

MASCULINITY AND MOBILITY:
A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS INTO HOW ADOLESCENT BOYS WITH PHYSICAL
DISABILITIES CONSTRUCT AND EXPERIENCE MASCULINE IDENTITY

By
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

**I hereby declare that this research report, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the
text, is my own original work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree at
another university**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at looking at how young adolescent boys with physical disabilities construct a masculine identity, how they engage with masculinity and how they manage gendered aspects. The study follows similar masculine research conducted overseas, and some limited work conducted in South Africa, however these studies mainly explored how able-bodied boys relate to masculinity and a masculine identity. Thus, this study covered two broad areas, namely the experience of masculine identities related to a physical disability, as well as a comparison between able bodied and disabled adolescent boys. In order to conduct this research, five adolescent boys from a government school catering for disabilities in Johannesburg interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The recorded data was transcribed, and thematic analysis was used to analyse and code the data. Some themes that emerged reiterated findings from existing literature, such as aggression and muscle mass as markers of masculinity. Other new themes emerged, such as emotional maturity being important to the boys. The analysis and discussion highlights the central themes, as well as some smaller sub-themes that emerged from the data.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The research aimed to explore how adolescent boys with physical disabilities construct and experience their masculine identities and how they position themselves with regard to hegemonic masculinities. According to Koch (2001), the medical model's definition of a disability "refers to a necessarily limited, restricted state in which the subject cannot independently undertake specific tasks or actions" (p. 372). This definition will be used to inform the term "disability" throughout the research report. The term "physical disabilities" in the current research project is employed to refer to individuals whose physical mobility has in some way been compromised through their disability. The research is influenced by Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix's studies involving adolescent boys and their experiences of masculinity (1998, 2003, 2005) and by Blackbeard and Lindegger's study of a similar nature (2007). More specifically, the research was designed, through thematic analysis of data obtained from interviews, to shed light on the subjective experiences of adolescent boys who have a physical disability with regard to their masculinity and masculine identity. Given that there is limited research geared towards the relationship between masculinity and physical disabilities, especially in South Africa, the project appeared to be a meaningful endeavour.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aim was to critically examine how adolescent boys with disabilities experience and understand their masculine identity, and how they position themselves in relation to hegemonic or dominant constructions of masculinity/ies in South Africa.

1.3 Brief Contextualisation of the Study

In South Africa, amongst many boys and men, attributes of "athleticism, dominance, and toughness" are strongly associated with the achievement of a masculine identity (Govender, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2000; Morrell, 2001; Phillips, 2006; Ratele, 2007, as cited in Martin & Govender, 2011), particularly during adolescence and early adulthood. These attributes seem to be integrally related to the expression of masculinity, and are often related to participation in sport. As will be elaborated upon further in the literature review, research shows that sport seems to be an important marker used by boys to define masculinity and masculine identity (Martin & Govender, 2011). The proposed research is important as it will

consider the experiences of boys who may not be able to relate to or express this aspect of a hegemonic masculine identity, due to their disability. The research hopes to explore how boys with disabilities position themselves in relation to prevailing or hegemonic forms of masculinity and how their particular life experiences may lead them to possibly challenge, align with, circumvent, compensate for or idealise these masculinities, the research study aimed to add to and enrich the existing knowledge base on young masculinities. A fairly considerable body of research on the experiences of adolescent boys with regard to masculinity has been conducted internationally (for example Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman, 2003; Pattman, Frosh & Phoenix, 2005; Connell, 2005). Although this is growing, less research in this area has been conducted in South Africa. The study thus aimed to expand this knowledge base in terms of capturing understandings and expressions of masculinity as evidenced by a sub-population of South African adolescent boys. It is also hoped that the findings may assist professionals who deal with adolescents with physical disabilities to understand gendered aspects of their experience with greater sensitivity.

1.4 Structure of the Research Report

Following the Introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of literature pertinent to the study of masculinity and young masculinities more particularly. This chapter provides a brief overview of some of the historical developments in gender and men's studies, and how the concept of a hegemonic masculinity was first introduced and subsequently evolved. It also introduces some of the pertinent literature related to masculinity in the South African context. Following this, Chapter 3 discusses the method and process of the research, including how the data was collected and analysed. Chapter 4 introduces the main findings of the study together with the analysis and discussion of the findings. Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes the research report, offering some evaluation of the study and summarising the key findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review

Research into masculinity and masculine identity is broad and has many theoretical underpinnings. Covering the vast body of literature on masculinity is beyond the scope of this research report, and as a result the material to be covered will include that which is deemed to be useful in understanding the experiences of boys with disabilities in relation to masculine identity. The literature on masculinity located within a social constructionistic perspective will be emphasised, although it is recognized that there are a range of perspectives from which masculinity and identity can be studied.

2.1 Historical Understandings of Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity

In defining masculinity historically, Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985, cited in Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) refer to the “male sex role” (largely synonymous with masculinity) which, as a concept, was constructed in contrast or opposition to femininity and also to homosexuality. Connell introduced the notion of hegemonic masculinity into the literature understood as, a dominant type of masculinity, a “pattern of practice... that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Aptly cited in Martin and Govender (2011), Connell (1995) speaks of hegemonic masculinity with reference to Gramsci’s idea of “hegemony”, suggesting this was a term that is appropriate “to describe masculinities ascending to dominance through culturally accepted norms and values...” (p. 221). This definition of hegemonic masculinity is widely used and accepted within contemporary gender studies, and will inform the understanding of the construct, as applied in this study. A dominant form of masculinity has tended to underpin gender inequality and in the majority of societies globally men have been understood as having power and elevated status over woman. Feminist studies highlight masculinity and manhood as concepts that have historically been aligned with characteristics such as “patriarchalist, misogynistic, domatory, materialistic, competitive, and violent” (Carver, 1996, pp. 676-677). Thus, within this historical framework of thinking, these types of characteristics have been paired with and have influenced societal ideas of what men should embody. To be a ‘man’ entails identifying (at least to a large extent) with these characteristics. Carver (1996) however, does state that the idea of “man” as articulated by feminist theorists within a textual and political framework has remained abstract and not tangible. What it entails to be a man

