

An exploration of constructions of masculinity:
A narrative study of young Zulu men's stories of
'being a man.'

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Social Science

of

Rhodes University

by

JUSTIN KENNEDY MAXWELL

January 2004

ABSTRACT

Previously understood as a fixed and universal set of behaviours social constructionists are now arguing that masculinity is contextual and fluid, reflecting a multiplicity of different understandings. Within any 'cultural environment' the discourse of masculinity, culturally and historically bound, expresses attitudes and behaviours that shape the understanding of what it means to be a man. Adopting a narrative approach and analysis this research explores the stories of six Zulu men in seeking to elicit the aspects of their masculinity and show how these men negotiate an identity 'position' from the social narratives available to them. It was found that while the ideal Adult (responsible) man contrasts with the Young man's ('isoka') position there is a consistently hegemonic and patriarchal notion of masculinity.

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I hereby declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated in the text, is a product of my own work.

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We are born male.
We must learn to be men.

(Nerburn, 1999, p.vii)

The point is that the masculine subject is not innately male/man, it can only *become* this through being positioned in and positioning itself within those discourses that speak of and suggest maleness/masculinity.

(Whitehead, 2002, p.212)

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A Masters thesis is more and less than it seems. Constructing a research project from start to finish is no mean feat and the challenge of doing it alone is for some of us uncomfortable. The historic and contextual construction of the importance of this work, and as a rite of passage, places quite a pressure on the student which is further added to by the pending evaluation by our soon-to-be peers. Needless to say much support is required for the 'sane' completion of this task.

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Nine young men sharing their stories.
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In the land of *Psyche* where the shadows lie.

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* Pseudonyms

1. INTRODUCTION

...how dreadfully familiar that scene had been, with Babamukuru condemning Nyasha to whoredom, making her a victim of her femaleness, just as I had felt victimised at home in the days when Nhamo went to school and I grew my maize. The victimisation, I say, was universal. It didn't depend on poverty, on lack of education or on tradition. It didn't depend on any of the things I had thought it depended on. Men took it everywhere with them. Even heroes like Babamukuru did it. And that was the problem. ...You had to admit she was altogether too volatile and strong-willed. You couldn't ignore the fact that she had no respect for Babamukuru when she ought to have had lots of it. But what I didn't like was the way all the conflicts came back to this question of femaleness. Femaleness as opposed and inferior to maleness.

(Dangarembga, 1988, *Nervous Conditions*, p.115-116)

As an example of an all too common interaction between men and women this experience of a young woman is one of subjugation along gender lines. The above quotation reflects the consequences of a traditional approach to gender difference and role allocation in societies that result in and maintain an inequality between men and women. Interestingly, in private and public social interaction both men and women feel justified in their respective action and reaction.

A new approach to understanding men and masculinity will be argued in this paper. By moving towards a postmodern conceptualisation of identity resultant social interactions and behaviours are understood anew, and new hope for meeting the challenge of this era is nurtured. Resistance to change, particularly where those in power are asked to disempower themselves (Redman, 1996), is evident. It is argued here that much of the inflexibility experienced with regard to change within social interaction (particularly gendered relations) may be understood in terms of traditional canonical narratives that construct and maintain a male dominated 'gender order' (Connell, B., 1995).

Male dominated societies have long been evident in many cultural systems around the globe, and in South Africa in particular. As a result of the growing influence of

feminist movements and the association of certain male behaviour with the ongoing propagation of HIV/Aids (Foreman, 2000) a deeper understanding of masculinity embedded in such social systems is now required.

Brittan (1989), Kimmel (1987) and Seidler (1994) (amongst others) claim that patriarchal social structures are built on and maintained by a hegemonic masculinity espousing toughness and physical strength, aggression and competitiveness, emotional inexpressiveness and virility. Masculinity, traditionally, is posited as ahistoric and fixed, while men are wrongly perceived as a homogenous group (Whitehead, 2002). Although patriarchy, which leads to male hegemony and an inequality between the elite (predominantly male) and women and minority groups, has long been a dominant narrative it is no longer possible to assume the term 'masculinity' is universally understood or synonymous with being male.

The physical 'facticity' of being born male constitutes a major factor in the formation of identity and this contributes significantly to our ability to compare and note difference in relation to 'otherness' – represented by women and minorities not conforming to the hegemonic masculine image. The external biological component of human beings has long been the main source from which individuals draw 'knowing' about identity. To this end gender role theory, sex role theory and functionalist approaches argue a biological (physical) determination of behaviour thus equating maleness with the dominant expression of masculinity. That any man with a perception, attitude or behaviour deviating from the 'norm' is considered abnormal and a failure of manhood, attests to the strength of this belief. However, as will be shown, the construct 'masculinity' is multi-faceted, deeply complex and any explanation is theoretically and contextually bound.

The development of what is referred to as the 'sociology of masculinity' has emerged and been developed over the past three decades (Whitehead, 2002). Numerous stakeholders have contributed to a growing literature on 'masculinity' influenced primarily by power issues resulting from political interests of and in women's movements and the ensuing reaction ('backlash') of men's movements to the challenge on the current (patriarchal) 'gender order' (Connell, B., 1995).

As literature suggests the traditional ways of establishing gender identity, particularly for males, are failing and this situation has led to identity confusion regarding 'what it means to be a man' and, consequently, a general 'masculinity crisis' (Clare, 2001; Kimmel, 1987). This 'crisis' experienced by many men comes in the wake of social change that threatens the current gender order, requiring males to reassess their masculinity by adopting roles that are more relevant to modern times (Horrocks, 1994; Whitehead, 2002). These threats include the empowerment of women, rising unemployment, changing family structures, and the political recognition and rights of homosexuals and other minorities.

In contrast to the above position social constructionist theory suggests that masculinity is neither singular nor static. It is argued that masculinity is bound by context and history (Horrocks, 1994; Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002; White, 1997), which implies that there is a multiplicity of alternative masculinities available to men at any one time (Connell, B., 1995). From this perspective men and masculinity are distinct allowing critical study to consider the "relationship between the amorphous character of masculinity and those behaviours of males considered problematic or dysfunctional" (Whitehead, 2002, p.9).

Tacey (1997), in his book *Remaking Men*, argues that both the subjective experience and political position of being a man in the current socio-economic climate need consideration for there to be healing and an appropriate reconstruction of men's identity. Thus, using a social constructionist framework for understanding masculinity as bound by time and space (historical and contextual), this study draws on a narrative approach to research for examining the deeper psychological processes of how each individual negotiates between a multiplicity of "voices" (Hermans and Kempen, 1993). This model of the self, made up of a multiplicity of voices, contributes to the understanding of the possibility of individuals or groups of men being able to position themselves within and between the 'multiplicity of masculinities' available to them (Connell, R.W., 1995).

Through the analysis of narratives obtained from Zulu men living in a single community I was able to explore some of the ways in which they negotiate between their inner experiences and the social narratives that contribute to their understanding

of what it means to be a man. Such an approach aims to contribute to deproblematizing men *per se* (Cornwall, 1997) while remaining aligned with the (pro)feminist concern that there be an equal contribution (by men and women) in renegotiating the construction of masculinities and femininities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Understanding Masculinity

“Masculinity is a term that refers to a specific gender identity, belonging to a specific male person” (Morrell, 2001, p.6), and comprises of “those practices and ways of being that serve to validate the masculine subject’s sense of itself as male/boy/man” (Whitehead, 2002, p.4). The importance of the sex/gender component of our identity is emphasised by several authors (e.g. Sweetman, 1997; Whitehead, 2002). The argument being that gender is “probably most central to how we see ourselves, and how others see us [since] it transcends all cultural boundaries, is not limited by access to wealth or education and is, other than via the surgical and legal process of gender reassignment, unchangeable” (Whitehead, 2002, p.10).

A specific definition of masculinity is, however, difficult since each society views men differently, combining observations of how men do behave and opinions of how they should behave in their understanding of what it means to be a man (Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Foreman, 2000). Societal perceptions and mores contribute to the building of a masculine ideology, which becomes an internalised guide for understanding the self and engaging with the world (Mead, in Hermans and Kempen, 1993). This would suggest that ‘how’ masculinity is understood is dependent on the theoretical explanation of the day; thus, the construction of masculinity is dependent on the historical and cultural context.

In developing a ‘sociology of masculinity’ critical gender theorists have had to confront many distinct beliefs including notions that gender is destiny; that women are marginal to history; and that a traditional gender dichotomy is natural, contributing to a ‘healthy’ society (Whitehead, 2002). These beliefs often confuse maleness (being a man) with masculinity (a gender construction) arguing male behaviour as ‘natural’, and therefore justified and unchangeable, or problematising men as the root of gender related problems.

It is argued that masculinity and the concomitant ideology of ‘masculinism’ (Brittan, 1989) are based on social, cultural and historical constructions that serve power relations maintaining patriarchal structures (Brittan, 1989; Messner, 1991, in Lorber &

Farrell; Seidler, 1992). Male behaviour is moderated by a belief in the importance to adhere to culturally defined standards of masculinity, where to differ from the dominant image is to be a “traitor to supremacy” (May & Strikwerda, 1992, p.xiii). This does, however, suggest that there is the ability to choose and, therefore, a malleable construction of masculinity. This is contrary to historical understandings of masculinity, which consider gender identity to be biologically determined.

2.2. Traditional approaches to understanding Masculinity ✓

Nature i.e. the primacy of biology and genetic universals continues to be one of the dominant narratives used for explaining gender difference. Assertions based on the assumption that there are “natural behaviours of men and women” lack a critical component and further contribute to strengthening the current ‘gender order’ (Connell, R.W., 1995) – the unequal distribution of gender power in society (patriarchy). Further, the common-sense understandings of a natural gender difference contributes to the structuring of language itself, which in turn, through distinguishing between men and women as separate entities, maintains the “nature-nurture dualism underpinning our understanding of ‘reality’ and our individual place within it” (Petersen, 1998, in Whitehead, 2002, p.10).

Physical differences in size, weight, muscular strength, and brain weight are all used to argue for traditional hierarchical arrangements (Kimmel, 1993). Biological difference, especially the childbearing capacity of women and the resultant conclusion that women are therefore not in a position to fulfil political and economic positions of responsibility in society, as an argument, is however challenged by feminists and profeminist men as a social construction that maintains the current gender order (May & Strikwerda, 1992, Whitehead, 2002).¹

Considering gender-identity to be a fundamental component of identity (Kimmel, 1993; Whitehead, 2002), and the nature of identity having been embedded in the nature-nurture debate it is not surprising that, traditionally, masculinity has been understood in terms of functionalism and different ‘role’ theories.

¹ Ongoing reporting in the press that distorts scientific research results (e.g. Utton, 2003) contribute to these arguments and the sustaining of these beliefs around gender.

2.2.1. Gender role orientation ✓

The gender-role orientation theory considers the constellation of traits that tend to occur with greater frequency in either males or females (Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001). This frame of meaning has been expressed through socialisation theories of functionalism and gender-role orientation. Based upon a theatrical metaphor, this theory suggests that people act in pre-scripted, socially prescribed roles and emphasises the characteristics that tend to occur in males and females respectively (Edley & Wetherell, 1996). An individual learns his or her role, shaped on biological contribution, and then plays it out in a social forum.

Here, the learned social roles and the constellation of traits occurring in males and females form gender-identity, which, it is believed, are central to a person's biography. The different roles played by men and women were seen as naturally different but complementary. For example Parsons (1969, in Whitehead, 2002) argues the "inequality of power between women and men was a natural phenomenon, one that arose as a consequence of necessary social stratification" (p.18).

The qualities or characteristics considered typical of or appropriate for a man have, in this instance, been assumed to be static and universal (Kimmel, 1987). This narrative has been challenged as serving a construction of power by interpreting the importance of psychology and individualism on which certain conclusions are drawn (Messner, 1991, in Lorber & Farrell; Morgan, 1992; Brittan, 1989).

2.2.2. Sex role identity theory

According to Whitehead (2002) the sex role theory emerged as a by-product of functionalism and gender-role theory as an attempt to make sense of the new role demanded of men due to changing work patterns, the breakdown of traditional industries, increased unemployment, and an increased rate of divorce. The notion of a natural, positive, fixed masculinity is exposed and challenged through post-war (W.W.II) change and the development of feminist thought.

The sex-role identity theory, informed by Freud's drive theory, suggests that the development of a stable internal sense of male identity is facilitated through identification with acceptable male role models. These assumptions grounded what Joseph Pleck called the "male sex role identity" model of masculinity – a static,

ahistorical container of attitudes, behaviours, and values that are appropriate to men and define masculine behaviour (Kimmel, 1993).

Building on the notion of there being 'natural' (unconscious) urges motivating behaviour it is also argued that appropriate modelling is required for the learning of appropriate social expression of these desires. The sex-role identity theory emphasises the "need" for access to and identification with male role models (e.g. father) in the development of a stable internal sense of male identity establishing a 'conforming' to *masculine* behaviour.

This view has, however, not only been questioned but there has been a call for a complete perceptual (paradigm) shift. Where behaviour is considered 'appropriate' it suggests social agreement and choice of participation, and any belief in a prescribed biological nature of motivation removes much responsibility from men for their behaviours and argues a political superiority.

2.3. Power issues

A man's role and behaviour have largely gone unquestioned. Brittan (1989) refers to this unquestioning belief as 'masculinism,' which is often used in justifying and naturalising a dominant male position in society. That men remain unaware of the centrality of gender in their lives perpetuates the inequalities based on gender, and keeps in place the power of men over women, and the power some men hold over other men – the central mechanisms of power in our societies (Kimmel, 1993).

A driving force behind the reconsideration of gender identity, and masculinity in particular, is the women's movement. The pioneering work of feminist scholars, both in traditional disciplines and in women's studies, has made us increasingly aware of the centrality of gender in shaping social life (Kimmel, 1993; Whitehead, 2002). This has invited gender to join race and class as one of the axes around which social life is organized, and through which we can gain an understanding of our own experiences (Kimmel, 1993). Gender, as such, varies enormously across cultures and can thus be considered a social construction (Kimmel, in Hood, 1993). Thus, it is argued, male gender identity is a consequence, not a cause, of the values in male conduct, making it plausible to challenge how men act. The "women's movement seeks to deconstruct

masculinity as a singular, monolithic category capable of being used against marginal groups, and to reconstruct masculinities as a set of possible gendered identities, each different, and all equal” (Kimmel, 1993, p.vi).

2.4. Social constructionist approach to understanding Masculinity ✓

“Femininity and masculinity are increasingly recognised as ideological practices rather than ‘objects’ for study. As noted by Bohan, gender is ‘an agreement that resides in social interchange; it is precisely what we agree it to be’ (1993, in Hood, p.3). In other words, gender is constructed and reproduced culturally, socially and historically; masculinity and femininity, from this perspective, cannot be regarded as fixed and stable but rather as contextual and flexible” (Harris, Lea and Foster, 1995, p.175).

A social constructionist perspective considers masculinity to be heterogeneous, interrelational and contextualised (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). In other words masculinity is understood to be constructed in social interactions and dependent on cultural resources i.e. ideologies, social structures and social position (Cornwall, 1997; Frosh, et al., 2002; Horrocks, 1994). This approach suggests reality to be constituted by “social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (Gergen, 1985, p.267). Acquired in social contexts and circumstances masculinity bears the marks of history and childhood experiences, and is ‘owned’ by the individual (Morrell, 2001). Previously thought to be static, male identity is now considered “protean, fluid, [and] adaptable” (Horrocks, 1994, p.5). Masculinity is therefore not something that men are, but is something that men do – a set of practices (Cornwall, 1997; Frosh, et al., 2002).

Central to the social constructionist view of masculinity is the understanding of a reality that is dialogic in nature. An individual action impacts on the social creating a ‘cultural environment’ – local and temporary, which in turn impacts the individual’s position in a co-construction of ‘reality’ (Whitehead, 2002). Masculinity is thus a product of both the individual and society.

With a different masculinity constructed within each cultural environment the plural nature of masculinity (multiple ways of being a man) suggests that there is no prevailing, singular masculinity.

“Rather, we can see that masculinities are plural and multiple; they differ over space, time and context, are rooted only in the cultural and social moment, and are, thus, inevitably entwined with other powerful and influential variables such as sexuality, class, age and ethnicity” (Whitehead, 2002, p.34).

While masculinity, an elusive fluid construct, might appear illusory and even dislocated from the social web, male behaviours have very ‘real’ social consequences. However, argues Whitehead (2002), no amount of cultural representation can make masculinities biologically real. Even so, “in purporting to speak of the practices, behaviours and attitudes of males – boys and men – masculinities are very powerful, for they have ideological or discursive elements that appear to embed given ‘truths’; the same ‘truths’... that scholars such as Parsons, Freud and Jung found so seductive and elementary to their thinking, and to which many psychoanalysts and sociologists are still drawn” (ibid., p.34).

Patriarchy, the self-serving and self-perpetuating system that tradition and social structure have mobilised and upheld, is therefore also a social construction that through progress, albeit with difficulty, can be undone (Tacey, 1997).

2.5. The experience of being male

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002), in their study of ‘young masculinities’, found that in establishing a sense of self there is a ‘positioning’ of oneself in relation to the dominant form of masculinity. Frosh et al. suggest that there is a tension within the individual as he negotiates his position within and between available, and often contradictory, narratives.

It is argued that masculinity is usually defined in, and is dependent on, contrast and distance to opposing categories i.e. ‘otherness’, such as femininity and homosexuality (Holland, et al., 1993; Segal, 1990; White, 1997). There is some support for this experience in the development of the male identity from psychoanalytic theory whereby it is argued that the male child must undergo a process of separation from his

mother in order for 'healthy' modelling and identification with a male (father) role model [discussed further in section 2.5.3 below].

