The Making of Masculinities: The Hidden Curriculum About Gender-Based Violence and Rape Culture at an Elite Private School in South Africa

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Dedication

For my mother, Janet Prest Talbot

Abstract

This study examines the formation of 'ruling class' masculinities and their relationship to gender-based violence (GBV) and rape culture at an elite private school (called Blue School for the purposes of this study). Through interviews with alumni, the research explores the recollections and narratives of young men in terms of how they navigated and experienced masculine identity formation in the school context during their adolescence, and also deciphers their awareness regarding GBV and rape culture. The findings demonstrate that identity formation within the school studied is complex and often reflected as a Western-centric masculinity drenched in heteronormativity. This is captured through the shared experiences alumni of the school regarding their adherence to traditional values, submission to hierarchical structures, collective mockery of vulnerability and the instillation of competitive individualism. The alumni speak to the ways in which boyhood and gender are conceptualised through the taught curriculum, contrasted with the hidden scripts of masculinities in the boarding school environment. The complex interplay between institutional culture and the formation of gender identities shows a superficial adherence to progressive ideals, unveiling the entrenched hegemonic practices that reinforce restrictive norms. Most alumni expressed a sense of living in an isolated bubble, where wrongdoings are swept under the carpet. Through these practices, elite private schools depict institutional blindness as an entangled strategy to protect institutional reputation and capital. Insinuating irrelevance of GBV within elite private boys' schools emphasises the racist and homophobic discourses that deem who is capable of performing and experiencing gendered and sexual violence. By drawing on African feminism and Foucault, the study provides insight into the pervasive disciplinary mechanisms and their lasting impact on the alumni's personal and social embodiment of masculinity. This highlights the urgent need for a reimagined approach to masculinity that is inclusive and cognizant of historical and socio-political nuances. The thesis calls for a systemic examination of the elite private school system across South Africa and African-centred pro-feminist educational strategies to address the genealogical discourses embedded in these institutions.

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List of Acronyms

AFI	African Feminist Intersectionality
ANC	African National Congress
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBVF-NSP	Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan
IRTHJ	Intersectionality Research for Transgender Health Justice
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
LO	Life Orientation
MMC	The Mighty Men Conference
MP	Member of Parliament
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
NSAM	New South African Man
SANAC	South African National Aids Council
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence

CHAPTER 1: Masculinities and Gender-Based Violence in South Africa

1.1 The paradox of democratic South Africa

> Underpinning every act of sexual violence is a struggle for the supremacy of gendered identities. (Couturier, 2012: 1)

The South African socio-political landscape receives the nod of approval for our globally recognised progressive constitution with regard to the inclusivity of gender and sexual rights. However, paradoxically, the South African state has one of the world's highest reported levels of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) (Qambela, 2016; Vetten & Bhana, 2014; Ndashe, 2004).

The existing literature in the democratic South African context looks at gender-based violence (GBV) from various angles. Even so, it is critiqued for maintaining a women-centric focus– justifiably, as women and children are continually the most vulnerable to GBV and rape (Qambela, 2016: 181). Gqola (2007) contends that there are prevailing notions by South African men that perceive the pain of women and feminine bodies as negotiable. The prevailing notions and beliefs associated with manhood and masculinities are harmful and perpetuated through entitlement to sex and access to feminine bodies (Gqola, 2007). The raised concern, globally and from various sectors within South African societal discourses, calls for a deeper engagement with boys and men on the attached, assimilated and learnt meanings of manhood and masculinity.

In this study they will be referred to as private schools although they are known as independent schools. This research explores the theorisation of manhood and masculinity formation in elite private male schooling in post-apartheid South Africa. By seeking an understanding of alumni experiences in private school institutions, one can examine the socio-cultural and political factors that influence the formation of elite masculinities that maintain hegemonic ideals.

In the context of South Africa, scholars deem the 'crisis in/of masculinity' a necessary lens to analyse social phenomena like GBV (Dube, 2015: 1). The useful gender-informed analysis, primarily focusing on negative elements of masculine attitudes and behaviours, shows that men are the largest population that perpetuate violence. (Dube, 2015). Furthermore, the emphasis

and concentration on black men's experiences has resulted in an exaggerated focus on the destructive and anti-social attitudes and behaviours that have been incorporated into the discourse of black hegemonic masculinity (Dube, 2015). Simphiwe Dube (2015) thus urges for a more complex analysis of masculinities in South Africa that takes into account the nuanced performance of hegemonic masculinities constituted and contested in a democratic South Africa.

Despite democratic South Africa being categorised by the World Bank as an upper middle-income country recognised for its progressive and legally equalising constitution, the country is renowned for being one of the most unequal (Nyagumbo, 2021: 9). In the last few decades research on rape, rape culture, sexual violence, gender and sexuality, all incorporated under the umbrella of GBV, has seen an exponential growth (Gouws, 2017, 2018; Qambela, 2016 Gqola, 2007a, 2007b, Dlakavu, 2017). This has allowed scholars to expand their understanding of the phenomena of GBV, inevitably contributing and shaping the public discourse and discussion on addressing GBV more effectively and sustainably (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021: 1; Hassim, 2005; Gouws, 2017, 2018; Gqola, 2007a, 2007b,).

South Africa as a state still maintains social and economic conditions that are exacerbated by the historical context of apartheid and colonisation, which contribute to a perpetual climate of violence, particularly against feminine bodies (Nyagumbo, 2021). In spite of not facing conflict, in 2006 South Africa was ranked the international rape and sexual violence capital (Britton, 2006; Moffett, 2006). South Africa is thus regarded as one of the most unsafe places in the world for women and feminine bodies. In a country not considered at war, this is shameful.

This study specifically focuses on the formation of elite masculinity at a particular school (called the Blue School for the purposes of this research), a private elite male educational institution with a long historical legacy, traditions, and cultures of policing, that have significant socialisation effects that contribute to the maintenance of elite masculinities. Private school education constitutes a small but substantial component of the South African educational system (Randall, 1980).

The conversation on GBV and rape culture in elite private educational institutions is not the sole solution to GBV mitigation. However, it can give insight into the cultures that maintain

the homogenous, ruling class, norms of masculinity. Due to the reality of operating in a capitalistic dominated world, homogenous masculine norms that inform masculine identity formation cripples the diversity of masculinities. By normalising stereotypical gender norms, patriarchal masculinity and rape culture perpetuate the policing of nonconforming behaviour and acts that do not represent 'manliness.' Furthermore, investigative journalism provides insight and examples into the reasons single-sex elite private schools are breeding grounds for sexism and patriarchy heavily entwined with rape culture and GBV. It also paints a picture where learners are subjected to this sexism and are victim to a variety of GBV during their schooling years.

This introductory chapter aims to provides a contextual framework which situates the research questions of this study. Firstly, by contextualising GBV discourse during the decade of 2011-2021. The relevance of and need to deconstruct the perpetuating discourse of GBV is emphasised, with the goal of also situating this study in the post-apartheid/post-colonial climate of private schooling. This chapter will then move onto a contextualisation of hegemonic masculinities in South African as well as establishing the historical context of the site of research. Finally, the chapter closes by depicting the intersectionality of political science, masculinities, and GBV.

1.2 Gender-based violence discourses during the decade of 2011-2021

Violence is deeply rooted in the social context of South Africa due to the historical backdrop of colonialism and apartheid policies. It is against this backdrop that in democratic South Africa structural violence is prevalent, correlating with the high levels of inequality, poverty, racism, unequal gender power relations and hostility to sexual and gender diversity (Nyagumbo, 2021: 11). Statistically in line with other countries, most of the violence is perpetrated by males (Nyagumbo, 2021).

This depiction of a violent nation was particularly evident during the global COVID-19 pandemic, where South Africa, as with many other countries worldwide, experienced a national lockdown. The intention of the lockdown was to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by keeping people in the safety of their own homes, but South Africa saw a drastic increase in GBV complaints at a record of 2300 cases and 148 perpetrators were arrested and charged between

27 and 31 March 2020 (Nyagumbo, 2021: 12). According to the Minister of Police (MP), General Bheki Cele (Cele, 2022).

Over 13 000 women were victims of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm between July and September 2022 … 989 women were murdered during this reporting period … over 10,000 rape cases were opened with the SAPS … it was determined that 5 083 incidents (62%) occurred at the residences of the victims or perpetrators.

No South African women, regardless of their socio-economic context or identity, are exempt from potential victimisation by GBV (Gouws, 2021). However, some women are considerably more valuable depending of the intersectionality of race, class and sexuality. Importantly, geography also contributes to the vulnerability of women (Gouws, 2017). Arguably, it is the discriminatory policies of apartheid and the dehumanizing acts of colonialism that have resulted in the deep levels of collective trauma that has become a daily reality across social and economic spheres, evident in the high homicide and GBV crime rates (Madumise-Pajibo & Shisana, 2020). In the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide, Madumise-Pajibo and Shisana (2020) argue that apartheid policies promoted migration, resulting in the destabilisation of the family structures where structural norms are embedded. To exert power, violence is often resorted to. In this way, GBV has become ingrained in the social structural system that permits the use of violence to maintain the status quo. This encompasses gender, race, culture, gang violence and taxi violence (Madumise-Pajibo & Shisana, 2020).

Gqola (2015) contends that race is a way of perceiving, defining, experiencing, and organising the world, leaning heavily on the formation of sexual difference and sexual violence. In this way, rape is inextricably linked to race. Gqola (2015) goes on to state that race is seen as a type of knowledge and ordering system that becomes institutionalised and receives legitimacy via the use of sexual violence. Gouws (2021) critiques Foucault for not theorising the biopolitics of colonialism, specifically settler colonialism, where Western constructions of gender and sexuality became naturalised through interdependent patriarchal alliances between settlers and indigenous people. However, South Africa is subject to the dual burden of violent histories of slavery and being a settler colonial society, anchored in the history of race (Gouws, 2021). Shailja Patel aptly asks if "you want to understand how power works in any society, watch who is carrying the shame and who is doing the shaming" (Gqola, 2015: 38).

Gqola's (2015) work on slavery and the settler colonial state argues that slave women's sexuality was treated and engaged with through rape because their bodies were considered the property of slave owners. This limited their agency over their own sexuality. Societies where slavery was the norm provided a platform for stereotypes of slaves or indigenous bodies to be perceived as hypersexual, impossible to satisfy – therefore deemed legally impossible to rape (Gouws, 2021). Gqola (2007) articulates that the stereotype of hypersexuality was transferred to male slaves who were perceived to have ravenous sexual desires deemed a danger to white females, who were rapeable. The biopolitics of control in colonial settler societies attempted to control African sexualities in order to prevent miscegenation (Gouws, 2021). Gqola's work on rape and women's sexuality and the biopolitics of race and gender in settler colonial societies shows that women's sexuality was regulated through violence and a direct correlation between women's sexuality and violence. Gouws (2021) highlights how settler colonial continuities of sexual violence are visible in democratic South Africa, especially for feminine bodies subjected to victimisation, through the abandonment by law from state agencies (police and the criminal justice system) who are meant to uphold the law. This leads to the reason for this study – to investigate how, and in what forms masculine identities are significant to perpetuating rape culture in schools; specifically, historically white, elite private schools.

Despite the depressingly brutal crime facts which reiterate that GBV is prevalent in democratic South Africa, if we look at events in the public arena, there has been an increase in visibility when it comes to GBV and rape culture. Locally and internationally, one can highlight an array of protests, campaigns, stories, media and hashtags that paint an uncomfortable picture of the state and neglect of GBV and rape culture in South Africa over the decade of 2011-2021, but also before this time.

The most internationally recognised hashtag movement, #MeToo, went viral in 2017 to draw attention to sexual harassment, sexual abuse and rape culture. This global movement and campaign used #Me Too to capture the experience of people who experienced sexual violence. The phrase was initially used on Myspace by Tarana Burke (who is a sexual assault survivor and activist) (Burke in Gouws, 2018:6) following the multiple sexual-abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein in 2017. The #MeToo movement went viral on social media, instigated by an actress, Alyssa Milano's Twitter post saying: "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem" (Milano in Gouws, 2018:8).

In South Africa, we can contextualise the dialogue around GBV by looking at the array of protests and campaigns that have mobilised young South Africans, mainly young black women, against the epidemic of sexual violence, GBV, femicide and rape culture. The popularisation of discourse around GBV can be linked to the pivotal rape trial in 2005/2006 of Jacob Zuma and Fezeka Kuzwayo 'Khwezi' that highlighted the ubiquitousness of violent patriarchal power (Gouws, 2018). The rape trial of one of South Africa's past presidents from 2007 to 2017 put a spotlight on the legacies of colonial violence and cultural constructions of masculinities (Gouws, 2018). A rape trial that symbolised and witnessed the performance of complicit sovereign power when it comes to sexual violence and a lingering colonial legacy of mutual patriarchal apprehension and racial paternalism tangles the discourses of sexuality, race and gender in democratic South Africa (Gouws, 2018). Depicting a significant shift in the political landscape emphasised the division of discourses reproduced by sentiments of 'respectable' maternal politics articulated by the ANC Women's League and radical black queer politics that embraced nonbinary sexual identities (Hassim, 2023). This inspired the popularisation of a new lexicon of intersectionality that went well beyond 'triple oppression' – race, class and gender (Hassim, 2023).

Following the Zuma trial, numerous campaigns have unfolded. One of the oldest is the One in Nine Campaign established by black feminists in support of 'Khwezi' and other victims. The #EndRapeCulture campaign in 2016 can be closely linked to the 2015 national #FeesMustFall and #EndPatriarchy campaigns calling for the decolonisation of tertiary education (Gouws, 2018). The Rhodes University Silent Protest started in 2006, catalysed by the Zuma rape trial and influenced the political revolt against respectable politics policed by nationalism and maternalism (Hassim, 2023). The silent protest has its main objective of highlighting the seriousness of rape and sexual violence, in addition to the nuanced difficulties victims face post-violation (Seddon, 2016). The 'RU Reference List' protest grew out of the RU Silent protest in 2016, taking to the streets across the country, often with topless young women often declaring "They're tired of violence!". Remarkably, both campaigns embraced a feminist identity and notions of gender equality from the vantage point of intersectionality and black African feminism (Gouws, 2018). The feminism that motivated these campaigns is rooted in black African identity in the post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa. The African feminist concept 'the personal is political' informed by black consciousness philosophy is highlighted (Gouws, 2018). Through this lens, race and patriarchy are perceived to be the

largest contributing obstacle in the mitigation of rape culture, GBV and oppression of women in society, institutions and structures. Similarly, Hassim (2014: 218), critiques patriarchal power for its complicit persona in the reproduction of the 'colonial collective subconscious' because of the perceived assimilation of black male bodies to the white gaze.

In the midst of a broader GBV crisis, an even more recent and wider scale protest movement was experienced in 2019, that escalated beyond university campuses. Thousands of South African women were mobilised to protest for the #TotalShutDown after the brutal rape and murder of 19-year-old Uyinene Mrwetyana (Gouws, 2021). Uyinene, a student at Cape Town University, received unprecedented media and political coverage as many South African women felt it was the breaking point after years and months of horrific rapes and murders of women and girls (Nyagumbo, 2021). Uyinene Mrwetyana's murder was the catalysis to the nation-wide protests, including a protest of 5000 people outside parliament calling for a state of emergency for GBV (Gouws, 2021). This outcry was also made internationally viral through the #AmINext that trended on Twitter. GBV is rife against women and girls in South Africa. The abovementioned campaigns and protests are outlined to paint a generalised picture regarding the dialogue women find themselves in when it comes to GBV.

Understanding gender-based violence (GBV) and rape culture within elite private educational institutions can provide valuable insights into the cultures that sustain homogenous norms of masculinity among the ruling class. In a world dominated by capitalism, the prevalence of uniform masculine norms hampers the diversity of masculinities. The normalisation of stereotypical gender norms, patriarchal masculinity and rape culture, contributes to the enforcement of conformity and penalizing behaviours that deviate from traditional notions of 'manliness'.

As mentioned, investigative journalism provides insight into how single-sex elite private schools serve as breeding grounds for sexism and patriarchy, closely intertwined with rape culture and GBV. This exposure sheds light on the fact that learners within these institutions often experience sexism and fall victim to various forms of GBV during their academic years. The journalist Warren Chalklen (2019), a product of an all-boys elite private school system, regrets that his education did not adequately equip him with ideals of compassion, equality, and justice. Chalklen (2019) acknowledges spending his adult life unlearning and relearning

ingrained sexist behaviours acquired from the institutional sexism prevalent in such schools (Chalklen, 2019).

Chalklen's (2019) personal experiences documented in his high school journal reveal instances of sexual abuse and the normalisation of misogynistic behaviour within the school environment (Chalklen, 2019). The pervasive nature of these incidents indicates that schools like the one Chalklen attended, are reflective of South Africa's deeply ingrained patriarchal rape culture. Chalklen (2019) argues that his schooling contributed to the internalisation of socialised misogyny, preparing him for inhumane treatment towards women and reinforcing a repressive societal stance against them.

Elite private schools in South Africa, while modest in number, exert significant influence on the country's educational landscape (Chalklen, 2019). Originally established as white educational institutions for the preparation of young white boys for colonial administration, Chalklen (2019) says that these schools continue to perpetuate racial, class-based, and gender inequalities even in post-apartheid South Africa. Chalklen (2019) contends that the value system of these schools prioritises white masculinity, leading to the reinforcement of erroneous ideas, linking manhood with sexual power and gender aggression.

The *My Only Story* podcast, hosted by investigative journalist Deon Wiggett in 2021, further explores the issue of silence and cover-ups within elite educational institutions. Wiggett (2021) highlights the prevalence of cultures of silence around problematic behaviours among students and employees, exposing the inadequacies in addressing issues such as pedophilia within these institutions. The podcast's second season investigates the death of a SAC student, Thomas Kruger, shedding light on the concealed cultures of elite educational institutions that endanger learners and perpetuate GBV.

In an article by Robyn Wolfson Vorster for Daily Maverick, the alarming statistic that "two in five boys in South Africa are sexually abused before the age of 18" is emphasised, with 20% of these cases occurring within school setting (Vorster, 2023). Vorster underscores the correlation between traumatic childhood experiences like sexual abuse and an increased likelihood of suicide attempts, particularly in cases of early trauma onset. Recent accounts of GBV and suicides, such as the case of a learner from St Johns College, highlight the ongoing prominence of the issue in elite private schools. The normalisation of violence and

sexualization of femininity within these settings suggests a prioritisation of institutional reputation and generational traditions over the safety of learners.

The persistent normalisation of hierarchical violence and the cultivation of a homogenous ruling class masculinity in elite private schools demand a systemic examination through pro-feminist educational strategies. The study presented here is rooted in this context, aiming to address the generations of normalised violence and its impact on shaping attitudes within these educational institutions.

1.3 Elite private education

Private school education constitutes a small but substantial component of the South African educational system (Randall, 1980). The literature on the composition of South Africa's private education industry is vast in democratic South Africa. However, for the purposes of this study, we will focus one, the many, South African elite private schools. These schools tend to replicate foreign school models (for example, British public schools), imitating many of their ethos, practices, curriculum material and pedagogical techniques.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the concept of the 'public school' first emerged (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016). This saw an era where the Bishop of Winchester established Winchester College in 1382 (Flemming, 1944: 7) and the beginning of a new era in English education, as for the first time, an independent institution for educating boys was established, rather than being added onto a collegiate church (Randall, 1980). William of Wykeham, the founder of Winchester College, definitely had a charity school in mind, and he stated that the institution would admit "poor and needy scholars" (Randall, 1980). However, it became apparent that this word referred not to the very poor, but rather to the sons of working/ middle class men and fairly destitute aristocracy and gentry. In addition to the scholars, a limited number of 'commoners' were to be allowed but were required to pay for their 'commons' or boarding (Randall, 1980). This is the first discernible trend towards the admittance of fee-paying students from families with financial means. Peter Randall (1980) refers to this as a classic example of the concept he calls 'very English' – words that acquire meanings that appear to contradict what they actually convey. Another example is the term 'public school'.

Most South African elite private schools did not historically overtly play a leading role in the formation of elitist identities as the British Oxbridge or American Ivy League College system did (Squelch, 1997). However, South African Anglican schools form the dominant percentage in the private sector of education and have maintained the most comparable elitist agenda which strives to educate for leadership (Squelch, 1997).

For the purposes of this study, we will focus on one of South Africa's elite Anglican private school – which for ethical reasons we will be titling the Blue School. Anglican private schools were founded by prominent a colonial missionaries, who received funding to establish a schools in the colonies to serve three purposes: first, to provide sound Christian education to boys, in accordance with the Church of England, and to perform as a centre of missionary operation for increased efficacy of the colony (Randell, 1980). Catering for over 450 pupils worldwide, staring from Grade 8 to matric the school claims that pupils experience individual attention aiming to foster and focus on individual talent (N/A 2024). Broadly the school ensures a passionate approach to each boy's schooled life, developing character and to assist their journey to his full potential (N/A, 2024).

The Blue School makes claims of being an innovative independent school, based on the "house system" model, a key traditional pillar to English Boarding Schools.

Randell (1980) describes schools such as The Blue School as:

> boarding houses with a hierarchy of prefects and monitors who control much of the daily business': a benevolent fagging system; elite societies with restricted memberships (the Alchemists — a nice medieval touch, the Cornish literary society); major and minor sports; a pipe band; a tutorial system;... very much the heart of [the Blue School].

In 2023, BusinessTech (2023) recorded a comparison of price inflation in 2022 and 2023 and rated the top, most-costly elite private schools based on their yearly tuition in 2023. In addition to paying for the prestige, traditions and spectacular buildings and grounds fees are typically required for various levies such as Information Technology and infrastructure, additional food charges and extra mural activities and trips (BusinessTech, 2023). In descending order, were Hilton College with an increase of 7.8% (R369 920.00), Michael House (R347 680.00 per year)

and St Andrew's College in Makhanda (R340 896.00 per year) (BusinessTech, 2023). The aforementioned schools, notably all-male schools, have a long colonial history.

This thesis provides insights into the landscape of private education in South Africa, particularly focusing on elite private schools that emulate foreign models, such as British public schools. It delves into the historical origins of the 'public school' concept and traces the development of fee-paying institutions, exemplified by the school in this study (Blue School).

However, there is a need to broaden this research into contextual histories that normalise hierarchical violence and the cultivation of a homogenous ruling class masculinity in elite private schools.

The Blue School, established in the 19th century, reflects the influence of colonial missionaries and maintains an Anglican elitist agenda. This is emphasised through discourse highlighting the school's architecture, traditions and its ranking among the top most-expensive elite private schools in South Africa in 2023, highlighting the enduring impact of colonial history on institutions such as this.

1.4 Political science and ubiquitous power

The historical context of South Africa has heightened sensitivity towards race and class, intricately intertwined with gender dynamics. It is imperative to investigate the role of race in masculinity, GBV and the prevailing rape cultures that exist in post-apartheid South Africa as ongoing discourses that strangle progress to a more gender-equitable democratic state.

The exploration of politics, encompassing political philosophy and theory, along with the discipline of international relations, predominantly revolves around issues related to the state – its establishment, governance and security (Heywood, 2001; Dhal, 1963). Conventional theories in international relations posit that the Westphalian state serves as the primary unit for organising human life and is the central actor in global politics. Rooted in the works of early philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, Aristotle and Niccolò Machiavelli, realism and liberalism grapple with questions of state sovereignty and strategies for ensuring state security. The twentieth century is marked by a political crisis and world wars which prompted the discipline to focus extensively on issues of war and peace. This emphasis emerged from a "passionate desire to prevent another war" (Tickner, 1992: 9).

The connection between masculinity and politics has been enduring and widely acknowledged. Throughout history, qualities associated with 'manliness', such as toughness, courage, power, independence and physical strength, have been highly prized attributes in the political realm, particularly in the discourses of international politics (Tickner, 1992). Tickner (1992:18) posited that the predominance of masculinity in the execution of international politics is also mirrored in the academic study of international politics. Key concepts central to international relations theory and practice, such as power, sovereignty and security, have been formulated in terms aligned with masculinity (Tickner, 1992: 18)

For this study, political philosopher Michael Foucault informs our primary concern around power, particularly the manner in which power, discourse and social identities are shaped within the state (Foucault, 1972). Foucault's work was directed at entire systems of thought or 'knowledge systems' (Hacking, 2004), such as medicine, religion, psychology and law. His focus was on the processes through which individuals are shaped into institutionally recognisable categories of subjects, either willingly or by external pressure. Foucault contends that discourse can serve as both a tool and an outcome of power, contributing to the reinforcement of power while also exposing its vulnerabilities (Foucault, 1978: 100–101). Instead of merely portraying or reflecting reality, discourses actively construct social reality and are performed and contested within the realm of the individual's body (Mills, 2003).

The concept of power has been a subject of extensive debate among scholars in numerous scholarly disciplines and is central to the discipline of political science. Different perspectives include power as the capacity of influential agents to impose their will on the powerless, the ability to modify others' states through resource provision or punishment and the individual, interpersonal and organisational viewpoints (Shook, Tordoff, Clark, Hardwick., St. Pierre Nelson, & Kantrowitz-Gordon, 2022). Power is often seen as a possession, with the powerless striving to obtain it. Definitions may focus on the actor's intentions, the location or distribution of power, the unit of analysis (societies, institutions, groups or individuals) and the outcome of interest (Shook et al., 2022).

Theorists such as Robert Dahl (1975) and Max Weber (1986) offer insights into power dynamics. Dahl (1975) emphasises power distribution within communities, examining ruling elites and their influence on different strata. Weber (1986) associates power with concepts like authority and rule, defining it as the probability of an actor achieving their will despite

resistance. Both Dahl and Weber discuss ‘power over’, a concept criticized by some scholars as either misconceived or too narrow. On the other hand, Bertrand Russell (1986) classifies power as the production of intended effects, distinguishing between power over human beings and non-human forms of life. He also explores the coercive power of the state over its citizens, taking a more traditional approach. The various definitions converge on the idea that power is wielded by certain groups or individuals to control others and is considered a possession owned by some.

Foucault’s contribution to the discussion on power extends beyond sociology to encompass all fields in the social sciences and humanities (Sadan 1997: 37). Unlike the other approaches discussed earlier, Foucault’s conceptualisation of power diverges, contending that power should not be seen as a possession wielded by specific individuals to dominate others. Instead, he posits it as a force exercised by everyone whenever there is opportunity (see, for example, Foucault 1975: 26-27). Michel Foucault’s theoretical approach to power, emphasises its dispersed and dynamic nature in society (Mills, 2003). Unlike theorists such as Marx Weber and Robert Dahl, who focused on regulated and legitimate forms of power, Foucault contends that power is diffused across various institutions and everyday interactions (Foucault, 1978, 1979, 2003; Mills, 2003).

A significant aspect of Foucault’s work is the exploration of biopower, distinct from premodern sovereign power, focusing on the regulation and control of individuals rather than on seizing life (Foucault, 2003; Taylor, 2011). Biopower operates at the sub-state level within various institutions, diffusing throughout society and subjugating bodies through control, monitoring and surveillance (Foucault, 2003; Taylor, 2011). Foucault’s interest in the nuanced details of power highlights its localised and intimate mechanisms, shifting from a focus on the overarching authority of the state (Foucault, 1986; Mills, 2003). His exploration of power delves into individual behaviours and interactions to reveal broader patterns leading to national norms or regulations (Foucault, 1986; Lynch, 2012).