remains somewhat opaque, even though certain characteristics are deemed as desirable in the embodiment of manhood (Carver, 1996). It is argued that across many different societies men have attempted to embody these characteristics associated with gender power, and in many ways, have tried to incorporate them into their identities. The kind of dominance associated with hegemonic masculinity in its various forms has largely maintained men's power and women's subservience despite substantial changes to gender constructions and relations. The idea that particular type of men are necessarily superior to women has been profoundly questioned by the feminist movement, more recently influenced by postmodern thinking. However, Carver (1996) suggests that hegemonic masculinity, or dominant forms of masculinity, perhaps remain as "archetypal by traditional modes of discourse" (p. 678). These understandings of masculinity appear to remain ideals, rather than representing what may actually be present in reality. However, even as ideals for masculinity, hegemonic representations may still operate as a powerful influence in relation to everyday behaviour and expressions and evaluations of those expected to embody masculinity. What becomes important to understand is that in relation to masculinity, "men are not born, but made, and made with ['differences']" (Carver, 1996, p. 678). These "differences" that may operate both in conformity with and counter to or in spite of the presence of dominant discourses are important to understand, if one seeks to understand the spectrum of expression that masculinity may encompass.

Hegemonic masculinity or maleness has conventionally been understood in terms of its association with heterosexuality, being white, capitalist, and middle-class. It was this ideal or mental representation of what masculinity truly entailed that has been increasingly challenged. Feminists not only criticised the social formations that allowed for the dominance of masculinity (and particularly of specific forms of masculinity) and the suppression of women, but also highlighted the role of social scientific, including psychological, theories that they felt contributed to enforcing and maintaining these opinions. For example, some feminist scholars offered a gender sensitive critique of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. Feminists viewed this model as being associated with and over-generalized from "white, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class masculinity", and argued that such models contributed to perpetuating the prevailing ideas about gender identity and idealised maleness, anything falling outside of this characterisation being considered aberrant and, for boys, un-masculine (Phillips, 2006, p. 403). (It is not intended to single out Erikson's model, but it must be remembered that he wrote at a time when psychology was dominated by white male theorists, and his theorisation offers a good example of the kind of masculine culture operating at that time and its uncritical acceptance). Ironically, the majority of men did not and do not fall into this hegemonic 'camp'. However, taking into account the intangible

nature of the archetypal man, Carver (1996) states that other forms of male-ness, such as those that deviate from heterosexuality and competitiveness, are not often thought of or noticed, especially within the political arena, because if this were to happen, it would destroy “the presumed inevitability in male development on which a supposed universal masculinity relies” (p. 681).

Current research has shown that not all boys subscribe to and identify with hegemonic masculinity, in part because masculinity has a variety of connotations and meanings (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The attainment of a clear or well defined gendered identity may not always be possible (Pattman, Frosh & Phoenix, 1998). Hegemonic masculinity has remained an idealised characterisation that only a few men hope to achieve or come to embody (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). It is apparent that the historical understanding of a single, universal, trans-historical type of hegemonic masculinity has shifted. Currently many gender theorists understand masculinity as not confined to a single, specific typology, but rather observe that there are multiple masculinities that operate in any society (Young, 2000).

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Masculinity

Given the brief sociopolitical history of conceptualisation of masculinity outlined above, it is important to attempt to articulate some of the ways in which masculinity has been understood within the social sciences in greater depth. An acknowledgement of some of the paradigms that have informed the understanding of masculinity and how men come to identify with and embody masculinity, is in order.

Modern theories (as opposed to *postmodern* theories), suggest that masculinity, or the understanding of what it entails to be a man, is a predetermined aspect of a person that is biologically determined. Biologically being born what is categorised as male determines masculinity. It is suggested that “maleness” and accompanying attributes will develop and evolve due to biologically predetermined templates. Newer versions of gender theory located within the modernist paradigm, such as “gender role strain theory” and “self-in-relation theory”, still view masculinity as resulting from innate attributes, and view biology as the starting point for the development of gendered characteristics. More importantly, more recent theories also emphasise social perspectives that draw from biology, for example ideas of socialisation that are still predicated on innate propensities. However, the appreciation of the role of socialization in gender development does allow for greater entertainment of the role of ‘nurture’ in gender development, Pleck (1995, as cited in Phillips, 2006, p. 407) suggests

that “gender roles and stereotypes have predominant themes”, which position males to act and behave in certain, (pre)determined ways. These ways of being are imposed onto boys as they develop and grow, which results in boys acting and behaving “as boys should”, and in culturally determined ways. An ideology of masculinity is created through the agglomeration of gender roles and stereotypes. Interestingly, some boys may ‘violate’ these ideologies, by behaving in ways that are thought to be less masculine. Because this is threatening both to self-image and masculine norms, boys who feel that they do not fit what is expected in some respects may overcompensate or conform more heavily to masculine behaviours and masculine identity markers in other respects. Violators may also include boys who do not or cannot overcompensate, such as boys who struggle to perform well in sports, boys who make homosexual identifications, and men who may not be able to find employment and provide for their families. Boys or men who fall into these categories may struggle socially, and experience psychological disturbances such as low self-esteem or depression (Phillips, 2006, p. 407), because they fall outside of what is seen as the ‘normal’ or desired range of male ways of being.

Self-in-relation theory as explained and elaborated by Bergman (1995), (based on the “Stone Center self-in-relation theory”) describes how “men and women have a primary desire for connection with others” (Phillips, 2006, p. 410). This innate desire for connection or intimacy is apparent at birth and in early development, and is experienced and fulfilled for young boys largely through contact with their mothers (or primary care-givers). Although some theorists (such as Erikson) state that ‘disconnection’ from the mother is a necessary occurrence, Bergman describes this process as a “violation” for boys, and argues that by “turning away from the process of connection, boys and men are taught to become agents of disconnection” (p. 411). This is reminiscent of work conducted by Nancy Chodorow (1991). Culture then reinforces this disconnection, which results in the assumption that disconnection is a ‘normal’ male attribute. The associated view is then that men should in essence be interpersonally hardened and should not connect meaningfully with other people. Courtenay (2002) suggest that research shows how men and adolescent boys experience greater pressure from society to conform to gender role expectations and are heavily pressurised by societal beliefs that men are *supposed* to embody specific characteristics. In this case it is suggested that these “health-related beliefs”, such as a type of resilience and toughness. Courtenay (2000) reiterates the idea that men are expected to be strong, self-reliant, independent and tough.