2.5.1. The 'reality' of Masculinity

"The quest for manhood – the effort to achieve, to demonstrate, to prove their masculinity – is one of the animating experiences in the lives of [most] men" where "the process of self-making, of identity formation, is a public enactment, performed before the valuative eyes of other men" (Kimmel, 1993, p.vii). Fragile, provisional and something to be won and then defended, masculinity is under constant threat of loss (White, 1997) and as Gilmore (1990, in White, 1997, p.16) explains real manhood is "a precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds."

"While the male role is demanding it is not very specific, and is subsequently difficult to define in concrete terms" (Lemon, 1992, p.8). According to David & Brannon (1976, in Lemon, 1992) there are several possible routes and numerous variations for men to fulfil the minimum requirements of their male role (see also Cornwall, 1997; White, 1997; Segal, 1990). Changing popular fashion has contributed to the various styles of masculinities altering in relatively short time spans, yet certain basic themes pervade and ultimately define the traditional male sex role (Brittan, 1989; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; May & Strikwerda, 1992) [see section 2.5.2].

Within the different aspects of masculinity the criteria of male behaviour are clearly expressed through the values, beliefs and expectations of each discourse. It is these images that create a context for the fostering of behaviour that is likely to maintain the current patriarchal gender order (Brittan, 1989). Masculine behaviour has very real social consequences, and it is the often violent and oppressive behaviour displayed by men that is behind much criticism of and discontent with males.

2.5.2. Hegemonic Masculinity

Traditional masculine ideology embodies an ideal image of what it means to be a man within Western society. Although this image of masculinity is not uniform, certain themes or aspects of masculinity do appear universal i.e. across cultural lines (Frosh, et al., 2003; Lemon, 1992; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; May & Strikwerda, 1992). There is significant social pressure to conform to these dominant ways of being a man

that are valued over any other expression of manhood (Cornwall, 1997). Extending this to other cultures, there is little disagreement in the literature that traditional masculine ideology is hegemonic and patriarchal in most if not all cultures.

The traditional male is required to appear tough, objective, rational, independent, achievement-oriented, aggressive, virile and emotionally inexpressive (Falabella, 1997; Lemon, 1992). May and Strikwerda (1992) consider there to be a traditional model of masculinity, which encompasses the following traits:

- Sincere
- Single minded
- Resolute passion
- Panache
- Tunnel vision
- Oblivious to consequences
- Egotism
- Wilfulness

Others (Lemon, 1992; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Rowan, 1987; Whitehead, 2002) have reinterpreted the 'model' of masculinity to include the following: sexual prowess, or the ability to satisfy the "natural", irrepressible male sex drive; competitiveness between men, or the conquest and conquering of the environment (perhaps expressed through the conquering of women sexually); the expectation of success; the breadwinner ethic; males as risk takers; and emotional strength and self-reliance.

Contributing to this traditional construction of the roles of men as provider, protector, victorious combatant, and winner of the beautiful bride is the way in which this construction is embedded in everyday discourse, colloquialisms, myth, and fairytale (Bhasin, 1997; Hornstein, 1991; Campbell, 1972).

While not every man conforms fully to the ideal, the traditional male sex role is nevertheless the most fundamental yardstick against which men measure themselves as men. To the extent that men fail to meet these criteria, even of their own accord, they are likely to see themselves as inadequate in some way (Lemon, 1992).

The institution of heterosexuality also has hegemonic status, and it too is predicated on presumptions of naturalness and normality implicating any notion of heterosexual identity (Wilton & Aggleton, 1991). The concomitant fear of being considered 'soft' or a 'wimp' in the struggle to portray oneself as masculine translates into a fear of homosexuality and a fear of the female (Rowan, 1987; Holland, et al., 1993). The construction of heterosexual desire as instinctual, spontaneous and irresistible often operates to reinforce sexual oppression and abuse "by allowing men to justify their abusive and irresponsible behaviour" (Wilton & Aggleton, 1991, p.153).

Women's role in the construction and maintenance of a hegemonic masculinity has not been overlooked. This is, however, often the result of tension within the current system rather than being indicative of women's reluctance for equality of gender. For example, the sexual division of labour is an expression of the unacceptability for men to do women's work, and while a change is desired women are not always willing to allow part of 'their role' to be taken over by their partner (Sweetman, 1997), further reducing their influence/control. Another example where women contribute to the construction of a hegemonic masculinity is by wishing the romantic ideal of being a bride rescued by a handsome prince who has overcome much obstacle and danger to arrive.

2.5.3. Relational Masculinity and 'otherness'

Included in the traditional male role are a fear of femininity, homophobia, and the glorification of male friendship and camaraderie (Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Lemon, 1992; Seidler, 1992). It is argued that masculinity is defined in relational terms (in contrast) to femininity (Connell, R.W., 1995). Shaped in relation to an overall structure of power (the subordination of women to men) masculinity is defined "in relation to a symbolisation of difference (the opposition of femininity to masculinity) (ibid., p.223).

One contribution to understanding this side of masculinity is offered by psychoanalytic theory, which suggests an asymmetrical developmental process for males and females. A boy's search for identity begins by separating himself from the feminine, realising his difference to his mother, thereby struggling to establish an opposition between masculine and feminine (White, 1997). Seeking that which will inform and strengthen his 'difference' he turns to his father (male role model) and learns those behaviours that distinguish him from the 'other' (White, 1997; Whitehead, 2002). Masculinity is thus

constantly defined in relation, or contrast, to femininity or 'otherness' (Brittan, 1989; Rowan, 1987).

The Cartesian divide between mind and body creates and sustains the dualistic understanding of human nature separating, as distinct and exclusive, reason and emotion, rational and irrational, etc. from which (or so it appears) we must choose our nature (Seidler, 1994).²

2.5.4. Contemporary Masculinity

The contemporary male sex role has emerged in response to the changes occurring in male and female roles, and to the limits placed on the traditional male role in a post-modern society. With less emphasis on the hierarchical position of men over women this new position emphasises a greater interdependence between men and women (Lemon, 1992). Without moving too far from the 'traditional male' position, and maintaining a number of characteristics in common, there are two notable adaptations that identify the contemporary male role: the 'New Man' image and the resurgence of fatherhood.

The New Man

The new man appears to differ considerably from the traditional male by favouring equality with women and being warm and caring. In contrast to the stoic, aggressively focussed, virulent archetypal man, the 'new man' image is of one who shares his feelings, is more cooperative and inclusive, and is perhaps even effeminate (Parker, 1995). This image is, however, considered to be largely a media image promoting a new way of relating to women that includes participating in household and family chores as used for the marketing of consumer products rather than existing in any significant way outside of the media connotation (Parker, 1995; Lemon, 1992).

The resurgence of Fatherhood

The second adaptation can be found in the new preoccupation with fathers and fatherhood (Biddulph, 1994; Lemon, 1992). Traditionally men practiced the biological and financial roles of fatherhood, while the 'social father' i.e. participating in the

² See Parker (1995) for a discussion of discursive complexes of separation, distortion and castration that contribute to our formation of subjectivity, and how this applies to writings of the men's movement, particularly Bly (1990).

raising of the children, was less commonly seen as essential to the male role (Sweetman, 1997).

The image of the so-called 'New Father' is "fully entrenched in *Mothercare* catalogues, securely ensconced in the role of being a good father. He is imaged as soft and gentle, and most importantly, not afraid to show these feminine emotions" (Lemon, 1992, p.11). This new image is being used by the media in a similar way to that of the 'New Man' and portrayed in a wide variety of popular media, including magazines, books and movies.

The motivation for the incursion of men into the traditionally female domain is, however, questioned. Interestingly, some authors consider it to be the result of a male fear of loss of sexual and social potency (Slavin, 1989, in Lemon, 1992). In both these 'new' images the inconsistencies and contradictions contribute to the critique that while it appears such men have changed for the better, these changes are superficial and cosmetic - hiding the lack of significant change in the male sex role and patriarchal ideology (Whitehead, 2002).

2.6. Masculinity in 'crisis'

Compounding the dialectic construction of a sense of male identity are, *inter alia*, the growing acceptance of gender identity as culturally constructed, the changing contexts of sites of traditional forms of masculinity, and the momentum of the feminist movement. These pressures contribute to an experience that has been dubbed 'masculinity in crisis' (Clare, 2001; Horrocks, 1994; Kimmel, 1987) and is considered to be a sense of threatened hegemonic gender identity.

The phenomenon of 'crisis' in masculinity is not new but has, according to Kimmel (1987), happened on a number of occasions following widespread (or rapid (Brittan, 1989)) changes in social structure, which challenge the existing roles and sites of masculinity. The discourse of masculinity in crisis is prominent in numerous cultures around the world. The idea that "men are facing some nihilistic future, degraded, threatened and marginalized by a combination of women's 'successful' liberation and wider social and economic transformations has become a highly potent, almost

common-sense, if at times contested, understanding of men at this point in history” (Whitehead, 2002, p.51).

It is argued that due to social, economic and political change (and the speed of this change), traditional roles associated with ‘hegemonic masculinity’ have been rendered increasingly dysfunctional and obsolete, contributing to this experience of crisis (Brittan, 1989; Lemon, 1992; Whitehead, 2002). A conflict exists where social and political changes pressure traditional male sex roles as inappropriate, while myths and stereotypes keep men bound to antiquated patriarchal notions of what ‘he’ must do or be in order to prove himself a man (Brenton, 1967, in Lemon, 1992). The consequence of this is that more and more men find it difficult to conform to a traditional masculinity choosing alternative ways of being, and ‘doing’, in order to remain relevant yet the deviance from the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and the impossibility to fulfil *any* ideal results in an emotional and social strain (Lemon, 1992).

2.6.1. Threats to traditional Masculinity

Feminism is considered by several theorists (see Brittan, 1989; Seidler, 1994; Whitehead, 2002) to be a significant source of anxiety to men through the challenge on traditional ‘maleist’ ideology (Whitehead’s term equivalent to Brittan’s ‘masculinism’), and by enforcing a ‘moralism’ of how men should behave. Feminism and women’s studies are also considered the cause for focus on ‘masculinity’ as a subject and concept that had previously not been understood and recognised as a contested political arena. There was little critique of patriarchal assumption (still fundamental to many social structures) in the political and private sphere prior to the women’s movement and ‘second-wave’ feminism (Folbre, 1994, in Whitehead, 2002). In raising such issues the themes of power and control are questioned, having a destabilising effect on the position of men (Hearn, 1998, in Whitehead, 2002; White, 1997).

The political nature of gender is exposed by feminist writings, and the duality and distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public’ (political) is reduced pressuring men to reconsider their position, for example, as primary breadwinner (worker) or head-of-the-family, and their understanding of gender identity.

Rising unemployment has placed a lot of pressure on men threatening the fundamental role of providing for their families and the participation in certain social activities. For young men (in many countries) a process of alienation occurs because of the lack of economic options available (Large, in Cornwall, 1997). Furthermore, those that are still employed, and those just starting out, endure much anxiety of possibly losing out and thus not meeting the requirements of a 'real' man. Also, industrial and technological changes in traditional work sites and the increase of women in the work place threatens not only men's role as worker, but also threatens their chances of employment. Men experience this as an incursion of their sanctioned space and the possibility of being replaced by a woman a humiliation.

Homosexuality, as an acceptable sexual preference, and the challenge from gay theorists and activists, contribute to the growing plausibility of a multiplicity of other masculinities. This affront on the traditional, hegemonic set of criteria also underlies many crises (Brittan, 1989).

2.6.2. Beneath the 'crisis' discourse

Whitehead (2002) warns of the reductionist underpinnings of the notion of a homogenous body of men in 'crisis' that such a discourse purports.

The idea of a 'crisis of masculinity' speaks of masculinity in the singular; usually white, heterosexual and ethnocentric. Moreover, the masculinity posited is ahistorical and absolute, with men perceived as a homogenous group lacking class, ethnic, sexual or racial differentiations. Men are, paradoxically, understood to be somehow simultaneously powerful and threatening, yet also rendered powerless by external (often feminist) forces. (Whitehead, 2002, p.55)

Reported consequences of the 'crisis' – such as declining emotional and physical health, and increasing gender confusion and homosexuality, offers men a new identity of victim, diverting attention from current power differentials and the call to change maleist ideology, which continues to suggest “an ordered society is dependent on the maintenance of a given functional gender order” (ibid., p.55). The reluctance to change

may also be due to it not being apparent how men's interests are served by changing the system (Bhasin, 1997).

Another view, held by Mac An Ghail (1996), considers the position of being in crisis as a mourning of the loss of position and purpose, where, he suggests, an alternative response could be the welcoming of change that brings social benefit to all, and an improved personal pleasure.

2.6.3. Responding to the 'crisis'

A very real response to the 'crisis of masculinity' is the men's movement. This movement has shown a tendency to 'demonise the opposite gender' (women), a reaction that took place in the early days of the women's movement, and continues as the men's movement establishes itself (Tacey, 1997).

The response by the men's movement, and the 'crisis' discourse itself, is considered by many to be a 'backlash' against women in general and feminism in particular (Holland, et al., 1993; White, 1997; Whitehead, 2002). The numerous approaches to this threat include conservative antifeminist perspectives (using biological and moral standpoints to maintain traditional gender roles); men's rights perspectives (seeking legislative change of benefit to men as a balance to the benefits of feminism to women); and other group-specific perspectives informed by specific experience of specific groups e.g. black men, gay men, Jewish men and Latino/Chicano men (Whitehead, 2002).

A significantly large group perspective arising in response to feminism is the Mythopoetic movement; a spiritual perspective arguing that masculinity is formed deep in men's psyche. Using an interpretation of Jungian (and Freudian) theory they conclude that feminism is "tilting the balance too far the other way and suppressing the masculine" (Connell, 1994, in Whitehead, 2002). This movement, exemplified in Robert Bly's (1990) *Iron John*, suggests a 'natural polarisation' of men and women is needed and can be achieved by inhabiting different 'retreat zones' (Whitehead, 2002), spaces where men can get in touch with their 'lost' masculine qualities.

Critical theorists (see Parker, 1995; Whitehead, 2002) consider these particular interpretations of Jungian theory and the resultant explanation for men's troubles with

feminist women as an attempt to ignore the political nature of gender and avoid making changes that might undermine men's 'comfortable', privileged position.

In other instances men appear to have responded with violence, domestic violence and even rape (Foreman, 2000; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001) in their attempt to maintain a sense of security and status. When faced with feeling fear, men are pushed to be braver and more aggressive, which has led to recklessness and despair as expressed in more risky behaviour – including behaviour endangering themselves and others to sexually transmitted disease (Foreman, 1999).

The profeminist response to feminism, and the 'masculinity crisis', is a call for an integrated approach to the resolution of this 'crisis' and the renegotiation of masculinities that includes both the private and political aspects of gender identity (Tacey, 1997; Samuels, 1995; Whitehead, 2002). These theorists suggest that for any sustained change towards gender equality the importance of working with both the internalised representations of our identity and the need for externally expressed changes in the current gender order need to be considered.

2.7. Masculinity in the South African context

As in other parts of the world, discussions in South Africa regarding men can be understood in terms of the discourses used. Rival interpretations and prescriptions of masculinity combine as discourses and include those of 'men as naturally violent and competitive', 'men as victims of the advancement of women', and 'victims (as are women) of policies such as structural adjustment' (Morrell, 1996). While these discourses suggest there to be a 'crisis of masculinity' in South Africa, there remains an unequal distribution of gender power in our society (Morrell, 2002).

Until recently South Africa was a man's country, where men exercised power publicly and politically. "In families, both black and white, men made decisions, earned the money, and held power" (Morrell, 1996, p.18). Even the law (customary and modern) supported the imbalance of power and discrimination.

While there has been very little research or applied work in the area of masculinity in South Africa, a few notable exceptions identify some central components making up an

understanding of what it means to be a man (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Conquest, bravery and risk taking are central themes in the socialisation of African youth (ibid.). The notion of conquest is important to the different cultures in South Africa expressed in the socialisation and 'rite of passage' into masculinity of African youth, the Afrikaner 'voortrekking' spirit and the English colonialist (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Lindegger (1994) and Makhaye (1998) show that all major decisions about sexuality are perceived to be in the hands of men suggesting that this notion of conquest has been extended into men's relationships (especially sexual) with women.

Excessive alcohol use amongst males has been associated with 'risk taking' and is prevalent in both the black and white communities in South Africa (Kaminer & Dixon, 1995, in Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Evidence of increased sexual risk behaviour and partner/wife abuse in efforts to assert dominance within the household is associated with such substance abuse, and the decreased sense of political and economic power (Moore, 1994, in White, 1997; Segel & Labe, 1990).

Research performed by Campbell, Mzaidume and Williams (1998) shows that miners identify with the belief that frequent sexual intercourse is important for the preservation of physical and mental health, which is analogous to the male sex drive theory.

In South Africa, fertility i.e. the ability to produce offspring is considered central to the identity of both men and women. Not only is having a child an important element in gender identity but is also used as important proof of masculinity (Sweetman, 1997). As in many African cultures marriage and procreation are understood as the purpose of human existence, articulated in the following myth: "Lord-of-the-sky said to them: 'this is your work, you male, the work of conception; you woman, the work of giving birth. Just do it nicely and humankind will continue'" (Berglund, 1976, p.254). A consequence of infertility, for women, is often a focus on the loss of the baby. With men, however, it is frequently the loss of their status as men (Menzies, 1995).

The idealised male body has been put forward as an aspect of masculinity and according to Petersen (1998, in Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001), has been enacted through military training and in the arena of sport. Forming a major part of masculine identity inscription into the SADF was seen as the legitimate rite of passage for young

white men, as was the preparation for resistance (in SDU's or Impi's) on the part of young black men. National sports have served an equal part in the formation of young men's identity.

