psychology. This document serves to inform you of my research interests with regards to Rhodes university students and to ask for your permission to conduct the research study. The proposed research study will be based on exploring the significance of informal social rituals with regards to alcohol consumption amongst male students. The proposed participants will be requested to participate in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews concerning their drinking behaviours. These participants will consist of male students from the Rhodes University, who consume alcohol, and are between the ages of 18-25 years old.

The aim of this study is to explore the significance of informal social rituals related to alcohol consumption with regards to performing masculinity amongst male university students – at Rhodes University. The research also seeks to gain insight into the interpretation of these rituals and to understand their significance in maintaining and perpetuating excessive alcohol consumption. This research will also explore and attempt to reach an understanding of how these rituals are perceived to relate to the achievement of performing masculinity.

The sampling method to be used will involve placing recruitment posters; informing the students about the nature of the research and what their involvement entails, and my contact details. The recruitment posters will be placed on several notice boards on campus. The researcher would also briefly inform students about the research during randomly selected Psychology classes, and would also leave contact details for students' inquiries. This study has been approved by the Research Project and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) and is under the supervision of Mr. Werner Bohmke. The letter of approval from the RPERC is attached for your perusal.

During the process of the research study, the participant's identities will remain confidential. Prior to the research taking place, all participants will be informed of the voluntary nature of this study, their right to provide or withhold their consent, their right to privacy and how this will be maintained, and their right to withdraw their participation from the study should they wish to. After this has been done, they will be handed informed consent forms to sign, granting the researcher permission to conduct research. During the data collection process, the researcher will handle the information revealed appropriately and discreetly, all participants will be treated with respect by the researcher – and thereby ensuring that no harm is done to the participants during and as a result of this research study.

My contact details are 0606006964 or obakengthatopmakgale@gmail.com. My supervisor's contact details are 0466038508 or w.r.bohmke@ru.ac.za.

Mr. Werner Bohmke  (Supervisor)

ObakengMakgale  (Researcher)

Appendix C: Approval from Registrar



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grabouwstruik • 6140 • South Africa

THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR • Tel: (046) 603 8101 • Fax: (046) 603 8127 • e-mail: S.Fourie@ru.ac.za

Obakeng Makgale
Counselling Centre

10 February 2017

Dear Ms Makgale

Name of research proposal: Exploring the significance of informal social rituals with regards to alcohol consumption amongst male students.

This serves to confirm that you have been granted permission to conduct your proposed research at Rhodes University as requested.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Fourie', written over a white background.

Dr Stephen Fourie
REGISTRAR

Appendix D: Recruitment advertisement

MEN, MASCULINITY AND ALCOHOL

Participants wanted for research study

- Researcher: Ms. Obakeng Makgale, Masters in Counselling Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Rhodes university
- Supervisor: Mr. Werner Bohmke, Lecturer in Psychology at Rhodes University
- I'm looking for volunteer male students between the ages of 18-25 years, who consume alcohol
- Participants will be asked to partake in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions: both will last for 30 - 45 minutes. Refreshments will be provided.
- Participants' identities will remain confidential – only the researcher and other focus group participants will know who you are. Focus groups will be covered by confidentiality agreements. No identifying details will be reflected in the interview transcripts or final research report.
- This research study has been approved by the Research Project and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) in the Psychology Department
- Permission from the Registrar has been granted
- Contact details: masculinemenresearch@gmail.com
- Closing date: 25 October 2016

The aim of this study is to explore the meanings of informal social rituals related to alcohol consumption amongst male university students in South Africa.



Appendix E: Request to use transcriber

17 Byron Street
Rustenburg-North
Rustenburg
0299

15 January 2018

Research Project and Ethics Review Committee
Department of Psychology
Rhodes University
P.O. Box 94
Grahamstown
6140

Dear RPERC Chair

Intention to use a transcriber

This document serves to inform the RPERC committee of my intention to use transcription services for the audio recorded interviews and to seek approval for this amendment. My ethical clearance research tracking number is PSY2016/50. I acknowledge that the intention to use transcription services departs from the ethics protocol that was initially approved by the RPERC committee. This is the reason I request your approval for this modification. This would not impact on or change the methodology for my research. Prior to the transcription, participants' informed consent would be obtained. Participants will be informed of their right to withhold consent from having their audio recorded interviews transcribed by the transcriber.

The transcriber would be a member of the Grahamstown community and a member of the Rhodes University. I acknowledge that this increases the chances of the participants' identities being identified by the transcriber. I have considered the ethical implications of the change in terms of protecting my participants' rights to privacy/ anonymity, as well as risk for harm/ embarrassment to my participants and/or third party.

However, based on the content of the interviews, the nature of the content discussed in the interviews is not harmful or embarrassing to participants; and would not impact on the reputation of the organizations they are affiliated with.

The nature of the interview questions do not judge or humiliate the participants. They do not drive participants to disclose any embarrassing or humiliating narratives related to alcohol consumption. Participants are also informed of their right to refrain from answering a question they do not feel comfortable with – this is linked to the voluntary nature of participation in the research as stated in the

informed consent. Interview questions do not focus on intoxication or on the participants drinking habits, rather they focus on social expectations regarding alcohol consumption and masculinity.

The attached confidentiality contract to be signed by the transcriber also states that he/she would handle any participant's identification, that may inadvertently be revealed during the transcription process, with the strictest confidence. This confidentiality contract is designed in a manner that ensures that the transcriber handles data in a discreet and sensitive manner.