Postmodern literature, on the other hand, takes issue with the assumption of “an innately predetermined individual” (Phillips, 2006, p. 413), and views individuals rather as “dynamic

social creations” (Phillips, 2006, p. 414), positioned in relation to societal norms and influences. Language enables these positions to be mobilised, and gives meaning to the concepts ‘man’ and ‘woman’. It is in this way that social discourses are created. Postmodernity is critical of the “assumption that biology is stable and real” (Phillips, 2006, p. 415), as understandings such as these create the image, for example, of a man as associated with being able to produce children, (because this is what men are biologically supposed to do) which reinforces the “normalcy” of heterosexuality. A further image is created, one of the ideal male as a virile being, aggressively protecting his family, simultaneously suggesting that men who fall outside of this picture, or who position themselves outside of this idea (such as homosexual men, individuals who are impotent, or those who cannot physically perform sexual acts) are not normal, not male enough, and ultimately less masculine. Feminism suggests that because of these ways of thinking about masculinity, “identity has been produced as naturally connected to sex” (Phillips, 2006, p. 416), and as Butler notes, “normative heterosexuality fortifies normative gender” (cited in Phillips, 2006, p. 416). Butler suggests the idea of “gender performativity”, understood as “a repetition of acts within a rigid regulatory frame, [and] culturally sustained over time” (cited in Phillips, 2006, pp. 417-418). These acts, repeated by people of a particular gender (in this instance men) become ingrained and central to the meaning and expression of the specific gender. In terms of masculinity, repetitive ‘performances’ or acts, such as demonstrating “athleticism, toughness, domination, bullying, heterosexuality, and violence” are understood socially as normal masculine behaviours (Phillips, 2006, p. 418). Starting at birth, an individual’s “[body is] constituted within discourses that constitute” (Phillips, 2006, p. 418) aspects of identity such as gender. It is largely from this postmodern, social discourse understanding of masculine development that masculinity will be explored in the present study.

An important theory or construct in understanding how and why boys hold and live out various masculinities is that of “positioning” (Davies & Harré, 1990, as cited Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman, 2003). Language is often exercised in social situations to determine how it is acceptable to act, as well as to determine what will not be viewed as acceptable. It has been observed that multiple masculinities can be held and expressed by a single individual depending on the social context and who holds power within these contexts. This implies that boys will note the ways in which language as a form of communication is used to regulate behaviour in any given situation, because language is “central to the setting up of expectations about how others and ourselves should behave” (Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman,

2003, p. 180). Language (including non-verbal dimensions of communication) has meaning, and this meaning will be interpreted by human beings, and in this case by adolescent boys who are the focus of this study, to infer how they feel they should act. To investigate aspects of positioning and the possible multiplicity of identity, Phoenix et al., (2003) conducted a study with boys aged 11 to 14 years in London. The data collected suggests that boys are able to hold and identify with multiple types of masculinity, depending on the context. The boys showed a “softer” side of themselves during individual interviews, where they “criticized other boys for being uncommunicative, thick-skinned, aggressive and uncaring” (Phoenix et al., 2003, p. 185). These attitudes are in stark contrast to the masculine identity that the boys portrayed when in focus groups with other boys, where hiding emotions and lack of expressiveness was favoured, lest they find themselves labeled as “gay”. Being the target of this type of label would position them in accordance with female attributes and with negative attributes associated with homosexuality. It has already been noted that, historically, positioning oneself against the heterosexual grain creates ideas of being less masculine. Although there may be variations of masculinity, there may also be “distinct masculinities” that are idealised in specific contexts. In this case, it appeared that aggressive tendencies and an unemotional, detached style of being were highly valued in the more public expressions and portrayals of masculinity (Pattman, Frosh, & Phoenix, 1998, p. 128). What this study demonstrated is that the boys positioned themselves and showed various sides of their masculinity, depending on who their audience was, and on who they were positioning themselves in relation to (interviewer versus other boys around them). The boys were able to “police” themselves and their behaviours within the group settings in order to maintain a favourable masculinity that ensured they were not ridiculed and targeted by other boys. They therefore “gain respect” in relation to “hierarchies based on toughness, threat of (or actual) violence, casualness about schoolwork, ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ and a concomitant homophobia” (Phoenix et al., 2003, pp. 180-181).

Young (2000) describes a theory of masculinity similar to those related to the use of language in the construction of gender. Young argues that it is through language in texts that the discourse of masculinity has been created and entrenched. It is suggested that through texts, as well as through media’s representations of men, “gender stereotypes” are created and then maintained. In a study conducted by Young, using four male children, aged from 10 years to 13 years, the school children were able to pick out stereotypes concerning gender and to identify them as such, but interestingly, they tended to agree with or personally subscribe to or identify with these stereotypes. Specific stereotypes are thus maintained through exposure to imagery and texts that children are exposed to in the course of their

everyday lives (Young, 2002, p. 317). What seems to be created then is a population of children, who, through engagement with public discourse/s, are able to assign categories and attributes to each gender, and thus in a sense through identifying gender 'types' contribute to creating and perpetuating characterisations that each gender is supposed to embody and employ. Thus Young appears to be arguing that there is a kind of iterative process, exposure to stereotypes contributing to entertainment of and subscription to these stereotypes. Once the stereotypes become in a sense internalized then they present as evidence of the 'inherent' nature of gender characteristics. Interestingly, Young was able to demonstrate that despite subscription to masculine stereotypes the boys in the study he conducted were able to understand that "masculinity" may not be the same for every individual, and that there might be different forms of masculinity operating, depending on the individual, as well as the society and culture within individuals might find themselves. Again there is some evidence of an almost contradictory concomitant entertainment of a common fixed typology of masculinity (stereotypes) together with some awareness of contextual dependence and malleability in gender expression.