Rugby has, especially for 'white' masculinity, served as a stronghold of traditional male power and success over the perceived 'feminisation' of society. Sporting functions provide a socially sanctioned place for male closeness and the assertion of themselves as physically tough, strong and aggressive, united in their goal of obtaining success (Messner, 1987). Soccer, for the majority of young black men, is an equivalent site for the display of physical prowess, emphasising 'fancy footwork' and skill as a means to dominate. Thus, sport offers the opportunity for enacting and worshipping hegemonic masculinity (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001).

South African history, and a hegemonic masculinity that promotes toughness and authority (control), has contributed to producing masculinities that are defensive and prone to violence. The privilege given to men, and white men in particular, made them defensive to any challenge of that privilege by women, blacks and/or other men (Morrell, 1996). The oppression of black men extended to their rural home areas eroding their power and status as *men* over women and children and their resistance to this class and race oppression often involved efforts to re-establish or perpetuate power over women (Morrell, 2002).

Unemployment and poverty are widespread in South Africa. The high levels of poverty allied with the constant rise in materialist expectations have produced a volatile opening for fostering the growth of violent masculinities (May & Strikwerda, 1992). Sudden (post-Apartheid) changes in the political arena of the country have led some young African men to choose crime and violence as a source of income thus being transformed in the public eye from heroes to villains (Xaba, 1999). An example is the failure of many military (e.g. MK, IFP) operatives to become integrated into the new South Africa where "retraining and educational programmes hold few attractions for men whose identities are based upon the glory and political symbolism of violence" (Conway, 2001, p.102).

The emergence of and support for alternative masculinities also contributes to the 'threat' of hegemonic masculinity. For example, in contrast to the image of a dominant physicality, and as a challenge to the dominant construction of masculinity, black lifesavers formed their masculine identity based on mutual support, respect and trust (i.e. concepts associated with lifesaving). One lifesaver understood that "[a] real man is one who is using your head. You don't have to use your body" (Hemson, in Conway, 2001, p.102).

The South African male response to the 'crisis in masculinity' has not been as conscious and collective as many other countries' organised political movements. There is, nonetheless, a reaction that is revealed more indirectly by attempts of men to re-instate their authority through violent means: including battery, rape, abuse of women and violence toward other men (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001).

These studies suggest that certain behavioural practices, and underlying assumptions of power, are maintained within traditional (hegemonic) forms of masculinity. It is therefore of interest, and of some importance, how these forms of practice that are associated with being male are constructed, assumed and maintained. Understanding the concept 'masculinity' to be socially constructed (Frosh, et al., 2002; Horrocks, 1994), and that masculinity can be considered a 'set of practices' (Cornwall, 1997; Frosh, et al., 2002; Harris, et al., 1995; Whitehead, 2002) a connection (theoretical) between these behaviours and the formation of masculine identity is needed. To understand this link a Narrative approach to psychology is used.

2.8. Narrative Psychology: An approach

Butor (1969, in Murray, 1995, p.180) describes narrative as "one of the essential constituents of our understanding of reality." By way of definition Sarbin (1986) explains the narrative as "a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes of happening" (p. 9).

The narrative approach posits, "it is within conversations that the social world is created" (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991, in Hermans and Kempen, 1993, p.165); that

human nature “is in conversations” (Sampson, 1993, p.98). Hermans and Kempen (1993) suggest that ‘narratisation’ underlies all our activities, encompassing the structuring of behaviour and the assigning of causes to the behaviour.

Narrative theory proposes that we ‘perform the stories of our lives’. It is argued that an individual’s behaviour reflects their dominant narrative (Chase, 1993; Hattingh and van Veuren, 1995; Josselson, & Lieblich, 1993; Riessman, 1993). It is understood that the relationship between narrative and behaviour is not linear such that stories are not only reflections of our lives but they also shape our lives; narratives are constitutive (i.e. compose and form our lives, influence decisions and actions, emotions and our thoughts) (White, 1995). This view has implications for our understanding of identity.

2.9. The Dialogical Self: a model of understanding

According to Sampson (1993) “the originating and ongoing source of Mind, self, and society is found in the process that occurs between people” (p.98). He argues further that the ‘other’ plays a central role in the formation of all that we presume to be characteristic of the individual, which is not surprising when “it is the others response that first endows the child’s halting gestures with meaning” (ibid., p.103). This process of the formation of identity (i.e. the self) is considered iterative where the internalisation of ‘other’ (individual responses and social rules) is not only reflected in the individual’s interaction with the world, but also contributes to the (co-)construction of that world (Gergen, 1991; Hermans and Kempen, 1993; Sampson, 1993). Sampson expresses it succinctly thus:

“[The] mind and all its attributes, as well as personality and personal identity (i.e. self), are emergents of a *dialogic*, conversational process and remain socially rooted as an ongoing accomplishment of that process” (1993, p.107. Emphasis added).

By way of introducing the ‘dialogical self’ an understanding of the role of language and the internalisation of ‘other’ needs to be developed.

According to Gergen (1991) language gains its capacity for meaning through use in human relationships. Meaning is generated as people collectively generate descriptions

and explanations through the use of language. In this way “language represents knowledge, and knowledge is in joint action (activity) aimed to accomplish locally-agreed-upon purposes concerning the real and the good” (Gergen and Gergen, 1991, p.80). Thus concepts, for example masculinity, are not features of the world independent of a language system. Instead masculinity “is a linguistic integer enmeshed in cultural codes of communicating (and acting)” (ibid., p.80). This dialogic interplay between people creates the meaning behind the constructed concept such that it is by nature contextual and historical. Gergen and Gergen (1991) link language to the formation of identity by suggesting that language facilitates the internalisation of the object (other) into the subject (individual).

Building on Mead’s theory of the internalisation of social rules Taylor (1991, in Hermans and Kempen, 1993) argues that the self is of a dialogical nature. Taylor’s theory proposes that while the self does absorb the attitude of the other it does so into the ‘me’, the self also has an ‘I’ that is innovative and can continue in imaginal dialogue with memories/others as if present. Hermans and Kempen (1993) use Taylor’s model of the self to argue that while the individual experiences a sense of continuity in the ‘I’ s/he experience discontinuity between the different perspectives internalised into the ‘me’. The self is thus constructed through a multitude of positions juxtaposed which, in what Hermans and Kempen refer to as ‘spacialisation of time’, is the discontinuous but simultaneous present-past-future. They capture their argument thus:

“The kernel of our proposal is that the generalised other is reformulated as a collective voice. As a collective voice, the individual speaks the words of the group, social class, or society to which the individual belongs and reflects the unity of the group, class or society. However, collective voices may also conflict, oppose and disagree with one another, with the result that one voice becomes more dominant than the other” (Hermans and Kempen, 1993, p.114).

Made up of a multiplicity of I-positions the self is a dialogical phenomenon that works according to principles of intersubjective exchange and dominance. In the same way that individuals alternate holding the dominant position of speaking when in dialogue so positions within the self may assume a position of dominance (Hermans and Kempen, 1993).

Each position, it is argued further, has a voice that is spoken by the individual (Hermans and Kempen, 1993). In the same way that the multiplicity of positions in the self represent various collectives (groups, classes, and other social categories) so the voices expressed in an individual's narratives represent the discourses of the group/community (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; White, 1995). Furthermore, where a community narrative is shared by many it becomes dominant, prescribing attitudes and behaviours to which individuals often adhere – even to those they do not consider their first choice (Bandura, 1989; White, 1995).

Thus by identifying individuals that represent a particular group and exploring their life stories for voices that express concepts and positions not only is it possible to learn about these individuals but also about the common canonical narratives. Specifically, the exploration of young Zulu men's narratives will contribute to our knowledge of how they negotiate their I-positions and the dominant community narratives that underlie the local construction of masculinity.

2.10. Voice-centred method of analysis

Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) voice-centred relational method of analysis offers a way to extend this approach to individual narratives. This method explores individual narrative accounts, emphasising the understanding of humans situated in a complex web of social relations. Specifically, it is believed that a narrative structure serves as an organising principle for human action and that it is through creating and recreating stories that humans create order and meaning, constructing texts in particular contexts (Riessman, 1993). The relational emphasis of this method reflects a dialogical framework compatible with Hermans and Kempen's (1993) understanding of multiple contributing influences (social discourses, internalised others and 'self' positions), which are constantly being negotiated in defining the self.

2.11. A motivation for this study

According to Foreman (1999), men and their risky sexual behaviours are the driving force behind the continuing propagation of HIV. Effective and long-term change to the behaviour of men is, therefore, crucial and will only take place if men (and women) are seriously challenged to reconsider the very construction of masculinity (Lindegger &

Durrheim, 2001; Redman, 1996). This research aims to contribute insights into the construction of masculinities of South African men that may inform the approach of existing and future HIV/Aids intervention programmes (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1994). This is, however, beyond the scope of this study.

It has been argued that canonical narratives limit individual choice and option (Bandura, 1989) and that dominant narratives of a threatened hegemonic masculinity contribute to current expressions of masculinity (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Identifying both dominant and subjugated narratives (internal and social) is, therefore, important for understanding men.

This study forms part of an ongoing study by Professors Lindegger and Durrheim, at the University of Natal. Within this broader exploration of how South African men construct a sense of masculine identity this study focuses on the narratives of 6 Zulu participants thereby contributing to existing data that has been collected from white and Indian men.

2.12. Research question

Thus this study aims to contribute by answering the following question: What themes of masculinity are prevalent in the narratives of young Zulu men; what identity positions are being negotiated within these accounts; and how do these constructions of masculinity relate to dominant canonical narratives?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Meta-perspective

This research adopts a narrative approach (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) that reflects a broader constructionist worldview (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This is an exploratory study that, through eliciting and analysing narratives from young Zulu men, aims to investigate the social systems of meaning that underlie their constructions of masculinity.

3.2. Characters

Eight Zulu men between the ages of 20 and 35 years, and myself (a white English speaking male), participated in the creation of this study. These men form part of an informal settlement in the Umgeni valley near Pietermaritzburg; I am a Masters student at university.

I used a purposeful convenience sampling method since, contributing to a broader study, a target community of Zulu men was required. The opportunity of gaining access to a community of potential participants emerged through meeting the coordinator of the Umgeni Aids Centre. Actively involved in a semi-rural community nearby the Centre was in contact with numerous young Zulu men.

3.3. Insights

Several bases were covered through spending time with one of the young men I met at the Centre. As a contact person, living in the community, it became possible to make contact with other potential participants. Also, I was able to get to know him, his position in the community, and about the community itself: the living conditions, socio-political-economic tensions, and the history of research interventions previously conducted within this community.

There are significant tensions within the community, and between the community and the owners of the land on which they live. Taking time to find out about the community enabled me to avoid certain potential pitfalls. I was grateful for this inside information and was able to understand better my interactions with the community and their responses to me. This interaction gave me the chance of not being insensitive or un-
'pc'.

3.4. Interviews

Through my contact person I was able to distribute information about the study and my contact details enabling those who wanted to participate to contact me. The Centre offered access to an office near the community where the participants lived. This facilitated privacy during the interviews, important to the participants.

The ability to communicate effectively in English, as a prerequisite for the interviews, had been established as a feasible criterion. It did however limit the research in this regard, although not significantly. I found those that were interviewed sufficiently articulate in English. Reportedly, many other men appropriate for this study also have an adequate ability to communicate in English.

By distributing my telephone number the participants were able to contact me according to their own need for confidentiality. Arranging to meet each participant telephonically I used this first communication to explain the aims of the study and to set up an interview time. The process and expectations of participation were also explained.

Each interview began with a formal explanation of the research, my motivation (a Masters thesis), and the proposed outcome of contributing to the development of current and future HIV/Aids interventions through contributing to a larger Masculinity project run through the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Psychology department. A formal consent form was explained to, and then signed by, each participant.

Of the eight interviews recorded I have used only 6 for this study. My decision to use 6 narratives is due to insight gained through the experience of interviewing and analysing. The halting flow and poor form of the interviews and the content being repetitive of positions and voices expressed in the other narratives suggested I exclude them from this study. However, having transcribed and done a preliminary analysis on these two interviews their voices have informed and are expressed in the broader context of this analysis.

3.5. Narratives

Narratives were collected using one individual semi-structured interview (Kvale, 1996) per participant of between 1 and 1 1/2 hours in length. Semi structured interviews enabled the collection of data around specific themes identified as important, but also allowed further in-depth questioning around elicited narratives to ascertain individual constructions of meaning around those themes (Kvale, 1996). The interview guide consisted of themes relating to aspects of masculinity identified by Lindegger and Durrheim (2001) including authority, family, employment, physicality and sexual relations. The guide made reference to these themes by suggesting 'open' questions in order to elicit narrative accounts of life 'episodes' around these themes (Riessman, 1993). Clarification and exploratory questions were developed during each interview.

A process of concurrent data collection and (preliminary) analysis enabled the improvement of the interview guide as interviews were conducted, incorporating new ideas and dominant themes emerging in the data. For example, an emphasis on the importance of obtaining a certificate of tertiary education emerged during the first two interviews, thus this theme of education was included in the interview guide for the remaining interviews. Also, while the first participants did not respond spontaneously with 'narrative accounts' I was able to include questions that asked explicitly for examples of interactions with significant people or of different times in their lives.

An audiotape was used to record the interviews. Over several thorough listening sessions the interviews were transcribed. Transcribing [however tedious] did allow the data to live. While the first three interviews were transcribed verbatim, the remaining 3 interviews were transcribed 'to capture the narrative'. Analytical notes, theoretical memos and process notes have also been used to inform the analysis contributing to the understanding of what was meant by the participants and to building a deeper understanding of specific lives within the community.

The names used here to identify each individual are pseudonyms, being used to maintain an ethic of confidentiality, while hoping to maintain some of the relationship developed in the interviews.

3.5.1. A Narrative Analysis

The narrative approach to the understanding of the structure of what 'is' and the dialogical interactions that construct meaning used in this study sets a framework for the collection and analysis of the narratives, notwithstanding your [the reader's] interaction with these lives.

A method of analysis was constructed through an integration of two sources. By modifying the step-by-step method of analysing narratives modelled by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) and using the model of the 'dialogical self' developed by Hermans and Kempen (1993) a method was designed. This method involves a multiple reading of the data, where the term 'reading' refers to the examination of both transcribed text and audio text. In this instance multiple readings also refer to exploring the data on several levels. Each reading sought an added level to the depth of analysis. After familiarising myself with the text I began with a reading for emplotment, the overall picture of the narrative that maps the imaginal space of the individual.

Secondly, a reading for the different voices of the participant's 'I-positions', which (as argued above) contain the cultural context i.e. traditions and values, social structures, and also any unique deviations from the dominant position. Thirdly, accounts of personal relationships, and any dialogical exchanges (negotiations), between positions were sought. Finally, the dominance of certain positions, and the suppression of others, was explored.

During the developmental process of the collection and initial analysis of the narratives I began to 'hear' the different positions and wondered whether my interviewing skills were adequate to free the participants to express their positions, and to create a space in which they might explore any dialogical exchange. The flow of dialogue and openness of the participants suggests that I did establish 'good-enough' rapport with each of them. Also, I have attempted to remain as close to the data as possible supporting my analysis with quoted text of the participant's voice. My intention here is to introduce you to these young men.

As the interpretation of the data reveals there are numerous 'I-positions' and voices emerging across themes, often in dialogue. Some voices were loud, and others subtle,

while still others are noticeable due to their relative silence. By asking the participants to recount stories from their lived experience the historical accuracy of their narratives is less important than the social discourses and power relations contained within them (Chase, 1993). Using this technique is, due to structural aspects, less easy to manipulate and therefore often more revealing (White, 1995).

The individual voices emerging from the data contribute to a growing insight into the local constructions of masculinity. According to Chase (1993), “understanding general social processes *requires* a focus on their embodiment in actual practices, that is, in actual narratives” (p.20. Original emphasis). Thus the dominant narratives identified here are suggestive of dominant canonical narratives, and indicate a direction for further exploration.

Acknowledging that the reading and interpretation of narratives can be conducted in a myriad of ways (Schwandt, 1994), here is our creation of meaning through the re-telling of parts of our life story.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

In the following section I attempt to convey each participant's narrative in a way that expresses who I experience them to be, how they approach their lives (i.e. employment), as well as exploring the I-positions that form their identity. Due to the focus of this study being the exploration of masculinity I have limited the analysis to those experiences and positions expressed in the participants narratives that offer insight significant to these aims. Each participant's story is represented here in a short-form and his individual narrative positions, narrative tensions and dominant narratives are discussed separately.

Secondly, I add to this discussion by presenting a general discussion, including the use of two theoretical diagrams, of salient findings. The diagrammatic representations of certain aspects of the construction of masculinity and the relationship between these components are explicated, as are the positions and tensions of the participants as a group.

4.2. Robert

4.2.1. *History*

Robert's life, as told from the position of the Reflective adult, follows something of a romantic structure where the subject fluctuates between the highs of participating successfully within his group of (male) friends and the lows of failing the Ideal man.

As a child he was part of the group of boys herding cattle and playing at the river and doing other 'boy' activities, like collecting milk for his family and being treated to cake by the person they collected the milk from. On the other hand, he was beaten by his father's brother who "not hav[ing] a boy" had, since Robert's father left the valley, taken him in.

As a young teenager (about 13 years of age) Robert was concerned with how to pick up girls and "how you can avoid her to dump you." He recalls how "you were good if you had many girls" and that "this month it could be me who was good or next month it was another boy." Failing the ideal of being "good" was a "difficult [position] for a

person to be in” since if “you failed to find a girl that you were looking for we would laugh at that guy” ridiculing him in his failure.

As Robert grew older so the pressures of being a man increased. At 15 years he felt he “had to get more girlfriends and more time with them. It was important.” The excitement of sexual contact and the risk of sneaking around at night behind his parents back were countered by the fear of being ridiculed for the lack of success. The new knowledge Robert was learning related to the dangers of HIV and Aids also contributed to the tension of his position.