However, Amanda Gouws (2021) critiques Foucault for failing to theorise the biopolitics of colonialism, specifically settler colonialism. Gouws’s (2021) work investigating sexual violence through the lens of biopolitics found that the systemic effects of settler colonialism revealed that specifically women in post-colonial South African society are subject to high levels of sexual violence. Gouws (2021) specifically looks into the application of state

exception and bare life to settler colonial states where race, gender and sexuality are central to the biopolitics that creates conditions for abandonment by law and neglect from law and state agencies.

Power, according to Foucault, is a multiplicity of force relations immanent in specific spheres, occurring within various domains or discourses (Foucault, 1978; Lynch, 2011). Power is not given, exchanged or regained, but is exercised and only exists in actions, with individuals serving as vehicles of power (Foucault, 1980; Mills, 2003). This dispersed and ever-present nature of power in social relations challenges traditional notions of power confined to specific interactions or institutional structures (Foucault, 1975; Mills, 2003). Power, as Foucault argues, is ubiquitous and operates in all kinds of relationships, permeating the social body (Foucault, 1978; Lynch, 2011).

Considering that this study investigates the ubiquitous power that permeates social identity production and the maintenance of hegemonic discourses that perpetuate heteronormative cycles of gendered violence, intersectionality is relevant in this study. Intersectionality accounts for identity categories of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and others in relation to power and hegemony in social, political, cultural and economic spheres of society (Gouws, 2017).

Aligning with the African feminist notion, intersectionality in essence, goes beyond static identity categorisation, encompassing the dynamic interplay of power, privilege and relational dynamics among different identity groups (Gouws, 2017). This involves understanding the lived experiences of individuals in relation to power structures and inequalities, such as comparing the experiences of black working-class women with those of white middle-class women (Gouws, 2017). The concept acknowledges that the racial aspect of white women's experiences is often overlooked, and yet, unfortunately, these experiences are sometimes generalised to represent the broader spectrum of women's experiences (Gouws, 2017). Intersectional and African feminist lenses have been used to engage with the multiplicity of South African masculinities. Mfecane (2018) suggests that transformative interventions for South African masculinity have to account for the African concepts of personhood. Mfecane (2018) critiques current South African masculinities transformation programmes, specifically scrutinizing black African masculinities. The application of Western hegemonic masculinities throttles the critical reflection of gendered beliefs of individual boys and men (Mfecane, 2018).

Scholars from an array of disciplines advocate an explanation of the theoretical scope and intervention areas (Mfecane, 2018; Dube, 2015; Ratele, 2006;),. This has prompted an increased application of intersectionality engaging an aspects approach tackling aspects of class, race, poverty and economic marginalisation (Gouws, 2017). A multi-level intervention, that proposes targeted micro-level interventions, allows for nuanced understanding of the vulnerabilities young men experience related to identity and sexuality formation, whilst recognising the potential of implicit internalised hegemonic gender norms (Shefer, Kruger & Schepers, 2015).

Research uncovering sexual violence and its deeply rooted drivers is situated in a dark shadow of South Africa political conflict (Gqola, 2007; Hassim, 2009). Determining whether political violence is the root cause of sexual violence or a consequence, remains unresolved. Nevertheless, it is clear that male identities are shaped through and expressed in acts of violence and that hegemonic, aggressive masculinities inhibit the capabilities and autonomy of women (Hassim, 2009). Pumla Gqola (2007: 118) emphasises the pervasive nature of gender-based violence, describing it as ordinary, ubiquitous, and normalised. As mentioned above, the evoked protests catalyzed a decade after the 2006 trail of Jacob Zuma depicted the turmoil and inconclusively relating to issues of gender identities and sexualities in the South African political sphere (Hassim, 2009). The landscape of politics shifted in response, spurring a new lexicon of intersectionality, expanding the lens of African feminist discourses. The rise of radical black queer politics embraced nonbinary and sexual identities (Hassim, 2009), rooted in decoloniality. This lexicon emphasises the idea of 'triple oppression' – of sexuality, gender, race and class – as mutually formative in the positioning of people's economic hierarchy (Dlakavu, 2017). Collectively, radical black feminism interrogates the intersection of race and patriarchy; focusing on long term change despite socio-political consequences (Dlakavu, 2017).

This thesis explores the recollections and narratives of young men (whom are alumni of the Blue School) in terms of how they navigated and experienced masculine identity formation in the school context during their adolescence and deciphers their awareness regarding GBV and rape culture. I use an intersectional approach together with Foucauldian discourse analysis and African feminisms as a political lens for a nuanced analysis of the formation and maintenance of elite masculinities which are arguably constituted by 'hegemonic masculinities'.

1.5 Research Questions

It is in this context that questions regarding the intersectionality of race, gender and class and their contribution to the perpetuation of GBV and rape culture in South Africa emerge. This study seeks to investigate several core questions:

1. Are elite private schools sites for masculine identity formation that perpetuate rape culture and GBV in South Africa?
    a) How is masculinity formed in elite private schools in South Africa?
        i. What attributes should men attain to have accepted and celebrated masculinity in elite private schools?
        ii. What forms of silencing, sanction and punishment are used to discipline young men who do not perform accepted manhood norms?
    b) How do young men in private elite schools understand the relationship between GBV, rape culture and masculinity?
        i) Do masculinities upheld and maintained by the South African private schooling system prepare learners to be aware of and act against GBV and rape culture?

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 served to introduce the context in which the study takes place and outlined the prevalence of GBV and rape culture in popular protest and societal South African discourses, with relevance to elite private schools. The themes of violence and hetero-patriarchal masculinity emerged as significant in the ways that we have come to understand elite masculinities. Additionally, the reality of the of the GBV epidemic, particularly in the educational landscape but specifically in elite private schools, provided a site from which to examine a dominating discourse perpetuating GBV and rape culture through the minutiae of hetero-hegemonic discourses. This chapter also briefly outlines the contestant nature of hegemonic masculinities as a state of being in the context of post-colonial South Africa.

Chapter 2 of the study provides a historical thread of the socio-historical context of elite private schooling, to locate discourses of dominance across disciplines in South Africa. I examine elite private schools as sites of personhood formation, whilst also maintaining hetero-patriarchal

traditionalism. The historical evolution of elite private schools is also be used to discuss how pro-African feminist conceptions of gender and violence have emerged to replace mainstream conceptions of masculinities, that have previously been inadequate in demonstrating how the personal is intertwined with the political.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological underpinnings of the study. This chapter locates the study at the Blue School, South Africa. The study makes use of qualitative research methods, wherein semi-structured, in-depth interviews with seven alumni who attended the school between 2011 and 2021. In this chapter, I also make a case for the significance of the Foucauldian theory of power and governmentality to contribute to individuals' personal identity and ideas.

Chapter 4 details the findings of the study, and the major themes are identified. The findings demonstrate that identity formation within SAC is complex and often reflected as a Western-centric hegemonic masculinity entrenched in heteronormativity. This is captured through the shared experiences of alumni of in the course of adherence to traditional values, submission to hierarchical structures, collective mockery of vulnerability and the instillation of competitive individualism.

Chapter 5 of the study discusses the themes detailed in Chapter 4, and links them with the theoretical frameworks put forth in Chapter 2. This allows for a greater understanding of hegemonic masculinities in democratic South Africa, how these men function and navigate their lives within society and the nuanced experiences of GBV and rape culture for alumni once they leave the school bubble.

Chapter 6 concludes the study.

CHAPTER 2: To Grow to Maturity: (Un) Defining Gender, GBV, Rape Culture and Ruling Class Adolescence

The literature relevant to this research project stems from diverse disciplinary arguments. To comprehensively make the correlations between masculinity and GBV, it is imperative to account for the nuanced drivers that normalise GBV into systemic cultures of society. The literature is expansive when it comes to gendered violence. However, for this research, there is a focus on a specific area of masculinity formation in the setting of elite private schooling. Therefore, to fully account for the contributing factors and complex nature of identity formation of an individual, this research draws on psychoanalytic development theory. Alongside this the institution itself is a powerful force, therefore, we look into literature that situates private schools particularly as sites that preserve hegemony. This leads me to emphasise the need to interrogate the nuanced maintenance and creation of hegemonic masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.1 Conceptualisations of gender-based violence

To grasp the complexity of GBV it is imperative to first define gender. Gender is conceptually grounded in the gendered dynamics that exist in society. Gender is conceptualised through social and political attributes, and the opportunities that come with the identities of male and female (Nyagumbo, 2021). Jenkins (2007, in Nyagumbo, 2021: 10) refers to gender as the societal expectations of the sexes. She further extends her definition by describing gender as socially sanctioned roles that are assigned to males and females. These socially constructed gender norms/roles are perpetuated through socialisation (Peacock & Levack, 2004: 173).

Scholars of gender studies reiterate the need to distinguish between gender and sex as this can affect how one approaches gendered violence (Nyagumbo, 2021: 10). Scholars argue that gender provides a construct of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, gender and power dynamics (Nyagumbo, 2021). This is where feminists differ, because from the feminist perspective, gender as a concept does not refer to biological differences but rather as culturally shaped and defined characteristics that are associated with masculine and feminine identities (Gqola, 2007, 2015). This results in specific expectations (known as gender

roles) that gender identities are expected to align to, in order to function in society (Nyagumbo, 2021:10).

More specifically, gender roles are understood to be the non-physiological component of sex that is culturally appropriated into gendered identities (Kann, 2008). It is argued that gender role expectations influence an individual's identity at birth with a child's earliest exposure to gender-role expectations from their parents (Kann, 2008). From birth, girls and boys are treated differently by parents and society. Girls are expected to embody the stereotypically sweet, sensitive and submissive role that acquires meaning though social interactions (Nyagumbo, 2021:10), whereas boys are expected to be brave and strong and therefore boys perceivably have a more dominating role (Nyagumbo, 2021). It is these societal binaries that affect behaviours and fundamentally influence GBV.

2.1.1 Defining gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any acts or threats or actions that result in any harm or suffering experienced by an individual or group, on the basis of their gender identity (Mabaso & Ndlovu, 2019). Human Rights Watch, in 2001, defined GBV as the "Violence that promotes gender inequality: it includes all acts that inflict physical and/or sexual suffering, acts of cohesion or other deprivation of liberty" (Nyagumbo, 2021: 11). For this study, we define GBV as physical or explicit sexual violence (ie rape, sexual assault, sexual coercions and intimate partner violence) (Nyagumbo, 2021). This definition also recognises other forms of interpersonal, physical and non-physical GBV that are implicit or imposed on the basis of an individual's gender identity or motivated by gendered imperatives (ie homophobia, effeminiphobia, gendered corporal punishment, gendered bullying and verbal/psychological abuse) (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021). Whilst the primary focus in GBV literature is on men's violence against women, for the purposes of this study, I include violence enacted as an act of gender enforcement or as a resource to affirm a sense of gendered dominance (Mosavel, Ahmed & Simon 2005: 2), particularly in elite private educational institutions.

Male-on-male violence is a significant social issue that manifests in various forms, including physical altercations, bullying, and organized crime. This violence often stems from societal expectations of masculinity, where men are pressured to assert dominance, display physical

strength, and suppress emotions (Connell, 1995). These expectations are deeply embedded in cultural norms that equate masculinity with aggression and control, leading men to engage in violent behaviors to affirm their manhood (Kimmel, 2008). Such violence can occur in diverse settings, including schools, workplaces, and public spaces, often exacerbated by peer pressure and the need to conform to hegemonic masculine ideals. For example, in educational settings, boys may bully their peers to establish social hierarchy and demonstrate toughness, a behavior reinforced by the broader cultural milieu (Messerschmidt, 1993).

The recognition of masculinity as a social category embedded in power, dominance and violence is crucial. However, with a wider range of actors, including transgender men, gender-queer and non-binary persons or women who personify masculine traits, there is a potential for an increase in GBV or a qualitative shift in GBV (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021). There is a need in research for more theorising on the connections and disconnections between maleness, masculinity, men and violence. As the impact of male-on-male violence extends beyond immediate physical harm, leading to long-term psychological trauma, perpetuating cycles of aggression, and fostering environments of fear and hostility. For instance, incarcerated men often experience heightened levels of violence due to the toxic masculinity pervasive in prison culture, which further impedes their access to mental health care and rehabilitation (Kupers, 2005).

Attitudes towards sexuality and gender relations are normalised by cultures and traditions deeply inscribed into societal discourses (Mosavel et al., 2005: 1). Cultures within society normalise and promote ideas about masculinity and femininity, regardless of the positive and negative aspects of these identities (Mabaso & Ndlovu, 2019). In the context of South Africa, the racialised and gendered characteristics of inequality have hardly shifted since the establishment of a democracy in 1994 (Nyagumbo, 2021). Therefore, it is imperative to account for the intersections between gender, race and class. Gender-based violence should not be depicted as individual isolated instances while seeking structural solutions to GBV and sexual violence; rather, GBV should be recognised as a societal issue entrenched in historically embedded structures (eg colonialism) (Minister, 2018: 35).

Carrillo (2000: 11) argues that GBV is “largely perpetuated by men, silenced by custom, institutionalised in laws and state systems and passed from one generation to the next”. The

statistics and literature highlight women and girls as the most vulnerable '– disproportionally affected in South Africa (Nyagumbo, 2021:11).

Gender-based violence has evolved in accordance with the discourses of gender inequalities. As a concept iit ntersects with race, ethnicity and class, which are deeply entrenched within society, therefore making it hard to uproot (Nyagumbo, 2021: 11). The understanding of GBV has broadened to incorporate queer theorist and postmodern feminist scholars who highlight that "not all males are 'men' and not all men are male, and not all people that enact or perform masculine qualities are men or male" (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021: 23). Peretz and Vidmar (2021) pose an approach that increases and broadens the recognition of men's multiple relations to GBV. Whilst the notion of men as perpetrators of GBV is recognised by the literature, research has shifted to recognise GBV as a social problem. Expanding the scope of GBV research assists to mould and support more effective polices, while providing a more contemporary and complex understanding of gender as a social structure (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021). It explores the impact of GBV in different contexts of men across identity groups (ie race, sexuality class, religion, culture and ethnicity) in addition to the relationship between masculinity and GBV which shapes lives of non-normative gendered identities (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021).

2.1.2 Theorising rape culture

Inextricably, GBV is linked to an array of social problems and manifests in diverse contexts. Prevalent to GBV perpetuation is how rape culture intersects with numerous cultural discourses, understandings of and responses to GBV (Minister, 2018). Rape culture enforces rigid gender norms with violence and then uses those stringent gender norms to further police social non-conformity (Minister, 2018).

Rape culture, a concept incorporated into feminist analysis, surfaced through feminist scholarship and activist literature in the United States in the mid-1970s (Kessel, 2022: 131). In the mid-1990s the term 'rape culture' migrated into mainstream discourses and became interrogated in the literature more and more. Despite the popularisation it invoked in mainstream discourses, rape culture is typically understood as a climate that normalises aggressive heterosexual male violence towards women (Kessel, 2022: 131). In 1970, rape culture as a concept experienced a shift, due to radical feminist movements that conceived rape as more than an isolated, individual behavioural issue but rather an expression of dominance

within societal structure (Kessel, 2022). It is a culture that goes beyond the discourse and practices of rape, it reinforces the pervasive threat of rape and it regulates feminine behaviour (Kessel, 2022: 131). Rape culture regards violence as a natural part of life and believes that there is a link between violence and sexuality. It emphasises that males play an active role while women are more passive, and that men are accustomed to violence (Phipps, Ringrose, Renold & Jackson, 2018: 1). As a phenomenon, rape culture sustains and promotes beliefs about GBV, particularly rape myths that produce doubt in victims of GBV (Phipps et al., 2018: 1).

According to Gqola (2015: 12), rape culture "makes rape acceptable". Rape culture insinuates that males cannot be held accountable for their decision to rape or conduct sexual violence (Gqola, 2015: 12). It perpetuates the "pervasive and dangerous patriarchal fiction" that all or any men cannot help or control themselves when faced with female bodies (Gqola, 2015: 12). Furthermore, radical feminists argue that rape itself is a political act, which is prevalent in the South African context and is pivotal in the scholarly explanation that there is a sense of 'everywhereness' when it comes to sexual violence (Kessel, 2022). This aligns with Kessel's (2022) argument that recognises rape as a political act. Rape culture as a concept needs to extend beyond horizons of male dominance and include political domination like heteronormativity, colonialism, white supremacy and xenophobia (Kessel, 2022).

According to Minister (2018: 35), "rape culture is defined as socially acceptable practices that legitimise violence to regulate socially nonconforming actions such as manifestations of sexuality and gender". Minister's (2018), description of rape culture has various elements that require clarification. Firstly, the description above implies that rape culture is a socially acceptable pattern or culture that polices not only femininity, but also masculinity, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and capacity (Minister, 2018). Secondly, this definition implies that rape culture legitimises violence and explicitly avoids modifying the concept of violence with the sexual (Minister, 2018). Lastly, the concept indicates that rape culture polices socially nonconforming behaviours such as sexuality and gender expression (Minister, 2018). Ultimately, rape culture is based on the belief that all humans are either male or female, that there are significant biological differences between the sexes, and that gendered expectations in public and private life are overt or covert.

The need for purity normalises rape culture: knowing the relationship between purity culture and rape culture allows us to reframe rape and GBV as a cultural and religious issue (Minister, 2018). Purity culture adheres to social norms that have been defined as pure while rejecting social norms that have been identified as impure. The breadth of purity culture cannot only be associated with evangelical religion since it fails to represent the extent of society's expectation of purity. Minority identities that are not sexually normative are used to justify or explain rape. Crucially, cultural and religious notions about purity continue to influence how cultures respond to sexuality and gender identities (Minister, 2018). As a result, if we regard GBV to be a cultural problem that targets individuals, we are not addressing the systemic issue and may aggravate it rather than alleviate it.

Kessel (2022: 32), on the other hand, rejects the notion that rape culture is defined as the normalisation of sexual violence by men against women. Kessel (2022: 32) proposes the redefinition of rape culture from a more intersectional perspective with a focus on the power rape culture exerts rather than focusing on who its subjects are. Kessel (2022: 32) defines rape culture

> as a set of intersubjective and collectively reproduced myths, discourses, and practices that individuals use to assign interpretations of rape victimhood and perpetration, innocence and guilt, and power and powerlessness that, in turn, reproduce a culture that normalizes rape and other sexual violence as an effective (though outwardly condemned) way to reinforce relations of subordination.

This is represented in mainstream media, law, the quantity and quality of news coverage, institutions, music, literature and many other avenues of society.

Given the definition of GBV above, I would like to align with Kessel's (2022) definitions of rape culture to the extent that it reproduces the normalisation of rape, sexual violence and gender-based violence. These discourses, myths and practices that form rape culture are an interpretive framework through which society makes the distinction between rape and sex, victims and liars, rapists and good guys (Kessel, 2022). Therefore, rape culture needs to consider cultural mythologies and discourses regarding rape and GBV through daily practices where sexual violence and GBV act as the persistent mode of domination.

Delving into the complexities of GBV and rape culture, highlighting the role of societal norms in shaping gender identities and power relations stresses that GBV is a manifestation of deep-

seated cultural and structural norms, not merely individual actions. The calls for an intersectional perspective are clear, recognising that addressing GBV requires acknowledging how gender intersects with race, ethnicity and class. The text advocates for systemic change, urging a departure from individual blame to a broader confrontation with the societal myths and structures that normalise GBV and rape culture, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more equitable society.

2.2 Masculinity or masculinities

There has been an increasing interest in the discipline of gender studies researching young boys and men in recent years (see for example, Connell, 1995, 2000; Frosh et al., 2002; Kann, 2008; Messner, 1997; Morrell, 2001). Many of these studies have delved into the issue of what constitutes masculinity. In this chapter, I discuss several definitions of masculinity and critically enquires whether we should talk about masculinity or masculinities. In the past two to three decades, the study of masculinity has gained significant attention in various social science fields, including psychology, sociology and anthropology. The focus of masculinity studies within the social sciences has primarily been led by sociologists such as Connell (1995, 2000), Messner (1997), and historians like Morrell (1998, 2001).

Alongside the increased interest in masculinity studies there has been a growing body of literature that intersects masculinity studies as a mitigating response to GBV, rape culture and gender inequality (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020; Britton, 2006; Kann, 2008; Messner, 2016; Morrell et al., 2012; Langa, 2012). This study aims to investigate the formation of masculinity in elite private schools as a means to contribute to the body of literature that investigates the persistent nature of GBV and rape culture in environments of class-defined prestige.

Masculinity has long been a subject of inquiry, prompting questions about its definitions, meaning and formation. Broadly, masculinity is assumed to be an inherent and natural aspect of being a man (Langa, 2012: 29). Numerous scholars argue that masculinity is shaped by men's thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Langa, 2012: 29). According to Morrell (2001) and Connell (1995), masculinity is a distinct gender identity specific to males and is perceived as a social construct primarily influenced by gender socialisation. Scholars also emphasise that the masculine gender identity is intricately linked to femininity and can only be understood in relation to it (Connell 1995; Langa, 2012: 29). Therefore, masculinity is considered a gendered

form of existence shaped by cultural and social influences, varying in expression across different cultures and often positioned in contrast to femininity (Langa, 2012: 29). Although masculinity is often depicted as powerful, dominant and strong, its definition is not fixed, making the process of defining masculinity complex. Various definitions of masculinity exist and researchers interpret and use the concept differently, based on their respective fields of study (Kann, 2008).

The most current social science research has emphasised that there is no universally applicable model of masculinity prevalent across all cultures (Langa, 2012; Ratele, 2006; Mfecane, 2018; Dube, 2015). Masculinity varies, depending on factors such as class, race, ethnicity and culture. Consequently, scholars argue that rather than a singular 'masculinity', we should refer to 'masculinities' to encompass the diverse manifestations of masculinity across different contexts and historical periods (Connell, 2000; Frosh et al., 2002). Clatterbaugh (1998, in Connell, 2000) highlights the challenge in defining 'masculinity' or 'masculinities' due to inconsistent usage by various authors. However, several researchers, including Connell (1995; 2000), Morrell (2001), and Frosh et al. (2002), contend that it is essential to discuss masculinities instead of a singular masculinity, viewing it as a beneficial theoretical shift. Moreover, they posit that masculinity is not an exclusive characteristic of men, emphasising that men's studies and the study of masculinities are not interchangeable, although they share significant overlaps. Given the focus of this study on comprehending how a group of boys define their gendered selves, particularly in terms of masculinity, it is appropriate to frame this research within the context of studying young masculinities despite significant similarities.

Morrell (1998) uses Connell's model of masculinities to discern variations among different groups of men categorised by factors such as race, class and culture. However, Mfecane's (2018) evaluation of the model's application in South Africa suggests that scholars often overlook a crucial qualification made by Connell who emphasises a model of masculinities specifically representative of patterns of masculinity in accordance with Western gender. Numerous research findings and statements merely reiterate Connell's theoretical assertions concerning the subordinate status of homosexual men. When discussing masculinity in the South African context, Swart (2001: 76-77) illustrates the existence of multiple definitions of masculinity characterised by dynamic hierarchies of identity. However, literature that examines South African male experiences as distinct and varying across different socio-historical-cultural contexts does not receive equal social respect (Langa, 2012; Mfecane, 2018).

The advocation for an African-centred perspective of masculinities, does not intend to dispute established theories of masculinity originating in the global North. Rather, the goal is to embrace what Nyamnjoh (2012b: 148) refers to as 'epistemological conviviality' – a situation in which diverse knowledge systems coexist without one dominating the others.

2.2.1 Hegemonic masculinities

The notion of hegemonic masculinity was popularised twenty years ago, initially being introduced in discussions related to a study on social inequality in Australian high schools. It was also brought forth in conversations regarding the formation of various expressions of masculinity and in debates concerning the involvement of men in Australian labour politics (Connell, 1995, 2005). The term 'hegemony' is derived from the research of Italian sociologist Antonio Gramsci, particularly his examination of class dynamics (Langa, 2012: 33). Gramsci, a Marxist sociologist, introduced the term hegemony to analyse and critique the dominance the bourgeoisie exerted over the working-class majority within a capitalist economic framework. Hegemony encapsulates the structural and ideological or discursive dominance in a particular set of intrapersonal relations, primarily pertaining to class position and power (Langa, 2012).

Connell (1995) introduced the term 'hegemonic masculinity' to describe how certain men utilise power to uphold authority and supremacy not only over women but also over various sub-groups of men. He defined hegemonic masculinity as the set of gendered behaviours and attitudes that provides space for patriarchal legitimacy within society, securing the dominant status of men and inferior feminine bodies (Connell, 1995: 77). Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is the phrase utilised to emphasise the prevailing cultural stereotype of masculinity (Connell, 1995), which encompasses the social construct that men are innately seen as courageous, powerful, assertive and enduring in numerous cultures (Connell, 1995). 'Manliness' in the conversation of hegemonic masculinity is attached to the demand or be entitlement to sexual intercourse with women and girls. Consequently, hegemonic masculinity primarily revolves around being a heterosexual, physically fit, competitive male who perceives women as sexual objects of desire and competes with other males for opportunities to be with women (Connell, 1995; Langa, 2012). The bedrock of hegemonic masculinity is the relationship between heterosexuality and homophobia (Langa, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity is not characterised by domination over women but rather by domination over feminine bodies

(ie homosexual men, females, women, trans-men) – in other words it is the hegemony over women and hegemony over subordinate masculinities (Langa, 2012).

While Connell's theory has made significant advancements in the field of masculinity studies, it has faced criticism for its lack of precise elaboration on how men actively navigate and shape their masculine identities (Langa, 2012: 41). The emphasis of the theory was primarily on macro-sociological concerns, with limited attention given to the intricate psychological processes at the individual level. The central argument that Connell's framework overlooks is an in-depth exploration of the discursive tactics employed by men to contest prevailing norms of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). Furthermore, the categories (hegemonic, subordinated, marginalised and complicit) may not always be easily distinguishable and can be overly restrictive in capturing the diverse positioning and strategic engagements with hegemonic masculinity within specific contexts (Langa, 2012). As stated by Wetherrell and Edley (1999), the 'hegemonic masculinity model' proposed by Connell is deemed inadequate for fully comprehending the intricate process of negotiating masculine identities (Connell, 1995: 336). While these categories might be useful at a broad or sociologically analytical level, this conceptualisation of masculine expression fails to encapsulate the intricate complexities of a man's lived identity and experiences. Hegemonic masculinity does not refer to characteristics of 'real' men, but rather a set of ideals that individuals aspire to (Connell, 1995). It is important to note Gramsci's work that explains that hegemonic ideologies preserve, legitimate and naturalise the interests of the powerful at the expense of the powerless (Langa, 2012).

Despite some critiques and perhaps as a response to them, Connell has made substantial changes to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. He now recognises the diversity, fluidity and multiplicity of masculinities included in respect of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic positions (Connell, 2000, 2005). The construct of hegemonic masculinity remains vital in understanding social positioning and the ways in which certain expressions of masculinity become dominant, legitimated and celebrated, and others rendered less legitimate.