Following the idea of positioning, research shows that gender tends to be organised by individuals according to "otherness". As Johnston explains, "opposed identities... are not only constructed in relation to each other, they always carry... some version of the Other" (cited in Pattman, Frosh & Phoenix, 1998, p. 126). This relates to what was previously mentioned regarding masculinity and how it is positioned against and in relation to femininity. The difference between self and the other, against which, in this case, boys, position themselves, is what creates their masculine identity. In general, other is considered femaleness or femininity but may sometimes pertain to other boys or forms of masculinity. Masculinity is defined in large measure through contradistinction from femininity.

Studies of gender identity acquisition have suggested that as an individual grows up, they 'learn' and incorporate various ways of being, acting and behaving. "Gender role socialization" is a way of capturing an understanding that gender is socially constructed. "Gender socialization theory" suggests that as boys grow up, they are taught to be "less emotional than girls because parents, teachers, and peers respond negatively to displays of emotion by boys and men" (cited in Jakupcak, Salters, Gratz, & Roemer, 2003, p. 111), labeling such displays as inappropriately feminine. Markers of hegemonic masculinity, such as displays of aggression, stoicism and willingness to enact violent behaviour in situations of contestation, are thus learned by boys to be important aspects of their gender. Those who then fail to subscribe to such stereotypes and directives may then be positioned as more of a "girl", a devalued kind of positioning relative to more typically masculine

identified boys. Based on their study of 174 males aged between 18 and 70 years (with a mean age of 25 years), Jakupcak et al. (2003) further observe that boys may be conditioned firstly by “rules” that they are supposed to adhere to, and then, secondly, via the evident anxiety demonstrated by significant adults if they move out of the typical gendered aspects of being a boy or man. Thus socialisation may take place at both quite overt and quite subtle levels.

Present understandings of masculinity (for example Pattman, Frosh & Phoenix, 1998) suggest that boys do not necessarily ever attain masculinity, but rather they are always attempting to attain it, whilst constantly constructing and reconstructing views of themselves in relation to others and their self observations.

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept that is currently evolving and undergoing elaboration. Research shows that there may not be one standard type of masculinity, but rather many types of masculinities which are operating, and which are “subject to change” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 835). According to Mac anGhaill and Haywood (2010), the term masculinity has become a “catch all” phrase to refer to all male behaviour (2010, p. 2). Bearing this in mind, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that research shows that there is a continuum on which masculinity operates (Mac anGhaill & Haywood, 2010). This implies that adolescent boys will not necessarily experience their masculine identities in the same way, and may not share the same views as to what constitutes masculinity, but rather, masculine identity will vary according to who is experiencing and expressing it. What constitutes accepted masculinity is also historically and culturally contingent. It is, however, important to note that there may be a type or types of masculinity that is/are more valued and more accepted (hegemonic) in a particular society or historical period. Martin and Govender (2011) speak of the “real man”, a construct which is heavily reliant on the contexts in which it is being spoken about.

Further research by Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix (2005) conducted on adolescent boys in the United Kingdom showed that aggression and fighting were important markers of what the boys felt was encompassed by a masculine identity. It is apparent from the data that the boys were active in the construction of their own masculinity. This appears to contradict research that suggests that boys are merely products of social discourse, lacking any agency. It also seems that although social discourse is undeniably influential and cannot be ignored, prevailing discourses do not necessarily wholly dictate the expression of masculinity. Using psychoanalytic theory as well as drawing upon understandings of social discourse, the researchers demonstrate that “boys and young men [are not]...detached subjects” (Pattman et al., 1998, p. 126). This implies that although discourse has influence,

and boys engage with prevailing discourses, they are also active in their own positioning. Showing how social discourse plays a part in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, Phillips (2006) speaks of “popular adolescent boys” and “media stars” who are seen with “beautiful” women. These images highlight and illustrate the positioning of these kinds of men (often idealised by the general public) in relation to women, representing heterosexuality as desirable and “women as objects and resources” (Phillips, 2006, p. 416) that may serve as aids in the presentation of oneself as embodying an aspirational masculinity. Thus, in relation to these images that become a type of discourse, boys who fail to live up to these depictions may be viewed as “being weak”, lacking and somehow less masculine. This exemplifies how heterosexuality is viewed as an imperative aspect of masculine identity. It also highlights how boys may position themselves in relation to girls or women, and the importance that is placed on this in terms of masculine status. Importantly, the media “attaches... degrees of social confidence, mastery and masculine prowess” (Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 223) to masculine identity (in part marked by the status of women that men are able to attract to themselves), reinforcing that these attributes are desirable in terms of masculinity.

Sexual practices and behaviour seem to be integrally related to the way in which men view their masculinity. According to Philaretou and Allen (2001), gender role socialisation suggests not only that men should cultivate attributes such as dominance, independence and aggression, but also that there is an “unrealistically high standard of male sexual performance and satisfaction” which has been attributed to, and is required from men (Philaretou & Allen, 2001, p. 303). They suggest that sexual practice for men can then become an expression of “...power, dominance, and an opportunity for the release of deeply seated aggressive feelings” (2001, p. 304). Research suggests, however, that the potency promoted in portrayals of male sexual activity may lead to many men feeling inadequate and discontented due to the fact that they may not be able to live up to this aggressive virility and “masculine ethos” (2001, p. 304). Essentially, they may not be able to meet the sexual masculine standards that are socially or publically dictated, yet may also feel unable to challenge such portrayals assuming personal inadequacy rather than unrealistic expectations.