During the data analysis of my research, identifying information extracted from the interviews as part of the analysis and discussion chapters will be altered by the researcher; to ensure that their identities remain hidden.

Although this may be a slight deviation from the initial protocol approved by the RPERC committee; I will ensure that participants of this research project are not in any manner harmed as a direct or indirect result of their participation. With the guidance of my supervisor, Mr. Werner Bohnke, I believe that the aim of the research would be achieved, despite this slight alteration.

Regards

Obakeng Makgale

Student Researcher

Appendix F: Approval letter from RPERC



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RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 February 2018

Obakeng Makgale
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Ms Makgale

CHANGES TO ETHICAL PROTOCOL PSY2016/50

Thank you for your letter dated 15th January 2018 informing the committee of the changes to your ethical protocol, specifically your intention to use a transcriber. The committee is satisfied that the documentation that you have submitted meets with the ethical requirements for using a transcriber.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Saville Young'.

Prof Lisa Saville Young
CHAIRPERSON: RPERC

Appendix G: Consent form



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

RHODES UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ (participant's name) agree to participate in the research project of Obakeng Makgale on Exploring the meaning of informal social alcohol consumption rituals in performing masculinity amongst male university students.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on 0633680225 or obakengthatopmakgale@gmail.com. The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee(s), and is under the supervision of Mr Werner Bohmke in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on 0466038508 or w.r.bohmke@ru.ac.za.
2. The researcher is interested in exploring the significance of informal social rituals related to alcohol consumption with regards to performing masculinity amongst male university students – at Rhodes University.
3. My participation is of a voluntary nature and will involve being interviewed by the researcher.
4. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
5. Personal information I disclose during the interview process will be handled with confidentiality.
6. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.

7. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.

8. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader.

9. I give my consent to having the interview voice recorded by the researcher.

10. I give my consent to have the recorded interview transcribed by a professional; who would handle transcribed information with the strictest confidence; and is also bound by a confidentiality contract.

11. My anonymity will be ensured by the researcher throughout the research process; however I am aware of the limitation on this point that might result from the use of a transcriber; and I trust that the confidentiality contract drawn between the researcher and transcriber ensures that my desire to remain anonymous be respected and protected by both researcher and transcriber.

Signed on (Date):

Participant: _____ Researcher: _____

Appendix H: Confidentiality contract



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT:

Transcription Services

I, _____, (name of transcriber) agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio recordings and documentation received from Obakeng Makgale (researcher) related to her research study on *Exploring the meaning of informal social alcohol consumption rituals in performing masculinity amongst male university students* (title of research).

Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Obakeng Makgale (researcher).
3. To store all study-related audio recordings and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audio recordings and study-related documents to Obakeng Makgale (researcher) in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audio recordings and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

Appendix I: Interview schedule

Interview Schedule

Introductions:

1. People – you as researcher, participants
2. Topic area – explain your research focus
3. Consent for audio recording
4. Right to withdraw participation
5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

Alcohol consumption:

1. Do you drink alcohol? How often / frequently? What is your drink of choice? Why?
2. What do you think is the main reason that others have for drinking alcohol? Do you agree with this?
3. On average, when you drink alcohol, do you tend to get intoxicated? What do you like about drinking alcohol?
4. In what sort of contexts / or occasions do you usually consume alcohol?
5. Could you describe a typical 'night out' / drinking occasion?
6. Does consuming alcohol form an important part of your socialising activities? Could you explain why / why not?
7. How do you experience drinking alcohol alone compared to drinking with peers?
8. What kinds of rules / social expectations govern the manner in which you consume alcohol? Could you give some examples?
9. Would you say these expectations are quite strictly adhered to? What happens when someone doesn't stick to them? Could you give an example?
 - a. How much you should be able to drink
 - b. Being able to brag about how much you drink
 - c. Expectations about being able to "hold your liquor"
10. How do you personally experience these expectations? Are they important to you?
11. What do you think if or when you see a man who fails to meet these expectations regarding alcohol consumption?

Social rituals:

1. Can you think of any specific activities that form a regular part of your social drinking?
2. Could you describe these activities? What do they entail?
3. Do you ever play drinking games? Can you describe what you would typically get up to?
4. Can you talk about "pre-drinks"? What is it and what usually happens at "pre-drinks"?
5. What kind of social dynamics are at play when you're out drinking with your peers? (who invites others for drinks or usually takes the initiative, who usually pays, who usually decides what time the drinking session is over – who is the decision maker, how are all of things decided)

Masculinity:

6. How would you define masculinity? What makes a man masculine?
7. Where do you think these ideas around masculinity come from?
8. If I asked you reflect on how you learned about masculinity, where, or from whom would you say you get most of your ideas?
9. How do you feel about the notion of masculinity, as you have described it? Is it easy to be masculine? What are some of the things that make it easy / difficult?
10. Are there certain things that a man needs to do to prove or perform their masculinity? Could you give examples?
11. How do you feel about these expectations?
12. What are the consequences if a man does not meet these expectations? Could you give examples?
13. Do you think that the sorts of activities you have described as being part of your social drinking behaviour are related to masculinity? Could you explain how, or why / why not?

Concluding:

1. Thank you for time, participation and input.
2. Is there anything additional you'd like to add?
3. Are there any questions about what we've spoken about that you'd like to ask / know more about?
4. Is there anything about the research process that you would like to ask / know more about?