Drawing from Connell's work and its subsequent developments, hegemonic masculinity continues to be a key concept for interrogating the perpetuation of power and privilege across gender lines. It serves to illuminate the societal mechanisms that privilege certain groups over others and how these mechanisms are reproduced and challenged. This understanding is crucial

for efforts aimed at promoting gender equity and for challenging the structures that enable gender-based discrimination and violence.

2.2.2 Hegemonic masculinities in democratic South Africa

Morrell (2001) and Connell (1993) contend that masculinity constitutes the gender identity specific to males. They perceive masculinity as a social construct shaped through gender socialisation. Additionally, Connell (1993), Edley and Wetherell (1995) highlight that masculinity is interconnected with femininity and not an isolated concept. Hooks (1982) expands on this, stating that authority is not confined to upper and middle-class white males, but extends across all classes and races. Epstein (1998: 49) underscores the influence of social status, state interactions, personal experiences and societal norms on the development of identities and masculinity. Consequently, pinpointing a singular hegemonic masculinity is challenging due to the dynamic nature of masculinities, which are influenced by a spectrum of contributing variables resulting in both positive and negative masculine attributes (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012).

Historically, in South Africa the state has played a substantial role in people's lives. It dictated their social, racial and economic standing, which in turn impacted the shaping and evolution of male identities (Epstein, 1998). In South Africa, masculinity is deeply rooted in the historical narratives of colonialism, apartheid, slavery and the struggle against these oppressive systems. In the 19th and 20th centuries, South Africa underwent significant historical developments. After Britain took control of the Cape in 1806, the ensuing century saw military expansion, inland migration, mineral exploitation and armed conflicts, notably culminating in the South African War (1899-1902) (Morrell, et al., 2012). From 1910 until 1961 South Africa was deemed a union in the British Commonwealth (Morrell, et al., 2012). This ushered in an additional century of white minority rule marked by disenfranchisement, discriminatory laws and the establishment of a sophisticated state security apparatus, particularly reinforced by the introduction of apartheid in 1948 (Morrell, et al., 2012).

The year 1948 witnessed the rise of Afrikaner nationalists to political power, leading to the implementation of apartheid policies that rigidly segregated various racial groups. This resulted in significant hardships, especially for forcibly relocated black African populations, leading to an expansive pattern of poverty and wealth along racial lines. Belinda Bozzoli (1983)

characterised the resulting gender dynamics as a "patchwork of patriarchies", involving traditional authority in rural areas and patriarchal influence in urban settings, with men dominating the paid workforce (Morrell et al., 2012). Ethnic and national identity impacted white masculinities, necessitating an understanding of the distinctions in white masculinity within English and Afrikaner settings, norms and values. The cultivation of masculinity in young boys emphasised empowerment and physical competence (Dlamini, 2017). Boys were encouraged to be in tune with their bodies, unlike the way in which female bodies are often objectified.

This reveals a gap in literature and it is imperative to investigate the role of whiteness in the analysis of hegemonic masculinity, gender-based violence (GBV) and the prevailing rape culture. In post-apartheid South Africa, the ongoing hyper-focus on black masculinities to address violence situates scholars in an epistemological self-reflexive gaze when looking at the nuances of hegemonic masculinities (Dube, 201). Segregation and supremacy are firmly ingrained in white masculinity through various forms of interpersonal and institutional cultures (Epstein, 1998).

Despite a shift in masculinities within South Africa, remnants of colonial authority and apartheid persist in numerous cultures and arenas of identity formation. This has culminated in an idealised version of masculinity associated with whiteness, middle-class status, heterosexuality, and the archetype of a family man residing with a wife and children. This ideal is closely related to militarisation as a gendered process.

The 'Ideology of Militarism,' as defined by Jacklyn Cock (1991), plays a central role in silencing the prevalence of violence in South Africa. Ignoring this pervasive issue allows it to persist in the country. In the context of modern South Africa, Cock (1991) continues to shape the ideological construction of gender by identifying and emphasizing femininities and masculinities, affirming that militarization bears gendered characteristics. Cock (1994: 152) illustrates this through four prominent examples: the active involvement of women in the militarization process, the likelihood of women in conventional and guerrilla armies, the persistence of patriarchy and the vulnerability of women's gains during times of war, and the way the South African context aligns with gender equality and women's participation. Overall, the militarized backdrop of South Africa influences the formation of masculinities. According to Cock (1994: 152), the process of demilitarization does not result in gender equality. This

finding elucidates how histories of militarization can perpetuate inequalities and violence in a state not explicitly engaged in war.

Understanding militarization is crucial to comprehending the pro- and anti-conscription debate and the objector movement. In the 1980s, South African citizenship was infused with understandings of hegemonic masculinity, defining what it meant to be a 'real man.' This concept was tightly bound to military service as the means through which hegemonic masculinity and citizenship were fulfilled. At the pinnacle of South Africa's 'performance' of masculinity and citizenship was soldiering; to refuse to be a soldier was to forfeit political agency, embodying subordinate masculinity (Connell, 1990, p. 529).

The constructions of military identities also make direct links between masculinity and the state and are fundamental in forming gender and civic identities (Sasson-Levy, 2002, p. 359). Violence, racism, dominance, and control were all integral to the construct of hegemonic masculinity and citizenship for white men. This construction also creates a hierarchy within masculinity, with sexuality and the values attached to it serving as a policing mechanism for individual men. Hegemonic South African men were typically heterosexual, white males who served in the army to protect their mothers, wives, and girlfriends.

Conscription is a significant aspect of the narrative in South Africa, intertwined with militarization and the legacy of authoritarianism. Apartheid necessitated a mechanism to regulate the ruling class, prioritizing heteronormative gender boundaries through citizenship and masculinity. Hence, conscription was introduced (Conway, 2008). Those who objected conscientiously were viewed as a threat to binary gender thinking. The state covertly employed homophobia to stigmatize objectors and advocates for peace.

In 1912 the African National Congress (ANC) was established in resistance to the pass laws and other unjust laws. During the 1940s the ANC, and more specifically the ANC women, became notably more militant. After the 21 March 1960 Sharpeville massacre, the ANC and the PAC were banned on the 8 April 1960, forcing them to operate underground. For five decades the ANC had committed to its policy of non-violence, but the banning reignited debates about the armed struggle (Ellis, 2011). The ANC would officially adopt the armed struggle as a pillar of the anti-apartheid struggle on the 16 December 1961 (Mandela, 1995; Magadla, 2023), while the PAC founded a military wing called Poqo (Kondlo, 2009). Many of

the anti-apartheid organisations in South Africa during the mid-1970s and 80s became widespread and militant, characterised by state violence and extreme repression in the townships, but also by increasing mobilisation of civil society in opposition to apartheid (Morrell, et al., 2012: 15).

Connell's typology (1993) defines hegemonic masculinity as the accepted configuration of gender behaviours that legitimise patriarchy, with its focus on social structure rather than personal identity (Dlamini, 2017). According to Western definitions of masculinity society endeavours to adhere to and adopt masculinities that provide the most social capital and gains for individuals. Additionally, hegemonic masculinity encompasses undisputed norms and beliefs in social and cultural conduct. This raises the question: are hegemonic male discourses present in the South African context?

Morrell (1998) specifically recognises the presence of diverse masculinities linked to South Africa's historical background shaped by colonialism and apartheid, with race, class and geographic location being pivotal in the creation of gender identities. Social status, state interaction, personal experiences and societal expectations further contribute to the formation of identities and masculinities (Epstein, 1998: 49). Consequently, categorising monolithic hegemonic masculinity is challenging since masculinity is flexible, and a range of positive and negative masculine features stem from various contributing variables (Morrell et al., 2012). Robert Morrell was the first to employ the term 'hegemonic masculinity' in the South African context, describing the nature, structure and dynamics of male authority. He identified three hegemonic masculinities within the South African context.

The first is 'white masculinity', representing the political and economic dominance of the white ruling class (Morrell et al., 2012). In "Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be: White Identity in a Changing South Africa" (2001), Steyn elucidates how whiteness operates as an invisible norm, often remaining unexamined and unchallenged within societal structures (Steyn, 2001). By making whiteness visible, Steyn's emphasises the allowance for a critical deconstruction of racial hierarchies, revealing the pervasive nature of white privilege and its implications for social justice. Conversely, white masculinities are frequently enshrined in the notion of 'what constitutes a decent man'. This sustains a dominant binary and hierarchy of masculinity, indirectly promoting GBV and the prevailing rape culture. To comprehend hegemonic white masculinity, it is crucial to discern the differences and similarities between perceptions of

English masculinity and Afrikaner masculinity. The post-1994 era witnessed a substantial shift in gender relations, challenging the prevailing power dynamics of men. Affirmative action, gender equity laws, governmental restructuring and a rights-based constitution, compelled white males, particularly Afrikaner men, to revaluate and construct a masculine identity that is not inseparably linked to power and dominance (Pretorius, 2013). Furthermore, Steyn's research extends into the realm of organizational transformation and diversity, emphasizing the need for educational institutions and workplaces to transcend superficial compliance with diversity policies. She argues for the adoption of genuinely transformative practices that address systemic inequities and foster inclusivity (Steyn, 2007). Steyn's analysis underscores the importance of intersectionality and the complex interplay of race, gender, and class in shaping identities and power dynamics (Steyn, 2012). Her work provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and dismantling entrenched racial inequalities, advocating for a more equitable and inclusive society.

Similarly Christi van der Westhuizen offers a critical examination of the identities and positionalities of whiteness in Afrikaans women in the post-apartheid era, situating their experiences within the broader socio-political transformations in South Africa. Van der Westhuizen interrogates how these women navigate the intersections of race, gender, and class, highlighting their strategies of maintaining privilege in a context where historical power dynamics are being challenged (van der Westhuizen, 2017). Through a feminist lens, the book explores how the legacy of apartheid continues to shape the lives and identities of white Afrikaans women, who must reconcile their historical complicity in systemic oppression with the demands of a democratic and egalitarian society (van der Westhuizen, 2017). Van der Westhuizen's analysis is critical for understanding the complexities of whiteness and femininity in a post-apartheid context, offering insights into the ongoing negotiations of identity and power among South Africa's white Afrikaans population (van der Westhuizen, 2017).

Hegemonic white Afrikaner masculinity epitomises the Christian nationalist ideology of the Dutch Reformed Church, advocating morality, self-discipline, hard work and heteronormativity (Sonnekus, 2013). This conception of masculinity is established and defended to perpetuate the heteronormativity and racist ideologies of Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaner masculinity, like English masculinity, manifests itself through sports, notably rugby, and military service (Sonnekus, 2013).

However, it is crucial to delve into the motives underlying the concept and traits which are integral to apartheid ideology, portraying and sustaining an image of racial supremacy and affluence. Consequently, Afrikaner masculinity was used to legitimise and further its racist political agenda (Sonnekus, 2013: 24). Heteronormativity and homophobia are not exclusive to hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity but reflect Western gender norms, as is also evident in English masculinity (Sonnekus, 2013: 25).

The post-apartheid South African constitution explicitly condemns discrimination and advocates for gender equality and black empowerment, destabilizing the role of white masculinity. Despite facing opposition and obstacles, this transformation has become ingrained in South African reality. Dube (2015) draws on aspects of Muscular Christianity to delve into a contemporary evangelical Christian movement and transformation in democratic South Africa, which Dube (2015: 3) argues should not be perpetuated in the context of post-apartheid and postcolonial South Africa where women's rights and human rights are central to the state's identity. The perpetuation of Muscular Christianity in the context of South Africa is vestige of the empire (Dube, 2015: 6). The perceived decline of white male power in post-apartheid South Africa presents the need to reaffirm this power through public discourses and performances. The Mighty Men Conference (MMC) is presented as an example of a platform that maintains Muscular Christianity which broadly advocates for a progressive façade focusing on family attentiveness and responsibility, along with other proscriptive and prescriptive understandings of masculinities that generally privilege heteropatriarchal and heteronormative gender standards. Additionally, in the contemporary liberal socio-political climate of post-1994 South Africa, where there has been a push for gender and racial equality, caution should be exercised regarding a movement that seeks to hark back to a past era under the guise of a godly masculinity, especially given the efforts to challenge the previous white political hegemony (Dube, 2015).

Similar to Muscular Christianity, a case study by Epstein (1998) explores the notion of a proper English gentleman, delving into a specific version of white South African masculinities heavily influenced by British ideals of masculinity. The educational system plays a pivotal role in identity formation. The educational system for white children and elite boarding schools is modelled on the British paradigm of upper-class white education. The emphasis lies in understanding a particularly discreet yet potent masculinity that embodies British colonial rule, making it challenging to embrace alternative masculinities within such a system (Morrell,

1994: 62). These prominent British colonial schools, whether private or public, promote sports and maintain a strong hierarchical structure in leadership, including prefects, academic performance and sports achievements, to toughen the boys (Epstein, 1998). In this highly competitive society, 'loyalty' and homosociality are imperative. Competitiveness also paves the way for violence in the form of bullying, often endured in silence to be perceived as a 'real man'.

The second hegemonic masculine classified by Morrell et al. (2012) is 'African masculinity', reflecting rurally based masculinity perpetuated through indigenous institutions such as chiefship, communal land tenure and customary law. Finally, there is 'black masculinity', representing urbanised and culturally distinct African townships (Morrell et al., 2012). However, understanding masculinity and identities in South Africa requires considering additional factors such as ethnicity, national identity and political impact, adding further complexity (Morell et al., 2012). Furthermore, when examining 'black' masculinity, one encounters a complex identity shaped by ethnicity, class and political power. Raymond Suttner's (2009) study on the masculinities of the African National Congress political party highlights this complexity and fluidity of masculinity. Suttner's work delves into the flux of masculinity by using the ANC as a lens to understand the interplay of time and environment. Through organisational awareness, practices and individual identities, the ANC is linked to various legacies, some rooted in warrior traditions. These legacies coexist with members of the organisation (Suttner, 2005). According to Suttner (2005), even within this political organisation, perceptions of masculinity within the ANC are not consistent or absolute. Various factors and influences have clearly shaped the creation of ANC masculinities. The liberation movement has given rise to conditional, contested, ambiguous, and even conflicting forms of manhood and masculinity, evolving over time (Suttner, 2005).

In contrast to Connell and Morrell's conceptualisation of hegemonic masculinity, Mfecane (2018) expands the field of South African masculinities studies and hinges research on acknowledging popular perceptions of reality in African contexts. Mfecane (2018) highlights that Western theories of masculinities are rooted in individuality that assume autonomy, which contrasts with many African settings where individuals are integral to the collective whole. This distinction becomes apparent when examining black Victorians, such as Reverend Tiyo Soga, through the lens of African personhood, characterised by 'rituals of participation' (Mfecane, 2018). Mfecane (2018) describes Reverend Tiyo Soga, the first Black South African

ordained as a minister who adhered to Christian values, leading to his non-traditional circumcision. Despite being heterosexual, married to a Scottish woman, and having six children, Soga was never fully acknowledged as '*indoda*' (a man) among *amaXhosa*: he was consistently perceived as '*ikwenkwe*' (a boy) for not undergoing *ulwaluko*. Morrell (1998) argues that both black and white men benefited from colonialism's power dynamics, particularly in their authority over women. However, scholars like Gqola (2015) and Mfecane (2018) observe that under colonialism, not only were black men unable to attain full personhood, but Europeans also did not recognise women as complete humans. Consequently, individuals like Soga, who adhered to Eurocentric ideals of manhood, were still unable to fully attain manhood within this framework (Mfecane, 2018).

Qambela's (2021) concept of a New South African Man (NSAM) emphasises that tension experienced by black Victorians' choice of either aligning with Eurocentric value systems or African traditional practices. However, Qambela's (2021) idea of post-apartheid black men's choice of personhood is nullified, as black masculinities are constructed through a myriad discourses that contribute to prism of new South African men. Looking into the concept of NSAM through the lens of two films, *Inxeba* and *Kalushi*, Qambela(2021) expands the scope presented by Morrell (2012) and Connell (1993) as these conceptualisations ignored the role of traditional rites and practices to attain manhood socially.

Masculinity in South African society is deeply entrenched in violence. Gqola's theory (2015: 37-38) emphasises how slavery and colonisation were intertwined with violence, perpetuated through sexual violence. Some ideologies used violence to reinforce their superior or dominating social positions. Traditional concepts from capitalist societies and their militaristic history have resulted in hegemonic masculinities persisting even in post-apartheid South Africa. According to Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity and its beliefs are responsible for institutionalised violence, domestic violence against women, international violence, homophobic attacks and crimes. Furthermore, the organisation of sexual life intersects with the role of the ruling masculinity. Ratele (2006: 59) deploys masculinity to unpack the discursive practices of past president Jacob Zuma, to demonstrate the idea of ruling class masculinity as a powerful means of organising ideas on sexuality and human rights.

The exploration of South African masculinities reveals a complex interplay of historical, social and political factors that shape the diverse identities within the nation. The historical backdrop,

marked by colonialism, apartheid and resistance movements, has left an indelible mark on masculinity, evident in the distinct constructions of an array of hegemonic masculinities. The post-apartheid era has seen shifts in power dynamics, challenging traditional notions of masculinity, particularly for white males. However, the persistence of idealised white masculinity linked to whiteness, heteronormativity and patriarchal values reveals the enduring impact of historical narratives. Violence remains a central theme in South African masculinities, from the historical roots of slavery and colonisation to contemporary manifestations in domestic and international spheres. In essence, South African masculinities are multifaceted, shaped by a historical tapestry of oppression, resistance and transformation. The ongoing dialogue around these identities is crucial for dismantling harmful norms, fostering inclusivity and addressing the persistent challenges posed by entrenched hegemonic masculinities in the nation.

2.3 Adolescence identity formation

The term ‘adolescence’ derives from the Latin verb *adolescere*, which means “to grow to maturity” (Hurlock, 1980: 2). Adolescence is seen as a critical time in a person’s life. Adolescence, in broad terms, refers to persons between the ages of 12 and 21, with some variation depending on the situation (Langa, 2012: 10). In the South African constitution, an adolescent is defined as a person between the ages of 12 and 18 (South African Constitution, 1996). At the age of 18, a person gains the constitutional status of ‘adult’ with the ability to vote, drive a car, legally drink alcohol and be held responsible for his or her own actions (South African Constitution, 1996).

Feldman (2006) reiterates that adolescence should not be confused with puberty. Puberty refers solely to the physical and physiological changes that occur throughout adolescence, whereas adolescence encompasses all maturation stages. Physical changes in boys include genital development, pubic hair growth and face and vocal changes. Physically, girls develop faster than boys and are taller than boys during adolescence (Feldman, 2006). Sexual impulses grow stronger at this time due to hormonal changes. The rate of physical growth varies in adolescence. Antshel and Antshel (2002, in Feldman, 2006) discovered that adolescents with a high socioeconomic status matured physically faster than adolescents with a low socioeconomic position. These differences are attributed to higher socioeconomic households having more access to adequate nutrition and medical care.

This section draws on leading scholars (eg Peter Blos, 1979; Erik Erikson, 1963 and James Marcia, 1966) to present a brief interrogation of adolescence as a period of transition in relation to human development, with an emphasis on gender development and masculinity. Blos (1979) and Erikson (1963) based their concepts of adolescence on Freud's psychoanalytic theory, whereas Marcia (1966) built on Erikson's theory to analyse ego identity formation in adolescence (Langa, 2012: 11).

Social practices within societal institutions like families, schools and communities play a direct role in shaping gender and various identities during the adolescent phase (Langa, 2012). Blos (1979, in Langa, 2012: 10), rooted in Freudian principles, perceived the process of adolescent identity development as a second phase of individualisation. This phase entails re-evaluating and conquering childhood traumas (Blos, 1979). In a similar vein, Erik Erikson (1963, 1968, in Langa, 2012) advocated for allowing adolescents to experiment and learn from their mistakes. Marcia (1966) built upon Erikson's theory analysing the relationship between exploration and commitment during the construction of ego identity during adolescence.

Erikson and Marcia (1963, 1968 and 1966) both recognise and highlight the importance that the context plays in the process of adolescent identity development. In this study, I aims to explore how adolescent boys from one private elite school in South Africa negotiate and develop masculinities. The school is a central context where identity exploration, formation and commitment can take place. As this study uses narrative reflections on elements of masculine identity during adolescence while at school from a particular sub-group, it is pertinent to draw on theories that signify the importance of identity formation. In so doing, we recognise that adolescence is a fundamental period of transition and development, and highlight its contextual effect on young people's development.

Adolescence emerges as a pivotal developmental stage where individuals undergo significant physical, psychological and social transformations. This period is marked by a journey from childhood to maturity, where adolescents navigate through complex processes of identity formation and individuation, influenced by various social institutions such as family, school and community. The theories of Blos, Erikson and Marcia (1979, 1963, 1966 respectively) provide a psychoanalytic and psychosocial framework to understand how adolescents, particularly boys in elite South African schools, construct and negotiate their masculinities. These theories underscore the significance of context in shaping the adolescent experience and

the importance of allowing space for exploration and experimentation. Through this lens, we recognise the profound impact of adolescence on gender development and the formation of masculine identities, highlighting the need for supportive environments that facilitate healthy and diverse expressions of gender during this critical phase of human development.

2.4 The formal and the hidden curriculum

Gender is a particularly prevalent feature in the adolescent stage of life and children (learners in the school context) are actively regarded as participants in the development of gender roles and identities. The social-learning theory aims to elucidate gender socialisation, gender behaviour, how different genders learn from one another and how the social environment impacts individuals (Kann, 2008). It delves into gender socialisation, positing that people learn through observation, imitation and modelling. Gender roles are viewed as social constructs that shape male and female behaviour and can be transmitted from parents to children or influenced by interactions with parents, teachers, media and sport involvement (Kann, 2008). Schools play a crucial role in gender socialisation given the extensive contact that occurs within these environments.

The provision of sexuality education to young students in South African is currently delivered through a curriculum known as Life Orientation (LO). This curriculum aims to empower learners by fostering self-awareness and an understanding of their roles in their communities, ultimately promoting responsible citizenship (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). The National Curriculum Statements (NCS) of the Department of Basic Education, applicable from Grade R to 12 and referenced in all four LO Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), emphasises three key components (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). These components involve equipping learners, regardless of their socio-economic background, with the knowledge, skills, and values essential for achieving self-fulfilment and engaging meaningfully as citizens in a free nation (refer to the DBE, 2011: 4).

It is apparent that the Life Orientation (LO) curriculum is seen as a significant instrument for advancing sexuality education within the framework of human rights and gender justice (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019: 423). Emphasising sexuality education is deemed critical in South African educational institutions due to the persistently high prevalence of HIV, instances of

early and frequently unplanned pregnancies within schools and the prevalent issue of GBV, especially among the youth (as indicated by the Department of Basic Education in 2012).

The persistent gendered challenges faced by young South Africans are salient. HIV prevalence among young women is almost four times higher than that of men in the same age group, with 37% of new infections occurring in young women aged between 15 and 24 (South African National Aids Council [SANAC], 2017). Additionally, 30% of South Africans aged between 18 and19 years report experiencing pregnancy and approximately 50% become sexually active before or at the age of 17 (Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009). According to a UNESCO report (2009), schools are considered the most suitable institutions for delivering sexuality education to young people, given that sexual debuts often occur during the school years. The provision of knowledge and skills within schools has the potential to empower young individuals to make responsible choices in their social and sexual lives. The emphasis on human rights, freedom and gender equality in the LO policy aligns with the broader South African democratic imperative, providing a valuable platform for addressing issues of gender injustice and violence, as recognised by feminist and social justice practitioners and researchers (DBE, 2011: 1.3(c)).

There is limited quantitative research assessing the impact of LO in schools, especially in private schools. However, a study in 2017 indicates that LO educators are a primary source of information for young people in South African schools, particularly in the context of sexuality and HIV prevention education (Makina, Mandal, Xiong, Hattori, Beke & Speizer, 2017). However, an expanding body of scholarly work, influenced by a critical intersectional gender perspective, reveals numerous challenges that hinder schools' ability to fulfil their mandate of equipping learners with essential skills for agency in their sexualities, desires and interpersonal relationships (Macleod 2009; Ngabaza, Shefer & Macleod 2016; Shefer & Macleod, 2015). It is against this body of literature that sexuality education is depicted as a space of regulation and discipline targeting young sexualities, rather than a platform for constructive engagement and the development of skills and knowledge for informed decision-making. Additionally, the intended purpose of creating a space to reconsider normative and oppressive gender norms, fostering confidence and empowering agency, does not seem to be realised in the actual experiences of young people in the school environment (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019).

The existing body of gender scholarship highlights the difficulties and limitations of contemporary sexuality education in South Africa. Despite well-meaning intentions, the current initiatives in sexuality education (found in both the curriculum and students' reported experiences and educators' accounts) tend to perpetuate problematic practices and discourses (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). Instead of challenging conventional gendered and sexual narratives which arguably promote agency and equality for young people (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019), school-based education tends to regulate and discipline young sexualities, reinforcing binary and hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality, along with heteronormativity. The universal adoption of Western family values rooted in the nuclear heterosexual family is advocated, emphasising a pro-family narrative (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019). This approach is marked by persistent beliefs in adult authority, driven by a motive to 'civilize' the younger generation (Ngabaza & Shefer, 2019).

The discourse on gender, sexuality education and the LO curriculum in South Africa reveals a complex interplay of challenges and intentions. While the LO curriculum is recognised as a crucial instrument for advancing sexuality education within the frameworks of human rights and gender justice, a closer examination highlights persistent gendered challenges faced by young South Africans. The prevalence of HIV, early pregnancies and GBV underscores the urgency of effective sexuality education in schools.

The call for a more inclusive, empowering, and nuanced approach to sexuality education is evident, emphasising the need to challenge conventional gendered and sexual narratives. The current trajectory tends to adhere to a pro-family narrative rooted in Western family values, driven by persistent beliefs in adult authority. Reimagining the positionality of education as a platform for constructive engagement, skill development and informed decision-making is essential to address the complexities faced by young South Africans.

2.4.1 The impact of the hidden/corridor curriculum on identity formation

In schools, the responsibility of instilling broad social ideals through the curriculum and peer interaction is significant. This is achieved through the utilisation of the formal curriculum, the hidden curriculum and the corridor curriculum. The hidden curriculum encompasses the unspoken or implicit values, behaviours and expectations that are taught in addition to the official or formal curriculum, often conveyed through the presentation of the formal

curriculum, but not explicitly outlined (Taole, 2016). While the formal curriculum includes the subjects and content explicitly taught in schools, the hidden curriculum consists of the lessons that are conveyed indirectly through the structure and culture of the educational environment. On the other hand, the corridor curriculum refers to teachings imparted and learned by peers outside of the classroom. Both curricula mirror societal structures, settings and values. While the formal curriculum includes the subjects and content explicitly taught in schools, the hidden curriculum consists of the lessons that are conveyed indirectly through the structure and culture of the educational environment.