Mac an Ghaill (2000) suggests that materials and conversations about sexuality and sexual experiences and understandings are evidenced throughout schools, not only by virtue of coverage in the formal education system (for example, in sex education classes), but by their

presence within the less formal, nuanced areas of school life. It is suggested that sexuality can be found within relationships between teacher-students (not necessarily tied to sexual experiences per se but even in students' ways of relating to and experiencing differently gendered teachers), is evident in relations between students, and is even found within graffiti on desks (Mac an Ghaill, 2000, p. 91). It appears thus that this covert and overt foregrounding of sexuality within schools, where arguably boys spend a considerable part of their time, means that boys are pressured to acknowledge sexuality, and to largely accept the "normative" ideas that male sexual practice is associated with dominance, securing multiple sexual partners and virility. Those who may not be invested in or able to attract the interest of girls or women (for whatever reasons) may experience pressure and possibly be vulnerable to a sense of being left-out of normal ways of being and relating. This then introduces questions regarding the experiences of adolescent boys who are disabled, and who may not be able to engage in courtship and sexual behaviours in the same way as more able bodied boys.

These and other kinds of possible constraints in the formation of a masculine identity are the focus of interest in this research study. Having discussed some of the more general theory relating to the construction of masculine identities and the pressure to conform to commonly entertained images and portrayals, the discussion now moves into a more focused examination of some of the theory and research findings pertaining to young masculinity/ies in South Africa.

2.3 South African Masculinity

Research conducted in South Africa on masculinity has not been as extensive as studies done overseas. What is apparent however is that the understanding of masculinity has historically changes, evidence of which appears throughout international literature. Given the fact that South Africa suffered from political rife and the Apartheid regime, it must be noted that shifts in the political terrain has resulted in shifts in the understanding of masculinity in South Africa. Post-apartheid developments have influenced masculinity and the understanding of this term in South Africa. Thus, post-apartheid developments are naturally different from those during colonization in South Africa.

Walker (2005), in a study conducted with young black South African men *post* 1994 Apartheid, surmised that these men may be facing a change in masculine identity construction, with a possible masculine identity crisis. According to the men in this study, they experienced their masculinity as strained and not stable, especially because they felt that challenges to the legitimisation of women's oppression and the fact that women were moving into political arenas had left them concerned. Interestingly, the men in this study seemed to have felt pulled in two different directions. On the one side they felt the need to engage in hyper-masculine activities, such as belonging to gangs, treating women with disrespect and having multiple sexual partners, and on the other hand, realising the possible consequences of these actions (sexually transmitted diseases, getting into trouble with the law), they portrayed a need to stop engaging in these perceived masculine activities (Walker, 2005). What is suggested in this study is that “the society of Madiba”, has confronted and contested violent masculinities, creating the space for different, non-violent versions of masculinity, which some of these young men are seeking to embrace” (Walker, 2005, p. 231). It is suggested that the men in this study could be seen as attempting to embrace a different form of masculinity, one that seemed to challenge hegemonic notions of violence and aggression, and perhaps create another or different forms of masculinity, including demonstrating a concern over one's future, and “[rejecting the gender order they grew up with.... [with a desire] to be modern men” (Walker, 2005, p. 233).

As previously mentioned, athleticism is an important marker of masculine identity. Engagement in physical activity is encouraged in many schools in South Africa, where boys often have to take part in compulsory sporting activities. The practice of valuing sporting activities resonates with Connell's (1995, p. 51) observations about what he terms “body-reflexive practices” (as cited in Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 221). Sport acts as an activity that “[operationalises] the masculinization of male... bodies as agents and objects of gendered practices” (Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 221). Similarly, Attwell (2002) and Epstein (1998) suggest that South African schools “have produced identities based on... participation in ‘acceptable’ team sports” (as cited in Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007, p. 29). The male body becomes an agent that embodies hegemonic masculinity, as defined by engagement in (particular kinds of) sports. Thus, the social practice of being active and playing sport and using one's body, represents a boy as clearly masculine. Confirming this idea, Martin and Govender (2011) showed that boys tend to view masculinity as defined in terms of physiology and morphology. Their study consisted of grade 10, 11 and 12 boys (ranging from 15 to 19 years old) from a single-sex high school in KwaZulu-Natal. Rugby is emphasised as an important and central aspect in defining the reputation of the school. The boys' physical bodies acted as “symbolic tools” that represent masculinity (p. 220), and

their bodies thus appeared to become the physical manifestation of their masculinity. In South Africa, rugby is not only a sport that is played, but is also likened to a subculture. Given the strong influence that sport has in schools, as well as the fact that it offers a means of creating “togetherness”, it is clear that there is a physical enactment of masculinity that is being produced by sport (and perhaps rugby most particularly), which operates as a type of social standard for adolescent boys. Ratele et al. (2007) (cited in Martin & Govender, 2011) explain that boys who participated in the activity of playing rugby, developed a “jock” identity. This positioned these boys as “attaining a hegemonic status which elicits and demands respect” (Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 222). Attributes associated with “athleticism, dominance, and toughness are key to (re)producing social context and subjectivity that is masculine” (Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 221) for South African boys in school. Given that there is this hegemonic masculinity operating, and that there is a desire to obtain these types of ideals as a boy, including the desire to attain a muscular and strong body type, it becomes apparent that these images are creating powerful ideals to which boys in South Africa are exposed. Consequently, boys who do not or cannot identify with the “jock” hegemony (for whatever reason), and whose bodies do not conform to the ideal muscular morphology, may feel pressure to attain these images. The abovementioned study showed that 87.3% of the sample wanted a body type that was much larger than that which they currently possessed. This is a high percentage showing that the majority of the sample was ultimately unhappy with their bodies, which seems to mirror the idea that a clear masculine identity may never be quite achieved, but is rather something that is always pursued as an ideal. Boys who are not “jocks” not only feel the pressure of not belonging to the hegemony, but may also start to feel inadequate and unworthy in terms of their overall self-concept.