The romance of highs and lows lived on life’s journey fade as Robert explains, tragically, that to be successful as a man he must be able to work hard at a job, become independent (including financially) and have a vision for the future. He acknowledges that he did not get “a proper education” and is therefore “an uneducated guy” and since education is necessary to procure employment he is therefore “not independent because everything I do I am depending to others.” Success seems out of his reach; even “the first step to be a successful man” eludes him since to get married requires the paying of Lobola, possible only with a measure of financial success.

While Robert does have a job on the grounds of a High School and is spared the guilt of not being able to contribute financially to the home, he feels that he needs “to get a piece of education that I didn’t get at school, and to find a better job that can help me to be independent.”

As for being a man, the future is frustrating and unsure. “I am still taking myself as a boy, I can’t think of myself as a man, I think, until I am married. And, I am still living with my family....” Being 25 years of age, and ‘normal’ (within his community) with regard to unemployment and financial dependency Robert holds to a vision of a future ideal, and is thus not without hope.

4.2.2. Narrative positions

The Hegemonic man

The position of Hegemonic man is expressed mainly in relation to women, where a ‘man’ is someone who has more than one girlfriend, and who is “in charge” within

these relationships. This voice speaks with the authority of “the culture” claiming that men should be “Isoka” – meaning someone “very interested in girls,” and that “it is good to have more than one wife.” There is a pressure on a man without numerous girlfriends suggesting that “there is something wrong” with him. Robert justifies his position of having two girlfriends “so the farmers wouldn’t take me as a stupid boy.”

This position requires that men be strong, in control, and independent. The voice of the hegemonic man is punitive, ridiculing those who appear not to belong to this group.

The New man

Acknowledging that he participated in this hegemonic construction of being a man Robert now sees “that is a big mistake” and negotiates a new position within another group of “men like me, [who] are not the same.”

The new man is someone that chooses to be with only one woman, even if it is because “things are changed. ... Now we have this thing called Aids.” Alternative ways of relating to women are becoming apparent to and are acknowledged by Robert. However, taking up the position of the ‘new man’ is not without tension.

This position is what “I have been learning, not from my culture, but from education.” In Robert’s case the New man is caught between the voice of Culture and the voice of Education.

The Successful man

To be successful is an ideal situation for a man to be in and is a position that Robert projects into his future. “The first step to be a successful man” is to get married and to have a family. “To be a successful man you need education” which facilitates getting a good job, which in turn allows one to move out of the family home and be independent.

Robert holds the ideal of being successful as a hope in and for his masculinity. The hegemonic construction of what it means to be a man includes the components of ‘success’, thus hope lies within his masculinity. It is this ideal that gives hope to his failed manhood: “I can’t think of myself as a man...until I am married, ...and can move to my own home.”

4.2.3. Dialogical tension

Robert's main negotiation is between the positions of "two groups." Previously positioned as a Hegemonic man he is, having gained some education, now positioned in the New man group.

Education relating to the threat of HIV/Aids certainly has an influence in Robert's changing behaviour albeit through instilling the fear of death. Also contributing to his position of New man is an awareness of the 'suggested' equality of men and women. It is only a suggestion since there is clearly a perception of choice expressed in Robert's position in this regard.

The tension exists where the cultural construction of a man's position, in relation to women, is in opposition with the emerging discourse of women's rights e.g. the constitution. Interestingly, Robert argues this tension by considering what the new constitution says regarding equality between men and women applicable "toward the people in your culture" whereas "I don't think that it applies to us."

While Robert is positioning himself with one foot in opposition to the hegemonic masculinity by "stay[ing] with my one woman." Within this change is a spreading sense of respect i.e. that respect is now understood to extend to one's 'woman'. Claiming that he is not like the other group he continues, however, to hold the cultural belief that "the role of the man is someone to be in charge of everything in the house... that the man is always at the top, and the women, everything she does depends on the man."

These two masculinities are maintained simultaneously and in dialogical tension.

4.2.4. Dominant narratives

The dominant position in Robert's narrative is that of the Hegemonic man. This is the default position that is challenged by other voices. Robert does respond to these voices, yet only as a variation on a theme. With the authority of history and culture the hegemonic man argues for its position somewhat violently.

Less dominant are the voices of education and political change. Education speaks of the threat of HIV/Aids implicating (in Robert's understanding) those with more than one sexual partner. Political change poses a threat through a growing awareness of South Africa's new constitutional position on equality of women. While Robert does not consider this binding of him there is a fear that if women's rights are ignored there will be "conflict in the family; fighting, divorce, things like that." Such a lack of control by a man is to fail. Here hegemonic masculinity shouts louder than even the constitution.

The voice of the Successful man is subjugated by the dominant voice of hegemonic masculinity until a point in Robert's life where he has "grown up." There appears to be a moment where a decision is made to change from the set of priorities and behaviours that dominate a *young* man's struggle to prove his manhood to the criteria set by the ideal of the Successful man. This ideal is, however, embedded within the hegemonic masculinity.

While his shift to this new position is real for Robert and does cause a tension it is an adjustment to only one of the many aspects of a hegemonic masculinity – multiple partners and/or promiscuity.

For Robert, any sense of self as male outside of his relation to women is subjugated.

4.3. Elijah

4.3.1. *History*

Elijah tells his story as a light drama through a chronological sequence of the stages of manhood. He is a stable and reliable contribution to his group of friends, and later the community. Elijah has an uncomplicated outlook on life often seeming to wonder at the confusion in other young men's minds. Elijah's external locus of control is reflected in his somewhat passive position of responding to the stages and changes in life. While the transitions that he makes from one position to another are not self-analysed, nor suffered, he is aware of the changes in and around himself.

As a boy he was part of a group of friends through whom he felt supported and to whom he felt he contributed. Initially they would "walk together, talk together and play

together,” and sometimes “for no reason we would fight and then decide to continue to be friends.” Later, they would assist each other through hard times and with “studies and things.” Elijah would confide in his friends on issues of import, usually before he would speak to his parents.

During the early teenage years of his life, Elijah and his friends “always had the girlfriend.” As young teenagers they “did not know about the sex, but just fall in love.” An incident that Elijah remembered was when another group of guys “tried to take our girls, so we were fighting.” To him it was clear. The girls were theirs, and the other guys were trying to take them away “so we had to stop them.” The detention set by the school principal as a result of the fight was, for Elijah, both a punishment and a blessing. A punishment since they had won a contest and this was no reward, and a blessing in that it “helped us to pass because we were studying.”

During high school Elijah was introduced to the adult world in several ways. Since the school in the valley did not have a high school Elijah and his classmates had to move out of the valley to another school in the district. The school he attended was situated in a larger community where there was political turmoil and violence. It was during the late 1980’s conflict between the ANC and the IFP and schools were targeted as sites for enlisting young men into factions. Having teachers fleeing police, being cased by police themselves, and witnessing the fighting “we were...facing a hard time.”

Elijah’s parents and other members of his community decided to “bring us back [to the valley] and open another class here at this school.” Their valley school was able to add a high school component and Elijah and his peers were to complete their schooling in the valley.

It was during his high school years that Elijah’s father died and he was thrust into the ‘eldest male’ role in the family. He understood it thus: “as my father was passed away I tried to be a man, to be strong.”

Also during this time “my body was changing;” “I knew about sex... I had some other girlfriends...[and] I was doing it when I was young”. However, during this reflection

Elijah acknowledges “I am scared, you know, of this HIV/Aids they tell us, ... [so] I am scared to have sex. Before, it was different.”

Elijah was unemployed for a time, which he found difficult since “the father brings the money” to provide for his family. Unable to fulfil this role and unable to participate with his friends when they went out (or shopping) he felt “shy” because he “didn’t feel equal in the group.” It was “very hard” for Elijah to accept financial assistance from his friends when they offered to support him when short of money.

Elijah “just realised that now I am a man. I used to drink a lot, then I thought ‘now I must be responsible and stop that, I am a man now’.” This responsibility includes working and supporting his family. He finds this change “hard.” Motivated by not wanting to disappoint his mother, who “helped me a lot; she was growing me up” he has responded to this notion of responsibility by working and supporting his family.

At 30 years of age “it is time for a family.” “I want to be a father, have a house, marry a woman.” Having work on the farm, having a girlfriend (whom he intends to marry once she has finished school), and living at home with his family Elijah positions himself as a “man, but not like I will be, [not] like a full man.”

4.3.2. Narrative positions

The Hegemonic man

Being one of the boys: walking, talking and playing together; “just fall in love” with girls; fighting for, and winning, “our girls” in a contest; drinking and “doing it” with “some other girlfriends” as a younger man; being “strong” as the head of the house; and “working and supporting” my family are constructs of the hegemonic masculinity that Elijah lives.

Nearly all these aspects of the hegemonic man are in relation to women. “We always had the girlfriend” from the early age of 12 or 13. Fighting other boys who were trying “to take our girls” and being proud that “we won” – an example of “being strong” in the face of threat, and what appears to be a position of power or ownership of “our girls”.

The Upright man

Elijah remembers his father as someone who gave moral advice. Taking the role of encourager he was heard to steer the youth away from being involved with drugs, carrying guns or “mix[ing] with the gangsters.” Instead he encouraged them to go to school and to study hard. The voice of his father can still be heard in Elijah’s narrative.

It is important to be a man. To be honest, support your family, come home early, spend your money on things good for you. Don’t get into a fight, explain everything with your wife and children, and try to make sure your children are listening to you. Encourage them to go to school. Try to be looking after your house. A good house is important. If you don’t have a house where are you going to sleep?

He compares this to “some of the men [who] don’t know how to treat their family. They are shouting or beating, and even some of them are not coming home, sleeping in another house with another woman.”

While the Upright man respects women i.e. his wife, and is responsible in his support of his family, his role of being a man still includes being strong and the head of the family. Elijah considers being in control as a family man important and is concerned that “some [men] are facing another problem; they are too shy. Scared to talk to their wives.”

The Full man

Positioning himself now as not yet fully a man, “not like I will be, like a full man,” Elijah has a vision, a goal of becoming what for him is a real adult male. This Full man is constructed by Elijah to be a man who fulfils 4 critical criteria, namely: is married, has children, has a house for his family, and has a job. While being married is central to being considered a man, employment is primary since having a financial income makes paying Lobola possible.

The position of the Full man is a goal that is certainly attainable, but not without overcoming the odds that the men in the valley must face that threaten this ideal.

The threat of unemployment and the inherent insecurity of his job, where “one of the men, he loses the job because he came to the job with too much alcohol”, and the lack of opportunity for education, even where willing (“I want to go to study... I would like to be an electrician”), restricts the potential of a better and more secure employment.

Elijah projects this position into his future while also holding it as a guide for his manhood.

4.3.3. Dialogical tension

Elijah has negotiated his way successfully through what might be considered age and stage appropriate behaviour, consistent with growing up and being a man in his community. In so doing Elijah positions himself within the dominant definition of what it means to be a man at each stage of his life. While Elijah responds to the voice of the hegemonic masculinity he has an attentiveness and sensitivity to his mother, and to doing what is morally right (expressed in the voice of his father).

The upright (moral) man does not fall outside the hegemonic masculinity, but does include a *moral* ethic that excludes certain aspects, and that steers Elijah towards a notion of responsibility. This shift in position happens as a point of decision in Elijah’s narrative moving from being a young man and participating in the behaviours of drinking and “hav[ing] more than one girlfriend” to that of an adult man, and in his case, the Upright man. To be a man in this stage of his life means to be responsible. This has everything to do with family and being a good father. It is this component of the hegemonic masculinity

One moment in Elijah’s narrative where a tension between the position of the hegemonic man and the Upright (moral) man exists is in the experience of being punished for successfully defending his right to “our girls” and the reasoning of his father’s voice that the detention gave legitimate space to study school work.

Another tension Elijah experienced was when he was unemployed and did not have the financial independence to participate with the group. He reports that he “didn’t feel equal in the group” when not having any money to go along with them. The call to do what men do and go out was, in his case, stronger than staying at home even to the

point of suffering dependence on the others. This tension between needing to go out with the guys and not being financially independent to do so creates a chink in the armour of hegemonic masculinity.

4.3.4. Dominant narratives

The narrative of hegemonic masculinity remains the core script from which certain scenes may be removed in order to form an alternative masculinity. The alternative masculinity that involves respect and responsibility is easily justified in order to remain within the in-group.

Belonging and being faithful to the group is of importance to Elijah as shown in his affiliation to and participation with his group of friends in different activities throughout the different stages of his life. The harsh tongue of the hegemonic man persuades participation through threat of ridicule and exorcism, muffling the quieter voices of respect and care that might have caused Elijah to remain faithful to one girlfriend, as he does now.

The threat of HIV/Aids has become dominant in Elijah's narrative and yet the fear around this issue seemed out of proportion. One explanation is that this fear might contain a tension between the threat of HIV/Aids and an opposing threat of failing as a man if he does not sleep with his girlfriend.

4.4. Sipho

4.4.1. *History*

Sipho's life story is one of a hero journeying through trials, on a conquest, in contest with other men, finally to arrive in a new territory that challenges his former lifestyle and the context in which he still lives.

His story as a man begins when "we started to think about girls." It was during his standard 8 year in high school that he began "looking after" himself, becoming conscious of himself as a man in relation to women. Deportment and dress took on new meaning. Being "mature" at this time was to look good, to be clean and smart,

motivated by the ideal to be charming and be able to charm women. Any sense of himself as male prior to this woman-focus is absent.

Having finished school Siphso got a job serving in the kitchen at a high school, a new experience for him where “everything changes ‘cos I had *my* money.” The financial independence of earning his own money gave him a sense of power in “spend[ing] it on everything I want to.” The year of independence was short lived, however, since he was not satisfied that his matric “certificate was [all] that impressing” and so repeated his final year of schooling. Giving up his job to return to school meant that Siphso remained “at home” unemployed “for several years.”

Identifying with two role models and “what good I’ve seen in them, I mean, they are looking good, they look after themselves and everything they do is girls business” Siphso decided that it would be good to live his life along these lines. His life became a quest to have “lots of girlfriends” which then became a contest, since “I am a man and I will have to keep this record.”

Siphso’s narrative changes from romantic to the tragic when “five of my family members died the same year.” What made it even more significant for him was that “they all died the same way, and if you look at it, it was all the Aids related diseases.” Heroically, Siphso chooses not to deny what was happening, but rather to “face it and do something about it.” The impact of this incident “changed me completely.” While “everybody sees it” (Aids) there is little response since, as Siphso explains, “it is just this denial.” As a hero Siphso goes against the flow by being proactively involved in the fight against HIV/Aids.

It was at this time that Siphso became involved with establishing a committee in the valley community that would “teach here about Aids,” offering information and opportunity for people to learn about the pandemic that was visibly impacting their community. Fortunately for Siphso the co-ordinator of an Aids Centre lived on the same extended property and they were able to negotiate a partnership between the Centre and the committee that would assist them with information materials and “things.” This initiative and opportunity has provided Siphso with work i.e. financial independence, and also a life purpose.

Sipho's narrative, at this stage, contains two conflicting positions. On the one hand he was living a romantic conquest of women, and on the other he was advising community members about the tragic threat of HIV/Aids. And, as if to drive the tension home, one of Sipho's role models "strangely...he died...of Aids. My role model, can you imagine, died of Aids." Another tension that Sipho is carrying is that there are members of his committee that are "not doing the right thing, ...they don't look after themselves and they mess around, then I mean, you can't expect people to believe us whilst we...have people who are doing that" (i.e. having indiscriminate unprotected sex).

Looking back Sipho reflects that he learned more about being a man from his mother than his father. "My mother should have been my father and my father should have been my mother." His "father was very poor" as a role model, as a man a disappointment. The conflict and abuse that Sipho experienced at home was due to his father's behaviour. Arriving home drunk, demanding to be served food, shouting at his wife and kids, spending his wages on alcohol, while not contributing "even ...a small packet of sugar" to the household.

In the same way as his mother was taking "the full responsibility" Sipho resolved to do the same and "be the man." In his mind the man should be the head of the household and take responsibility for his family and their wellbeing. The example his mother set for him was understood in terms of the behaviours required of the head of the house, which Sipho experienced as showing his father to be a failed man.

The experience of learning about HIV/Aids tragically through the death of numerous family members and through teaching others about the disease initiated a critical thought through which Sipho has become aware of the behaviours of men and the incongruence with the consequences that they bear. Again, men who are irresponsible, yet demanding of respect and power, disappoint him. For Sipho there should be a dignity and pride in being a man, which includes taking responsibility and being "proud to look after his home" and family.

In contrast to "playing rock and roll" where "they are swapping around girls," the young men should be "taking care of themselves" and their partners. Older men with

families should take responsibility, walk with dignity, and learn to “respect another person as they respect themselves... and treat everyone equally.” Such is the path of the hero of this story.

4.4.2. Narrative positions

The Hegemonic man

Sipho considers the essence of a real man to be in the conquest of women. Observing his role models' lives focussed on “girls business,” the contest of having to “keep [his] record” of “messaging” with girls was Sipho's way of proving (and maintaining) his manhood. This he did well, reporting having had sexual contact with about 150 women, a quest that he has only in the past year interpreted as being irresponsible and “not doing the right thing.”

The dominance of men, and their control in social relations is something embedded in his understanding of what it means to be a man.

“You see when you grow up you grow up to know that everything has to be occupied by men. Men lay the rules; men say what they want ... cos the man is the one who dominates everything.”

While Sipho is disappointed with the men in his life the voice of what a man should be is loud and clear.

The Failed man

Sipho's father, who failed as a man in the following ways, represents the position of the Failed man. According to Sipho a father should take responsibility in the household by making the rules, providing for the table and the house (in terms of furniture and appliances), providing education for his children, and being a role model. He should also be the mediator who resolved disputes, avoiding violence, yet the violent drunken behaviour of Sipho's father made demands on his wife and children that alienated him from the rest of his family.