These implicit lessons can include social norms, cultural expectations, attitudes and values that are not explicitly stated in the formal curriculum but are transmitted through the day-to-day interactions and experiences within the educational setting. The hidden curriculum can play a significant role in shaping students' beliefs, values and behaviours. The classroom and educational institutions are known to provide a predictable environment, relying on hierarchical structures to maintain order within and outside the classroom (Taole, 2016). This seeks to uphold the controlled origins of information dissemination, regulated by Western and patriarchal standards. Since rape culture is deeply ingrained in societal, cultural, educational and religious institutions, addressing GBV should extend beyond prevention to focus on the moment of assault. This is where the classroom and educational institutions can play a crucial role in combating GBV. Schools should establish environments that strive to understand and challenge fundamental concepts of rape culture and GBV through comprehensive learning (Taole, 2016). However, utilising education as a catalyst for societal change is controversial, due to its strong influence by Western, masculine pedagogy (Taole, 2016).

Understanding the cultural and traditional practices that implicitly and explicitly perpetuate violence, rape culture and GBV in historically white colonial schools is essential to deconstruct the roots of GBV and find lasting solutions. Violence, especially, is a tool employed by all communities, to solidify power hierarchies within the school system (Taole, 2016). At first glance, schools seem to be hubs for knowledge creation and economic advancement. However, a deeper understanding of the school system's role in moulding identity and personhood reveals evident links between school practices and the perpetuation of gender inequities (Taole, 2016). This realisation emphasises that schools can be violent environments, often overlooking the fact that this violence stems from unequal and hostile gender relationships normalised by school structures, procedures and practices (Taole, 2016).

Doyles's (2015) exploration of the university classroom as a dynamic space acknowledges that the classroom is an interpersonal space where sexual violence can occur, influenced by institutional decisions regarding content, format and responses to GBV. Introducing a critical pedagogy that responds to societal violence, rather than perpetuating it, begins in the classroom and impacts students' lives during vital moments of identity development (Taole, 2016). Even though the classroom is expected to prioritise academic learning over other social concerns, its impact on learners is influenced by external factors such as meals, clothing, field interactions and dormitory life. The classroom and educational systems are an extension of the social environment they exist in. Hence, redefining our perception of the 'classroom' is crucial, as it is part of the hegemonic network promoting GBV and rape culture.

Acts of sexual, physical or psychological violence against minors in and around the school setting are termed school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). Stereotypes and assigned or expected roles based on gendered identity or sex reinforces SRGBV (Green et al., 2013). Gender-based violence is not a fixed concept: it adapts to changing eras, circumstances and civilizations, suggesting that gender roles are also not fixed, as they are subject to cultural variations (Minister, 2018). All forms of violence within community practices and power hierarchies are believed to be engrained and regulated by the school setting (Taole, 2016). Social practices within institutions like schools, families and communities play a vital role in shaping gender and other identities (Taole, 2016). According to Leach and Humphreys (2007), schools may inadvertently encourage behaviours based on unequal and hostile gender relations, which are perpetuated, tolerated and normalised by everyday school systems. Furthermore, no school is immune to the societal attitudes, beliefs and historical backgrounds promoting harmful gender norms and condoning acts of GBV (Green et al., 2013). The promotion of dominating, unequal power relations is deeply rooted in the school setting, and within the school system, boys and girls soon learn that society expects them to behave differently and conform to socially imposed gender roles (Wilson, 2006). School is a critically important institution where we learn about gender and where power systems normalise explicit forms of GBV and rape culture. The gender roles and norms taught, create a gender hierarchy that frequently positions men at the top of this hierarchy (Taole, 2016).

Therefore, educational institutions are pivotal agents of socialisation, reinforcing gender socialisation that occurs in other contexts. According to Dunne (2009), gender regimes emerge from the daily routines of schools, controlled by official and informal norms and ways of

behaving. Physical space, peer pressure and implicit accountability are all identifiable elements of gender regimes in the daily school routine (Taole, 2016). The gender regime determines the physical space male and female learners inhabit, such as the establishment of single-gender schools and classrooms. It can influence the school atmosphere and escalate peer pressure actions like mockery, exclusion and intimidation, in addition to regulating physical space (eg through initiation practices) (Taole, 2016). Importantly, male and female learners support gender regimes to maintain their territory (eg matriculants dominating younger grades).

Furthermore, schools have the potential to indirectly perpetuate discrimination, exclusion and harm. The power-control hypothesis, a sociological theory explaining gender disparities based on power dynamics in social institutions such as families and schools, offers another theoretical lens for understanding gender socialisation (Taole, 2016). Many believe that power and control is a source of GBV. Power, on one hand, can be used in a negative and discriminatory manner, ranging from mild to severe, such as social exclusion, denial of privileges or rights, extraction of labour or services, psychological cruelty, silencing, verbal abuse, physical force and sexual violence (Taole, 2016). For example, men are believed to use violence to demonstrate dominance and subjugate women, signifying that power functions in specific ways depending on societal understanding (Taole, 2016). Asymmetrical power dynamics within the educational setting can exacerbate levels of gendered violence. Power is frequently misused through the roles automatically assigned to teachers and other positions of leadership (Taole, 2016).

School systems are fundamental to an individual's personhood and identity, and the afore-mentioned theories shed light on the significant roles they play in shaping one's identity. In the context of South African private or elite schools, gender regimes are particularly explicit in single-sex school systems (Dunne, 2009).

Single-sex private schools arguably maintain and uphold – with implicit or explicit intent – the masculine gender regimes that fall within the hegemonic web of masculinity, contributing to the perpetuation of rape culture and GBV. As demonstrated by Saltmarsh (2007) and Gilbert's study (1998), elite boys' schools in Australia are sites that maintain a range of cultural and institutional practices that are complicit in the production of violence, often perpetuated by a heteronormative, elitist ideology of masculine gender regimes.

It is important to be aware of the hidden curriculum because it can have a profound impact on students' social and emotional development, as well as their attitudes toward learning and society. Recognising and understanding the hidden curriculum allows educators and policymakers to be more intentional in creating inclusive and positive learning environments.

2.5 Sites of hegemonic preservation in the South African educational landscape

The influence of the Victorian public school model on South Africa's education system, particularly elite private schools introduced by the British, has shaped the ethos, traditions and ideologies of these institutions (Randall, 1980). Despite historical shifts, including Afrikanerisation and racial integration, these schools have maintained key traditions, forming a significant component of South Africa's educational legacy (Randall, 1980).

Protestant private schools are dominated by Anglican and quasi-Anglican foundations, with some run by private enterprises closely resembling British 'public' (ie independent) schools, frequently founded in deliberate imitation of them (Randall, 1980). The historical context is difficult to define and is an outcome of a long evolutionary process, but the British 'public' schools were/are autonomous. For the most part, they demand exorbitant tuition fees, making them elite and selective (Randall, 1980). A handful of schools in democratic South Africa are believed to be elite nationally and internationally (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016). This is due to their long historical position in the national discourse, their historical context and their substantial alumni network that disproportional in terms positions across occupational sectors such as politics, law, the media and the private sector (SuttonTrust, 2012).

According to Squelch (1997), there are an array of reasons for the existence of private education in South Africa. Firstly, these schools provide an alternative educational system for parents who want their children to be socialised in a particular religious direction. Secondly, private schools act as an alternative source of education for those who do not trust the quality of state schooling. This is usually based on the assumption that private schools offer more curricular choice, facilities and support – which aids the premise of better results in examinations (Squelch, 1997). Thirdly, parents might also choose schools on pedagogical or legacy grounds (Squelch, 1997).

Despite the compelling arguments that private schools are elitist and selective, there are counterclaims that are aimed at increasing personal liberty and autonomy (Squelch, 1997). These arguments are derived from a combination of factors that contribute to a broad philosophical position that justifies the need for privatisation of education in a democratic state. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, English 'public' education was overtly class-based: a fee-paying education system that recognised its position in the national agenda. It was responsible for restricting social mobility and establishing a curriculum determined by the perceived needs of each social group to take up its future position within society (Randall, 1980).

Halsey (in Randall, 1980) reflects on the attitudes underpinning education in modern civilizations. He argues that it is more concerned with altering knowledge, rather than the intention of spreading culture to broad social circles or from one society to another with the intention of preserving and conveying the culture of a specific group. However, in a separate study, Halsey (in Randall, 1980) asserts that, in the United Kingdom, the state system has played a role in the dissemination of cultural capital, where independent/private schools' in the UK can be said to maintain a 'cycle of privilege' because of the cultural capital that is reproduced among those from educated families.

2.5.1 Perseveration of elitist discourse

The private schooling sector draws the bulk of their pupils from a narrow sector defined by social class distribution (Saltmarsh, 2016). Democratic South Africa has seen a popularisation of private schooling, although these schools can still be considered selective by making use of entrance examinations, an extensive admission process and the annual increase in exorbitant fees.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the various strategies used by the middle classes to 'defend,' 'capture' and preserve their social and economic position in society (Ayling, 2016). However, substantially less research has been done on how elite organisations preserve their power. The influence of neoliberalism has exacerbated the class struggle for positional advantage. This is not only necessary, but is also an ethical consideration to subject elite groups to similar scrutiny in order to determine how they reproduce their position in society and, more importantly, legitimise their claim to social and moral superiority (Ayling, 2016).

Ayling (2016) discusses how Nigerian elite (private) schooling is still prominent, and how the influence of British whiteness and colonialism is woven into the structure and intrinsic properties of schooling. These are key to the social and cultural practices that shape the manner in which 'educated' elites and bourgeois classes are constituted (Ayling, 2016). In Nigeria private elite education was threatened by the increase of access to education. The 'resources' and 'sites' of elite reproduction and preservation in modern-day Nigeria have been affected since education in Nigeria has become a commodity.

Despite the heritage of former colonists serving as the primary point of reference for African elites, Fanon (2008) contends that colonialism has devalued African cultures and languages, hence casting blacks as the 'other'. Fanon (2008) reminds us in his book *'Black Skin, White Masks'*, how the colonised people who learnt the colonisers' language acquired prestige and social standing. In other words, Fanon argues, "the Antilles [Black] who wants to be White [and therefore reach the rank of elite] will become Whiter as he obtains more command of the cultural weapon that language is" (Fanon, 2008: 25). This is to depict the transformative power of Western education in the colonial and early postcolonial era. Studies in Nigeria have shown that Western education has solidified and homogenised the country's elites while simultaneously differentiating them from other social groups (Ayling, 2016).

Classical elitists such as Mosca, Pareto and Michels argue that elitists may exist in every society as the minority group that makes key choices (Randall, 1980). Because these decisions influence the most general parts of society, they are frequently viewed as political decisions, even if the minority making them are not 'politicians' in the traditional sense of being a member of a government or a legislative body (Randall, 1980). This minority achieves dominance by means other than elections.

Writers like as Burnham and C. Wright Mills expanded on this idea of elites. Both scholars fundamentally maintain a Marxist position in that control over the primary means of production is the foundation of any elite's power (Randall, 1980). Mills (1956:92) promoted the pluralist notion that the elite is made up of those who occupy the highest positions in societal hierarchies: "if they have many interconnections and points of coinciding interest, then their elites tend to form a coherent kind of grouping". Mills (1956) argues that the existence of a plurality of contending elites protects freedom and democratic principles, at least in the United States. He perceives elite power consolidation rather than dissemination.

In democratic South Africa there is relatively little sociological research into how elite status is obtained and/or maintained. However, there have been significant changes in the South African educational landscape since the demise of apartheid, thus, education is no longer the sole domain of the minority and wealthy (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016). Rather, education democratisation has resulted in education popularisation, which has arguably devalued it to the point where being educated, regardless of level, is no longer a vital marker of current elite status in South Africa. Most countries are concerned with where an individual is educated and by whom one is taught, whether or not they are 'experts'. This now takes precedence over how educated one is (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016). This aligns with what Bourdieu (1996: 112) asserts – that the "manners and style are among the surest signs of nobility".

For this study we will use Boyd's (1973: 16) criteria of 'elites in modern democratic society,' which describes these elite groups as maintaining nine fundamental attributes and ideals. These distinguishing characteristics include having prominent employment positions, a distinct way of life, group awareness, a sense of exclusivity, being considered to have functional aptitude and moral duty in society (Boyd, 1973: 16).

Besides the status, tradition, and magnificent buildings and grounds, tuition at these top private schools typically includes boarding, games, basic medical assistance and use of the sanatorium, library and laundry (BusinessTech, 2021). Additional payments for different levies such as IT and infrastructure, additional meal costs or extra-mural activities and excursions are generally required (BusinessTech, 2021).

Even in post-apartheid South Africa, when race should not be used to determine educational institution exclusivity, the financial expense of attending elite private schools is geared towards the upper socioeconomic class. South Africa's white population has a larger percentage of people in the middle-upper income bracket as a result of apartheid and colonisation. Because of the high cost of these elite private schools, its student body remains primarily white and confined to students from wealthy families.

It is easy to lose sight of the wealth of elites, the abstractions of class analysis and the qualitative focus on strategies and perspectives of an elite social group. One must overlook the basic role played in their lifestyle, identity and social relations by the exclusive possibilities provided by such wealth (Randall, 1980). Elite formation and reproduction is argued to strongly rely on the

capacity to pay: even elite sport is now characterised exclusively in financial terms (Randall, 1980). Taking a glimpse into the tangible components of the elite, it is evident that membership and social identities are still established in connection to particular types of consumption – fashion brands, fast vehicles, particular education and exclusive restaurants (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016).

Baird (1977) notes correctly that demonstrating that affluent and powerful people send their children to private schools is insufficient to demonstrate that the objective of these institutions is to enable an elite to perpetuate itself. It may not be their intention, but it appears to be unavoidable.

Aligning with previous discussions, van der Merwe et al. (1971) believe that no single socioeconomic class has a monopoly on access to elitist positions, and therefore the single pyramid model of society is being replaced with a model of numerous pyramids, each identifying an elite. Pluralism characterises the white South African elite system. The various groupings are distinguished by their roles as well as their values. In South Africa, ideological debate over important topics hinders the formation of a cohesive power elite (van der Merwe et al., 1971).

The conclusion is inevitable: whether they like it or not, private schools are complicit in the preservation of an elite (Aggleton & Maxwell, 2016). Of course, in South Africa, the issue is complicated by the country's racial and ethnic diversity. A following chapter will investigate the extent to which South African private schools have worked as a tool for widening the basis of the English-speaking elite. While some criticise it as undemocratic, others, including powerful public figures, defend elitism as the greatest way to achieve social development.

Elitism is frequently confused with privilege, elite education with private education, and in certain circumstances, we are again referring to the affluent middle class as 'elite'. Saltmarsh (2016) emphasises the importance of distinguishing elites spatially and within distinct circuits of social interactions, social domains and educational contexts. Location is crucial, but it may not be decisive. Elites must be understood both within and outside of national class hierarchies. The 'elite' schools discussed are predominantly rooted and aim to replicate national histories and traditions (Saltmarsh, 2016). Scholars argue that even elite institutions in Australia and

North American have significant features which are ‘stolen’ from the English and which they strive to instil in international identities (Saltmarsh, 2016).

2.5.2 Ruling class masculinity machines

The discourse on private schooling and elite education, particularly within the context of South Africa, reveals a complex interplay of class dynamics, institutional practices and the shaping of ruling-class masculinity. Private schools, primarily catering to the wealthy and upper-middle classes, face opposition in societies founded on principles of classism, as highlighted by Randall (1980). The infiltration of education by Afrikaner nationalism in post-1948 South Africa is seen as a totalitarian strategy aimed at harnessing education for state goals (Randall, 1980).

The reputation of private schools lies not only in providing a higher quality of education but also in serving as a pathway for upward social mobility into the middle classes (Randall, 1980). Poynting and Donaldson’s (2005) exploration of a ruling-class boys’ boarding school in Australia sheds light on the inherent bullying culture within elite educational institutions. The pervasive practices of bullying, often entrenched in traditions like ‘fagging’, contribute to the reproduction of ruling-class masculinity and the marginalisation of qualities associated with femininity, non-whiteness or homosexuality.

For the purposes of this study it is important to clarify that the ‘bullying’ in question consisted of “no less than seventy-five sexual assaults that had been perpetrated in the school over a four-month period – fifty on one boy and twenty-five on another – often during lunch hour and in front of ‘spectators’”(Connolly, 2000, in Poynting & Donaldson, 2005) who “stood by and cheered them on and laughed as the victims screamed” (Overington, 2001). This is where the intersection of GBV literature and rape culture theory intersects as these acts of ‘bullying’ were violent acts of harm inflicted to assert dominance and establish hierarchal positioning. If we analyse events of bullying in the schooling setting without the theoretical lens of rape culture and GBV, the root cause of this violence cannot be addressed.

Through available biographical material, Poynting and Donaldson (2005) explained that the education provided to boys in what they call ruling-class boarding schools, entails separation from home and initial isolation, and forming connections within demanding group dynamics

that require loyalties. It also involves adherence to traditional values, submission to a hierarchical structure for upward advancement, collective mockery and punishment of vulnerability and intimate connections, strict penalties for deviating from norms, harsh physical discipline and instilling a sense of competitive individualism. Brutal treatment and toughening play a vital role in all these processes, defining the essence of elite ruling-class masculinity (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005).

In institutions such as Trinity Grammar and similar elite schools, Poynting and Donaldson (2005) observed the cultivation of a distinct form of masculinity ingrained within affluent educational settings. This masculinity is defined in opposition to aspects of femininity, being non-white or homosexual. It embodies traits of competitiveness, physical aggression and a dominating presence. It imposes limitations on diversity and arranges various forms of masculinity in a hierarchical structure, where a particular masculinity encourages boys to engage in competition and become strong in terms of their abilities, enabling them to assert dominance and confront adversaries in conflict situations (Connell et al., 1982: 73, 96).

The concept of ruling-class masculinity as a portrayal of masculinity is characterised by the notable absence of women in roles beyond assistance and service (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). The elite schooling institutions not only ostracise women by confining them to supportive roles while using their assistance, but also consistently marginalises and belittles qualities traditionally associated with femininity, devaluing them as manifestations of vulnerability, passivity, softness and inadequacy, which are qualities they also associate with homosexuality (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005).

Lewis (1991: 182) explains the concept of the masculinity of success which perceives sexuality, emotion and friendship in isolation from each other, and devalues traits of care and nurture. Manliness in the setting of elite education is associated with qualities of might, strength, aggression, honour, daring and casual indifference (Lewis, 1991). Furthermore, Lewis (1991: 184) articulates “the policing of experience and competitive dynamic of a hierarchical system” acts as an emotional vacuum to prepare boys for the working world. The boys who displayed tolerance and compassion competed amongst themselves to redefine their identity in contrast to women” (Lewis, 1991: 187). This was to secure entry into an exclusive male group that unified by excluding and mistreating any boys who could be associated with feminine qualities characterised by weakness, peculiarity or discomfort.

Jackson (1990) argues that the pervasive language of male dominance was evident within the schooling response. Common actions like exerting authority, making accusations, delivering lectures, giving reprimands, asking probing questions and engaging in debates were regular occurrences and ingrained institutional norms (Jackson, 1990: 149, 207,). When it came to sports and games, a strong emphasis was placed on concentrated focus, prioritising success and performance at all costs, often overlooking the importance of acknowledging the other person (Jackson, 1990: 209, 210). To adapt, Jackson described himself as hiding his emotions in order to earn credibility among the intimidating boys (Jackson, 1990: 204). Nevertheless, he felt compelled to outwardly endorse a particular form of masculinity that effectively suppressed his emotional identity (Jackson, 1990: 205).

Morrell (1996) asserts that this casual fear appears to have been deeply embedded in elite schooling from its inception. Bullying predominantly took place without any official interference or consequence (Morrell, 1996: 60). The dominance of the stronger over the weaker was mirrored by the formal systems of power and authority, characterised by extreme hierarchies and regulations.

The most-recently enrolled boys received the brunt and the harshest treatment under the prefect system, which restricted them from walking on specific lawns and certain corridors, or passing by the quarters of notable individuals. Any transgression of these rules or others could result in being called to the prefects' room and subjected to corporal punishment such as caning (Morrell, 1996: 57). Despite occasional acts of defiance, boys tended to rally behind rather than challenge this system. Any indications of non-conformity were actively suppressed by the boys themselves, and their informal culture consistently aligned with and implicitly supported the ethos of elite schooling (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005)

'Fagging', a prevalent practice in private schools, entailed the integration of bullying into the official school structure intended as a mentoring relationship (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). This tradition has evolved from an arrangement involving younger boys performing household chores or tasks for older boys, mirroring a form of domestic service in which younger boys would carry out tasks typically assigned to servants for their older counterparts. 'Fagging' linked bullying to the formalities of school life and regulations, constituting one component of a series of institutional practices that governed aspects of school life beyond the classroom and

away from the eyes of teachers (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). The fagging system solidified and perpetuated the existing hierarchy.

In Poynting and Donaldson's (2005) experience, hierarchy being obviously intertwined with practices like fagging and bullying not only reinforced a sense of surveillance, but also imposed uniformity and discouraged diversity. This rejection of diversity is perceived as loyalty (Morrell, 1996: 59), and adhering to this loyalty was a perceived as a vital survival strategy.

Other than the above-mentioned collective rituals, the promotion of uniformity was a regular occurrence, manifesting in everyday interactions like 'banter' – relentless mocking and the repetitive brutalisation of one's actions (Jackson, 1990: 178). Boys, accepting their position in the institutional hierarchy, demonstrated loyalty towards both their peers and the school. Challenging this structure and its established norms meant opening oneself to potential victimization. Bullying targeted those boys who anticipated persecution due to their perception of not fitting in, including those who were assertive or reserved (Morrell 1996: 62). To evade constant humiliation, the boys conformed. The emphasis was on suppressing differences and promoting uniformity, as the ultimate objective was to shape a form of masculinity aligned with the ruling class – a journey involving:

> learning to . . . come to terms with public opinion and to know one's place, rising to be a house prefect, school prefect or games captain, and arriving at the end with that quality of self-confidence and poise which came to be the hallmark of the public school man. (Honey, in Morrell, 1996: 57)

Shaping of ruling-class masculinity involves adherence to traditional values, submission to hierarchical structures, collective mockery of vulnerability and instilling competitive individualism (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). The rejection of diversity in favour of loyalty to established norms perpetuates a culture of uniformity, with bullying acting as a tool to enforce conformity and suppress differences. The emotional vacuum created in elite educational settings prepares boys for a world defined by might, strength, aggression and a competitive dynamic, reinforcing a particular form of masculinity (Lewis, 1991; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005).

It calls for a critical examination of these practices and norms within educational institutions to challenge and redefine the concepts of masculinity that perpetuate inequality and violence. Addressing the root causes of bullying and the reproduction of ruling-class masculinity is

essential for fostering inclusive, nurturing and emotionally supportive educational environments.

2.5.3 Spaces characterised by whiteness

Elite groups and elite schools should have distinguishing traits that set them apart from other private schools. Considering the historical context and preservation of whiteness as an implicit symbol of superiority, the practice of hiring of white head teachers and teachers who are frequently and strategically positioned as heads of department, could be described as a type of differentiation strategy.

Whiteness in this study refers to a system that views whites as a social group entitled to better rights and advantages than the other groups, due to their ancestry of assumed superiority. Whiteness, according to Ramrez Johnson and Sechrest (2018: 12), constructs "the global systems of dominance that favors Whites and have in turn nurtured … " racism, white supremacy, hegemony and apartheid.

Whiteness was so influential in South Africa that racialised inequality has become one of the distinguishing hallmarks in post-apartheid South Africa (Majavu, 2023). However, research explains that intra-racial inequality is neither the source nor the primary driver of inequality in post-apartheid South Africa (Majavu, 2023). In South Africa inequality is rooted in white racism and the enduring impacts of apartheid that contribute to the reason for growing inequality in post-apartheid South Africa.

According to the South African Employment Equity Report, white males continue to hold 63.2% of senior management posts, while blacks hold 17%, followed by Indians at 10.9% and coloureds 5.9% (Employment Equity Report, 2022). Similarly, black South African CEO participation in the top 100 Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) companies remains low at 14%, while 78% of CEOs in these organisations are white (Practices & Remuneration Trends Report, 2022). The Mail and Guardian (Smit, 2020), highlights in an article that not only do white men continue to rule and earn more at JSE-listed companies, but "over-representation of white people in higher positions is likely to persist because they benefit the most from recruitment, promotional, and skills development opportunities".

Theoretically, if one traces the origins of racialised inequality, scholars such as Issar, Brown and McMahon (2021: 352) describe the "primitive accumulation of Whiteness" that ultimately resulted in fully-fledged "racial capitalism". The term 'racial capitalism' refers to an economic system that employs racial logic to facilitate the systematic exploitation of blacks and other people of colour (Albert, 2006). However, a theoretical expansion on the primitive accumulation of whiteness reveals social processes of racialisation and colonial mechanisms which perceived whiteness as a 'civilising force' symbolising civilisation and the saviour of barbaric 'others' from the state of nature (Majavu, 2023). Racial capitalism in the context of elite private schooling in post-democratic South Africa preserves racist beliefs that whiteness is superior to blackness; it enforces hegemonic, colonial and patriarchal ideologies in all their students to widen its economic hierarchies of exploitation (Majavu, 2023). In other words, historically, the sociological creation of whiteness in South Africa has focused on the acquisition of social status, symbolic power and money (Issar et al., 2021). South African history is driven by the social engineering of high-status whiteness, which typically sees individuals positioned in contrast to a low-status, intrinsically unstable and inferior 'other' (Issar et al., 2021).

The shifts in racial capitalism in post-apartheid South Africa have been driven by ideological variations rather than a change of narrative associating whiteness with wealth, resources and consumeristic behaviours (Majavu, 2023). Racial capitalism emphasises the importance of racial diversity as it acts as a socially acceptable way for whiteness and white individuals to improve their moral and social reputations whilst retaining power, wealth and privilege. This occurs while explicitly or implicitly deflecting any accusations of potential racism (Majavu, 2023).

Where racial capitalism is rife, nonwhiteness acquires an alternative value, however it is largely measured by its worth to white people and predominantly white institutions (Leong 2013: 2155–2156). Despite decentring the social position of the legal advantage of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, whiteness maintains a hegemonic power throughout many social and economic sectors of South Africa where white populations monopolise wealth, status and opportunity (Majavu, 2023). Sociologically, whiteness continues to affect status hierarchies in post-apartheid South Africa (Majavu, 2023). Status hierarchies are defined by sociologists as emerging as a result of sociocultural processes that are rooted in racialised and gendered social ranks (Ridgeway, 2019). In other words, status hierarchies are perpetuated via

shared cultural ideas and assessments rooted in racialised social differences such as competence, sophistication, intellect, attractiveness and leadership (Ridgeway, 2019).

The examination of South Africa's private schooling system offers a window into the persistent mechanisms of elitism and the perpetuation of ruling-class masculinity. Despite the democratic shifts in South Africa's political landscape, these elite institutions continue to reflect and reinforce historical patterns of privilege, where wealth, power and whiteness intersect to maintain a status quo that benefits a select few. The schooling system, particularly through practices such as 'fagging' and other forms of institutionalised bullying, becomes a breeding ground for a ruling-class masculinity that prizes dominance, competition and a dismissal of the 'other'. Furthermore, the landscape of racial capitalism within the educational sector underscores a broader societal adherence to the residuals of colonialism and apartheid. Whiteness, as both a historical and contemporary marker of privilege, remains deeply woven into the fabric of elite educational settings, perpetuating racialised and gendered hierarchies that privilege the social status of white males. This entrenchment suggests that the transformative potential of education as a levelling field remains compromised.