Although not conducted in South Africa, studies undertaken in New Zealand have shown that the participation in rugby at school is extremely important, and rugby has historically established itself as identified with a hegemonic form of masculinity within New Zealand (Park, 2000). Park conducted research aimed at understanding how boys with haemophilia, who could not partake in sporting activities, especially rugby, view themselves and their masculinity. Interestingly, boys (and at times their fathers) became disappointed in themselves and expressed feeling less masculine in relation to those individuals who could and did play rugby. However, although this occurred, the boys appeared to compensate for this by partaking in other sporting activities that were less dangerous to their “disability”, and thus ensured that new strategies were developed to make up for their haemophilia (Park, 2000).

This in itself has important implications, especially if one thinks in terms of physical disabilities. If the attainment of a specific body type, the practice of athleticism, and active involvement in sport is not possible, where does this leave disabled boys in terms of the expression of a masculine identity?

2.4 Masculinity and Disability/ies

Any disability, when viewed and thought about by individuals who do not have a disability, creates anxiety and distress (Watermyer, 2009). Such common reactions may lead individuals who have disabilities to feel that they have to hide and ignore what they are “afflicted” with, in order to ensure that other people do not become distressed. Thus, as French (1993) states, the disabled have “been well schooled in self-censorship and the denial of struggle” (cited in Watermeyer & Swartz, 2008, p. 600). Ultimately, this way of acting and reacting to social processes creates discrimination. This unfortunately leads to the hiding and “disguising” of subjective experiences, and disabled people may simultaneously become less real or more inauthentic in their responses. Watermeyer (2009) speaks about individuals who are not disabled “knowing” that the problem of those with disabilities lies in the image of the “body”. This leads to the construction of persons with disabilities as sad people who cannot use their bodies, and who ultimately experience loss and psychological “damage”. What some disabled people may then experience is the pressure of trying to prove that they are not disabled or affected in this way, so as to turn these kinds of stereotypes around. This inauthentic presentation that disabled persons may employ in response to the anticipation and receipt of able-bodied people’s perceptions, may create an incorrect representation of what a disabled person’s reality is normally like.

This understanding of the possible psychological consequence of living with a disability becomes particularly important in thinking about positioning and “othering” in the establishment of masculine identities. Disabled boys may create an incorrect and misinterpreted self-identity in an effort to avoid stereotyping and pity. This misrepresentation may lead them to not be able to realistically position themselves in relation to non-disabled boys. Also, if one takes into account that non-disabled boys may view disability as a problem, they may then create a type of being and way of acting that is projected onto boys

with disabilities. What may then occur are two sets of responses, the disabled boys' inauthentic view of self being produced as a reaction to able-bodied boys' perceptions of them, and able-bodied boys' perceptions of disabled-bodied boys being developed in part as a consequence of this kind of inauthentic self. Each party projects their own anxieties onto the other. This implies that what could follow is a warped perception of the "other", due to the misrepresentations and duality of positions that seems to occur.

This way of thinking seems to be reiterated in a paper by Kudlick (2003), where it is stated that thinking about disability is inevitably always related to positioning the disabled individual against those who are viewed in society as "normal". It is suggested here that public discourse emphasises the normality of being a non-disabled individual, and that the media valorises being able to make use of one's body, a youthful appearance and "bodily perfection" (p. 768). Not only through media representations are disabilities portrayed as a deviation from "normal". Kudlick (2003) suggests that everyday language creates a powerful discourse that positions people with disabilities as weaker, less capable of doing certain things, and almost as less human. Words and phrases such as "crippled/paralyzed... lame/idiotic/dumb" (p. 768) only serve to emphasise disabilities in a society that values the normalcy of a working body. Taking into account the above and aligning this with some of the previous discussion concerning masculine identity construction, what is created is not only a picture of adolescent boys who are viewed as imperfect, but added to this is the likely pressure of not feeling "man-enough" and of the need to compensate in various ways for one's disability. It seems that these boys are likely to experience a 'catch 22' situation, in that despite their best efforts, the powerful influence of society is unlikely to allow for recognised deviation or compensation, given that society "consciously or subconsciously equates *dis*-ability with *in*-ability" (Kudlick, 2003, p. 769).

It becomes apparent that social discourse plays an important part in determining what the prevailing norm or template for masculine identity is at any given time, and within specific cultural and societal contexts. However, some attributes, such as those raised in the discussion, including bodily strength, physical prowess and physical capability, are almost universally associated with masculinity. There is research evidence suggesting they are important amongst young South African men (Martin & Govender, 2011). Participating in sport and the attainment of a muscular body type seem to be markers of masculinity in South Africa, but realistically, some (if not the majority) of disabled boys may not be able to position themselves acceptably according to these attributes. In what position, and in relation

to what type/s of masculinity, does this leave disabled boys? Positioning theory and the idea that identity is constructed in part in relation to the “other” may offer some way of understanding how masculine identity becomes shaped within discourse and practice and in turn influences identity formation and expression. Disability and masculine identity seem to each consist of their own separate sets of meanings, in large measure incorporating contrasting kinds of representations. However, precisely because of some of the apparent contradictions in embracing a disabled identity simultaneous with a masculine identity, this study should be particularly interesting. It promises to shed light on some of the boundaries of masculine identifications and on how engagement with hegemony from a position of disadvantage may possibly highlight alternative positioning, resistance and strategic engagement with dominant discourses and expressions of masculinity.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Theoretical Orientation

Given that the broad aim of the study was to understand the subjective experiences of masculinity and masculine identity as described by a group of disabled adolescent boys it was deemed appropriate to adopt a qualitative approach. As stated aptly by Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner (1995), qualitative research allows the researcher to “learn about how and why people behave, think, and make meaning” (p. 880). Given that the aim of the research was an enquiry into a relatively new area within masculinity studies, the qualitative approach which allows for the “context of discovery” and for “new information to be brought into the fore (Ambert et al, 1995, p. 880) appeared useful. Qualitative research also allows for smaller samples to be used, while still attempting to obtain “in-depth and intimate information” (Ambert et al., 1995, p. 880). Bearing in mind that each individual comes with their own “story” that “is the reality of each [individual] - unique, personal, subjective” (Prochaska& Norcross, 2007, p. 461), it seemed important to attempt to understand how the boys felt about and perceived masculinity from their own individual perspective.