In his case, Sipho's mother carried the responsibilities and duties of his father while publicly, his father would (falsely) take pride in his achievements of supporting and

educating his children. For Sipho there was no dignity in his behaviour – another failing as a man.

The disappointment that Sipho experiences in his father as a man extends to other men in the community who “are acting like my father” in the way they get drunk and “mess” with other women, neglecting to take care of themselves and failing to take responsibility for protecting their partners. This suggests that his father was not atypical of the community.

A further failure of the ideal man happened when one of Sipho’s role models died of Aids. This, the death of several of his family members, and the contact he has with the Aids Centre ushers him in to a new territory where his understanding of being a man is questioned.

The New man

The new man is someone who treats others with respect “as they respect themselves” and who “treat[s] everyone equally.” For Sipho this is something that men need to be taught since this sort of equality is “not in our culture, [that] if it is it is something that is new.” He holds little hope for this voice being heard because “it is not there, and it won’t be. It is very much difficult.”

This new canonical narrative is perhaps emerging in Sipho’s life due his setting up a committee for the promotion of Aids awareness and behavioural change, and being part of an Aids Centre that is pro-feminist in its approach.

Where doing the right thing was not something Sipho, in his past, equated with masculinity, he now promotes sexual responsibility and respect for self and partner to his peers and others in the community. His negotiation to this new position is assisted by his very real fear of death through contracting Aids, and the continuity of his role of ‘adviser’ in the community.

While growing up Sipho took on the role of “giving advices” to friends and others, now he continues in this role with the message of protection and “doing the right thing.” The role of adviser is a role associated with a hegemonic masculinity and he leans on this

(and a mediator role that he plays) as a way to maintain an acceptable sense of masculinity.

4.4.3. Dialogical tensions

Sipho models his masculinity on his mother's behaviour and positions himself in something of a 'grey area' falling between a hegemonic masculinity and a position that "has just started" in his community. This "something that is new" is an emerging canonical narrative proposing that men and women are equal and should be treated equally. This new voice is, however, subjugated by the voice of a more dominant masculinity.

The voice of equality is coming from outside the community, specifically the Aids Centre for whom he is doing some work. Although Sipho has included this narrative in his own discourse about men and women it appears that he is yet to integrate it into his own narrative. This is to say that he has started using the words and concepts of equality in his speech but this is not yet reflected experientially in his life story.

For Sipho the new man is an assimilation of some 'new' into the old. While patriarchy remains the dominant structure the new 'equality' is negotiated as the 'equality of respect'. Also, where the behaviour of responsibility and provision of all things in his family is modelled by his mother and Sipho concedes, "I should be like my mother," he qualifies this by repositioning the man as the head saying: "I should take full responsibility and be the man."

Another example of assimilating the New man is the integration of sensitivity into rule making. Here the man lays down the rules, but "not to laying rules that are not comfortable to others; things that will free everybody in the house." The control, or final say, is with the man, the head of the house, however he must take responsibility and listen to everyone, maintaining peace and harmony at home.

The tension that exists within the position that Sipho's father holds is between his drunken and dominating behaviour, that is equivalent to a young man's behaviour that would secure his position as a man, and his failed responsibility. Both drinking and being responsible are part of the broader hegemonic masculinity, but this tension

suggests that adult men should shift their priorities to fulfilling the responsibilities of fatherhood above those of physically aggressive behaviours.

Ironically, bravery is needed by Sipho and the guys to expose their weakness of experiencing STD's since it is "not easy to speak about [such] things." Being brave is not only part of being a victorious hero (even if in this case it is to expose oneself), but is something that Sipho carries with him into his new role of a hero wanting to save others from the devastation of HIV/Aids.

4.4.4. Dominant narratives

Sipho's narrative is rooted in the patriarchal position of the hegemonic man. The conquest and control of real manhood is apparent through his entire story. While the voice of equality can be heard from the position of the New man there is very little ground conceded to any position where men are not dominant. Even though the voice of equality has been heard and is starting a process of change and re-evaluation its presence is at present justified from within the position of the hegemonic man.

4.5. Themba

4.5.1. *History*

Themba is "a person who is always dreaming." He has a romantic fantasy of being the hero successfully saving himself and the community around him from the poverty and limited opportunity of their valley. His dreams and his actions are, however, motivated more by his desire to feel acceptable to the group than any internal motivation.

While Themba did participate in hunting birds in the forest (and rats near their homes), and playing soccer with his friends, as a child he lived under his "strict" parents "always being guided by [them]" and so was not someone who was "always involved" with the gangs of boys fearing doing something wrong.

The notion of what is required of a man, in order to be 'acceptable', is apparent throughout Themba's narrative. At a young age, around the time he was in standard five, he heard the voice of a hegemonic masculinity and, thinking that he was behind "rushed things at the time because I had to see things in a different way, I mean, like

notice like there are girls, stuff like that.” “Doing boys talk”, “grouping with boys” and going to nightclubs make up the “stuff” that young men should be participating in.

The emphasis of manhood being in relation to women, more specifically the conquest of women, is a strong determinant of ‘growing up’. Entering high school Themba learned that “oh, I must have a girlfriend now,” better still, “more than one” in order to be considered a man and remain ‘in’ with the group. “So it was some sort of competition, like the more girls you had the more popular you are.”

Maintaining ones status as a man, and avoiding being “a stupid guy,” “you have to make sure you are making love, and I mean, you show off ... that she is your babe.” Not making love was considered a threat since “she will dump you and go for another one,” just as making “sure you are making it right! Cos if you are making fuck-up then she is going to loose you; ... you must be a man.”

Themba considers himself “a ‘player’, but not really.” Playing the field of women meant disregarding their feelings for your own success in the competition of the conquest of women. Passing from one girlfriend to the next with this attitude Themba realised was “not the right thing” to do. His changing attitude emerged later on, not because he believed he shouldn’t since his understanding of being a man was thus:

“I was a guy. I am what I am, and I am a man and I have every right, you know. So no one will tell me, no girls or anyone will tell me ‘you don’t do this’ or ‘you do this.’ I was a man, it was my world.”

Themba became a father during his Std. 8 year at high school. He was the first amongst his peers to have a child and “the first person” to have a child while still attending school. His schooling was not disrupted and once his daughter was born her mother, and Themba’s mother, looked after her. Having a baby was not only proof enough of his manhood that it allowed him to remain “in love” with one girlfriend for 13 years avoiding the pressure of needing to be a “player” in order to be acceptable, but it also fell within the example set by his role models who were “nice guys, taking care of themselves, having babies, sharing. Quietly respected, you know.”

Themba feels proud and in control when he is with his girlfriend. Ideally he wants her to be a woman who communicates well and has a good attitude, which means that she must “accept things and deal with things.” He would rather she respects him than complain and shout at him “whenever there is a problem.”

Grateful to his parents for supporting his child allowing him to complete his schooling it was only after finishing that Themba changed his attitude. It was at this time that Themba “realised I have finished school and now am a man ... and have to look things more like a man now.” “Being responsible” and “chang[ing] your attitude towards things” like “now I have a child and I must be responsible... I got a job.”

Being a man meant that Themba’s dreams became focussed on fulfilling what he considered to be his responsibility. Providing “whatever she wants” for his daughter and being able to send her to schools that will afford her “a better education that I got” is a main priority. This responsibility extended beyond “sav[ing] money for my child” and her schooling to include supporting his family “to thank them and to support them because they helped me through my education.” Getting a “good [sustainable] job, earning money, [more] educated” and driving a “nice car” are part of his vision enabling him to provide for his family, and to “make sure my community get what is better.” Getting married is necessary “because in our culture, I mean, I cannot just have a house without having a wife.”

Themba’s father is considered a ‘King’ within the family structure, whereby everyone in the family consults with his father on all family matters. As the eldest son Themba realises the responsibility of “not letting my father take things on his own, learning about his families customs to “know... the right time to do something for my child” since he will have to carry on the traditions once his father has passed away. His position of future King places him in a position of power where he does not question the current gender order.

Formally unemployed, Themba is “taking initiative” in the community participating in the community Aids Centre and in other political community affairs. He suggests that as a community “we need [to] change our attitude towards being better people” and his

vision is “to make sure that my community and myself are not dependent on someone else.”

Above all else “this is what I want. At least then I can die and I don’t care, but as long as I have a diploma or a degree.” Any chance of “going further with working” depends on this. “As long as there is an opportunity then I am not going to miss that opportunity.”

4.5.2. Narrative positions

The Hegemonic man

Being a man is, for Themba, constructed in relation to women and ‘other’. Moving from boy to man, although still young, he realised that he “had to see things in a different way...like notice like there are girls” and that he “must have a girlfriend now.” The fear of being a “stupid guy” by not proving prowess with women (i.e. having a list of girlfriends), and being able to keep them (sexual performance) motivated Themba to “show off” with a long list of girlfriends. In his case, however, his list of sexual partners was limited to two women yet he maintained much popularity with the girls allowing him to appear “successful” in front of the boys.

Having children fulfils one of the criteria of being a successful man – being a father. The consequential need to support his daughter meant that he found a job (another criteria) albeit temporary. Not having a “sustainable job” at present means Themba does ‘odd jobs’ for the nearby private school and at the Aids Centre enabling him to earn small amounts of money to contribute to his family. Positioning himself as a “representative of the community” affords him some sense of achievement while not fulfilling his ideal: having tertiary education, a sustainable job, earning good money and driving a nice car.

Being a man is to be “King” of your family and Themba considers himself the heir who will “have to take over” from his father in the future. While Themba will respect the presence and advice of his mother and his grandmothers he will have the position and power of the first-born male, that of the patriarchal head.

The African man

“As African people we have got cultures” to which Themba responds by being “more concerned about the home actually, and my family” since he “must know the right time to do things for my child.” There is a lot of traditional culture that must be learned and continued that is considered the responsibility of the eldest male. Themba takes on the position of heir to the king by spending more time with his father regarding family matters.

There is definitely a strong position of what is required, or what is the right thing to do, for example regarding submission (“respect”) to elders, and what the role of the father of the household is. While these cultural ways are “not a law” they have been associated with the law. Themba makes use of imperatives in explaining this position (e.g. “I must consult with my parents”).

The voice of ‘tradition’ is definitely heard within the position of the Hegemonic man. The patriarchal structure of the family and community are common to both these positions suggesting that the position of the African man augments that of the hegemonic man.

The Prince

The Prince is a position that Themba finds himself in as the eldest son. This is a position that is implicit in Themba’s use of the metaphor of King. He suggests that he will one day become king when his father has “passed away.” This position holds something of the tension between his future position of power and the submission and learning that he must undergo in order to fulfil this role. The voice of the Prince speaks of both the suppression of any deviance from this role juxtaposed with the “rights” of a man.

The ‘Self’

Hermans and Kempen (1993) consider the position of reflecting on our lived experiences and on ourselves (the meta-perspective) as a position, not greater than one of the ‘I-positions’ that make up an identity, but as one of those positions. Reflections such as “I started to grow up“, “I began to change”, suggests that Themba is aware of this position and has contemplated its voice in his search for meaning.



Themba uses the self-reflective position in trying to understand and make meaning out of his life experience. This position often gives voice to the changes, the movement between 'I-positions'. In the attempt to find meaning in the change in his behaviours reflecting someone "who didn't care" Themba concludes "there are a lot of things happening... within you, and you have to look things more like a man now..." This understanding colludes with the position of hegemonic masculinity.

4.5.3. Dialogical tensions

The voice of the hegemonic man dominates other voices in Themba's life. While he does not feel that he fits the criteria perfectly, being part of this group is important and he negotiates his position within this group by being enough of a "player" and "*one* man among the ladies." Acknowledging that often this behaviour is "not the right thing" he simultaneously negotiates his position as 'other'.

From a young age Themba began negotiating these positions. He wanted to belong to the group of boys, but was afraid of falling-out with his parents or teachers; he was "a player, but not really;" he is a man in his family which positions him over his mother, however he learned about being responsible from his mother and he acknowledges her role in guiding him as he grew up and that he will need to respect her presence after he takes over as *the* man of the family.

Themba's concern with being seen as a young man that is playing the field takes the form of having a list of women he claims to be his girlfriends and he is often seen to be the only man talking to a group of girls. This is played out to meet the criteria of being a womaniser while underneath the Don Juan image is a much more delicate side of Themba that identifies with the more sensitive side of the women he spends time with. Any alternative to heterosexuality is completely out of the question and Themba is able to maintain a relationship with one woman while living at his parent's house (and she at hers) safe behind the confirmation of his masculinity that his daughter provides.

Themba uses his position of being a father to justify much of his behaviour and to explain his lack of other behaviours. Being a father Themba was also able to speak from the more 'responsible' position of his masculinity. Needing to provide for his

child meant getting a job. Needing to care for his child meant not drinking and staying out at night. Needing to consider the mother of his child meant he stopped womanising even now they are “out of love.”

4.5.4. Dominant narratives

There is little challenge to the position of the Hegemonic man from other positions in Themba’s narrative. The African man and the Prince are both expressions of the hegemonic masculinity that pervades his story. The call to be seen as one of these men, to belong to this group is loud enough to cause Themba to position himself on community committees and thus be able to “organise” temporary work for some of the members of the community when projects arise.

The dominance of this canonical narrative of masculinity is such that any alternative e.g. being more sensitive and emotionally expressive are hidden or justified in terms of this hegemonic masculinity.

4.6. Lethi

4.6.1. *History*

Lethi’s story is a tragic story of a Child attempting to survive his lost childhood. With a “father [who] was over protective” who beat him because he “wanted us to obey him” and being encouraged to take on the ‘responsibility of a man’ at a very young age, Lethi carries much inner tension as he negotiates his different I-positions. The responsibility of being the eldest man in the family was thrust upon him through his father’s premature death. Being overwhelmed and depressed Lethi feels “stuck” and that he must just “take it as it comes.”

One of five children “from different mothers” Lethi grew up with his stepmother – a situation he does not want for his own child. Ironically his father would declare: “to be a man the greatest thing that you can do for your children is to love your wife.”

Lethi’s early years were “like torture” with his father’s “restrictions” not allowing him and his other siblings to “play with other children.” Ordered home from school, his father would check up on them during the afternoon to ensure they were at home. It

was a time that Lethi thought his father was bad and “wanted to pay back to my father, cos he was hitting me.”

Later, Lethi noted that his father “was a survivor. He had survived many things and to listen to him was the only way. I *had* to.” As a role model his father insisted that “if I did not obey his rules then I would not get anywhere in life.” Only now that his father is no longer there Lethi has reframed his experience “realis[ing] that he was trying to protect us.”

It was in going to high school outside of the valley that Lethi “started to have some freedom” and got “mixed up with some other people.” It was a time of tension and learning for him. The voice of a young man’s hegemonic masculinity was clearly conflicting with the voice of his father (representing his understanding of ‘responsibility’).

At school I had friends, and I used to listen to them and never talk about myself. If they asked me about myself I would have to lie. They use to ask more especially about girls, and I used to hate girls by that time, I really used to hate girls. I thought that a woman was going to harm me; I mustn’t touch her I mustn’t even speak to her. Greeting her was the only thing I could do to her. So when the boys are talking and they ask ‘did you kiss a girl?’ I would say yes, I would have to lie. I said all these things to impress them, knowing that I was lying. So I couldn’t even go out with them and so when they would ask me to come to a party I would always stand them up. I would say ‘yes I will come’, but then I would never go because I knew very well I was never going to do it. I knew the way I get taught things and what my father wanted.

I could not tell the boys the truth, I could not say to them ‘no guys I haven’t kissed a girl’, it would be too embarrassing for me. And they would have laughed at me and spread some rumours around about me.

I was holding quite a lot inside. I knew that my friends were important to me, and my father was important to me. At that time I didn’t know what to do, all I could think was that I should be at home.

During high school Lethi “started to go to parties, and to see girls” and would “tell my father that I needed to sleep over with a friend to do an assignment. Parties were about more than “enjoy[ing] yourself, ...it was a matter of being there.”

Lethi’s understanding of what it means to be a man is modelled on his father, and what his father said it meant to be responsible. By implication, having a wife and being a father is fundamental to being a man.

The primary role of his father was “the bread winner.” Providing for ones family is the right thing to do, particularly putting food “on the table,” clothing, education; “what ever I asked for he would make sure I would get it.” With hindsight, Lethi interprets his father’s actions as giving them “tenderness” and “respect, although sometimes you would think that ‘this is not respect’.”

Being a man includes, for Lethi, some interaction with ones children and “to care about the people in the house.” While “in this valley we see that today to me a man means to go to work, to come home drunk, to give your wife money, and that is all”, Lethi thinks “what they are doing is not right... that is not responsible.”

As a father himself Lethi has dreams of being “a businessman, moving up in life” and living in the suburbs with his wife and child as “a happy family.” Understanding that a man is “somebody who battles through life, somebody who is a winner, who fights and always gets up, somebody who knows his direction” he is frustrated and sees himself as “stuck because I have not reached even one goal that I want to obtain.”

Lethi hopes to be noticed and respected by those that live near him and sees himself “as a role model to other young people” being successful and (financially) independent where he might have his “own business...in community work, helping others...[because] no one can get out from here because of the poverty” [i.e. from the valley].

4.6.2. Narrative positions

The Hegemonic man

The pressure Lethi experiences to conform to the hegemonic masculinity causes him to lie, initially to his friends and later to his father. To be part of the group he would need to have girlfriends, go to clubs and even defend his friends in a fight. If it were not possible to meet these requirements then Lethi would pretend he had or show his intention to. Belonging to the group was important and taking risks in order to participate in the activities of the group contributed to a sense of achievement.