The sociological implications of these findings are profound, indicating that South Africa's journey towards genuine equality and dismantling of historical powers is far from complete. The role of elite schools in sustaining a particular form of social stratification calls for critical reflection and action to address the inequalities that continue to shape the educational experiences and future prospects of South Africa's youth.

CHAPTER 3: Methodologies

3.1 Introduction

Male private schooling in South Africa, infused with masculinist and traditionalist discourses, provides an exemplary site for examining the complex ways in which adolescent boys negotiate understandings of masculinities and identity formation. Furthermore, this study delves into the intersectionality of masculinity/identity formation and the perpetuation of GBV and rape culture. Gender-based violence is vast in South Africa, therefore problematising and pinpointing factors that perpetuate and normalise GBV is a necessary element of finding sustainable solutions. This raises the question: Are adolescent boys in private elite schooling familiarised with the relationship between GBV, rape culture and masculinities? Furthermore, are private elite schools evolving and preparing male adolescents for the reality of popularised discourses rebelling against endemic sexual and gender violence in South Africa?

Private schooling's privileged sociocultural position results in the domination of the upper class: gaining high profile students, producing a ruling-class masculinity and shaping their understandings and relations of gender (Pringle, 2002). Regardless of whether it perceives its positionality as transformative to society or resistant to transformation, elite private schooling has an influential position, as education is omnipresent. Numerous scholars call for a deeper empirical interrogation into masculinity that recognises the multiplicity of South African masculinities (Dube, 2015; Ratele, 2006). International and local studies highlight the influence of institutions such as schools, universities and political and religious movements as sites of influence in men's understandings and expressions of what it means to be manly (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005; Langa,2012; Dube, 2015; Ratele, 2006).

These narratives – or discourses – are influenced by the broader political, religious and cultural ideologies that play a pivotal role in defining, maintaining and policing hegemonic masculinities rooted in patriarchy. Literature argues that this normalises gendered and sexual violence and rape culture (Shook et al., 2022; Gqola, 2007; Dlakavu, 2017). This study places a significant emphasis on the discourses of perpetuating hegemonic masculinities that are empirically linked to the driving force of ubiquitous sexual and gendered violence.

In the pursuit of exploring the narratives of alumni from the Blue School, encompassing their personal experiences, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and practices concerning masculinities and

how these intersect with ubiquitous GBV and rape culture, this study opted for a qualitative approach with a feminist post-structuralist paradigm. The study seeks to comprehend both the subjective and socio-culturally constructed meanings embedded in participants' experiences within a specific institution – the Blue School. In essence, this study aims to be a pragmatic investigation as post-structural feminism emphasises the deconstruction of fixed categories and challenges essentialist views of gender and the state. It broadly emphasises a paradigm that understands identities and power as a fluid dynamic and socially constructed.

3.2 Conceptual and Analytic Frameworks

This study employs two core conceptual analytic frameworks to elucidate how relations of power produce social identities and the maintenance of heteronormative cycles of gendered violence. Identifying the formal and informal performances of masculinities rooted in institutional cultures and traditions lends nicely to introducing and explaining the use of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) and African Feminist Intersectionality (AFI) within this research as theoretical lenses. It allows for a contextually relevant research study that will contribute to the transformative literature on the multiplicity of South African masculinities. The African Feminist Intersectional lens very broadly recognises that individuals occupy multiple social categories simultaneously and their experiences are shaped by the intersections of these categories. African Feminist Intersectionality specifically considers the unique social, cultural and historical contexts of African societies. It allows for a nuanced analysis of how factors such as gender, race, class and other social categories intersect to influence power relations and lived experiences. The Foucauldian Discourse is a more Western lens that focuses on how language and discourse shape power structures and knowledge. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is particularly useful for understanding how discourses construct and regulate gender, identity and social norms.

The Foucauldian definition of discourse is "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972: 49). Dominant discourses function to advocate viewpoints and maintain ideologies that institutionalise existing power structures, hierarchies and societal frameworks (van Dijk, 2013). Foucault's primary concern revolved around power, particularly the manner in which power, discourse and social identities – which he referred to as 'subject positions' – are shaped (Foucault, 1972). Foucault's work was directed at entire systems of thought or 'knowledge systems' (Hacking, 2004), such as medicine, religion, psychology and

law. His focus was on the processes through which individuals are shaped into institutionally recognisable categories of subjects, either willingly or by external pressure. Foucault contends that discourse can serve as both a tool and an outcome of power, contributing to the reinforcement of power while also exposing its vulnerabilities (Foucault, 1978: 100-101). Instead of merely portraying or reflecting reality, discourses actively construct social reality and are performed and contested within the realm of the individual's body (Mills, 2003).

However, an important angle for the researcher is to recognise the intersection of elite masculinity's performance and maintenance that sustains the ubiquitous sexual and gendered violence. This specifically relates to discourses that subject feminine bodies to high levels of rape, gendered violence, policing, neglect from the state and intimate partner violence (Gouws 2021; Gqola, 2015). The term 'intersectionality' was used first by Kimberley Crenshaw as means to describe the experiences and problems black women have in relation to engagement with the law (Crenshaw, 1993: 1252). Intersectionality's diffusion into feminist literature through radical feminism's critique on the essentialisation of identities (eg the linear experience of discrimination), prioritises gender to the exclusion of other markers of identity. The second wave of feminism in the 1970s in the global North prioritised women's experiences and theorised women as a homogeneous category/unit of analysis (Crenshaw, 1993).

Recent literature on African feminisms that resist the necropolitics of bare life moves away from intersectionality single axis analysis to a matrix of means to analyse data. One of the reasons for this is the increased visibility of protest discourses that have contributed to the nuanced understanding of sexual and gendered violence in a post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa (Gouws, 2021). Amanda Gouws (2021) uses the African Feminist Intersectional approach to explain the theory of intersectionality through the matrix of domination. The AFI approach was popularised through a radical African feminist rebellion towards GBV. These campaigns embrace feminist identity and advocate for gender equality from the vantage point of intersectionality and black African feminism (Gouws, 2018). They emphasise the African feminists' core premise 'the personal is political', which is informed by Black Consciousness philosophy (Gouws, 2018; Dlakavu, 2017; Gqola, 2015; Hassim 2023).

Radical AFI is a theory-driven conceptual model that has the potential to shed light on the mechanisms of intersectional power relations and subjectivities that can expose factors that contribute to masculinity formation (Gouws, 2018). This framework is therefore employed to

examine discourses of domination (eg hierarchies of race and gender, heterosexuality and patriarchy) that are displayed through institutional cultures and traditions in private elite schools, which are formally and informally performed. As pointed out by many scholars, the multiplicity of masculinities in South Africa is pivotal to interrogating gendered violence (Gouws, 2018). The colonial/apartheid history of South African has painted a complex picture of the performance of sexuality and masculinities in this post-apartheid era. One cannot ignore the biopolitics of control in colonial settler societies that attempted to control African sexualities in order to prevent miscegenation (Gouws, 2021). Gouws (2021) shows the continuities of sexual violence from settler colonies through biopolitics in democratic South Africa. The reason for this study is a gap in research into how and in what forms masculine identities and sexualities are significant to perpetuating rape culture and GBV in schools, specifically historically elite male white private schools. Formal and informal traditions are often embedded into the institutional cultures of masculinities in a democratic South Africa. Also, I aim to find out whether the institution under study recognises its positionality of influence in masculinity/identity formation of adolescent boys of the 'supposed ruling class'. A more practical perspective, I argue, is important to expand the replicability, reach and impact of the study. More broadly, intersectionality is often theorised as a social theory – established through the interwoven strands of class, race and gender (Klinger, 2003; Gouws, 2018; Krenshaw, 1993).

Foucault's exploration of governmentality is particularly relevant for the poststructuralist-feminist paradigm (Bomert, 2015). In contrast to the array of implementations of the intersectional poststructuralist viewpoint, this differs in two significant ways. Firstly, it conceptualises subject and gender relations as shaped and controlled by public policies. Foucault's governmentality concept provides an intricate examination of the state's power technologies, offering a unique perspective on state power and its influence on the population's leadership. This analysis states that the formation of subjects and 'objects' occurs through concrete institutional practices, power technologies and discourses (Thompson, 2013: 201). Secondly, from a poststructuralist standpoint, the state is perceived as an outcome of conflicting discourses, power techniques and practices (Ludwig, 2010: 39).

From a feminist post-structuralist conception of the state, a "central gendered power mechanism' is identified" (Ludwig, 2010: 44). According to Ludwig, the delineation between public and private spheres based on gender, contributes to the sustainability and generation of

a specific social order within a state (Ludwig, 2010: 44). The essential correlation of masculinity and femininity within the public and private realms is crucial. The feminist lens builds on Foucault's notion of the state as a product of political rationalities and power techniques. Introducing an androcentric argument emphasising the genderisation of the modern state is a result of power relations materialising in the articulation of an androcentric governmentality (Bomert, 2015). Governmentality refers to the intricate processes through which a society policy moulds the behaviour of an individual or a group, connecting three types of power: the dominion of states (sovereignty), disciplinary power (discipline), and the governance of oneself and others (government) (Foucault, 1991). According to Foucault's understanding of power, it is all-encompassing, socially distributed and managed through discourse. In a Foucauldian perspective, power is not a possession but rather circulates within social relations, shaping individuals into subjects suitable for the prevailing political order (Shook et al., 2022).

Within the post-structuralist paradigm is a social theoretical perspective developed by Sauer and Wohl (2008: 251) called 'governing intersectionality', a critical concept that conceives constitution and interdependence of difference, which results in inequality as a result of social and political processes (Bomert, 2015). This form of governance is rooted in ideologies of materialistic state and hegemony. For the purposes of this study this theoretical approach leads to a visual conceptualisation of the interacting, coinciding and solidifying masculinities and gendered hierarchies of violence which are institutionalised by governmental control, cultures and systems. Similarly, Anderson's (2005; 2009) systems theory framework, that draws on theoretical and empirical work on gender and gendered violence, maps out the connections between gender identity, interactions and structures. Anderson (2005; 2009) describes the drivers of a specific form of GBV such as domestic violence at a micro-, meso- and macro-level.

The implementation therefore, of the abovementioned theoretical lenses (AFI and FDA) shed light on the multiplicity of elite masculinities and how relations of power produce social identities which intersect with the maintenance of the heteronormative cycles of sexual and gendered violence. Using Anderson's and Sauer and Wohl's systems theories (Bomert, 2015; Anderson, 2005), I would like to attempt to provide a visual conceptual diagram, aligning with systems theory the theoretical framework of this study's function – to deconstruct elite masculine multiplicity. This, hopefully, will also lead to enhanced understanding of, and target

sustainable transformative discourses and action against, ubiquitous gendered violence. This is also inspired by Shook et al.'s (2022) study that employs Intersectionality Research for Transgender Health Justice (IRTHJ) framework and the Foucauldian concept of governmentality.

At the 'micro' level, specific subjectification and identity formation take place and socio-political forces that contribute to an individual's identity, such as socialisation, impact on the journey of one's personhood. This study titles this level 'Socio-political processes'. The 'meso' level is where civil society and social discourses are reproduced and maintained. Named 'Socio-institutional systems', it looks at gender at a behavioural and interactional level (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). The 'macro' level recognises the national-historical context of apartheid and colonialism, the militarisation of masculinities and gender hegemony that perpetuate inequality by preserving the status quo and enforcing norms across institutional systems. It is internationally driven, dominates discourses that define social institutions and structures socio-politically, and is popularised through the international world order. 'Socio-political domination' is a section that emphasises the effects of hegemons, heteronormative discourses that maintain GBV, and rape cultures.

Other gender systems theories applied to GBV, such as Anderson's model, inadequately interrogate the role that race and class have in identity formation, interactions and structures/systems. Therefore, instead of replicating other studies, the utilisation of African feminisms and FDA allows for a more multidimensional engagement with elite masculinities and GBV, without neglecting hegemonic discourses. Furthermore, politicising the performance of identity formation provides a useful visual tool and analytical instrument of political science.

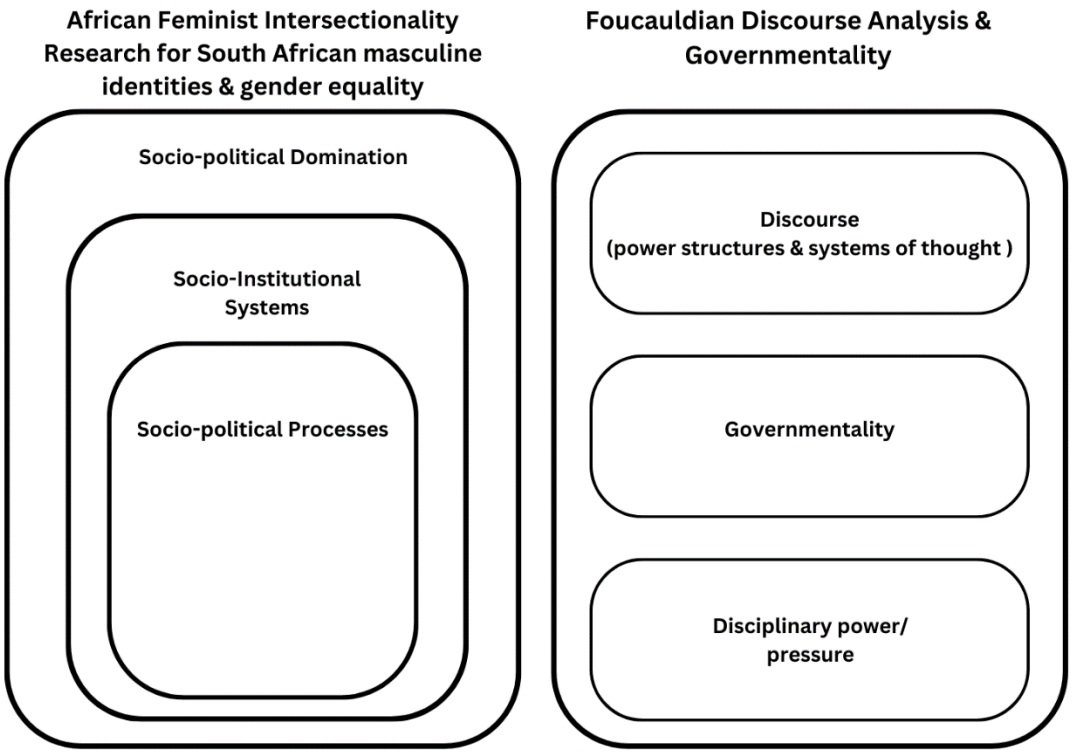

Figure 3.1: The parallel relationship between Foucauldian Discourse analysis and African feminist intersectional approach, inspired systems theory intersectionality, to South African Identity formation that influence ideas about gendered and sexual violence.

3.3 Recruitment

Initially, purposive sample recruitment was used in this research. Participants were recruited from the alumni of the school being studied. The participants were required to be alumni who attended the school between 2011 and 2021. This allowed the researcher to examine the evolution of the institutional culture of school such as this, as it relates to masculinities, GBV and rape culture over the last decade.

Participants were recruited through the researcher's personal networks, where I identified and approached potential participants. I also circulated details of my research on social media platforms to access the vast alumni communities of the Blue School. Post-purposive sampling led to snowball sampling to increase and gain a richer, more representative sample of participants.

After identifying and recruiting participants, each potential participant was contacted telephonically, where I explained the details of my study and inquired about their interest in participating further. If there was interest, I requested verbal consent to participate. Thereafter,

I maintained communication via email or WhatsApp and sent a letter of information regarding the study, the consent form and interview questions, for the participant to make an informed decision.

Prior to the commencement of the interviews, final verbal and written consent was sought in the modality in which the interview was conducted (online or in-person). This is where I answered any questions, clearly indicating their options as participants and clearly explained consent details to ensure the participants were fully informed and understood the parameters of the research that they had consented to.

3.4 Data Collection

Given the involvement of sensitive topics such as masculine identities, GBV and rape culture, this study employed semi-structured, in-depth interviews as a data collection technique. The choice of in-depth interviews is rooted in the aim to "provide the scope to seek internal corroboration of participants' accounts" (Wight, 1994: 704). In the context of this qualitative study, in-depth interviews are used to engage in intensive individual conversations with a small group of participants. This approach aims to explore their unique perspectives, co-creating meaning by reconstructing perceptions and experiences related to their knowledge about GBV, rape culture and masculinity formation during adolescence.

Since the interviews were semi-structured and in-depth, I had a set of open-ended questions to pose. However, this format also allowed me the flexibility to adapt and adjust questions according to the participants' responses, enabling me to probe further in discussions. As highlighted by Creswell (2011 43), the nature of questions can evolve throughout the interview process and this enhances one's reflection and understanding of the issue at hand. The semi-structured, in-depth interview guide facilitated a natural flow of conversation for participants, displaying how participants discursively navigate masculinities and GBV in democratic South Africa. Appendix 2 shows the semi- structured questions asked in the interview. This approach enhanced the credibility of the information gathered and brought to light the hidden issues surrounding elite male private schooling, given the societal taboo around discussing masculinities and GBV. My intention was to provide them with a platform to share their stories and narratives, and it was evident that they apprehensively seized this opportunity to recount and remember their experiences at school during our discussions.

Prior to outlining my approach to conducting Zoom interviews, I would like to provide an overview of Zoom interviews as an effective method for qualitative interviewing. Zoom, an internet-based video communication tool introduced in 2011, has been utilised for various purposes, including job interviews and long-distance communication (Kann, 2018). Its functionality involves transmitting communication via a webcam on a computer or smartphone. It is availed to Rhodes University staff and students for educational/research purposes. Offering a more affordable and expeditious alternative to organising face-to-face interviews, Zoom and older applications like Skype significantly diminish time and space constraints, making it safer and more accessible for participants, irrespective of their geographical locations (Hanna, 2012; Oates, 2015). Consequently, researchers can easily connect with participants who may be challenging to reach, as both researchers and participants have the flexibility to choose a time and space that suits them best, ensuring no intrusion into personal space, but rather participants sharing their virtual spaces (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Oates, 2015; Hanna, 2012).

Given the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, such as masculinities, learning processes and drivers of GBV, the use of Zoom interviews provided participants with a private space and the freedom to share their personal experiences. Nonetheless, I endeavoured to discern and capture the participants' emotions by paying attention to their laughter, expressions of anger, tones of voice and word repetitions. Additionally, I was fortunate that my participants were tech-savvy, possessing personal computers, laptops or smartphones with internet access. Consequently, they embraced Zoom as the chosen mode of communication (Kann, 2018).

Despite the inherent challenges of internet-based video technology, such as pauses, inaudible segments, sudden call drops, unclear body language, nonverbal cues and a lack of intimacy, our communication was not disrupted by technological issues. I implemented several effective strategies to maintain the flow of our conversations, including ensuring a stable internet connection on both ends, conducting the interviews in quiet and uninterrupted environments, speaking slowly and allowing ample space for questions and responses, repeating and clarifying queries, observing facial expressions, nodding, asking follow-up questions and paying attention to the participants' tones of voice.

I conducted the interviews from the end of May 2023 until the end of November 2023. The interviews lasted for around two hours. As all the participants and myself speak and understand English, the interviews were conducted in English.

Overall, the data collection was complicated by the apprehension of participants to participate. After inquiring about their socio-economic and demographic details, I endeavoured to establish a connection by initiating an icebreaker, asking participants about their school memories and when they first realised their male identity. This question served as a means to foster rapport with the participants and provided them with an opportunity to reminisce, particularly since many topics involved recalling past experiences. This approach proved effective, as the participants utilised the interview as a platform to share numerous previously untold experiences, stories and narratives – an uncommon occurrence beyond interactions with their peers. Throughout the interviews, participants not only recounted their personal stories and experiences but also shared those of their friends, siblings, cousins and community members who had undergone similar or different experiences related to school and GBV. In qualitative research, the quality of data hinges on the rapport between researchers and participants (Kann, 2018). To further strengthen this rapport, I occasionally shared my own experiences and knowledge about the private school context, which appeared to instil greater confidence and comfort in the participants.

Interviews lasted between 60 and 160 min and were audio-recorded as mentioned above and transcribed by me with the assistance of the Microsoft office Word AI transcribing function. Of the ten interested participants, I managed to interview seven participants comprehensively. I found that alumni from this school are scattered all over the world and are generally apprehensive about responding or engaging in schooling memories and experiences. Anonymity was specifically enquired about by all participants I reached out to, reflecting AFI's methodological objective that connects embodied knowledge and sensitivity to subjective experiences.

3.5 Participant Attributes

A total of seven alumni participated in interviews and ranged in age from 21 to 34 years. The participants live in a variety of locations, with three located in international settings and four in South Africa. All participants attended the school for a minimum of three years and one participant attended a similar all-boys school in Johannesburg in Grades 8 and 9. To align with the ethical guidelines of anonymity each participant was provided with the pseudonym Alumnus (A) and an allocated number, 1 through to 7. The participants represented a variety of socio-political identities including heterosexual male (A = 5; where A = participant) and

queer/homosexual (A = 2). The majority of participants were white (57%; A = 4) with two black participants (30%; A = 2). One participant was multiracial/coloured (13%; A = 1).

3.5.1 Participant Data table

	The Blue School				
Code Name :	**Consent form**	**LINK**	**School Years**	**Socio-political Identity data**	**Researchers Comments**
Participant 1	Digital	Instagram	2013-2017	straight, white male, he/him	Grew up in Central Africa, boarded, dad went to public boys school in Gauteng, parents together, 2 brothers, 1 sister.
Participant 2	Digital	Neighbour	2010-2014	straight, white male, he/him	Dad went to KZN boys school, 2 older sisters, day boy but had a room in the school, so pretty much boarded. Photographer.
Participant 3	Physical		2009-2014	coloured, queer, male, he/him they /them	sister, parents are teachers, art teacher (female) was influential, currently artist.
Participant 4	Digital		2009-2013	white, gay, male he/ him	sister, boarded, academic and swimming scholarship, currently working in Western Cape, strong family ties.
Participant 5	Physical	Instagram	2012-2016(+Prep)	white, male, he/him, straight	divorced parents, parents both in education, brother younger
Participant 6	Digital	Instagram	2015-2017	black straight male	currently working in Asia, separated parents, siblings "Sister", English teacher grade 8-10, recommended School by family friend, subsidised fees, bordered
Participant 7	Digital	Instagram	2016-2020	black(international student), male, straight, he/ him	born in UK, lives in Central Africa, 2 sisters and 1 brother, currently studying abroad, boarded

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Rhodes University Institutional Review Board (2023-5859-7540). This research study probes questions surrounding self-identity, life histories and narratives or personhood formation in an adolescent's life, involving topics around GBV and rape culture, deeming this a high-risk study because the topics and questions discussed might be considered personally, socially and culturally sensitive.

As previously mentioned, elite private schools can be perceived as powerful patrons of the discourse of hegemonic masculinities that advocate for hierarchy. They can be sites where violence has been normalised and inflicted on and by learners (Squelch, 1997; Saltmarsh, 2007). Therefore, the possibility of participants being exposed to violence, having experienced violence, or having perpetrated violence during their school years or after, is possible. This might pose a risk as sensitive topics tend to aggravate past/present traumas and it could emotionally trigger or stimulate self-realisations. It was expected that the reactions would be varied, ranging from physical or verbal aggression, to withdrawal or emotional breakdown.

As the researcher and in order to mitigate risk, the ten participants underwent an extensive recruitment process where they were made aware of the sensitivity of the research both verbally and in the physical consent form. See Appendix 1 for an example of the research invitation and consent form. Additionally, as part of the recruitment, the participants received a clear statement on the purpose, context and intention of the research. A part of this discussion was also to indicate/assure them that they would not be persecuted or accused of any past wrongdoing. Each participant was also made aware of their options of anonymity and confidentiality during the interviews. This was communicated with participants verbally and in writing to assure them of the protection of their identities and content. Participants received the interview questions prior to the interviews, so that each participate was aware of the line of questioning and the intimate nature of the topics.

The utilisation of semi-structured interview means the questions were merely a guide for the interviewer to prepare for emotionally-driven dialogue but they were not binding to the

participant or interviewer. Finally, participants were also provided with the option to pause and return to the interview process over multiple sessions or discontinue altogether at any point.

Furthermore, due to the sensitive line of questioning, the decision to interview alumni from the Blue School was imperative. This meant that the research could access data without the need for ethical clearance to conduct research with minors. Interviewing alumni also allowed the researcher to divert gatekeeping permission from the school as the interviews comprised life histories and narratives from the alumni's experience while at school.

3.7 Data Analysis

I employed Willig's Framework for Foucauldian Discourse Analysis as a guide for my analytical approach (Willig, 2017). Prior to delving into the analysis phase of this project, I organised and transcribed all the audio-recorded interviews. Before analysing interview data, open coding through the ATLAS.it application was used to organise data from transcripts.

Aligning with Willig, "Foucauldian discourse analysts focus on the availability of discursive resources and the implications of this for those who live within [a particular discursive economy]" (Willig, 2008: 130). Consequently, my analytic objective was to identify discourses that both restrict and reproduce masculinities that maintain rape cultures and GBV. I wanted to explore how adolescent males, specifically from this school, engaged with these discourses to negotiate the implicit power relations in their interactions with elite educational institutions. The analysis commenced by carefully reading and rereading the transcripts. Initial coding involved the application ATLAS.it, which allowed for a more thorough but more efficient coding process. Codes were then thoroughly re-examined and reviewed, line by line and word for word, ensuring that they accurately reflected the identification of the text contributing to the discursive object(s). Codes were subsequently grouped to discern discursive constructions related to participants' narratives – what they said and how they said it. Throughout this process, coding and discursive constructions were extensively discussed by the research on multiple occasions.

Next in the analysis, discursive constructions were scrutinised to identify what Foucault terms as discourses or "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972: 49). During this phase, I closely examined the discursive contexts where various object

constructions were being utilised, such as in conversations with participants regarding socio-economic contexts, family dynamics and school culture, which were areas of importance for this study. The purpose of analysing discursive constructions at this point was to identify broader discourses. Willig's framework for Foucauldian Discourse Analysis does not explicitly address Foucault's concern with the evolution of discursive formations over time (ie their genealogy) (Shook et al., 2022),. However, this analysis, particularly in this stage, involved frequent discussions on the evolving language used to describe elite masculinities (eg macho masculinities vs feminine masculinities, queerness vs heteronormativity; institutional homogeneity vs fickle hierarchal exclusion) and the potential implications for participants. The important lens of AFI was considered at all layers of analysis. The final stage of analysis reached a higher level of abstraction, where the researcher theorised the meaning of the discourses and the functions they served. Throughout the analytical process, which spanned three months and followed a back-and-forth approach rather than a linear one, continuous discussions occurred among the researchers.