Making use of semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews allowed for “a more natural form of interacting” (Terre Blanche, Durrheim& Painter, 2006, p. 297) thus creating the possibility of a more authentic interaction. The researcher was mindful, however, of the dynamics between researcher and participant that were operating, which may have put some strain on the interactions. Semi-structured face to face interviews were chosen as a means of collecting the data because of the fact that an interaction of this nature can create meanings that cannot be thought of in isolation, but rather that such interviews create meanings that are both a product of the relationship between two people, as well being indicative “of a larger social system for which these individuals act as relays” (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 297).

The analysis attempted to potentially highlight both the personal nature of masculine identity and the way in which this is referenced to dominant gender ideologies and/or discourses.

The method of analysis employed was “critical thematic analysis”, which enjoys “theoretical freedom” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5), thus proving to be a “flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed... account of data” (p. 5). This way of analysing and understanding the data makes use of descriptive exploratory methods, sometimes also employing interpretive methods to understand the data in richer detail. The importance of exploratory and interpretive methods lies in the fact that a phenomenon that may not be known or well researched is “examined and investigated on its own terms in this kind of open-minded manner” (Edwards, 1998, p. 45). By approaching the data in this way, a type of “experience-near” understanding can be generated, thus allowing the aims of the

research (the subjective experiences of disabled adolescent boys) to be better known. It must be noted however that typically interpretive methods call for exploration of “phenomena as they occur in the real world” (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 287). In this instance the verbalizations and demeanor of the boys during the interviews was understood to constitute behaviour in the ‘real world’, however, it is recognized that interviews represent a somewhat artificial way of interacting.

3.2 Aim of the Research

The aim of the research was to critically examine how adolescent boys with disabilities experience and understand their masculine identity, and how they position themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinities in South Africa. This study was influenced by other studies into young masculinities in the United Kingdom conducted by Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix, involving adolescent boys and their experiences of masculinity (1998, 2003, 2005), as well as by similar South African studies described by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) and Davies and Eagle (2007).

Within this focus, the researcher was interested in understanding several aspects related to the umbrella term masculinity. This included:

- How physically disabled adolescent boys understand what constitutes masculinity
- How these boys experience their own masculinity, and the ways in which they articulate and locate their masculine identity
- How these boys view themselves in relation to other adolescent boys
- How these boys construct and negotiate their relationship to hegemonic forms of masculinity
- Whether these boys employ specific strategies to manage gendered aspects of their identity.

These enquiries were viewed as important in considering the experiences of boys who may not easily be able to relate to or express hegemonic forms of masculinity, due to their disabilities. The research thus aimed to expand the knowledge base concerning young masculinities by exploring the experiences of a specific sub-population of South African adolescent boys.

3.3 Research Questions

The following questions were the focus of the study:

- 1. How do adolescent boys with physical disabilities understand and experience their masculinity?*
- 2. How do they position themselves relative to “able-bodied” boys and relative to hegemonic forms or expressions of masculinity?*
- 3. What kind of strategies do these boys appear to adopt to manage gendered aspects of their identity?*

3.4 Data Collection

Participants

Given the nature of the research, and the intention to specifically interview boys who had physical disabilities, purposive sampling was used. Research participants were those willing to volunteer to take part in the research, and “cases that [were] typical of the population [were] selected” (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 139). In terms of gaining access to participants, this was done through a school that caters specifically for individuals who have physical disabilities. The school is a government facility, thus permission from the Department of Education was first sought in order to conduct the research, and following this, permission for the principal of the school. Thirdly, permission from the participant’s care-givers was obtained and finally the boys themselves were approached to volunteer and to give their assent to take part (see more extended discussion below).

For the purpose of this research, participants needed to be adolescent boys between the ages of 14 to 17 years. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) state that “experience has shown that six to eight data sources... will often suffice for a homogenous sample” (p. 289) (in this case, homogeneity was in respect of being a disabled adolescent boy). The number of participants sought initially thus was 6 to 8 individuals. However, ultimately it proved more difficult to set up the interviews than originally anticipated and 6 boys were interviewed in total. Individual interviews were conducted with each individual. Although it was suggested that possible follow up interviews may have been needed, after the initial interviews were transcribed and analysed, the researcher decided that enough data had been generated, and second interviews were not necessary. It was also felt that it would have been difficult to

arrange these further interviews given some of the constraints in accessing the boys through their school and finding a suitable time to conduct the interviews.

In terms of disability as an inclusion criterion, the idea was to interview participants who had disabilities that restricted their physical mobility, in keeping with the definition of a disability as “[referring] to a necessarily limited, restricted state in which the subject cannot independently undertake specific tasks or actions” (Koch, 2001, p. 372). No attempt was made to select in terms of race or class, but since the boys were all attending a state run rather than a private school, the researcher thought it would be likely that they would not be upper-middle class boys, as indeed proved to be the case. A further selection criterion was that the participants were reasonably fluent in English and were comfortable to be interviewed in English.

Procedure

The sample was obtained from a public school in Johannesburg catering for a variety of physically disabled students. After the necessary permission was obtained from the Department of Education and the principal of the school, students fulfilling the necessary criteria (age and physical disabilities) were asked to gather in the school hall, and the researcher approached the students, explaining what the research would entail, what would be asked of them and answering any questions that they had. Forms detailing what the research entailed and permission slips were given to each boy for the perusal of the care-givers and the students. Students who wished to participate in the research were asked to return the signed forms to a representative at the school, and the researcher then obtained contact information from the school of the respective participants. The care-givers were contacted shortly after, to ensure that they were still willing to give their consent, and the participants were then briefly spoken to, and meeting times were arranged according to the mutual availability of the participants and the researcher.