Facing challenges and hard work are so much a part of how Lethi constructs masculinity that he wishes hard times upon his future. There is a sense of wanting to consider himself as someone overcoming hardship as his father's stories suggested a man's life was about. However, there is also a hint of self-punishment. Lethi's anger at his father for the strict and often abusive behaviour appears to be turned inward resulting in some depression and guilt that requires him to atone. How better than to be the man his father appeared to be.

The Responsible man

Being taught "you don't have to get to a certain age to say 'I am a man' and then become responsible...but that you can always say that 'I am a man'" creates a strong association between masculinity and responsibility. Being irresponsible as a child was, therefore, always a crisis for Lethi. When Lethi finally did bunk out he felt guilty and would think about being at home. Home was where 'responsible' people were, where it was not possible to harm anyone, get into trouble, or be distracted from schoolwork. Being responsible (and at home) meant that he would take no risks nor be influenced by other young people, which was what the other young boys were doing.

4.6.3. Dialogical tensions

The voice of Lethi's father is ever-present, requiring Lethi to negotiate the tension between this position of adult responsibility and the invitation of growing up as a young man. The rules and restrictions that his father set during his younger years excluded participation with other children his age, and stood in contrast to parties and 'girlfriends' during his high school years.

His father's teachings about becoming a man and being 'responsible' did not match what his friends were suggesting by speaking about kissing girls, going to clubs and getting into fights. Having to lie about having kissed a girl, and standing his friends up at parties indicates that Lethi was conscious of the requirements of growing up as a boy. Lethi knows the realness of being a father and can relate to the need for responsibility, but his understanding of responsibility excludes participating in the activities that young men do in establishing their manhood.

Staying at home suggests that the voice of his father was, initially, dominant. That he would lie to his father and go out with his friends, sometimes even "get[ting] into a fight" indicates that the voice of the hegemonic man had become dominant.

The Responsible man position is juxtaposed with Lethi becoming sexually active and having more than one girlfriend over time. An incident where his girlfriend told him that he had passed on a STD to her angered him to the extent that it "nearly caused a break up." To respond with such emotion (anger) suggests that Lethi considers her comment an insinuation that he may not be in control or that he has an illness. This would be to question his strength and therefore his masculinity. The negotiation between these two positions continues, existing together in tension.

4.6.4. Dominant narratives

Here again the tension is between the voice of youth and proving one's virile masculinity and the voice of an adult manhood that speaks of responsibility. Both these positions fall within the broader hegemonic masculinity and in this sense there is no threat to this canonical narrative that maintains the current gender order. It is clear however that the different stages of Lethi's life might require a different set of behaviours, and his particular struggle is having the voice of adult responsibility so loud at such a young age.

4.7. Patrick

4.7.1. *History*

Patrick's narrative takes the form of an observer's account of life, slightly distant, somewhat free from the group; a young man growing up in his brother's wake,

watching. Protected by his older brother, who was “fighting a lot” and of whom others “were afraid” Patrick was able to choose his own path, having “different ideas in my mind...not really mixing with people.” Content with his brother’s acceptance, and therefore not having to prove himself through participating in the behaviour of his peers Patrick was able to avoid playing soccer or having many girlfriends.

As a young boy Patrick did the chores. His day consisted of herding and milking his grandfather’s cows, doing his school homework and then to bed. He did have friends but they were limited to school time since they were “not visiting each other after school.” Looking up to his brother as “someone who I admire” Patrick balanced his brother’s gregariousness – “mix[ing] with guys who were troubling all the time” by wanting “to spend most time by myself” usually only “hang[ing] around with my brother all the time, until he passed away last year.”

Patrick could do no wrong in his brother’s eyes and he “was always on my side. Even if I was wrong he was on my side.”

It was during high school “things changed...because I realised I should mix with some others so that I can get some more ideas about how to live. ... You have to share some ideas with others so that you can improve you life.” So Patrick began to “mix with people who can upgrade my attitude.”

Patrick learned that to be a man is to “create your future” and that “the only way you can be a man is to be respected and respect other people.” Resolving to be responsible he responded to the need to support his family since his father had left them for another woman. “This is where I realised that it is important to find a job to try to earn some money and whatever I get paid I have to buy some groceries.”

Observing other men in the community Patrick felt they were “not doing what they have to do” since they “are not contributing to the house and are just taking money and spending to bars and liquor stores and get drunk...swearing people, coming home really late, or not even at all.” To Patrick...

...to be a man you have to work; you have to have money. If you have money you have to do something for the house, and you have to save some money. If you save some money you are going in to have a wife in the future, with kids who need to be supported. ... You can't just use all your money. You can use some of it, but also save some of it. It is for your future. School fees, clothes for your kids. That is how I started to see how I must be to be a man.

Patrick's role in his family became clear after his father had left and his older brother had died. He became the head of the family; "the one who is responsible" since now his siblings and mother "are telling it to me, and I have to feel responsible" and be "the one who must try and solve the situation in order to keep the house peaceful. ... the one who must lay some rules."

As rule-maker the man is "the one who teaches [the children] what they must do in that family. Even your wife should listen what you are saying. I am not saying she has nothing to do to decide, but you are the one who must be listened to more." Patrick's current (and second) girlfriend "is not drinking and is respecting me as a man.

... Whenever she talks to me she does not argue or shout at me, and she listens to me."

While Patrick has moved into the role of being a man at the head of his family he feels that "at the moment I didn't achieve anything... but I am still planning." His lack of success relates to "looking to first of all get married, and then buy a house, and a car, and take my kids to school." He feels he "should be married by now, but I lost a job in 1997 and I was unemployed for 5 years."

Being unemployed and the resultant failure to fulfil his male role "was really hard, but eventually I got a job and I will [just] have to continue." Working in the kitchen at the local college does not meet up to his dream of being a businessman and "to be a person who owns something." To be successful "you have to work hard, and lay some goals for yourself" and perhaps, in the long run, you have to let up [compromise] some goals to achieve it".

Considering himself independent ("a person who can solve things for himself"), particularly after his confidant and brother died, Patrick believes that to solve a

problem “you have to talk about it.” This is in contrast to his brother “fight[ing] a lot” and wanting to be on top. For Patrick there has always been an alternative way to choose from. Secure in his brother’s acceptance he felt free to choose his own path – to “create your future.”

4.7.2. Narrative positions

The Responsible man

As an observer of others Patrick chose the ‘responsible’ response to ‘being a man’ rather than the hegemonic masculinity that was all around him. His brother, “someone who I admire,” set an example of “mixing with the guys who were stealing” and fighting, and the “other men” in the community were also “not doing what they have to” – drinking and womanising at the shabeen, spending their money “on what they like.” While this was not behaviour that Patrick wanted to emulate he does identify the independence of being a man and the associated power to decide what your money is spent on qualifying this position by saying that “you can’t just use all your money; you can use some of it, but you also have to save some of it.” Responsibility i.e. providing for the “future school fees and clothes for your kids,” and the autonomy of the hegemonic man are thus negotiated.

The Hegemonic man

While Patrick did not participate in the life of playing soccer, drinking and “fighting” for respect he does participate in the patriarchal ‘gender order’, which places the man at the head of the household above the woman. Being respected and being in a position of power are certainly synonymous with ‘being a man’ and according to Patrick are achievable through being respectful of others, particularly his elders.

Respect, a wife, a home, children and a job are all criteria that Patrick hopes to achieve and do fit the hegemonic man’s notion of success. “To be a rich man” in a “top position,” and “a person who owns something” Patrick is prepared to “let up” [compromise] some short-term goals. This is part of the ‘restriction’ and determination of a man.

Patrick positions himself within this space saying: “I can say that I achieved because I had a car, which is something that I planned.” Unfortunately it was stolen, but was

proof of his capability of being financially successful. Further demonstration of his position within the hegemonic masculinity is his patriarchal understanding of marriage where “even your wife should listen to what you are saying” neither arguing nor shouting.

The Restricted man

Being a man is not simply about the freedom to do as you please since there are things “what they have to do.” Feeling restricted as a man “even in the clothes we wear” Patrick thinks “there are so many things that you can’t do as a man.” (e.g. “as a boy I would wear shorts without shoes and even a top...but now you can’t do that as a man”) His narrative contains numerous imperatives: you can’t, you must, you have to, etc. that limit or contain adult behaviour.

The restrictions that Patrick experiences have to do with the responsibilities he associates with being a man. On the one hand there is an independence and power of choice the decisions that he makes are informed by his role in his family. Without his father supporting his mother once Patrick had finished school his mother insisted that “I need to find a job to help support [himself] and to help at home with some small things like buying groceries.” His responsibility is to provide for the family, and to do that he *must* find a job. With the money that he earns from his job he *must* first spend it on provisions, then on himself.

While the need to be responsible towards one’s family is compelling there also needs to be a sense power in the choice to live accordingly. Patrick’s mother tells him to get a job and to contribute to the home. Patrick considers having a job and working hard necessary “to succeed,” and providing for the home the “right thing” to do – this is, therefore, his choice.

Success and doing “the right thing” are part of the discourse of what it means to be the man that Patrick is “striving for right now.” Having to watch his mother struggle alone to provide for food, clothing and his schooling has motivated Patrick to fill the gap left by his father and provide for and guide his family. This would balance the failure he experienced on his father’s part.

Another interpretation of Patrick's experience of manhood being restrictive is what appears to be his lack of participation in childlike and youthful behaviour as he was growing up. Overwhelmed by his brothers behaviour and the "trouble" he used to get into, and the early age at which Patrick's father left and brother died he felt "restricted" in his ability to have fun and be irresponsible. Being thrust into adulthood by suddenly becoming the eldest living male, and therefore required to assume the position of head of the family, Patrick developed a strong sense of responsibility.

4.7.3. Dialogical tensions

Patrick was able to avoid some of the pressures of performing to the requirements of the 'group' that his peers and his brother sought. It appears that his sense of security in his brother's love and protection freed him from needing to belong to any particular group thus creating a space for an authentic identity to emerge early on. Still, the construction of his 'self' involved negotiating several positions.

Respect, being responsible and providing for your family, making rules and mediating are all part of a hegemonic masculinity that Patrick identifies himself with. This position does experience a tension where it contrasts with those aspects of masculinity that marked his friends and brother's emergent manhood. With his strong sense of responsibility and desire to be respected Patrick foregoes youthful behaviours like drinking, womanising and aggressive competition. He understands this compromise as part of what being a man is about, albeit an adult man.

There is a sense of failure that Patrick expresses in his narrative. Not having reached his goals of getting married, having a home of his own or a car is a disappointment for him. Losing his job and therefore his capacity to pay Lobola is a threat to becoming successful and a real man.

Patrick has a more sensitive side that hears his mother's position. Her voice represents the need to respect and heed the position of the matriarch: guiding, providing and caring for Patrick and his siblings without the support of a husband. Interestingly she ushers Patrick into the position of head-of-the-house in the role of councillor, mediating disputes and troubles between members of the family (including herself).

4.7.4. Dominant narratives

The adult hegemonic man's voice dominates in Patrick's responses, attitudes and behaviours. Expressing the belief that men are placed above women Patrick positions himself within this hegemonic masculinity. He does this, for example, by telling of his desire for an obedient wife who does not drink or "argue or shout."

Any alternative expression of sensitivity that might be seen as capitulation is overruled by his patriarchal position of dominance over women. Even Patrick's mother contributes to his construction of masculinity by colluding with the patriarchal structure of the family.

4.8. A Construction of Masculinity

An image of the aspects of masculinity that the participants concerned themselves with, and their understanding of the relationship between them, is shown in Figure 1.

Apparent from the participant's constructions of masculinity is a distinction between the goals of younger men, and hence their behaviours, from those of adult men. The transition from young man to adult is captured in Patrick's words of "growing up." This distinction is expressed in more detail in Figure 2 and is discussed in more depth in section 5.9.

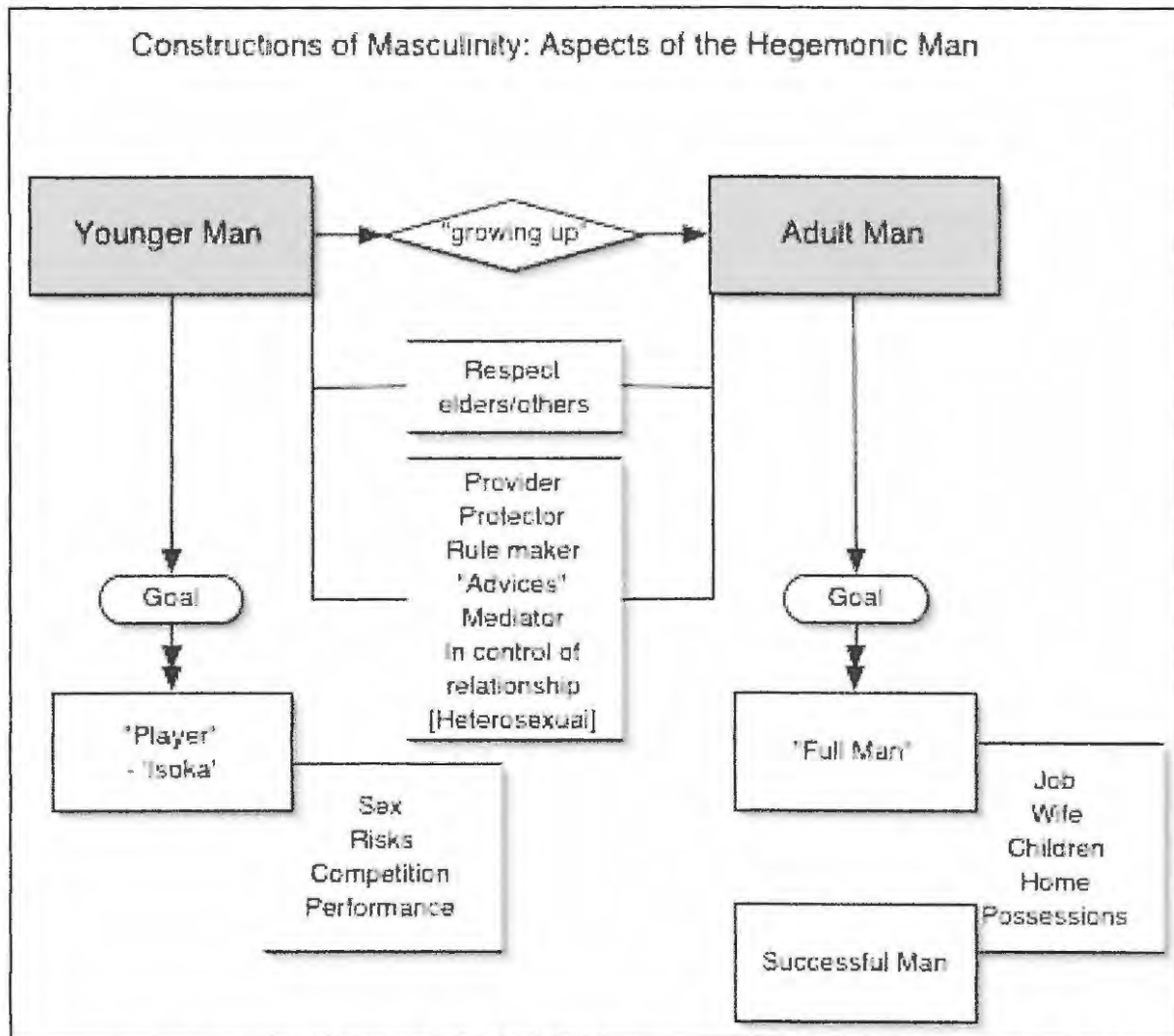


Figure 1 – Constructions of Masculinity: The Hegemonic Man

From the participants' narratives it is apparent that respect is important for them as men in the community. Respect is a two way process where one gains respect by being respectful. Respect for one's elders is a given in the community and refers to an obedient attentiveness to those who are older than you. It is an age related phenomenon and is expected, and given, as one moves up in the hierarchy of age. The loss of respect due to behaving in ways considered unacceptable for an adult man where he is clearly compromising his responsibilities is something of a separate issue. It does not change the submissive role played in the presence of anyone a generation ahead.

The roles that include providing for, protecting, mediating and advising others are common across the stage divide. Being employed and physically and emotionally

strong in order to fulfil these roles are therefore important components of a hegemonic masculinity (Morrell, 2002; Whitehead, 2002). The need to be in control of a relationship with a woman, whether girlfriend or wife, was also important to each participant expressed in their desire for a wife who did not argue (since an argumentative wife is interpreted as a sign of the man's lack of authority).

Heterosexuality is a position that is assumed by all the participants, evident by its absence in their narratives. Homosexuality is not raised as a possibility for themselves or any one else in their community. The level of denial implicit in their narratives was confirmed by the one participant who, when the issue was raised, replied that there were no people like that in the valley and was confused as to why anyone might be so inclined. The “discursive power and potency of ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ and the homophobia that is its condition and consequence” (Connell, R.W., 1995, in Whitehead, 2002, p.73) is unwittingly evident in their narratives.

The difference between the construction of a Young man's masculinity and that of an Adult man is in their goals. The Young man is in the position of needing to prove his manhood (Kimmel, 1993; see section 2.5.1). Being a “player” means that he is able to play the field of women having multiple and numerous sexual partners. Competing in the performance of their sexuality culminates in the ultimate game of “rock and roll.”

In contrast to the Young man's quest to prove his masculinity the Adult man has the aim of becoming a “full man.” This position is something of an ideal, and men who attain this position are considered successful. The Adult man is expected to be responsible to the roles of the hegemonic man (e.g. marriage and fatherhood) without compromising this goal through youthful/irresponsible behaviours.

4.9. Acceptable behaviour – the youth/adult distinction

The interesting component of the participant's narrative that distinguishes between the behaviours of the youth and adult man is reflected in Figure 2.