CHAPTER 4: The Complex Kaleidoscope of Elite Masculinities and Ubiquitous Gender-Based Violence and Rape Culture

4.1 Introduction

South African masculinities are at an intersection of contestation. Scholars emphasise that a necessary interrogation of the multiplicity of masculinities will contribute to the analysis of social phenomena like GBV (Dube, 2015: 1; Hassim, 1998). This study aims to understand how and what masculine traits are reproduced and maintained throughout the development of identity as a male adolescent at the Blue School. More specifically, it investigates how the participants navigated masculinities once leaving the school and participated in the socio-political and economic climate of South Africa. The literature examined in this study highlights the need to trace the multiplicity of masculinities, the conceptions of hegemonic masculinity and the intersection of the socio-historical context of masculinities with ubiquitous sexual and gendered violence in South Africa. It also shows the important role that educational institutions play in identity formation and in the mitigation or perpetuation of GBV and rape culture. This study aims to focus on elite masculinities, the conceptualisation of manhood and participants' own experiences of navigating identity in post-school life. The findings demonstrate that identity formation within this elite private school is complex and often reflected as a Western-centric hegemonic masculinity entrenched in heteronormativity. This is captured through the shared experiences by alumni in relation to adherence to traditional values, submission to hierarchical structures, collective mockery of vulnerability and the instillation of competitive individualism. Therefore, it becomes crucial to examine how the participants are situated within these discourses. In this examination, I pinpoint the prevailing discourse and any conflicting discourses (if present) to understand how participants either reinforce or challenge these discourses.

This chapter provides a presentation of portions of the interviews of all the research participants, centring the voices of the participants as a significant motivation for using AFI as a lens to interrogate the multiplicity of elite masculinities. Three themes emerged from the analyses of the seven transcribed interviews.

The emerging themes were:

(i) **The complex kaleidoscope of elite masculinities**. This theme explores multifaceted views on masculinity challenging traditional norms and the diverse ways masculinity is expressed and perceived. The participants expressed an overwhelming interaction with hegemony and heteronormative discourses when navigating masculine identities within the educational institutions and later in society as adults. This theme also focuses on the impact of peer, family and institutional relationships on participants' personal views, especially regarding gender norms and masculinity. In addition, it highlights how family dynamics, school culture and social interactions contribute to shaping personal identity, including gender and race perspectives. Foucault's notion of power/knowledge is relevant here, as it examines how environments (like family and schools) serve as institutions that govern individual behaviours and identities, particularly in relation to gender and race.

This theme is particularly broad, covering how the alumni came to attend the Blue School and how boyhood and gender are conceptualised through the taught curriculum, contrasting with the hidden scripts of masculinities in the boarding school environment. The findings reveal the othering of masculinities that do not fit the mould established by the institutional cultures at the Blue School.

(ii) **The ubiquitous gender-based violence and rape culture at the Blue School**. This theme unpacks the understandings and experiences of the research participants related to GBV, rape culture and bullying and how these are processed and reflected upon. It ties into Foucault's discourse analysis by examining how conversations and understandings of GBV and rape culture are shaped by prevailing societal and institutional discourses, and how individuals internalise or challenge these discourses. It enters into a conversation regarding access to pro-feminist discourses in elite education that aim to eradicate sexual and gendered violence.

(iii) **The ephemerality of personhood formation**. This theme emphasises the journey of personal development, the transition in perspectives through life stages and the influence of educational and social experiences on adulthood and identity. It discusses the evolving language used to describe the elite masculinities and the potential implications for participants.

Beyond simply identifying dominant discourses related to common-sense truths (eg the complex kaleidoscope of masculinities), it is essential to recognise that discourse is entwined with 'power-relations'. Individuals or institutions (eg schools, religious entities, physicians and parents) wield the power to shape and uphold these truths or realities (eg discourses of mainstream hegemonic masculinities). Holding authoritative positions, these entities create disciplinary or expert knowledge. Therefore, in addition to disciplinary power, patterns observed in the data suggest the presence of bio-power. Consequently, through both disciplinary power and biopolitics, participants become subject to these discourses (ie normalisation), often without resistance to dominant discourses, even though they may occasionally question or problematise them (Foucault, 1978).

The themes expressed in this study account for the personal experiences of the alumni interviewed. They show the ways in which their experiences overlapped and varied. The semi-structured in-depth interviews were all conducted with the participants in English and transcribed in English.

4.2 The complex kaleidoscope of elite masculinities

When I initiated this study, I operated under the presumption that alumni of the school would exhibit distinct characteristics commonly associated with males educated at elite educational institutions. However, the process of conducting interviews unveiled a diverse array of expressions and dissenting perspectives regarding the journey through manhood and masculinity. Engaging with the alumni from the school facilitated the development of a more nuanced understanding of the implicit meanings associated with elite masculinities. Additionally, the fieldwork experience brought to light the challenges inherent in the institutional conceptualisations of masculinity, which confronted participants with a pervasive discourse characterised by heteronormativity, stratified identities and an expectation of uniform masculinities. These narratives underscore the difficulties encountered by individuals as they attempted to integrate their personal identities within the framework of prevailing societal expectations and the established norms of traditional gender roles.

Discourses of heteronormativity, hierarchical identities and loyal homogenous masculinities are three interrelated normative or dominant discourses that are produced and reproduced in institutional systems such as healthcare, education and the legal system (Gouws, 2021).

Discursively, heteronormativity assumes that heterosexuality is the norm, often prioritising heterosexual norms and establishing rankings within identities (often privileging some over others) and promote a uniform understanding of what it means to be masculine.

All participants expressed some level of institutional normativity through an array of narratives. As previously noted, the Blue School, like many other elite educational institutions in South Africa is modelled on the Victorian public school system, introduced by the British into their colonies. The genealogy of private education in democratic South Africa is outlined in Chapter 2, which includes discussions on adherence to traditional values, submission to hierarchical structures, collective mockery of vulnerability and the instillation of competitive individualism (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005). This creates an emotional vacuum where elite educational settings prepare boys for a world defined by might, strength, aggression and a competitive dynamic, reinforcing a particular form of masculinity (Lewis, 1991; Poynting & Donaldson, 2005).

4.2.1 Coming to the Blue School

All the alumni interviewed described the Blue School as a space where the impact of peers, family and institutional relationships moulded their personal views, especially regarding gender norms and masculinity. Each of the alumni experienced different degrees of homogeneous elite masculinities at the Blue School, because of the impact of family dynamics, interactions with school culture and social interactions that contributed to shaping their personal identities.

All the alumni alluded to the impact of interpersonal relations on their conceptions of identity, either by generalising or highlighting specific relations of influence. In this study, participants' reasons for attending the Blue School ranged from sporting scholarships to institutional advertising, family legacies and parent employment. Two of the participants attended the Blue School as full-fee paying learners of the school whereas the other alumnis were either able to attend the Blue School by means of a sporting scholarship or staff fee discount.

Alumnus 4 alludes to the subjectification of genealogy of family and institutional ideals that are converse to traditional, hegemonic norms:

> *I think [masculinity] comes from upbringing and having fathers that are perhaps very stoic and very like traditional masculine men that enforce that narrative onto their sons. And then going to a prestigious school like [the Blue School], it just kind of takes the person, who could be completely different to their dad, and slots them into a very strict mould.*

Other alumni expressed the influence of family and peers that instil beliefs and ideas about manhood. Alumnus 1:

> *I mean it's it obviously. Informs like some of the like expectations and perspectives and blah blah blah. But. I think yeah I'd say. As part of my … I, I guess identity I'd say it was more shaped based on like in my upbringing and who I kind of was surrounded with and less to do with. Yeah I'd say less to do with being a man per se, it's what to do with kind of uh I guess friends, peers like grew up with I'd say more shape my identity than I guess being. Being a man."*

Interestingly, the alumni who were full-fee paying students at the Blue School tended to erase the impact of the school on their identity and accounted it more to family. They appeared to recognise the importance of the Blue School as an influential era of their lives but not a defining moment.

The alumni's experiences illustrate that the construction of identity, particularly in terms of gender and masculinity, is a multifaceted process influenced by a combination of family, peers and institutional culture. The Blue School, with its traditions and expectations, played a varying role in each alumnus's journey, reflecting the individual nature of identity formation. While the school's environment and culture had a notable impact, it was ultimately the interplay between family values and peer relationships that most significantly shaped the alumni's conceptions of masculinity and personal identity.

4.2.2 Boyhood, gender and the taught curriculum

As mentioned in Chapter 3, to interrogate the multiplicity of South African masculinities there is a need for an African-centred approach that considers the intersectionality of gender, race, culture and class in relation to identity formations. Foucault also emphasises the notion of power/knowledge, as it examines how environments like schools serve as institutions that govern individual behaviours and identities, particularly in relation to gender and race. All the participants contributed their journeys of identity formation as accumulations of formative influences, highlighting their experiences at the Blue School as predominant, but fleeting. These will be unpacked further in the section below. The alumni's discourses regarding how

boyhood, girls, women and gender were presented in the taught curriculum at the Blue School are reflected through formal and informal realms of institutional cultures.

Alumnus 3 had one reflection on the formal curriculum regarding the subject Life Orientation and the experience of engaging in the classroom with girls from the neighbouring school:

> *It's geared towards shaming women and not holding men accountable for their role. Yeah something ss simple as not simple but something like pregnancies we those things are geared. Those classes are geared towards shaming women and for having sex.*
>
> *Within LO like within alone and things like that. You obviously do touch on topics such as rape and human trafficking and things like that and you do get taught about consent and and all of that kind of stuff but…*
>
> *Yeah. I mean geez ... when you … I Guess when you're a young boy and you've got classes with girls and things is the kind of the obvious. You you're going to try and like… I don't know flirt or talk to them. And then you figure out which girls you like which girls or mates which girls are whatever. But I mean at that stage you still very immature and you're kind of development. So it's it's almost a situation of uh let's let's get together and hold hands after school. You still but then…*

Alumnus 7 also explained:

> *If schooling refers to like the institution, definitely not, and they've got no education in terms of that. And everything was very … check boxy like this is going on in South Africa, let's have half an assembly about it, and so in that regard, no. But like I said, in terms of like the grassroots things that were going on in the school, I think it at least gave me a foundation to start to acknowledge that these problems exist. School didn't fully prepare me, but I think it… you know it wedged these questions and problems into my brain.*

Alumnus 3's reflection on the formal curriculum:

> *Then they're going to carry that out into the world especially when our Life Orientation course is not geared. It's geared towards shaming women and not holding men accountable for their role. Yeah, something as simple as not simple but something like pregnancies we those things are geared. Those classes are geared towards shaming women and for having sex. Yeah yeah. I mean we watched Juno in LO and they were like don't get pregnant. And I'm like sitting there like OK but these boys are not gonna ...*

The above quotes reflect the contestation relating to femininity in elite private schools, resulting in a heteronormative hierarchy that subordinates and 'others' feminine expression.

Later, under the theme of ubiquitous GBV and rape culture, this research highlights the intersection of heteronormative discourses producing or reproducing cycles of sexual and gendered violence. All the alumni interviewed expressed cultures that sexualise women, especially girls from the neighbouring school and teachers.

4.2.2.1 Relating to adults, teachers, coaches and staff within the institution

The influence of teachers is recognised as positive but also messy, as there is an enormous amount of admiration and literal disciplinary power at play. The majority of the alumni could generally recognise a teacher or coach of influence but more a general experience of school. Only Alumnus 6 was specific regarding an individual who had influence on his ideas:

> *He [English teacher] really kind of changed my perspective on a lot of things on who I was. He gave me a lot of confidence. He was someone that really backed me... I remember saying that this is someone that I want to be like.*
>
> *What bridged that gap for me was just the confidence that I got from an [English teacher]. Going into [the Blue School] ... That's the single most important thing I would say just the confidence I got into being who I want to be.*

However, Alumnus 7 explains the blurry lines of teacher-child relationships within his boarding house:

> *The main problem was secrecy like and obviously I'm just …. these are hypotheses. I don't think [the headmaster] and the school like hiding all of these things. I think it's that they were genuinely so blind to how serious those things were.*
>
> *Yeah. And so I think even if I had heard about some of the accusations that have been made or the processes that were going on, I don't think I would have immediately had the alarm bells, because I think I'd also, you know, started thinking, I don't know…like the teachers at the school and the boys, when schools have strange relationships with students, sometimes they'll go to the coaches house for dinner and they're getting very close. That's just kind of how things are…*

The narratives reveal a critical examination of the construction of masculinities within the educational context of the Blue School, highlighting the need for an approach that considers the intersectionality of various social factors. The alumni I interviewed provide insights into how boyhood, gender, and the perception of women are shaped by both the formal curriculum and the broader institutional culture.

> Alumnus 2: *So I definitely think like it's so if you just if you look ... the teacher example and before moving on to the class I think that's that's actually and it was like you would definitely more terrified of a male teacher from a female one. I don't know if that's maybe something that was you like is taught into you or something or if it's just that like OK this is a this is a big guy like this like, like if he's going to scream at me a lot loud or scarier than maybe what a lady would. So I think that definitely that was a thing. And I think you know I definitely think it's a lot harder for a female teacher to teach 20 kids 16 year olds than it would be for a male teacher. Because I think there is that that kids might take more chances they might you. Know you will get. Those you put you'll get those pricks.*

The Blue School alumni point to an educational environment that simultaneously shaped and reflected societal attitudes towards gender. The school's formal curriculum and informal culture contribute to a nuanced and sometimes problematic understanding of masculinity, femininity and relationships between genders. While there are elements of positive influence and empowerment, there are also significant areas that require critical reflection and reform to ensure that the educational experience supports a more equitable and responsible formation of gender identities.

4.2.3 Boarding school and the hidden script of manhood

The alumni described a hidden script of manhood that is not formally taught, but rather dispersed and maintained through institutional discourses, culture and traditions. It is often policed by learners and the hierarchy.

A 1 and A 4 explain ideas of masculinity within institutional discourses:

> *And then if you display potentially non-masculine traits or various vulnerabilities, I guess results in some kind of ostracization way so I think that does. Yeah, I mean that pressure definitely does come from I guess that expectation to be or I guess to set ... like sounds hectic, but to conform to what everyone within your kind of micro-community expects.*

> *I think school taught me that to be a man is a very strict mould with very specific unsaid criteria that involve not being sensitive but involved. Being strong whatever that may mean and not showing emotion and being interested in conventional male things – you know like if you're a man you love rugby. If you're a man you love a beer you know like very stereotypical things.*

> *There was no space or any sort of expression that was out of kind of stereotypical expression of being very mass ... or being masculine and being what it what it means to be a man in the school's viewpoint ...*

Alumni 3 and 5, despite vast contrasts in socio-political and interpersonal relations, both capture discourses that highlight what Foucault refers to as disciplinary power:

> *I think you spend like five years in high school and just … These schools that are specifically investigating have rituals and traditions that I think reinforce masculine behaviours or the idea of being like the kind of boy. We often, we often … a lot of my other friends from school we speak about the idea of the mould that is supposed to fit into which obviously I didn't. So yeah …*

> *In a boarding hostel, where you are around these people 24 hours a day, it does become a thing where you do want to fit in. It's like a survival tactic. If you don't fit in, you'll spend a lot of time alone. You realise like it's actually okay ... but I think especially in the beginning, yeah, there is that like… okay I do need to fit in. It's just going to make life easier.*

Alumni 1 and 3 shared the collective sentiments of all research participants with variations in the types of physicality they mentioned, from sporting codes to peer groups and boarding houses:

> *Yeah people just made fun of me because I didn't do sport. But there was definitely physical violence in the sense that if you did something wrong you were lashed if you … there was this thing where they … if you out of line. Yeah, an older grade will come and stomp you ... so you have to go on the floor and then people just stand on you ... it's more like group militia vibes.*

> *Terrible. It never happened to me but like. They were … violence was used ...*

The alumni spoke about their experiences regarding a tradition that normalises the infliction of pain as a means of disciplinary power:

> *But in those days it felt like it was like, I mean … I remember getting branded and it was sore as hell, literally burning someone's skin. But felt so empowered because I was like, I feel included. Now you know and, and … Yeah I think I think a lot of it now… is, is … is. It's weird to say that it feels good to be have been hurt for going from one grade to another.*

Alumni 1, 2 and 7 describe violent masculine performances through traditions:

> *But I guess in terms of environments it can often be kind of when there's a bit of hysteria and in terms of in a group or something's happening with sport or there's some form of excitement can often incite violence. Various forms of competition I guess would incite violence. And then I guess the sometimes later stages of life I guess alcohol-induced violence is a common thing which I've experienced. But yeah for myself*

personally I've always tried to avoid it as much as possible. But yeah in terms of other people they're especially when there's a bit of a mob mentality. And I guess yeah men will sometimes get the whole that brash kind of outlook and and yeah try and incite violence as sometimes a sense of humour which is quite, quite scary, but yeah.

Alumnus 2 said:

I think a lot of them know and don't condone it but I think it's also kind of brushed off and it's not serious ... The boy[s]-being-boys type of thing ... a lot of issues that happen in school are blinded."

A weird experience was, was kind of being like watching the first team and obviously college being supporters on the side you know there would often be this violence towards watching the sport game you know. All kind of just just verbal which for me I I really think violence is something that's going to inflict pain. But you could ... you could, you could almost feel the anger and the rage when you know if you, if, if, another team tackle another player in front of the first team.

Alumnus 7:

... everybody basically from Grade 8 to 10, would just sprint to the stands and the reason they'd sprint is because if you end up being in like the front row, then you're not just going to be uncomfortable, but the sort of abuse that you'd be subject to, whether that was the war cry leaders with their war cry sticks like hitting you.

... or things being thrown from above, from, from the stands.

... and I think what was so jarring was that.

Alluded to by all, but captured by Alumnus 1, was the contestation of popularity reproduced in homogenous and elitist discourses of masculinity:

That results in somebody being more dominant such as like fit-like people are more confident or more assertive, more charismatic. Those kinds of traits would generally result in people who are looked up to and almost ... develop ... The kind of the norms and the expectations and things are kind of defined by a small group of individuals.

Those kind[s] of traits would generally result in people who are looked up to and almost develop a God complex, especially when it comes to First team sports and things. Like that? Where? They're all looked up upon in that small fraction of time that that is school.

Additional to the competitive culture of school in sport, boarding houses and hierarchy, the participants discussed the mentor-mentee system where the mentor is a prefect and or is an

older student. They shared their personal experiences, which involved doing laundry and making tea for their fagmaster. A participant pointed out that the mentorship system is essentially a form of servitude, where younger students are expected to serve their seniors, such as making coffee and beds, particularly emphasising the role of the fagmaster. Alumnus 4:

> *When you're a fag and you are governed by your matric that relationship reiterates this whole like thing that people are below you, are superior and you can get to that stage. And when you're there you can belittle other people and you can order them around or whatever the case may be.*

Alumnus A3 had this to say:

> *So they disguise it as such … but essentially you are their slave. [OK]*
>
> *Like I'm not even joking. Like if you make them coffee. You make their bed in the morning especially it used to be all matrics but then they changed it [to] only the prefect.*

The interviewees described how the mentorship system, particularly in the context of the fag/fagmaster roles, was perceived as a form of servitude by the participants. They spoke about the tasks expected of younger students, like making coffee and beds for their seniors, highlighting the unequal power dynamics in this system.

The alumni described a spectrum of violence, from physical punishment to more subtle forms of psychological pressure, as mechanisms that enforce and normalise the institution's masculine ideals. This violence is not only physical but also embedded in the social dynamics of the school, such as the pressure to participate in sports and the glorification of the first team.

The narratives of the alumni highlight a problematic aspect of institutional culture at the Blue School where masculinity is narrowly defined and strictly enforced through a variety of formal and informal practices. This culture promotes conformity and can lead to a range of violent behaviours as a means of policing and reinforcing the school's ideals of manhood. The experiences of the alumni suggest that the school's culture of masculinity is both physically and psychologically coercive, favouring a homogenous and elitist notion of masculine identity.

4.2.4 Othering masculinities

When asked about what they associated their school with, many alumni had similar understandings and experiences of traditions, cultures and the formal and informal curriculum, during their attendance between 2011 and 2021. For the majority of the alumni participating in this research, these associations prompted impulsive negative or indifferent emotion, while still acknowledging the access to opportunities they were granted at the school and the access to ample opportunity. The alumni who had more positive narratives often described excelling in either sport, academics or social popularity, or submitting to the formal and informal traditional hierarchal systems. Alumnus 5 explains in the lower grades such as Grades 8 and 9:

> *You just you just keep your head down. It's like yeah ...*

The discourses of assimilation or suffering were shared through the experience of Alumnus 2:

> *Honestly it was forced. Essentially. I mean, yeah, from Grade 8. But a lot of that is done in ways where you're trying to ... yeah force them into ... yeah. Also certain things which are are perpetuated with like masculine tendencies. So let all the Grade 8 go play touch rugby and there's always those guys who don't want to play. I was one this and was like I'm just going to have chats and chill [with] some other guys.*

Both Alumni 3 and 4 reflected on school from a queer perspective, suggested discourses of othering:

> *Not really. I had friends and I had my crowd but we were not considered like the cool kids. But I've since leaving school really disconnected from like this idea of having to use a specific kind of man ... I don't really care if someone is bothered by the fact that I'm not fitting what they think a man is supposed to be.*

> *I think large part of my schooling career was me trying to morph myself into something that would be liked by other people. I was very ... concerned about what other people thought of me. I think that definitely drove ... wanting, you know, to change myself or to alter myself in certain ways to make sure that I was liked and, and again that comes from ...*

The findings shown in this section demonstrate the complex kaleidoscope of elite masculinities. All the alumni interviewed alludes to a specific identity trait that thrives withing the schools system, whether or not their personal conceptions of masculinities have evolved since attending school. These traits often align with discourses of heteronormativity, hegemony and othering.

4.2.5 "A talented black boy going into that space"

Interestingly, the findings relating to race provide an interesting paradox in the formation of elite identity. Not highlighted in the narratives of white alumnis as a formative contributor in elite masculinities, the institution was generally perceived as an opportunity to level the playing fields, thus distinguishing peer pressure as the dominating discourse. Alumnus 1:

> *... think majority of it would definitely come down to peer pressure and that kind of stuff [is] definitely more driven from I guess the smaller lower rungs of the, the structure of a, of a school, and, and I mean that obviously plays into things like ... bullying and whatnot, to where if you expose certain vulnerabilities, you, you're fairly certain that those will be exploited. Which is just the nature I guess of, of boarding school. And so I think in that sense ... um ... yeah I think it is. Yeah significantly driven by peer pressure.*

However, alumnis identifying as coloured or black similarly perceived this school as an opportunity and levelled playing field whilst identifying differing dominating discourses. Alumnus 6 shared:

> *Apart from the blatant race like there was ... There wasn't a lot of blatant racist experiences. It was just the microaggressions that get you. But in terms of being ostracised for being black I wouldn't say that's entirely the case...*
>
> *I think that if you're a talented black boy going into that space, with a good work ethic, you definitely thrive in that environment.*

In response to a question about implicit obsession with whiteness and race within the institution Alumnus 3 deviates from the majority of the alumni's shared narratives that erase racial diversity to implicitly achieve homogeneous elite masculinities :

> *... to fit in, yeah. To kind of perform at the level of the school would want, want you to – in terms of your identity – not even just like actual academic performance and ... yeah definitely. If you presented yourself ... I'm thinking about a lot of the black guys who were popular were boy[s] were, were black boys who adopted white accents or white or sounding accents or ways of speaking were more masculine. That did sports and hang out with other they were easily more easily and well ... those environments.*
>
> *I wouldn't say race because I've seen how the system works for black men especially masculine black men."*
>
> *Yeah there were a couple of boys who definitely had their hair relaxed and would play into this white-looking aesthetic and I think even boys who wore whose features were*

more white. So, like not, not broader noses, but you know more white-looking features were even given more opportunities to be in the forefront of all … welcomed into the group if that makes sense. But then it also played out in the sense that … sorry, I had, I had a couple of friends who were not masculine but they were white and they were alienated from the group, so or made fun of. So it's in that sense, I think you needed to have both things to be ... yes yes. OK. OK. White and masculine to be that perfect.

The notion of an 'implicit obsession with whiteness' within the institution was explored, with the observation that black students who adopt characteristics associated with whiteness, such as certain accents or physical features and who display traditionally masculine traits and sportsmanship, are more likely to be accepted and successful within the school community. This suggests a nuanced form of racial assimilation where conformity to white, masculine norms offers social advantages.

The narratives of alumni reveal a complex picture of racial dynamics at the school. While the institution is seen as a place of opportunity, the path to acceptance and success for students of colour appears to be paved with expectations to conform to certain norms of whiteness and masculinity. This indicates that while the institution may not overtly endorse racial hierarchies, there is an underlying current that rewards adherence to specific racial and gendered performances, creating an implicit but powerful framework within which students navigate their identities.

4.2.6 Relationships with girls and women at the neighbouring girls' school

This school has a unique relationship with the neighbouring girls' school, where the learners from both schools have joint classes from Grade 10 onwards. This relationship and interaction between students comprised of discourses that define and situate masculine identity along incredibly linear or binary lines.

Alumni 4, 6 and 7, alluding to the competitive culture of heterosexuality established amongst boys said the following:

Alumnus 4:

I think being in boarding school, a lot of things are said in them. I think [in] with the intention of it being funny or, or, or trying to be popular or whatever the case may be about woman. That you're praised for, and that I think does place that to the whole thing about a female is below a man."

Alumnus 6:

> *Like even the woman that I'm friends with. Most of the time at one point or another it was because it was sexual to begin with or romantic ... which is ... You know you're like you're not really friends with women. You can't really be friends with women. You got nothing to relate them to.*

Alumnus 7:

> *As you're either gay or you had some sort of long-term plan for that to become a relationship or for you to hook up with them eventually that was always the underlying thing.*
>
> *The narrative at school was that you can't be friends with women.*
>
> *I don't want to make it sound like it was that strict and distinct because there were definitely some friendships and I'm sure some beautiful friendships, but and that was kind of the expectation … like if you're seen with a woman in the car [he's] definitely like trying something. And, and I did find that that changed a bit as you got into the later years because when you get to Grade 10 you start having classes with, with the girls and that you changes a bit but it was still the prevailing attitude.*

Furthermore, alumni 2 and 5 capture heteronormative discourses in relation to feminine bodies and how this translates into a type of hetero-patriarchal conceptualisation of women.

> *I was like, why do I naturally want to hang with girl[s]? I do enjoy it. But then you know, you know, I don't necessarily have a lot of the guy's mates that are like these macho guys ... I did question it... from a place of social acceptance of seeing guys together and ... the guy who hangs out with the girls is a gay guy ... And this is literally how my mind was thinking when I was at school.*

Alumnus 7 reflected on a long-standing informal tradition normalising the sexualising of girls as a performance of heterosexual prowess and a celebration of hyper-patriarchal sexual identities:

> *It's bang ups in the dining hall where when anybody ...*
>
> *Whether it was, happened on campus or where on campus?*
>
> *The prefect would say the announcements in the dining hall, say a prayer, and then they'd say we'd like to congratulate Johnny for kissing Sarah yesterday on district campus and then everybody would just go crazy in the dining hall. They'd be banging on the tables they'd be food and drinks flying. And so that was."*

The relationships between the Blue School boys and the neighbouring school girls are framed within a context that fosters and reinforces heteronormative and patriarchal values. The interactions and expectations set forth by the institutional culture at the Blue School not only perpetuate gender stereotypes but also contribute to a competitive and hierarchical view of heterosexual relationships. This environment underscores the need for critical reflection and educational reform to address these deeply ingrained cultural norms and to promote a more inclusive and respectful understanding of gender and sexuality.

4.3 The ubiquitous gender-Based violence and rape culture

In Chapter 2, I established the intersection of masculinities with the perpetuation of gender-based violence and rape culture. The alumni's narratives reflect the ubiquitous hierarchal gendered violence throughout the institutional culture at the Blue School. If not related to physical forms of violence, the alumni experienced and inflicted verbal or psychological forms of violence through both formal and informal traditions, punishments, relationships and simply levels of education.

The findings clearly reflect the reproduction of explicit forms of rape culture and violence through discourses that incentivised the performance of formal and informal traditions, linguistic expressions and hierarchal competitiveness.

Four out of the seven interviewed alumni found themselves confronting incidents of GBV, whilst at the Blue School. Famously, a recently publicised scandal was a point of entry into narratives that expressed GBV. Two alumni alluded to the creation of social media accounts that named and shamed incidents of GBV not at school, but rather on holidays away from school environment. Alumni 6 and 7 capture the somewhat frivolous attitude to GBV:

> *Yeah amongst the boys. I mean I guess, I guess it was, it's just the way, the way the conversations around women and our interactions with women, but most importantly how we reacted towards actual violence against ... you know. Like I mean there was, there was an instance in [a nearby holiday destination] in one of the years, where after [the place] everyone is talking about. How this guy was basically sexually harassing or raping his girlfriend in the bush.*
>
> *Yeah ... and no one did anything. And then after the fact it was just, it was like it was normal conversation ...*

A tradition of naive sexual objectification of women was captured by Alumnus 3, where all participants recalled a variation of this incident:

> *Yeah. When we were the year before I got to Grade 8 boys were sitting on the lawn rating girls as they walk past like the cards like. Yes, very disgusting. And like, and like this, and like it continued … I mean there were multiple things that happened that it was very obvious that ... The violence that was enacted was seen as the woman's fault or the men were given like reasons why they no[t] involved. I mean at some point, I think.*

Additionally, discourses of access were present in the alumni's narratives that talk about pathways around or through the elite private school system, frequently picking up on limited interactions or engagements regarding the climate of GBV in South Africa. Commonly, engagement with GBV and rape culture usually comes during tertiary education and peer interactions and less so from institutions. I wanted to establish when and how these alumni might be confronted with exclusion or othering when navigating the formal and informal curriculum about GBV and rape culture.

As mentioned in the above findings boys' relationships with femininity is often dominated by discourses of heteronormativity and sexual objectification. Alumni 3 and 7 highlight the paradox of the informal contrasted with the formal discourses regarding sexuality:

> *I also noticed that younger teachers were sexualized ... mostly. mostly women. Boys were quite literally speaking about like sleeping with the teacher and like saying things about her.*

> *But what I also will say is that there's a lot more happening that is in contradiction of the idea of masculinity and femininity ... like literally pretending to be having sex with each other."*

The limited dialogue and implicit reproduction of the most simplistic forms of rape culture provides discursive portals through 'the system' – where alumni are subject to broadly framing their narratives in line with what the institution deems accessible. Access to knowledge and discourses about GBV and rape culture is not always possible at school, because it is dependent on how these discourses are presented. The conversation about access attempts to centre the alumni's embodied knowledge and lived experiences of an elite private school which is positioned to guide and chart a path that disrupts cycles of GBV and rape culture. From this perspective, discourses of access often allow for incredible generative power, where they can

disrupt the status quo and undermine and expose the normative, dominant and oppressive ideologies that constrain adolescent identity formation, through institutional cultures and traditions (Shook et al., 2022). When discussions around access are present, it is possible to renegotiate the broad school landscape and expand the offerings presented by elite private schools like the Blue School and influence alumni's ideas of manhood and sexuality intersecting with violence.

Besides the sporadic engagement with transformative discourses about sexual and gendered violence whilst attending this school, all the alumni described limitations to access (to these discourses) until post-school identity formation.

Alumni 1, 2 and 4 expressed the influence of their tertiary education on concepts related to gendered violence:

> *So I think that kind of discussion and things more took place once I left school versus at school.*

> *Yeah I think … when I was a varsity I think a lot of, a lot of these concepts became a lot more apparent to me and discussing them between other men actually because that's where I think the importance was. And I actually did a couple of like artworks on rape culture. And yeah that that. Rape culture was very much something that I, I guess started when being at [the Blue School]. Not. Not that I even knew that. It wasn't even meant at school. But like understanding how I, I saw it, yeah. There's definitely correlation between gender-based-violence and rape culture for sure.*

> *No, I think … rape culture. As it as the term is definitely was not conversed at all. Yeah again, something I first heard of after school but the term rape was used in very inappropriate ways. I think that could …*

On the other hand, Alumnus 3 reflected the need for discourses of access regarding gendered and sexual violence:

> *Initially definitely. I think that I had [to] unlearn a lot of stuff. Or rather I was gonna say like learn. Like did you have specific things that you needed to like change your frame of mind about?"*

Access to transformative discourses on sexual and gendered violence was limited during the alumni's time at the school. The conversation around these issues was typically deferred until after leaving school, with many alumni acknowledging that their understanding and engagement with concepts related to GBV and rape culture only developed during tertiary

education. This indicates a significant gap in the school's curriculum and culture regarding addressing and challenging these harmful norms.

The experiences shared by the alumni highlight a critical need for educational reform at this school and similar institutions. There is an urgent necessity to create spaces within the school curriculum and culture for open and constructive dialogue about GBV and rape culture. Such dialogue can help foster a more informed and compassionate student body that is equipped to challenge and disrupt the cycles of violence perpetuated by patriarchal norms. It is imperative that elite private schools like this one re-evaluate and restructure their approaches to masculinity, sexuality and violence, to ensure they are cultivating environments that are safe for and respectful to all.

4.4 Ephemerality of personhood formation

As previously demonstrated in the above sections, the idea of personhood and identity is not static. Rather, for many participants the ephemeral journey of personhood is complicated by dominating discourses. For the majority of the alumni OA interviewed, learning/unlearning concepts influenced either by society, school, family or even culture, is evident. Some alumni reflect an internal shift specifically since school, to do with ideas of identity and what it means and looks like to present as a man. On the other hand, other alumni appeared more content and less conflicted about their identity and ideas of manhood. These shifts, or lack thereof, are described as discourses of temporality which involve the negotiation of subjectivity through which the alumni both resisted and embraced elite masculinities. As a function of governmentality (ie complex processes via which societies police and shape the conduct of individuals and populations), discourses of temporality govern not only how the alumni perform elite masculinities (ie normativity) but when and what they to do to fit in. This results in a developmental impediment to young people's self-determination, a form of discipline constructed via intersecting power relations related to the alumni's age and gender, meant to keep schoolboys in their place'. Importantly, discourses of temporality were often grounded in normative ideologies regarding development (eg that growth displaying as linear, dominating elite masculinity emphasises heteronormativity and somehow less 'fluidity' in identity development of elite masculinities).

Six out seven participants express explicit narratives of temporality in their conceptions of their identities and expressions of elite masculinities. However, despite not explicitly recognising these shifts, all the alumni, through their experiences in tertiary education and interactions post-school, describe discourses of temporality resulting in spectrums of deviation from institutionally-influenced discourses regarding elite masculinities, rape culture and GBV. The participants that associated school with negative or indifferent narratives expressed their tumultuous identity journey and association with their school.

Alumnus 3 and then Alumnus 4 both representative of narratives from queer bodies, say:

> *To be honest I think I'm still a bit nervous about facing that crowd in, as the person that I am now who is much more fluid in the expression of their gender. But I'm also like not scared to ... It will be something that I have to do probably next when I go to my reunion. Yeah, OK. But they've seen me in that form because they follow me Instagram and stuff, but. That was like a big, actually there was a big thing for me to actually share content of myself like ... in makeup, wearing a dress or doing ... being public yes. Yeah. And also I'm sure you can. In a town like [where the school was], kind of where everyone talks.*

> *After school time it was growing my hair and I started being perceived as a woman when I was … my sister because we looked the same. OK, so and was also COVID so no one could see my face, couldn't see this part. And so people often would say hi ma'am. Hi. Hi Sir. Hi. Hey girl. And I just got used to it and then I stopped associating myself with the, with any pronouns really. Because I was used to receiving everything and kinda made me feel good.*

> *Leaving school, I would probably only say now in the last five, maybe five years, four years ... I've really started kind of getting to know who I am ... The person that I am today is so different to the person that I was at school.*

> *Other than that I have a very negative overall experience of being there and found it very traumatising ... I spent a lot of years out of school trying to unpack all of that internalised sadness ... and being the emotional, personal, sensitive person that I was, it just wasn't the right environment.*

Comparing the findings from heterosexual alumni,5 and 2 to the abovementioned ones both show temporality regarding discourses of masculine performance that includes stereotypically feminine attributes:

> *I think maybe let's say if I dressed a certain way like it would be that OK. Maybe I shouldn't wear this pink shirt, so for example., But I think as I like slowly got older let's*

say let's say 16, 17, 18 … and was like yeah I do like, I'll wear whatever I want… That does, there is a undertone that does exist that is like."

I mean I, I'm … I'm going to say from school because I think, I think, compared from there, to where I am now, and what I think is has changed a lot, but ... Let's say I mean my best friend and a lot of my, my guy friends either wear makeup and have a feminine touch to them, painted nails where before I'd be like it's different and now I think it's one of the most beautiful forms of being a man.

The alumni that expressed an explicit lack of temporality in ideas of identity do however express narratives of temporality in their ideas associated with GBV and rape culture.

Alumnus 6:

If there's a shift. My, my ideas of masculinity ... not exactly I wouldn't."

Oh no, the way the way I understand it is the way the way we treat, the way society treats women and the conversations we have around women. Uh ... how that perpetuates the actual acts of rape, so. Rape culture, not actually performing the acts of raping but the system around that and how it gets to that … yeah, why basically the the why of why? Rape is so prevalent in our society and our culture.

Alumnus 5:

Yeah. No I definitely did like that or that test raped me. Like or like it raped. I raped that test. Like that was definitel. thing and again that you know. It's only getting older realising that like, like…"

Alumnus 2:

Instances where my perception of what I thought a woman should do was x and that had changed after school for the better. Yeah. And, and I, I don't know if that was actually it was a school thing for sure. But I mean the example is I thought that if a girl wore like really short shorts and like I'm showing or whatever that the concept of like she's asking for it. I was like … yeah well, just don't, don't wear that like you asking for it. Whereas now I know that that is absolute bullshit! You know like stark naked wearing absolutely nothing. She's still not asking for it you know and that is something that I had to learn out of school."

What the above sentiments above represent, is the possibility and need for renegotiating discourses of elite masculinities and arguably other masculinities.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter documented the themes that were present and significant for this study, through the interviews conducted with the seven participants. Through the research process, it was found that the very conception of elite masculinities in the African feminist sense, is in crises. This is because although elite private schooling institutions have been through some transformative policies and processes, discourses of domination however are institutionally embedded with the socio-historical context of elite private schools.

Much of what this chapter portrays is that central to how participants come to conceptualise their identity as a man through interpersonal relations and socio-political influences the idealised embodiment of an alumni from this school is enshrined in the performance of physicality through sport, a 'smart and clean' homogenous appearance and submission to institutional hierarchy (ie politeness and loyalty). Where discourses of heteronormativity permeate through formal and informal institutional structures policing the performance of hegemonic masculinities, they are often enacted as a means of survival for participants that deviate from the mould.

The findings indicate that even in some elite private institutions, , gendered and sexual violence along with rape culture is rife amongst some learners. Some participants' narratives express the need for discourses of access to allow for the renegotiation of conversations around the homogeneity and heteronormativity of elite masculinities at institutions such as this.

These alumni demonstrate how their knowledge about GBV and rape culture grew during tertiary education, peer conversations and exposure to gendered and sexual violence through social discourses. Their reliance on strategic interactions to embody the knowledge that renegotiates discourses regarding GBV and rape culture within is not reflective of the gravity of GBV in South Africa.

The following chapter further engages with the experiences put forth by the participants and makes a case for the formation of elite masculinities through elite private schools such as the one being studied. These representative experiences are rooted in the concept of Western-hegemonic masculinities, and reveal the varied way in which the maintenance of elite

masculinities and other elite private schools reproduce, neglect or maintain GBV and rape culture, minimise its prevalence in communities.

CHAPTER 5: Institutional 'blindness' to protect institutional reputation and capital

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the various themes introduced in Chapter 4, focusing on how these themes shed light on the experiences and identity navigations of elite masculinities following the participants' attendance at an elite private school in South Africa. Initially, the chapter examine the multiplicity of masculinities, specifically the concept of reproducing and maintaining hegemonic masculinities within a democratic South Africa. Considering the various socio-historical discourses of elite private schools, Western-centric ideas of hegemonic masculinities intersect with how relations of power produce social identities. The chapter then delves into the numerous influences on alumni's identity formation, particularly through interpersonal relationships (family, teachers and peers) and socio-political factors (eg formal and hidden curriculum, race, culture, etc), as previously discussed in Chapter 2.

African feminisms popularised discourses in revolt against gendered and sexual violence. This has been expressed through black radical queer political discourses – a lexicon of intersectionality that emphasises the role discourses of domination visible through sexuality, gender, race and class. These discourses mutually constitute the formation of subjectivities and the positionality of individuals in the South African socio-economic and political hierarchy. This chapter investigates the micro-, meso- and macro- influences on specifically elite masculine identities, shedding light on the mechanisms of intersectional power relations within a school such as this that affect ideas about manhood and GBV. The AFI framework displays performance discourses of domination through institutional cultures and traditions in private elite schools which are formally and informally performed. Furthermore, many scholars recognise the importance of acknowledging the multiplicity of masculinities in South Africa as pivotal when trying when interrogated gendered violence (Dube, 2015).

The chapter also illustrates how the alumni's ideas on masculinities and GBV are not static, as the alumni describe shifts in their conception of identity after their attendance at the school. Some alumni experienced shifts in identity greater than others, depending on their relation to femininity. These shifts allude to a broader conversation regarding the institutional gap between sexuality and gender-inclusive adolescent identity formative environments in the elite

private school landscape in South Africa. Negotiating identity formation within a school that emphasises discourses of heteronormativity, hierarchical identities and loyal homogenous masculinities relating to females or even just femininity can have a stigmatizing effect and involves navigating systems of power.

The previous chapters display the prominence of sexual and gendered violence within South African but also within an elite private school, like the one in this study. This chapter aims to demonstrate the deeply embedded discourse of domination within the conceptualisation of elite masculine identities that perpetuate or normalise sexual and gendered violence. This is further elaborated on through an examination of traditions and cultures that subordinate the feminine. As a manifestation of belonging and survival, a lack of access to alternative discourses ultimately contributes to ideas of manhood and masculine performativity.

5.2 Contentious elite masculinities: Negotiating identity

Broadly, masculinity is assumed to be an inherent and natural aspect of being a man (Langa, 2012: 29). This belief shapes the societal perception of who qualifies as a man. However, insights from my interactions with research participants in the previous chapter led to a more intricate understanding of masculinities, especially considering the varied socio-political context within South Africa.

Chapters 1 and 2 delve into the conceptualisation of 'hegemonic masculinities' in South African communities and its influence on conferring status and defining the notion of manhood. Connell (1995) states that the concept of hegemonic masculinities describes how certain men utilise power to uphold authority and supremacy not only over women, but also over various subgroups of men. Therefore, the pursuit of manhood for the alumni participants often becomes a negotiation of hegemonic hetero-masculinist power and institutional traditions. This study's findings reveal the multiplicity of masculinities in a post-colonial democratic South Africa and prominence of violence in the conceptualisation of masculine identities. Thus, looking into 'elite' masculinities within the Blue School is a niche contribution to a more complex analysis of masculinities in South Africa.

For all of the participants, their time at school contributed to the person they identify as today. When asked whether school memories are associated with positive, negative, or indifferent

emotions, they described a spectrum of experiences, all having to negotiate hierarchy. The participants went onto explain what being a boy from this school meant amongst learners and the school community, explaining processes and traditions like the 'house system', the emphasis on sport and the die-hard loyalty to the institution through formal and informal aspects of institutional cultures. Institutionally, the surface-level discourses of many of these practices are performed as a means to introduce, welcome and maintain the structure/order for new boys or as a rite of passage, passed down from previous generations as naturalised experiences of boyhood at school in preparation for manhood.

Interviewed alumni suggest that this school served as a significant environment in the formation of their gender norms and masculinity. The impact of family dynamics, school culture and social interactions at the school varied among the alumni, and these experiences contributed to the shaping of their individual identities in distinct ways. Family legacy and the influence of traditional, hegemonic masculine norms passed down from fathers to sons can play a role in identity formation. Attending a prestigious institution such as the one in this study often reinforces inherited masculine ideals by placing individuals into a rigid mould, regardless of their personal differences from their fathers or family expectations. Alumni reflected on how their identities were shaped less by the school's influence and more by their upbringing and the peers they grew up with. These reflections point to a complex interplay between family and peer influences in shaping notions of manhood and identity. It is particularly noteworthy that full-fee paying students tended to downplay the school's role in their identity formation, attributing more influence to their family backgrounds. While they recognise the Blue School as a significant period in their lives, they do not view it as the defining factor in their personal development.

The alumni who deviated from the norm often expressed experiencing stigmatisation, isolation, bullying, and then complying as a tactic of survival. In this regard, alumni 3 and 4 described a more challenging time at school, specifically from the angle of navigating their queer identity in a hyper hegemonic hetero-masculinist space and environment. Simply being a male was not perceived as enough, therefore the masking of emotions, morphing into conformity by participating in an array of formal and informal acts as a means to avoid violence and bullying. to fit in. Similarly, alumni who identified as 'straight' also expressed the intricacy of the expected mould, often being grateful for their physicality in sport. Ultimately, they recognised the necessary submission to 'the system' as a means to survival at the Blue School. They also

often expressed sympathy for boys that did not fit the mould, recognising that the school years would have been tough for them.

The tensions that lie within the socialisation positionality of some elite private schools , specifically in post-colonial democratic South Africa, is that it is strangling the potential for a diverse inclusion of masculinities. An array of investigative journalism mentioned in Chapter 1 reiterates the contentiousness of elite private school masculinities. Both Wigget and Chalklen's cases demonstrate the ways in which hegemonic hetero-patriarchal masculinities in elite private schools' value systems emphasise discourses of dominance. Poynting and Donaldson, after researching Australian elite private boys school Trinity Grammar's bullying culture, reveal how elite institutions perpetuate a ruling-class masculinity which has a form of solidarity that tolerates and admires bullies (Pontying and Donaldson, 2005). Well-entrenched patterns across numerous continents and spanning over centuries, show that elite private schooling produces separation from the family. Loneliness, established loyalties, attachment to traditions, the accepted subjection to hierarchy and progress upward through it, group ridiculing and punishment of sensitiveness and close relationships, severe sanctions against differences, brutal bodily discipline and the inculcation of competitive individualism can result. The 'deafness and blindness' regarding the effects of institutional hierarchy coexisting within the culture of the learners' environments has been linked to the normalisation of brutalising, humiliation and sexual violence (Poynting & Donaldson, 2005).

However, Pontying and Donaldson's (2005) conceptualisation of ruling-class masculinities is positioned from a Western framework of masculinity theories. Their theories therefore neglect the intersecting effects of colonialism, slavery and apartheid as prevalent discourses that contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of hetero-hegemonic power and violence (Ratele, 2006; Gqola, 2007). Findings show the persistence of hegemonic masculinities within institutions such as the Blue School, however minimal the association to socio-historical influences. Therefore, this study will later unpack the dominant discourses that govern the hetero-hegemonic discourses responsible for the reproduction of violence and ostracisation of the 'other'. Democracy imposes a transitory effect across socio-economic classes. The inclusion of multiracialism with elite private schools is what I would like to call a progressive facade. The website of the school under study claims that it is an institution that develops character and provides a platform for boys to strive to reach their full potential. The findings however, depict a different picture through the narratives of the interviewed alumni. Rather, a

prescriptive conceptualisation of masculinity that generally privileges hetero-patriarchal and hetero-normative gender standards is engendered.

The negotiation of normative discourses links to Foucault's conception of discipline, which looks into the kind of control that is internalised by individuals. As mentioned above, the theorising of normative discourses (such as heteronormativity and heteropatriarchal masculinities) influence the disciplinary pressure that stipulates how Blue School boys portray themselves whilst at school. There are both implicit and explicit expectations of performance of masculinity. As mentioned previously, the alumni expressed the pressure to conform – by teachers, coaches, parents and 'the system' – as means to make their experience within the heteronormative conception of elite masculinities a more pleasant time at school. Notably, the alumni mentioned that the process of self-discipline (ie assimilation) often created many years of intense embodied distress, along their personhood journeys.

Understanding the negotiation of normative discourses relating to identity formation is an example of what Foucault describes as the discipline flowing through individuals' ways of behaving and thinking. So, particular sets of disciplinary acts generally externally influence individuals by producing discipline of the self, by the self. For this study we turn our attention to the alumni's agency and power to negotiate these heteronormative discourses, not to minimise the negative impacts, as they are likely to have profound and lasting consequences to their conception and performance of masculinity.

By offering a critical interrogation into the construct of masculinity within the context of elite private schooling in South Africa, and illuminating the complex interplay between institutional culture and the formation of gender identities, I hope to challenge the superficial adherence to progressive ideals, unveiling the entrenched hegemonic practices that reinforce restrictive norms. By applying Foucault's theories, the analysis provides insight into the pervasive disciplinary mechanisms and their lasting impact on the alumnis' personal and social embodiment of masculinity. This highlights the urgent need for a reimagined approach to masculinity that is inclusive and cognizant of historical and socio-political nuances.

5.3 Discourses of dominance: Hetero-hegemony within the school under study

Although the journey of identity within the school may vary, contentious conceptualisation of elite masculinities puts an emphasis on the dominating discourses that contribute to personhood formation. Insights shared in the previous chapter demonstrate the performance and reproduction of hetero-hegemonic masculine norms that intersect with the perpetuation of gendered and sexual violence (Hassim, 2023, Ratele, 2006; Gouws, 2021). Chapter 3 explains howthe AFI approach sheds light on the multiplicity of elite masculinities and how relations of power produce social identities, highlighting the Foucauldian concept of governmentality. Findings in the previous chapter reflect that the alumni's time at the institution was a space where peers, family and institutional relationships moulded their personal views, prevalent gender norms, masculinity and GBV. African feminisms placing emphasis on what Hassim (2023) described as the 'triple oppression', which highlights the intersection of class, race and gender, are especially significant within the context of white supremacy. Embedded in the hegemonic status of whiteness across the gender spectrum this has resulted in unresolved issues of gender identities and sexualities across the South African socio-political sphere. Shifts in the discourses about gendered and sexual violence has birthed a socio-political discourse that recognises non-normative identities as valid. However, this continues to pose as challenge since religious bodies, traditional leaders, political parties and institutions such as schools reproduce conservative hegemonic gendered positions.

5.3.1 Socio-political processes

At the 'micro' level, where specific subjectification and identity formation takes place, socio-political power contributes to an individual's identity, with socialisation, gendering and stigmatizing all contributing to the journey of personhood. When sharing on their understandings of gender and masculinities the alumni associated them with a socially-political constructed identity based on behaviours and roles.

Gender is a recognised identity, where subjects are socialised into identifying and associating with a single sex category with particular roles and traits (Anderson, 2009: 1445). At an early age boys are socialised in a way that imbeds physicality, strength and violence as a vital element to their worth (Anderson, 2009). Socialisation and biopolitics of gender take place because of interpersonal relations and socio-political influences. The findings portray the

varying socio-political contexts of the alumni's experiences from fitting in and participating, to relating to teachers and friends. The participants account for the array of socio-political process that can contribute to one's ideas of identity and GBV. From embedded family beliefs and opinions informed by class, religion, culture and political association, these socio-political processes operate throughout an individual's personhood journey, through the discourses that appear in an individual's direct relationships with family members, friends and other influential people, over the course of their lives.

The finding reveals an interesting paradox of race as participants perceived race as prevalent but also not, as if the micro-aggressions and implicit or explicit encounters with racism were a naturalised element of existing within the school.

The finding illustrate the alumni, who identified either as black or coloured, firstly encountering race and racism more frequently, which is expected in a historically white institution. Secondly, I perceived race as a side-lined discourse of domination regarding identity formation in elite private schools, as it was rarely highlighted as a driving force of exclusion in the studied institution. The alumni admitted acts of assimilation, erasure and embodiment or protest towards hegemonic ideas of gender and race whilst highlighting the opportunity to attend such school. In contrast, reflections of white alumni on the effects of race were implicitly colour-blind, perceiving peer-pressure and performativity output as powerful forces.

At the socio-institutional systems level below, I unpack institutional discourses at the Blue School that can affect one's conception of masculinities, gender and violence.

5.3.2 Socio-Institutional systems

The 'meso' level is where civil society and social discourses are reproduced and maintained. Socio-institutional systems probes the driving forces behind gender identity and gendered violence at a behavioural and interactional level (Buiten & Naidoo, 2020). Discourses that unfold at institutional level are historically defined by a state or institutional context which therefore enforces norms regarding gender and gendered violence that can influence socialisation or perpetuate bio-political power. Given that this study is situated in post-colonial democratic South Africa, would be naive not to consider the national history of apartheid and

colonialism, militarisation of masculinities and gender hegemony that perpetuate inequality by preserving the status quo and enforcing norms across institutional systems. In Chapter 2, we see that the complexity of violent masculinities and GBV in South Africa is a product of bio-political discourses deeply rooted in settler colonialism and apartheid. It is my belief that effecting the conceptualisation of hegemonic masculine identities, democracy theoretically provided a platform for the more cumbersome patriarchal hetero-masculinist traditionalism that perpetuates GBV and rape culture.

Given the historical context of studied school, the findings display an array of traditions, cultures and hierarchies still performed and that one can trace back to the formative days of the school, its Eurocentric genealogy and elitist reputation. 'The house system' perceived as a core pillar of British boarding schools, is an established hierarchy visible in most elite private boys schools in South Africa. This is perpetuated through formal leadership structures such as prefects, sports team captains etc, or through the 'mentor/ mentee' relationship historically called the 'fag system' which operates where a matric boy (fagmaster) 'mentors (the fag) the 'mentee' (a new boy).

The interviewed alumni reflect on this dynamic as minimally effective as serving their fagmaster through performing tasks and chores, in return for protection and advice on how to navigate hierarchy could be onerous. It was often not carried out as intended by the institution, simply because of the diverse receptiveness and understanding of this tradition. Additionally, there were informal hidden hierarchies between grades, kinds of sport, popularity and relations to girls from the neighbouring school. The alumni participants all reflected on levels of subjectification as a means to police, homogenise and display loyalty to the institution, ulitimately moulding their ideas of identity.