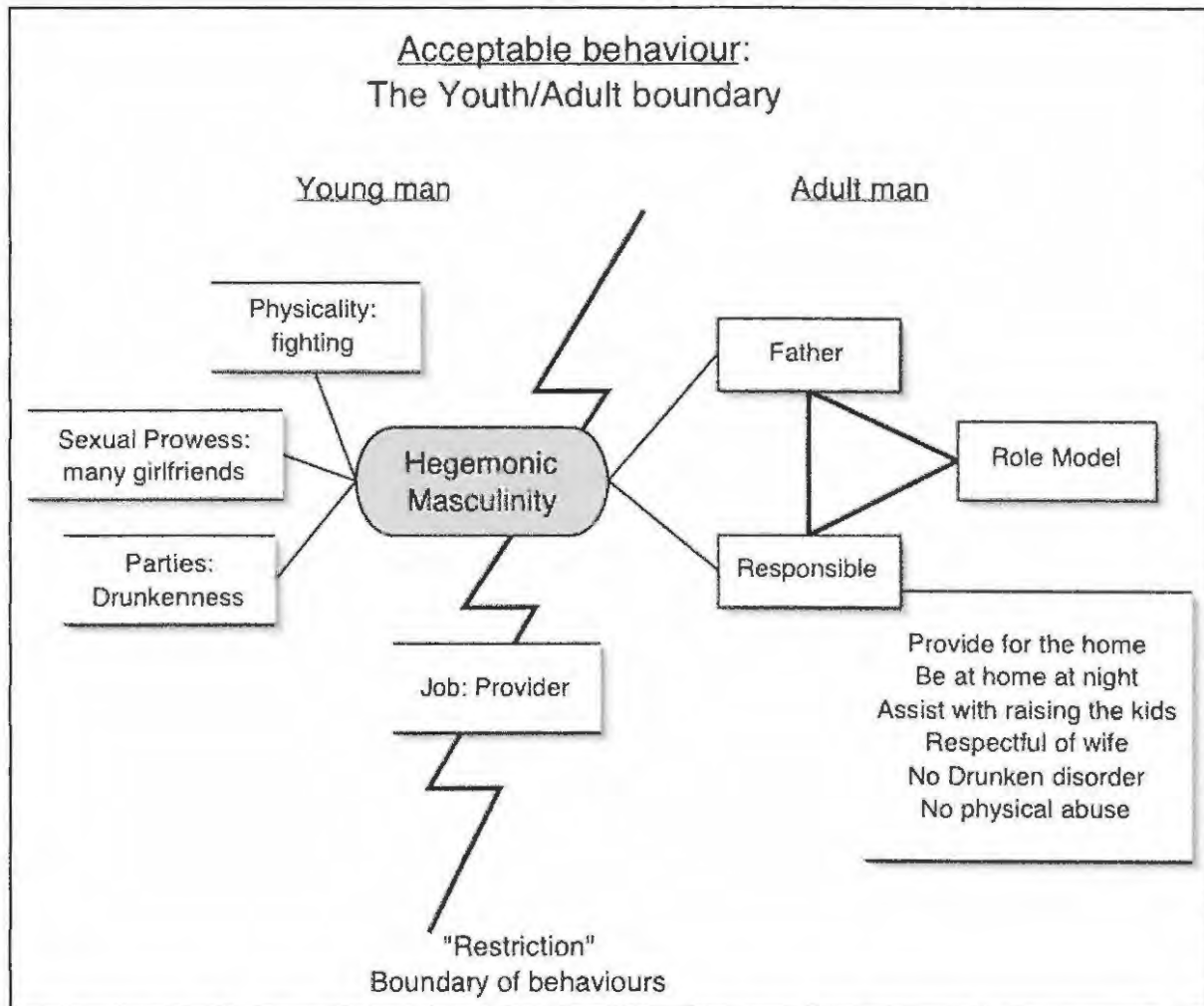


Figure 2 - Acceptable behaviour: The Youth/Adult boundary

It is apparent from the data that while the aspects of masculinity that are associated with young men proving their manhood i.e. drinking, womanising and being physically strong are acceptable at this stage of their lives these behaviours are not acceptable as adults. This distinction between life stages is not apparent in the literature, where both the Young man and the Adult man fall within the notion of a hegemonic masculinity (see section 2.5.1). The boundary that exists between the construction of the young man and the Adult man is considered a “restriction” of being a man (Patrick, section 5.7.2). An adult (described above) is the position of a married man who has children.

In constructing himself in the position of the Restricted man Patrick alludes to behaviours that are not acceptable for adult men. For example, an adult being seen publicly in shorts (unless at home) is an example of unacceptable behaviour. This extends to other behaviours that the participants associate with their experiences as

children in their own homes, and what they see in their community. Having had fathers who either left their families for other women, died, or remained at home drinking and sleeping around at night, this group of men on the cusp of adulthood spoke negatively of adult men who participated in these behaviours at the expense of being responsible.

Responsibility, fatherhood and being a good example in the home and community are interconnected. While having children (MacCormack, 1982; Sweetman, 1997) and being responsible are considered important components of being a man, in the literature and by the participants, the responsibility of being a father and setting an example for your children is for these men a paramount combination.

Where youthful behaviours are seen to bleed into the responsible role of fatherhood in the adults of their community these young men consider them failed or failing men (e.g. Siphon, section 5.4.1). This suggests that some behaviour included in the hegemonic masculinity of youth is not included in the construction of the adult component of this masculinity. This apparent boundary between life's stages suggests that the construction of masculinity is stage appropriate. Having multiple partners is less acceptable to the adult construction since it distracts from the responsibilities at home. While some roles e.g. the worker and provider are appropriate to both youth and adult, being drunk and physically rough are taboo as a father figure.

The social and economic context within which these men live do contribute to some of the behaviour that does bleed across the boundary e.g. drunkenness, freewill notwithstanding. Poverty and disadvantage contribute to a lack of hope and a sense of alienation that is associated with substance abuse and other risk behaviour (Moore, 1994, in White, 1997).

4.10. Developing a whole: belonging to the group

The positions from which the participants' share their life stories and re-construct their identities in the interviews contribute to the development of a common construction of masculinity. While each character describes a unique journey and their voices speak from several different positions there is a strong common language. The understanding of what it means to be a man that is constructed from this collection of stories told

paints a picture of a dominant central figure that is the standard to which each participant seeks to belong. Positioning oneself in relation to the dominant masculinity is part of the process of establishing a sense of identity (Frosh, et al., 2002).

4.11. Proving manhood, sustaining manhood

The young men's journey into manhood is a quest comparable to that of the athlete who sprints down the track with virile energy competing against others and performing for the approval of the Hegemonic man. Consistent with the hegemonic masculinity portrayed in the literature, sexuality and sexual performance are central to this position and their willingness and capacity for conquering an increasing span of women is scrutinised (Ali, 1996; Lemon, 1992; Rowan, 1987).

Successfully negotiating this youthful position secures the young man as a man. The scene change ushers in a different character – the mature long distance athlete. Central to this more mature position is becoming, or initiating the right action of becoming a father. Sustaining ones manhood over time and in the face of hardship (e.g. unemployment, lack of opportunity, and poverty) through taking on the responsibility associated mainly with fatherhood is the challenge of the adult man.

4.12. The voice of change

Change continues to happen in and around the lives of the participants particularly relating to how they express their masculinity. They are aware “things have changed” and that today “if I get married I think it will be different from before with my uncle” (Robert). The voice of Feminism (Whitehead, 2002) has been heard, and is impacting on the relationships between men and women. Thus, the constructions of masculinity are being renegotiated. The patriarchal gender order is, however, not questioned even if women are accorded more respect and an ideal man should listen to his wife before he makes the decision.

Another voice heard is that of ‘HIV/Aids’. The fear of being ostracised socially, of disease, and of death (Bandura, 1989) also contributes to the renegotiation of that aspect of masculinity associated, primarily, with sexual relations and thus the redefinition of the hegemonic masculinity.

Another change apparent in the narratives of the participants has been associated with different stages of their lives. This change is something of a shift in priorities (goals) that determines the young men's behaviour. While still young these men attempt to prove their manhood by participating in the hegemonic masculinity that prefers multiple partners and ardent independence. Once they reach a certain point, which some of them suggest is "growing up," they choose to shift their focus to becoming a 'full man'. This point of change in the lives of the participants, where they shift from proving their manhood via criteria set for young men to criteria set for adult men, is elusive to explanation. There is no mention of a significant moment or ritual that serves as a rite of passage facilitating this transition. Being thrust into the position of head of the house was a turning point for Patrick, however it appears that he had taken on his adulthood even in his childhood. For Robert, and others, while drinking with their friends there was a moment of "growing up" where they decide to take on the adult man's objectives and life style.

The transition from the young man to the adult man's form of life story happens in an unspecific moment of "growing up." Further exploration of this transition, the change in attitude towards risk and other behaviour that compromises the responsibility associated with being a successful man might offer insight valuable to interventions aimed at changing behaviour.

4.13. Positions

4.13.1. Hegemonic masculinity

In each of the participant's narratives there is evidence of a hegemonic masculinity i.e. a masculinity "that dominated other masculinities and which succeeded in creating prescriptions of masculinity which were binding (or at least partially so), and which created cultural images of what it meant to be a 'real man'" (Morrell, 2001).

Each participant gave voice to the position of the hegemonic man with very little disagreement about the attitudes and behaviours that are required by men in order to be considered, and to feel like, a real man. Strength, objectivity and independence are indicative of the way these men interacted with others in the pursuit of the ideal success.

4.13.2. Dominant narrative

The dominant narrative of the hegemonic man, and the variations thereof, contain the strikingly dominant voice of patriarchy. The male centred stories told by all the participants position men above women on the gender hierarchy. There were no stories told that compromised this position of power in the current gender order. What this suggests is that these men construct their masculinity in relation to women (Connell, R.W., 1995). A voice that is completely silenced in this narrative, and which further supports the understanding of a relational masculinity, is that of homosexuality. Men attracted to men are 'other', and the importance to be seen as heterosexual creates the need to be other than other.

It is through the use of women and women centred behaviours that young men prove their manhood. The virility and sexual prowess of a warrior is expressed through the number of women conquered. The roles of provider, protector and rule maker of both younger and adult men are played out in providing, protecting and being in control of the women with whom they are in relationship. Success is measured in terms of having a wife and children, and the ability to provide a home, with some comfort, for them.

4.13.3. Alternative masculinities

Contextually and historically bound (Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002; Horrocks, 1994), any alternative masculinity (Connell, R.W., 1995) constructed by the participants is more like a variation on a theme than a completely separate position. This calls into question the interpretation of 'alternative' and whether there are alternative masculinities articulated within the narratives of these participants. It appears there is only one hegemonic masculinity that encompasses variations of itself, which exclude only certain/some aspects of its archetypical form.

Robert's Successful man and Elijah's Full man represent the ideal of fulfilling (and maintaining) each of the aspects of the hegemonic masculinity contained within the common canonical narrative. Elijah's Upright man reflects an equivalent position with an emphasis on morality, while Themba's African man and Prince are the Hegemonic man in African dress. The position of the Failed man that the voice of Siphos father narrates is a tragic story of the failure of a Hegemonic man.

Each of these positions remains entrenched in the patriarchal structure of the family and broader society. It is the New man of Robert and Siphon that poses the greatest challenge to the position of the Hegemonic man. Voicing a concern with the position of women in society and how they are used in the forming of the young man's identity Robert and Siphon have not at this stage been moved by this voice to alter their current position or behaviour. Robert disapproves of how he treated women in his youth for his personal gain, and his behaviour has changed, only this shift is attributed to his fear of HIV/Aids and the physical consequences of becoming infected rather than a consideration for the position of women. Also, pressure from the voice of his culture sustains his participation in the current gender order (Bandura, 1989; White, 1995). Where these positions suggest that men should change and listen to women's concerns this is done out of a motivation to ease the tension within the family and to show respect for others (Themba). The head of the house continues to make the decisions (Morrell, 1996), now with more credibility thus maintaining his position and his manly image.

Siphon too is rocked by the tragedy of the death of his family to HIV/Aids, which has contributed to a significant change in his behaviour in relation to women. Another strong influence on his attitude is the voice of feminism and its message of the equality of women (Whitehead, 2002). This voice is strong in his ear due to his working with the Director [a woman] of the Aids Centre. The New man position in the narrative of Siphon may be seeking to fulfil the roles and goals of the Hegemonic man, but is the only alternative masculinity that has threatened the patriarchal gender order. Siphon has accommodated this new discourse into his speech and comes across as a 'work in progress' showing evidence of encouraging change.

5. REFLEXIVE DISCUSSION

5.1. Implications

The central role that others play in the formation of all that we currently consider to be characteristics of the individual is supported by the data. The “processes by which our selves are socially constituted and sustained allow for either a kind of symmetry...or asymmetry” (Sampson, 1993, p.107). Symmetry would occur if all parties contributed equally to each others emerging identities. Asymmetry exists, however, due to the imbalance of power where one party “has more power to determine the nature of the other’s identity, and thus their own identity reflected through the other” (ibid, p.107). As shown in the data the construction of hegemonic masculinity is representative of the patriarchal structure that pervades all aspects of our society. As such the challenge to adjust or renegotiate dominant constructions of masculinity is tantamount to challenging this foundation on which most of our societal structures and practices are built.

The distinction between the Young man and the Adult man and the discernment of stage appropriate behaviour by the participants has important implications. Firstly, it suggests that the construction of what it means to be a Young man is distinct to the construction of the masculinity of the Adult man. While the behaviours of young men are still embraced by an overarching patriarchy the behaviours considered appropriate for these men may be targeted by research and intervention independently.

Secondly, the data suggests the Young man has a need to prove his manhood and that once established as a man these behaviours are no longer necessary, or deemed appropriate. This motivation to prove manhood expressed primarily through conquering women sexually and having multiple sexual partners is situated within the construction of a Young man’s masculinity. This is not to say that these behaviours cease to occur. On the contrary, many of the participants experienced their fathers to be disrespectful of, or irresponsible towards, their wives through being involved with other women. This seemed to strengthen the participant’s determination of this behaviour being inappropriate of the Adult man.

The Young man’s need to prove his manhood is associated with the current lack of organised rites of passage necessary to mark and facilitate the transition through life

stages (Tacey, 1997). If certain ways of being man are culturally valued, then asking men to change or abandon these identities without having anything of value to hold onto is unreasonable (Cornwall, 1997). Interventions contributing to the experience of being recognised as Adults may be an alternative approach to influencing behaviours that are associated with health hazards, particularly the perpetuation of HIV/Aids through risky sexual behaviour (Foreman, 2000).

5.2. The voice of the Mature White Male Student

Qualitative research recognises the active participation of the researcher within the research process, and that no inquiry is value free. My presence as a white male with my own assumptions regarding the topic and the process of inquiry therefore contribute to the construction of the data, analysis and representation of this study.

Interviewing techniques vary according to the approach of the researcher, yet interviewing skills improve with practice (Kvale, 1996). I was conscious in the interviews of my role as interviewer and the pressure to get it right. This was both distracting and helpful by maintaining a meta-perspective of the process occurring between us. On occasion I found myself completely drawn into the lives of the participants following their stories with genuine interest. These moments felt good suggesting we had reached a level of trust and intimacy that allowed the participant to share of themselves. It became evident during the transcribing process that the times when this happened I had been able to facilitate a narrative response by inviting stories rather than reports (Chase, 1993). The analysis of the data reveals that stories of lived experience contain positions and voices that express more than perceptions or modelled answers to suit what the interviewee considers necessary in meeting the interviewer's perceived aims. This attests to the strength of a narrative approach in exploring constructions of masculinity (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993).

Each interview experience was different; as was the interaction I had with each participant. The unique relationships that were formed contributed to unique stories told. Being the audience that I was shaped what was included in their narration, as well as the way in which it was narrated. Each person constructed a different set of data, coloured by their positions. As a whole the data contributed to the construction of a common canonical narrative.

A factor that might contribute to the participants shift towards a more liberal and egalitarian position is my own presence. As a masters student representing a liberal white institution, and the themes raised through the questions I posed during the interviews the participants may have positioned themselves as more liberal than they are. While the call for equality and respect from the women's movement is evident within the narratives of these men, my participation in this study may have induced a greater attendance to these voices. Also, the emphasis by some of the participants on the importance of tertiary education and its pivotal role in making them a success may have been similarly influenced. The stories told to me might (well) have been different had the researcher been female. It could, however, be argued that these men may have felt more at ease talking about gendered issues with a man.

During the interviews, and particularly with Themba, I became aware of the association between economic and social opportunity and myself. It was obvious that my position as interviewer and psychologist in training awarded me a position of power, however being a white male student highlighted their poverty and lack of access to skills training and employment. Through stating his desire for "going further with working" and alluding to his poverty and unemployment I was felt that I had been identified as a possible ticket out of the valley. Knowing that the history of research interventions into the community had caused some dissatisfaction I had made my motivation for the study clear at the start of each contract. By reiterating that I could neither offer nor promise them anything other than holding their process of the interview I believe I was able to avoid disappointing anyone.

I did visit the community on four separate occasions, apart from the interviews, intending to develop a relationship of trust and to familiarise myself with discourses and colloquialisms used in the community. I believe these visits increased my credibility with the participants and my understanding of the context of their lives.

Focussing on and working with men in this way has offered unique opportunity for me to understand my own journey as a man. Remaining true to the characters and an interpretation of their narratives that reflects what transpired between us was a challenge. Positioning myself within a profeminist camp contributes to my perceptions,

attitudes and behaviours that will have influenced this study from start to finish. I trust, however, that the interest and knowledge that has grown in me through this research is motivated by a desire to contribute to the development of social intervention appropriate to our needs as a national community.

5.3. Limitations

This study does not contribute to an understanding of Adult (married) men's construction of masculinity, nor whether an experience of a sense of threatened masculinity contributes to certain behaviours (e.g. promiscuity) that are an attempt to re-establish a sense of a security. A broader study would need to be done to better understand this and how the Young men's construction of masculinity relates to dominant common canonical narratives. It was also not possible to offer an intervention to the participants as part of this study. Contact has been maintained, however, with the Aids Centre where future partnerships may be explored.

My growing understanding of the narrative approach and the use of narrative methods of analysis are by no means comprehensive, and the amount I have learned through this process suggests that I (as the researcher) contribute to the limitations of this study. I will, no doubt, begin my next project from a more informed and confident position.

6. CONCLUSION

From our own experience we know that “how we feel or behave as women or men is influenced by the many different messages we receive from others about what is acceptable or appropriate; that over our lives, being a woman or man has different dimensions and that in different settings we might behave quite differently, depending on whom we interact with” (Cornwall, 1997, p.11). This commonsensical position reflects the theoretical argument of this study.

As Sweetman (1997) suggests “men and women need to be studied if power relations between the sexes are to be changed for the better, and the potentials of individuals of both sexes is to be released” (p.2), and according to Cornwall (1997), new tools for doing this need to be explored and developed. Using a narrative approach and narrative methods of analysis this exploratory study of the constructions of masculinity was undertaken.

It is argued that while traditional understandings of gender identity contribute to and maintain a social order that privileges men post-modern approaches critique the theoretical perspectives underlying these beliefs. Social constructionism argues that masculine identity is not biologically or psychologically determined and therefore static, but is constructed and given meaning in social communication. A narrative approach argues that identity emerges in and through the performance of telling our life stories in conversation. Hermans and Kempen (1993) suggest that the self can be understood using a model of dialogue where different I-positions are internalised and continuously negotiated. “A first step then in analysing men and masculinity is to explore the private stories of men, and how they support or contradict the public ideologies of masculinity” (White, 1997, p. 16).

Adopting a method of study that combined the Hermans and Kempen (1993) model of the self with a voice-centred analysis proposed by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) the themes and positions within in the narratives of young Zulu men were investigated. The aim of attaining a deeper understanding of how these men construct a sense of masculine identity was achieved.

The themes or aspects of masculinity contained in their narratives, and most of their I-positions, collude in the expression and maintenance of certain beliefs contributing particularly to that of a patriarchal social structure. It was found that the voice of the Hegemonic man is dominant, promoting a position containing the aspects of a hegemonic masculinity suggested in the literature (Lemon, 1992; Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Rowan, 1987; Whitehead, 2002). Interestingly, any alternative position negotiated appeared to be little more than a compromise on any one of these hegemonic aspects, posing little or no threat to the underlying patriarchal gender order.

Distinguishing behaviours that are appropriate for the Young man and inappropriate for the Adult man opens a space for further research. Exploring the “growing up” process and the process of negotiation between these positions has implications for interventions that hope to influence or change these behaviours.

Insight into current experiences of masculinity (and indeed femininity) will make conscious our present position and the multiple voices contributing to the construction of masculinity, thereby informing our responses within our rapidly changing social context (Foreman, 2000; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2001). Whether the co-construction of new roles and partnerships between men and women leads to a more ‘nondual’ structure (e.g. post-gender)(Wilber, 2000) will be determined by the responses that both men and women make to this change.

I conclude, as do Denzin and Lincoln (1994): “The process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical. They are always emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished” (p.479).

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Appendix A

Masculinity Interview Sheet

Follow any nodes:

- Space, Time, Players
- Changes in narrative: heroic, tragic, “guide, server, impress’er”
- family, sexuality, work, identity, relationships (& ongoing),
- popularity, homophobia, activities, femininity,
- loss, changes, fear, difficulties, uncertainty, vulnerability,
- education, violence, criminality, rebelliousness

1. I want you to tell me your story of being a man.

Just take some time to think about growing up, becoming a teenager, and being a young adult. Don’t tell me immediately, just let your mind think about the times and things you did at school, with your family, with your friends....

Just begin to see what images/memories make up the story of your life.

About where you grew up, some of the things you used to do. Where you were a teenager and what you thought about....

Self

2. What are some things that you think are important about yourself?

Family

3. What important boy things did you do with your father? Talk about?

4. What important times did you have with your mother? Talk about?

5. When did you begin to feel like a man rather than a boy? Space, Time, Players?

Ideal, self-perception

6. What are the (different) roles that a man has (do you see this in your community)?
In the family, with children, in the community....

7. In which circumstances do you feel like a man?

8. How do you feel in these circumstances?

9. What does it mean to be a successful man?

10. What would you tell your son/ a boy (14yrs) about what it means to be a man?

11. How does culture shape what it means to be a man?

Popularity, ideal

12. Are there some people that you admire?

13. Are there some people that you would not like to be like them?

14. Who do you spend time with? Are you part of a group? Who? What do you do/talk?

15. What do you think the group says/thinks about you?

16. Are there any men in your community that are not in a group? Different to other men? (Don’t work; not married; jail; don’t like women) What do you say about them?

Past, Present, Future

17. What is it like to be a man today?
18. What makes it “.....”? (Use the answer from #7: difficult, hard, good... etc.)
19. How has this changed over the past 5/10 years?
20. What should it be like being a man?
21. What do you look forward to?

Women, relationship to:

22. What kind of woman do you like to have as your girlfriend?
23. What made you choose your girlfriend/ wife?
24. What do you/did you like about your wife/girlfriend?
25. How do/did you feel with her? What does/did she make you feel?

Wealth & money

26. Experience of money, and how this makes you feel as a man?

Emotions:

27. Anger: do you ever feel angry? What happens: before, during, after?
28. Who do you talk to if you feel vulnerable?

Masculinity Interview Sheet – Part Two

1. a) Which community do you live in?

b) Which area of your community do you live in?

2. a) Who do you live with?

b) Where do your parents live?

c) Do you have brothers/sisters?

d) Do your family members have jobs?

3. What is your “mother tongue” language?

4. a) Which school did you attend?

b) How many years of school did you complete?

5. How old are you?

6. a) Are you married?

b) If not, do you have a girlfriend?

c) How old is your wife/girlfriend?

7. a) Are you employed?

b) If yes, what job do you do?

c) Is your wife/girlfriend employed?

d) If yes, what job does she do?

8. a) Before you were married, or your current girlfriend, did you have other girlfriends?

b) How many of your girlfriends do you remember?

9. Have you had other work/jobs?

10. Do you have any children?

11. a) At what age did you become sexually active?

b) Were you sexually active with all your girlfriends?

c) Did you ever suffer from a STD?

d) Did your girlfriend ever ask you to wear a condom?

e) Did you use condoms?

APPENDIX B

Agreement between Researcher and Research Participant

I, _____, agree to participate in the research project of Justin Maxwell on the stories of being a man by urban African men.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting research as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Research Psychology at Rhodes University.
2. The researcher is interested in stories of "what it means to be a man" and their impact on behaviour that may be risky.
3. My participation will involve one interview of 1- 1 1/2 hours long.
4. This interview contains information of a personal nature but I can choose not to share any parts of my life I am not willing to.
5. I am invited to tell the researcher any problems/concerns I have about my participation in the study and to have these answered to my satisfaction.
6. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – but I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur or I have concerns about my participation I did not originally anticipate.
7. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but the report will be written in such a way that I will not be known (identifiable) to the general reader.
8. Interview transcripts will use a pseudonym for me, and will be kept secure so that people not involved in the research will not be able to read them.

Date: _____

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

APPENDIX C

Example of Transcribing 'to capture the narrative'

Robert:

- When I was a child, about 7, we would play with the boys, we would go swimming while we were **looking after the cattle**. We would go after school down to the water with the cattle, and **to the river to swim**. There were many boys doing that. We would also go up to get some milk. And even we would get some cakes from the college.
- We use to play with **bicycles** and **make wire cars**.
- The girls didn't have many things to do with us because while we went to do the cattle they would go to collect water and had different things to do. Sometimes we would go together to swim but not always. They would stay at home and clean, or do the dishes, things like that.
- We had other guys older than us, and we would ask questions about life, how can we manage. Or **asking about girls** and when you fall in love, which signs you can see from the girls to see if she is really interested in you, things like that. And how you can **avoid her to dump you**.
- The older guys were **teaching us how to behave**, and what language to use. For e.g. you must have the jokes when you come to them, and you must be friendly, but not too much. If you are too friendly too quickly then you will not become successful with that girl. She will take you like a friend and when you start to talk about love she will not take you seriously and **you will not succeed. You wont get that girl**.
- As young boys, maybe 13 years, we would go around with them. It varied, maybe this month **it could be me who was good or next month it was another boy**. You were **good if you had many girls**.
- This is "isoka" is a guy with many girls. These girls were your lovers, which meant that you would be with her and kiss her. That was all at that age, but later we realise, hey, there is something more than kissing.
- It was **important at that time to have many girls**.
- It was difficult for the boys who did not have girls because we used to sit around the fire at night around 7(pm) **and talk about girls** and if we found that you **fail to**

find a girl that you were looking for **we would laugh at that guy** and it was difficult for a person to be in that situation.

- Father: my father was not living here. I was born here, but my father left to go to Sweetwater when I was a little boy, and my father's brother did not have a boy so he took me to live with him here.
- We had a good relation. He used to tell me what things to do and he would advise me when I was doing the things wrong. Like to bunk at school or in trouble at school he would **advise me**, and sometimes **beat me**.
- He said that I would be dumb and I wouldn't get education if I bunk at school.
- If I was feeling sad I would **talk to my friend** and we could work together to fight that [...].
- I didn't really have that important time with my mother. She wasn't that close to me.
- Now I am a man: when I had **pubic hairs then you know** that now you are a man.
- It was this time that I started to get more with girls. I **had to get more girlfriends and more time with them**. It was **important**. I was around 15 years.
- Then it changed a little to ask her to visit you at home, at night, not when your parents were there, when they were sleeping. She would visit you at night, and we would sex then.
- I can say that in our culture, because us guys would get together and talk, it was a **good thing to call your girlfriend to visit you**, at that time. If you fail to do that it was difficult [i.e. not good because you would be laughed at]
- Even towards your girlfriend, if you didn't invite her, she, they would take that person as a **stupid boy**. They would talk together that "my partner asked me to visit him last night. How about your partner?" And if you fail to invite her she would say "oh, I am still waiting."
- Only one or two guys didn't, but all the guys had girlfriends. If they didn't then the guys used to **laugh at them**, or say there is **something wrong with them**. They were **unsuccessful**, in fact one friend was not interested in girls and so I cant say that he was unsuccessful because he didn't even try. Ja, the guys use to laugh at him and say there was something wrong and that he should see a doctor, things like that.
- Now during this time he is starting to get more involved, more involved with girls than all of us, more girlfriends.
- When you ask him now he says "**I am making history**"

- But things are **changed**. It is too late for that now. Now we have this thing called Aids.
- And **now we are grown up** I know it is **difficult to have many girlfriends**, if you have one you must be **faithful** and she must be faithful. Things like that I have been **learning**, not from my culture **but from education**. In our culture it is still the same, nothing has changed in our culture. It is up to us to see that things have changed and to take a decision. If we still believe a man is man with (a/no, or meaning more than one woman/sleeping around) wife then we will find it difficult.
- I don't believe that now but it was **hard to live without a girlfriend** so **I had 2** girlfriends and **so the farmers wouldn't take me as a stupid boy**. Now I see that is a big mistake.
- The other men like me are not the same. Some are like me, but others are still thinking it is nice to have many girls, to be "isoka," a boy with many girlfriends.
- **We have 2 groups here**. Some are very interested in girls and we used to invite **different girls from outside** the valley, mostly on weekends and at month end. And they use to have parties and sleep with their men.
- And there are other guys who are thinking: "no I must stay with my **one woman**". The groups are quite equal so we come with our ideas and them with those ideas.
- **I am happy now where I am**. I don't think I can go back. (to having many women)
- Role model: first of all, education. Even when I past matric it was very difficult for me. I didn't know what I could do. There was not much for me to do. And even then I could think and I could see I didn't do everything proper and there was no one who was a role model for me in education.
- My uncle was a good man. He had the talent in leadership. He was one person who was a leader here, in this compound. And the people used **to fear him**. He was a **strong man**; there was no one who used to play against him.
- In this area the guys are used to do anything against the old people, even take it as if they were one of us. But with him, when he come the guys are used to run away.
- He used to come while the guys were drinking they would run away with their beers. They did not want him to see.
- If he did see them then he would face them and talk to them. **With his words they were scared to face him**. Even me, I was scared to face him when I had done mistake. I used to run away and stay with my friends, or my relatives.

- He used to shout at me if I made a mistake. If I was in trouble in school with the teachers they used to tell him because he was on the governing body of the school. And when I heard that he knew what I had done at school I use to run away until later and things were right.
- Successful man: now I can say to the younger boys a **successful** man is a man who is **working hard**. One who is looking forward, has a **vision to a better future**.
- You need **education**. To be a successful man you need education. To be **independent** now, you need education so I can say you must work hard.
- In life, since my experience on many things, I can say he must wait. He mustn't get rush on things; he must wait until he is old enough to take a decision of things. Like to fall in love. He must be old enough and wise when starting to get involved. I think about 18 years. *I think a guy of 18 can start to make decision, start to make choices.*
- I am taking *myself as an uneducated* guy because I didn't have a chance to get a proper education. Now, I can take my self as *not independent* because everything I do I am depending to others. Like I am depending on my employers. Everything I am doing I am belonging to them. There is *nothing I can do on my own*, like now I want to get married but there is *no money for lobola*. Now the little money I get I use it to help my younger brother who is at university now, and I cant pay lobola for my girlfriend. But if you get education you can be independent and get a nice job, and you can do anything you want to do.
- It is **important** to get a **good job**, for a man. Let's say that you are unemployed, eish, it is difficult.
- Here in the valley there are lots of guys who are unemployed. They are all dependent; they cannot do anything. Lets say they have a girlfriend, you can't do anything, you can't promise her anything.
- I can say that **these men are unsuccessful because they can't marry them**. They have to call their girlfriends sometimes to come and stay with them, which is not good in our culture. To bring a girl and to stay with her in your home is not good. You get child and have children who have no supporting, which is difficult. And those children are growing up poor, bringing lots of poverty here.
- I think **marriage is important**. It is the **frist step to be a successful man**. To get married and to have a family.

- Role of man in family: we had a discussion at school where the girls said the man is equal to the woman. On my point I don't think that a man is equal to a woman. The role of the **man is someone to be in charge of everything in the house**. Let's say my wife wants to do something she must see to me first if I am agree with her. Even myself I can start (talk) to her, but I am the one who must see everything like a person who is in charge of everything. We can start together and share ideas, but there is one head, one who is controlling everything which is happening. Because, if I can say we are equal, ei, I think there will be a conflict in the family. Fighting, divorce, things like that. The man is always at the top, and the woman, everything she does depends on the man.
- But our government says that we are equal, but I don't think that it applies to us. I can see apply toward the people in your culture.
- Role of women: Her role is to look after the house, that everything is going right and to look if something is needed, like grocer. To me as a man it is difficult to see that we need flour or thing like that. It is the work of the woman to manage things like that, and to come to me and we can see what to do; organising money, giving to her for thing like that.
- With **kids**: the man role is to **look after them, and advising them**. Ja, advising them; and giving them the **best education**.
- Both men and woman must play the same role with the children. **Advice**. Maybe my wife explains something to the children that I didn't experience that can apply to the children, and I can use my experience to help them.
- Change in being a man: I think **things have changed**. If I get married I think it will be different from before. With my uncle, he will think that it is good to have more than one wife. At home, if I **bring many different women home that is good**. They will see that my son is right, he is healthy, he is a man. But *for me I will not allow* my boy to bring girl to my house without the right process.
- And in our culture, in my home, it is not a good thing to for my sister to bring her boyfriend to my home. My father can kill him (the boyfriend), or kill her if she can do something like that. But for me as a boy there is no problem to do that. He can see my girlfriend and greet her.
- On my side now I think I can say that I wont allow my girl to do that, even my boy, when they are young I wont allow that.

- We are 7 brothers and sisters in my family. It is really difficult because there is not enough money to help us with good education. I, myself on my side think that it is good to have one child. It is ok even if it is a girl, but if it is a boy; I will pray to God, *God if I have one child I will be glad if it is a boy.*
- One is enough, because I see in my family. Even me I am needing to help my younger brother who is struggling there at university, to give him some money to buy some food. He can't get a loan to get money to live. But if I have one child I can **plan** for him, or her. It can be up to him or her to see if he can get that education.
- STD: Ja, I was 15 when I got the STD.
- Condom: It was me when I was 19 when my first time to sleep with this girlfriend and I said no we must use a condom. It was my first time to use a condom, and I used it incorrectly and I failed to use it and I throw it away during that time. I didn't trust her enough to not use a condom. We didn't live together; she was from outside our community, from Edendale and didn't trust her – that she was with other boys.
- Most of the guys here have girls from outside; a few guys have girlfriends from here. And most of the girls have boyfriends from outside. This is now, my age group. I am 25 years now. Before, when we were young it was from here.
- Now the girls don't want the boys from here. They say that the boys here are just playing with them. They just want to sleep with them and don't want to pay anything. They are not pay anything like lobola or anything like that. (i.e. there is no future with these boys).
- They boys used to say: “ja we know, but later you will come back to us.” And it happens that the girl goes outside and falls in love with another boy for about 3 months or 5 months, and then she is back to her former boyfriend. And the boy says now what I said is true, you came back to me.
- I am still taking myself as a boy, I **can't think of myself as a man**. I think **until I am married**. And I am still living with my family, and after I am married for one year then I can move away to my own home.
- What is important for me now is to get a **piece of education** that I didn't get at school. And to find a **better job** that can help me to be **independent**.
- I have a group of friends that are Christian and we used to have time to discuss things. We have different kinds of churches here; I am with Assemblies of God.

[THE END]