Foucault's concept of governmentality connects three types of power: the dominion of states (sovereignty), the disciplinary power (discipline), and the governance of oneself and others (government) (Foucault, 1991). Established formal and informal hierarchies operate through disciplinary power, embedding hetero-hegemonic discourses in an individual's ideas of elite masculinities.

Other than through hierarchy, disciplinary power is operated through discourses of formal institutional expectations. The findings reflect patriarchal hetero-masculinist traditionalist

discourses through the narratives of participants. When the formal curriculum aligns with traditional masculinist discourses in relation to females and males, a heterosexual patriarchal masculine order is established. Therefore, teaching about GBV while dictated to hetero-masculinist discourses, results in victim shaming and romanticising violence by perceiving GBV as a problem outside of the institution.

All the alumni reflected on numerous hidden curricula that consisted of informal traditions and performances that embedded or moulded an adolescent's ideas around manhood and GBV. The discourses and interactions that objectified and sexualised girls and teachers (specifically younger female teachers) to the enactment of violence as a rite of passage or a natural part of being a boy (even more so a boy from this school) were instrumental in shaping how they viewed themselves. The alumni, specifically those that identified as 'straight'/heterosexual, were descriptive of the competitive sexualised culture between the boys at the school that carried on into half terms and holidays. If we consider a psycho-analytic approach to adolescents, this is expected during this phase of personhood formation due to biological aspects too.

5.3.3 Socio-political Domination

The broadest, 'macro' level which are internationally driven and dominated discourses that define social institutions and structures socio-politically, popularised through the international world order. Socio-political domination is a section that emphasises the effects of hegemons, heteronormative discourses that influence masculine identity, and GBV and rape cultures. Often elite private schools, have an international clout making them respectable enough, like other institutions, to internationally dominate discourses. Chapter 2 shows how similar elite private institutions in Australia have the same discourses of domination, in effect resulting in normalised violence. Therefore as mentioned, the globalisation of hegemonic masculinities are constructed and policed by international discourses constructed in international arenas such as geopolitics and transnational business and media. International discourses have neglected the raced, classed and heteronormative dimensions of sexual violence, the logics and manifestation of how implicitly demarcated the 'rights' of an individual can affect how protection manifests itself in particular along racial, national and gendered lines, both in scholarly work and in policy-making. The globalisation and popularisation of Western-centric discourses are historically positioned through the socio-political domination of slavery, colonialism,

imperialism, nationalism and capitalism. They all influence the socio-political systems and processes within the state, specifically entangling the dominant discourses of hetero-patriarchy, which influence an individual's identity and ideas of gender.

The construction of masculine identities within the context of the school emphasise the influence of socio-political and institutional factors on gender socialisation and identity formation. This outlines the multifaceted nature of masculinity, intersecting with issues of race, class and gender, under the framework of hetero-hegemony. The discourse highlights how institutional practices, such as the 'house system', alongside broader socio-political and international dynamics, contribute to a complex web of identity negotiation, often reinforcing traditional and exclusionary conceptions of masculinity that are inextricably linked to GBV. The significant need to address and dismantle these entrenched systems of hetero-patriarchal power to foster inclusive and non-violent gender identities is needed not only for elite private schools but across the South African educational landscape.

5.4 Transitory effects on masculinities that influence attitudes towards gender-based violence and rape culture.

The journey to personhood may vary and be tenuous in nature within institutions such as the one studied here because of navigating numerous dominate discourses of hetero-patriarchal and heteronormative systems and cultures scattered throughout out formal and informal realms of the institution. As discussed above, discourses of domination intersect and influence an individual's ideas about masculinities, identity and even GBV or rape culture. However, despite the interviewed alumni highlighting the prevalence of hetero-patriarchal and heteronormative systems and cultures at school (expressed through their narratives of identity, GBV and rape culture), shifts occurred in their conceptualisation of masculinities and gendered violence once they left school and entered into a tertiary educational space or even simply society itself.

The findings show this transitory effect in all the alumni that participated in this study, to differing degrees, depending on the varying intersections between sexuality, class and race. All the participants in this study have either been through secondary/tertiary education or are currently studying. Therefore, looking at the institutional pass rate at this school and admissions into either national or international universities, it is safe to assume the trajectory

of alumni from the Blue School and other elite private institutions is that the majority gain access to more education beyond school.

This is evident in the discourses of temporality often framed in the embodied processes which showed up in the alumni's narratives about shifts in ideas about masculinities and gendered violence. Participants gave accounts of peers being accused of acts of GBV, female peers' narratives of GBV and emphasised the reality of gendered violence within society through media and socio-political discourses post-school. They described internal conflict that challenged the conceptualisations of elite masculinities which were apparently normalised at institutions such as the Blue School. The participants displayed discursively negotiating access to more diverse expressions of masculinity, therefore it seems that the inaccessibility to diverse expressions of masculinity within the institution prolongs individuals attaining manhood. Similarly, discourses around GBV and rape culture, where participants spoke about inaccessibility and a dissociation with societal realities (eg alumni refer to school being a bubble). Temporally, these negotiations within school and once leaving school require alumni to recalibrate their conceptions of manhood as well as untangle their psyche around relating to feminine bodies. This can be associated with their sense of social recognition from peers within school, compared to peers after school. It is important that the discourses of access have temporal qualities and are framed in a non-linear manner.

As we see in Chapter 2, that there is minimal research into elite private schools and the research provided is largely uncritical about hetero-patriarchal masculinist traditionalism. This uncritical approach by elite private school institutions is in contention with what is understood about masculinities in South Africa. Within a progressive political paradigm, masculinity is always under construction and is better perceived as unsettled and changeable. In other words, masculinity is the incomplete configuration of gender and sexuality that boys and men learn, habituate and employ to navigate their given worlds (Ratele, 2007). We know through many disciplines, that men learn about masculinity through interactions with others, by comparison to others and comparing themselves with ideas of themselves at an earlier point in their lives.

Therefore, institutions like the one studied here contribute to a hinderance of transformative discourses, at the expense of pride for their institutional socio-historical context and prevalence of racial capitalism. This is at the expense of learners who negotiate violence and ostracisation while at school, who, spend years negotiating their realities post-school. In my opinion, elite

private institutions are simply failing their alumni, by their maintenance and reproduction of hetero-patriarchal, homogenous discourse which normalises the dissociation with gendered violence. Therefore, the intricate journey of negotiating sexuality, desires and interactions with violence that adolescent boys are comforted with regularly in society is often self-guided and uninformed.

Literature emphasises the fluidity in identity and masculinities and the findings show the temporality of ideas about gender and gendered violence. Therefore, as simply a researcher, I question why transformation in masculine ideas and gender violence are not taking place within the schooling context, rather than dismantling and reconfiguring their meanings of making manhood and gendered violence mostly after school. Adolescence is a privitol developmental phase during which elite private institutions have the means and resources to implement and reproduce discourses of access that can have transitory affects. The findings show how alumni were all willing and open to more dialogue about manhood and GBV while at school.

The intricate narratives provided revealing the journey to personhood within elite institutions such as the Blue School studied here is depicted as complex and dynamic, strongly influenced by entrenched hetero-patriarchal and heteronormative discourses. The transition from these institutional ideologies to broader societal and tertiary educational contexts reveals a temporal and fluid evolution of masculine identities. The critique suggests that such institutions, by clinging to traditional masculinities and failing to critically address GBV, delay the development of more inclusive masculinities. This underscores the necessity for educational reform that accelerates the reconfiguration of gender norms and violence, leveraging adolescence as a critical period for transformative learning and self-conception.

5.5 The othering of the feminine: The perpetual gendered and sexual violence in post-colonial democratic South Africa

The perpetual gendered and sexual violence in post-colonial democratic South Africa is a critical issue that reflects the profound dissonance between the country's progressive legal frameworks and the lived realities of its citizens. Despite South Africa's globally acclaimed constitution, which enshrines equality and non-discrimination, the nation struggles with high rates of GBV. This ongoing violence against women and other marginalised genders serves as a stark reminder of the entrenched patriarchy and the failure to translate constitutional promises

into social change. It highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that address not only the symptomatic violence but also the underlying gendered power imbalances that perpetuate it. Chapter 2 elucidates on the maintenance of violent masculinities that perpetuate sexual and gendered violence.

The abovementioned findings and the public investigative articles emphasise the omnipresence of GBV and rape culture in formal and informal institutional cultures. The findings also describe discourses of 'othering', specifically the feminine, via means of the formal curriculum in subjects like Life Orientation, or through the hidden curriculum where the competitive sexualised and normative violent cultures are reproduced. Othering results in the marginalisation and devaluation of feminine traits, often in favour of dominant masculine norms. This process can manifest in various forms of discrimination and violence against those who present or identify with these traits. It is a means by which societies establish and maintain power dynamics that privilege masculinity and subjugate femininity, creating a dichotomy that often has profound social, economic and political implications for gender equity. This 'othering' perpetuates systemic inequalities and can be observed in institutional practices, cultural norms and individual behaviours that collectively undermine the status and wellbeing of the feminine.

The internalised dynamic is the one aspect of othering. However, both the participants in this study and public media show how elite institutions respond to GBV within the institution: a response that is backed by adult traditionalist ruling-class power and organisation. The school's delaying, minimizing and controlling the narratives of the wrongdoings is also an attempt to isolate/cover-up incidents, while dissociating from established traditional discourses that make space for violence (Pontying & Donaldson, 2005). However, it is naive to assume that these stances are only institutionally driven. As mentioned above, socio-political processes also contribute to the apparent condoning of violence at elite private schools. The hetero-hegemonical predisposition of the majority of parents and 'the paying customer' at the Blue School advocate for the particular modes of 'making boys into men', with alumni who frame endemic violence in elite private schools classified as a mere few 'bad eggs' or a bad grade.

This response reinforces the patriarchal structure that regulates the ordering of relationships between men and women. This is compounded when gender identities and behaviour do not conform to the systems sanctioned by institutionalised traditionalist heterosexual patriarchal

masculine gender norms that are embedded in the socio-historical context of elite private school globally. African feminist like Gqola (2015) and Gouws (2021) trace states with histories of slavery and settler colonialism to theorise how bio-political power of colonialism polices sexuality, to the extent of defining who rapes and who gets raped. Therefore, sexuality became an important framework of colonial otherness. The silencing and minimal engagement with the prevalence of GBV within elite private school communities can be perceived as the remnant of the bio-political effects of settler colonialism.

The maintenance and reproduction of traditional hetero-patriarchal masculinist discourses illustrate how elite private schools foster endemic colonial violence and cultural construction of specifically hegemonic masculinities. The complicit sovereign power (ie school but also the state) and silence regarding the normalised effect of gendered and sexual violence within elite private institution enables this. Presenting GBV and rape culture as a phenomenon that happens in more uneducated, rural parts of South Africa, is also statistically true.

However, the presence of GBV and rape culture not only prevalent but also in need of interventions, as most of the interviewed alumni expressed a sense of living in an isolated bubble, where wrongdoings were swept under the carpet or frivolously dealt with. Associating these incidents with institutional blindness is one stance. I would like to argue that elite private schools use institutional blindness as an entangled strategy to protect institutional reputation and capital. This reveals the lingering colonial legacy and racial paternalism that discursively links ideas and engagement with sex, gender and race. Insinuating the irrelevance of GBV within elite private boy schools emphasises the racist and homophobic discourses that deem who is capable of performing and experiencing gendered and sexual violence.

The enduring GBV within elite private schools in South Africa highlights the disjunction between progressive constitutional ideals and actual social experiences. This section has explored the concept of ‘othering’ the feminine, which perpetuates systemic inequalities through institutional practices and cultural norms that favour dominant masculine paradigms. The discussion underscores a need for introspective institutional reform, addressing deep-rooted patriarchal structures that sustain violence and examining the socio-political legacy of colonialism that continues to shape gender dynamics and violence within many educational spaces.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I unpacked the major themes presented in the previous chapter and sought to understand how these impacts on the ways in which alumni come to conceive of their elite masculinity during and after the period of attending school. I argue that while it can be said that there is a changing nature of discourses around sexuality and gender in South Africa, the presence of radical black feminisms and the tenuous dynamics there are within a traditions and culture in private elite schools, provides a space for contestable elite masculinity that allows for a reimagining of South African masculinities.

It becomes evident that the construction of masculinity within the confines of elite educational institutions in South Africa is a deeply entrenched and complex issue. The entrenched hegemonic practices within these institutions serve not only as a bastion of traditional and exclusionary gender norms but also as a microcosm of larger socio-political dynamics that continue to perpetuate GBV. The intersection of race, class and gender, further complicates the evolution of masculine identities, demanding a dismantling of hetero-patriarchal power structures. The necessity for radical educational reform is underscored, aiming to foster inclusive gender identities and counteract violence. This entails a reimagined understanding of masculinity that is responsive to the nuances of historical and socio-political contexts, emphasising the critical developmental phase of adolescence for transformative learning. The dialogue extends beyond institutional practices to address the ‘othering’ of the feminine, a legacy of colonial and patriarchal dominion, necessitating a shift in cultural norms and institutional policies to achieve a more equitable and just society.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

The aim of this study was to understand the interplay of masculinities, GBV and elite private education in South Africa, delving specifically into the multiplicities of masculinity formation within the context of one particular school. I explored how institutions contribute to the perpetuation of hetero-patriarchal hegemonic masculinities and gendered violence. The study critically examined the historical and social factors shaping elite masculinities and their links to GBV and rape culture in a post-apartheid South African context. It also highlighted the role of political science in understanding the dynamics of power, identity, and violence in these educational settings. This thesis offers critical insights into the dominating discourses' influence on the intricate dynamics of masculinities and GBV within elite private education settings in South Africa. In my opinion, elite masculinities are deeply intertwined with South Africa's colonial and apartheid history, shaping attitudes and behaviours that contribute to systemic GBV and rape culture.

Tracing the ways in which the discipline of political science has positioned hegemonic masculinities in the literature, the study argues that much of the dominating discourses that inform ideas around manhood and gendered violence emanates from histories rooted in the biopolitics of settler colonialism and apartheid legacies. The endemic prevalence of GBV in post-colonial democratic South Africa was popularised by black radical feminist protest discourse in the tertiary educational sphere. Protest discourses have shaped the nuanced understanding of GBV and rape culture, whilst creating counter-hegemonic knowledge about what contributes to the conceptualisation of masculinities in South Africa (Hassim, 2023)

Within the global context, the hetero-patriarchal hegemonic masculine nature of elite institutions was traced through an analysis of masculine identity formation that demonstrates the perpetuation of rape culture and GBV not only institutionally but also indirectly/directly in society. The study's exploration of alumni's experiences at this elite institution has highlighted the significant impact of socio-cultural and political factors in forming elite masculinities that uphold hegemonic ideals. The pervasive normalisation of hierarchical violence and the cultivation of a homogenous ruling class masculinity creates tensions where many alumni experience a degree of othering. This, we have seen, has lasting impacts on an individual's ideas regarding their identity journey, GBV and rape cultures.

Elite private schools in South Africa, often sustain an uncritical view of maintaining and reproducing discourses of hetero-patriarchal traditionalism and fail to contest the need to dismantle Westernised transnational gender and sexual traditions.

The study suggests that the interviewed alumni discursively managed the disclosing of their identities by both performing normative subjectivities and by resisting them. In other words, the participants negotiated with the socio-political domination and socio-political systems of power they encountered rather than simply submitting to them, consistent with Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a network of relations permeating throughout society (Foucault, 1978). This power serves to cement ideas about masculinities whilst negotiating the elite private school system. It is reinforced within their narratives reflecting their time at this school providing a clear understanding that 'the system' maintained is not designed for all the boys to succeed.

Alumni navigated complex power dynamics whilst at school often altering their self-expression and withholding their experiences due to prevailing power structures. The narratives they shared about school settings were frequently oversimplified and not seen as shaped by these power interactions. This leads to a misunderstanding of adolescent male experiences in elite private schools, perpetuating gender binary, inequities and maintaining the existing hegemonic societal norms.

Central to this analysis is the importance of recognising the alumni as experts on their own experiences, a perspective crucial for transforming institutions and the issues affecting them. The study points to the complex dynamics in relationships between alumni, parents and education providers, especially considering the widespread rejection of deviating traits stereotypically associated with the feminine, when it comes to presenting as a man. There is a need for pro-African feminist educational strategies and a broader societal commitment to dismantling harmful norms and fostering inclusivity. Further research needs to be done into how hetero-patriarchal discourse cyclically contribute to the minimal reproduction of discourses of access across systems that could advocate for a nuanced approach to the complexities of gender sexuality and violence. By confronting these deeply rooted issues within elite private school institutions could result in a snowball effect of interrogating the effects that dominate discourses affecting journeys of personhood. Through dismantling hetero-patriarchal hegemony we can work towards a more equitable and violence-free society,

where diverse expressions of masculinity are celebrated and the perpetuation of GBV is actively resisted.

It is necessary to investigate how institutional cultures at elite private schools contribute to the perpetuation of hegemonic, heteronormative masculinities and to examine how these institutions, while purporting to be sites of character development and potential, can reinforce rigid and exclusionary gender norms,. These norms are not static but are subject to renegotiation and change post-graduation, particularly as alumni encounter different environments and discourses that challenge the school's hegemonic masculinity.

6.1 Reflections and limitations of the study

The participants interviewed in this research were alumni who had pre-existing relationships with my university peers. When more participants were needed to gain greater insight into the experiences of Blue School alumni, snowball sampling, which is effective in hard-to-reach population groups (Ndlovu, 2016) was used. The sensitive nature of the study resulted in numerous hurdles to gain the trust that was required to successfully conduct the interviews and put participants' worries about confidentiality at bay. Finding participants to commit was challenging as many were spread across South Africa and the world, often working in different time zones and having different working hours. This resulted in many missed interview opportunities for at least ten interested alumni. Interviewing more participants would have been beneficial in order to interrogate the Blue School institutional cultures more broadly. This would have brought a more comprehensive insight into the intersections of elite masculinities and GBV. However, the limitation of the number of participants was not significant as the data sampling worked to foster trust and to uniquely attempt to centre narratives of alumni to understand how institutional power can contribute to ideas of personhood and gendered violence, both literally and figuratively.

Establishing a genuine connection and rapport requires time and repeated interactions, which were limited in this study. Additionally, my positionality as a female, white researcher, not from a private school setting, may have contributed to participant apprehension. Participants might have feared judgment or misinterpretation of their experiences, making them hesitant to fully engage and divulge information. The more formal setting of an interview poses a reservation regarding vulnerability about schooling experience. This dynamic underscores the

importance of understanding and addressing positionality and power imbalances in qualitative research, as they can significantly impact the depth and authenticity of the data collected.

As the researcher, I recommend that similar studies be replicated and expanded to dismantle the socio-political hegemony maintaining and reproducing heteropatriarchal masculinism in post-colonial South Africa. To understand the dominant discourses shaping upper to middle-class populations, it is essential to interrogate the elite private school landscape. A critical examination of the formal Life Orientation (LO) curriculum, focusing on who teaches and what is being taught, is necessary. The data indicated a nuanced relationship between students and teachers, particularly in how student-developed intrapersonal relations are influenced by gender regimes.

Similarly, religiosity was not central in my questioning and in the data but there is scope to include this in further research. Given these schools' historical ties to religion, especially the Anglican Church, analyzing religious discourses that influence identity and masculinities is also pertinent. Therefore future research is recommended to explore the intersectionality religion, masculinities and cultures of gendered violence within elite private school settings.

In 2023, race remains a crucial aspect to explore further in historically white institutions. Participants alluded to the nuances of race, but there is a need for a deeper investigation into how racial dynamics within elite private institutions affect identity formation. Additionally, most elite private schools in South Africa have "sister schools," and while the Blue School has one, revealing further details could compromise the institution's anonymity. Exploring the female-gendered aspects was beyond this study's scope; however, similar research is needed to examine the discourses perpetuating rape cultures and GBV. Such studies can shed light on the broader socio-cultural mechanisms at play and contribute to developing more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

This study critiques the ‘institutional blindness’ regarding their role in perpetuating GBV, arguing that this ignorance is often a strategy to protect learners from the realities of violence embedded in South African society or to conserve institutional reputation and capital. It calls for a reimagined approach to masculinities in educational settings, one that is inclusive, acknowledges socio-political nuances, and is responsive to the critical developmental phase of adolescence for transformative learning. The study advocates for radical educational reform

that fosters inclusive gender identities and counters violence, emphasizing children's rights and participatory agents engaging with societal discourses of domination through personhood journeys. It calls for a shift in cultural norms and institutional policies to achieve a more equitable and just society, emphasizing the importance of dismantling entrenched systems of hetero-patriarchal power globally.

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Appendix 1: Research Invitation and Consent form

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RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

CONTACT

072-663-4414
alexzinhle@gmail.com

ALEX TALBOT
MASTERS IN POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University. My supervisor is Prof. Siphokazi Magadla (s.magadla@ru.ac.za).

The proposed topic of my research is *The formation of elite masculinities in South Africa, gender-based violence, and rape culture.* It explores the connection between masculine identities and the driving factors for rape culture and GBV in a sector of South African society and potentially makes recommendations for sites of identity formation, such as schools.

The objectives of the study are:

1. A microfocus area of understanding personal processes of identity formation, specifically masculinities that promote and reproduce violence and rape culture in South Africa.
2. A macro focus on how schools shape the ways that boys understand what it means to be a man in society and how men relate to girls and women. From this research, elite private schools can learn about the parts of their institutional cultures and curriculum that need to be maintained or changed so that schools become environments where boys are introduced to ideas of manhood/masculinity that are not connected to dominance over and violence against girls and women.

I am hereby seeking your consent to partake in this research study via means of a semi-structured interview. Where participants will be asked about their experience at school. What it taught me about becoming a man in society and how men are raised to relate to women.

To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter:

a. A copy of the research interview questions I intend to use as a structure
b. A copy-informed Consent Declaration

This research study has been APPROVED by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC). The approval number is: **2023-5859-7540**

Note: that I as the researcher will be traveling to major cities in RSA to meet and arrange in-person semi-structured interviews with potential participants.
Please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor if you require any further information.

Upon completion of the study, I am willing to share outcomes and feedback on the participant's request

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.
Yours sincerely,

ALEX TALBOT

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(To be signed by research participant/s)

Project Title: **The formation of elite masculinities in the South Africa, gender-based violence and rape culture**

Alexandreo Talbot from the Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to explore what the connection between masculine identities and the driving factors for rape culture and GBV are in a sector of South African society and potentially make recommendations to sites of identity formation, such as schools.

2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project ***(2023-5859-7540)*** and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator (ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)

3. By participating in this research project, I will be contributing towards two research foci.

   First, a micro focus area of understanding personal processes of identity formation, specifically masculinities that promote and reproduce violence and rape culture in South Africa.
   Second, a macro focus on how schools shape the ways that boys understand what it means to be a man in society and how men relate to girls and women. From this research, elite private schools can learn about the parts of their institutional cultures and curriculum that need to be maintained or changed, so that schools become environments where boys are introduced to ideas of manhood/masculinity that are not connected to dominance over and violence against girls and women.

4. I will participate in the project by partaking in semi-structured interviews the interview, I will be asked about my experience at school. What it taught me about becoming a man in society and how men are raised to relate to women.

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research.

Ethics Coordinator: ethics-commitee@ru.ac.za
t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707
Room 204, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

Appendix 2: Semi- Structured interview questions

Semi-structured one-on-one interview questions

Background – home, community, and schooling

1. Please tell me about yourself: (create a Pseudo-name/ code)
    a. Where did you grow up?
    b. What are you currently doing?
    c. Do you have siblings?
    d. How do you identify (sexually and racially)?
2. Who did you grow up with at home? Immediate family, extended family?
3. Tell me about the household you grew up in: your relationship with parents and/or other adults in the home, your relationship with siblings.
4. Please describe to me the neighborhood/ environment of you grew up in.
5. Are there any people from your childhood (who are not in your family, such as coaches, pastors, teachers etc) whom you think were influential in your upbringing? Please tell me more about them and your relationship with them.
6. What school did you attend?
    a. Did you board, if so for how many years?
    b. Why Red school the Blue School?
7. Is your memory of your schooling experience associated with positive, negative, or indifferent emotions?

Personhood Formation - gender and masculinity

1. Do you feel your schooling experience contributed to the person that you are today?
2. Please define gender in your own terms.
3. How does gender apply to boys and men? (Probe for characteristics and gender roles)
    a. How is gender different or similar in its application to girls and women?
8. Did your schooling experience contribute to your thoughts and beliefs around what it means to be a man?

9. Describe how your thoughts and beliefs about what it means to be a man have changed and evolved since leaving the schooling system.
10. Can you describe masculinity?
11. How does masculinity relate to gender?
12. What are some of the things have discovered about being a manhood/ masculinity; since leaving school?
13. What are some of the things associated with manhood or masculinity; that you now know are not true?

Manhood and Social Identity

1. What does it mean to be a man?
    a. Is this different to being masculine?
    b. In your view is being a man associated with masculinity?
2. How important is your identity as a man to you?
3. How important was it to fit in with your peers in the schooling system?
    a. What were the reasons for this?
4. Can you recall some of the things that you thought your school expected of you as a young man? (e.g. dress code, participation in certain activities etc.)
5. Were there traditions, standards, or expectations (formal or informal, known or unknown to school management) that one had to meet to be recognized as a man in your school?
6. Among your peers, what are some of the standards of manhood you had to meet at school to be recognized as a man?
    a. How different are these from societal standards and expectations?

7. How important is it to fit in with your peers as a man? (In Present)
8. What are some of the things that you think society expects of you as a man? (currently)
    a. What do you think about these standards and expectations?

Women and 'Other' Genders

1. Did you grow up with sisters/ relatives of the same age group that were girls?
2. When you were growing up, were you and them raised in the same way?

3. How similar/ differently do you view and relate with women in your family compared to women outside your family.
4. Did your schooling experience contribute to how you relate to women and how so?
5. Do you think men and women have different roles in society? Please describe
6. Describe some of the gender roles (for men and women) you disagree with and why.
7. What are some of the things you thought about women during your schooling years that you now have changed your mind about?
    a. What caused this change?

Violence, Gender-based Violence and Rape Culture

1. Can you define violence?
2. Do you perceive men to be more violent than women?
    a. If so, describe some of the reasons you think cause boys and men to act violently?
3. Was violence apart of your schooling experience?
    a. If yes, how?
4. What do you think gender-based violence is?
5. Did/ Do you know of any cases of men (Family, community, or alumni/ old boy) who have been accused of GBV?
    a. What was the response/ reaction from you at the time?
    b. What was the response/reaction from the community at the time?
6. Do you feel your schooling experience contributed to your understanding of GBV?
7. Do you feel your schooling experience prepared you as a man to deal with GBV?
8. Can you define rape culture?

“My research has defined rape culture as ”

9. With both of our definitions in mind, do you think rape culture was a part of your schooling experience?
10. Do you think rape culture has a role in perpetuating GBV?
11. Do you feel your schooling experience provided adequate opportunity to educate and dialogue about rape culture?
    a. If yes, what were they?

12. Do you think we will ever live in a world where gender-based violence against women does not exist? If so, what do you think will need to happen/change for us to end gender-based violence?