Thereafter individual interviews were conducted with each participant on the school premises. Interviewing, according to Terre Blanche et al., (2006) “gives us an opportunity to get to know people quite intimately” (p. 29), whilst allowing “particular linguistic patterns” (p. 297) to emerge. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for richer data to be focused on, as well as allowing the researcher to pick up on nuances that may otherwise have been missed. Attempts were made to create a relaxed environment, where the boys did not feel pressure to act and speak in specific ways as they might have done if other individuals were around. All interviews, as stated, were semi-structured and open-ended in

nature and took place at the school, after the school day had ended, in a quiet room. It must be noted that because the interviews were conducted at the school, all pathways to get to the room were wheel-chair and disability friendly. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio-recorder.

The meetings were each approximately of 30 minutes duration. Although the researcher would have liked to extend the interviews somewhat longer, it appeared that the boys became fairly easily tired and that enough data was generated in this time space. It must also be noted that 30 minutes appeared to be about the maximum time length that the boys were able to maintain concentration for and to remain engaged in the interviews..

Provided below is the interview schedule containing the questions that the researcher held in mind when interviewing the participants. The questions in the schedule were designed to stimulate conversation. It must be noted that the researcher more often than not used the questions, as it appeared as if the participants needed quite a bit of stimulation in thinking about the topic of masculinity.

Interview Schedule:

1. What is your understanding of masculinity?
2. How would you define masculinity?
3. Thinking about masculinity, are there any famous, recognisable males that you would describe as being especially masculine? What makes them especially masculine to you?
4. Do you feel there are specific types of masculinity that boys or young men tend to follow or aspire to? (Provide examples)
5. What makes someone especially masculine or most recognised by others as masculine?
6. What do you think happens to boys who do not follow this kind of masculinity (either out of choice or because they cannot)?
7. How would you describe your masculinity?
8. Do you feel that having a physical has led you to create your own way of being masculine?
9. Do you ever find yourself somehow comparing yourself to boys who are not physically disabled, and what is this like for you?
10. Do you ever find yourself comparing yourself to other boys at your school?
11. Tell me a bit about your relationships with girls.

12. Tell me a bit about your ideas and experiences related to boyfriends or girlfriends.
13. What is your picture of yourself and your life in the future?

3.5 Data Generation and Analysis

Recording

A digital audio-recorder was used to record the sessions. Following the sessions the researcher stored the audio-file on computer, which contained a password-protect function so as to protect confidentiality. This is the only place that the audio-file was stored, and once transferred to the computer, it was deleted off the recorder.

Steps in the Analysis

Transcriptions of the sessions were typed out for further analysis. Given the qualitative nature of the study, the data was analysed using critical thematic analysis, which, according to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 6), is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. The importance of thematic analysis is described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 5) in the following way: “Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed... account of data”. Themes of a similar nature were grouped together so as to understand and interpret commonalities that were present in the data. Stages involved in the thematic analysis were as follows, and were undertaken according to the steps identified by Attride-Stirling (2001, pp. 390- 394)

1. Coding of the transcribed data, by using a developed framework of coding, or by breaking the text up using a framework.
The data was coded using coloured tabs that grouped together information that seemed related. For example, all references made to body-image were tabbed using a specific colour.
2. The identification of themes by selecting abstract themes and the refining of themes.
After tabbing was completed, broad themes were already identified. The broad themes were then split into more refined themes.
3. The construction of the networks by arranging themes, selecting the basic themes, rearranging into organising themes, determining the global themes, illustration of the

network, and rechecking to make sure that the themes correspond to the transcription.

Themes were analysed in order to construct networks that linked together broader themes, as well as linking the refined themes.

4. Describing and exploring the networks.
5. Summarising the networks.
6. Interpretation of the patterns that emerged.

The three last steps above describe how the researcher started analysing the themes and patterns that emerged, concentrating on themes major themes that emerged, and grouping sub-themes under the necessary headings.

Much of the interview data was also read by the researcher's supervisor who endorsed the themes identified and also made some suggestions about further observations. These were incorporated into the analysis and discussion.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Consent:

Due to the participants being under the age of 18 years, parental consent to participate in the research was required. Informed consent forms were used to solicit permission from the care-givers. It was also imperative to attain assent from the participants, confirming that they were willing to volunteer to participate in the research. Furthermore, permission to conduct the research was needed from the Department of Education, as well as from the principal of the school. Care-giver consent, as well as participant's specific assent to audio-recording of the interviews was also required.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

All care was taken to ensure that information that was disclosed to the researcher was kept confidential. Care was taken to ensure that records of the data were/are kept in a safe place, for the required period of time. When using information provided by individuals, names were changed so as to retain confidentiality, and no personal information was used that could

possibly identify the individuals. If outside parties, such as parents or the school requested that information be disclosed to them, the need for confidentiality was reiterated, however, the parties were informed that they were welcome to a summary of the report once completed. It was explained that confidentiality may be breached under special circumstances, including disclosure of the following: harm to self; harm to others; suspicions of abuse to others, or abuse of the participant by others. It was made clear that should any of these features be in evidence in the interviews then this would be discussed with the interviewees and the necessary parties would then be notified. There was no need in any instance to break confidentiality on this basis. It was made apparent that the researcher's supervisor would have access to the raw data.

Psychopathology:

Although this was not anticipated, if it became apparent that mental health difficulties appeared to be present, it was decided that the researcher would then notify his supervisor, to ensure that the proper course of action was taken. It may have been necessary to refer individuals to professionals or services, in consultation with the boys and those responsible for their welfare, should the researcher have felt that this was required. Again, however, based on the actual interviews this did not appear necessary.

Other:

It was ensured that participants understood that they were partaking in the research on a voluntary basis, and that they felt in no way coerced into participating. Participants were also reminded that they could withdraw from the study at anytime, should they wish to do so, without any adverse consequences. Participants were informed that they would not receive any compensation for being a volunteer. (See documentation related to ethical permissions in the Appendix)

One of the somewhat difficult ethical tensions to manage was that in conducting the research at all the researcher was aware of the fact that he might be perpetuating certain stereotypes about disability. The fact that the boys were selected on this basis meant that they had some sense of being singled out for study. As far as possible the researcher sought to convey to the boys that he was interested in how they managed their day-to-day lives and created a gendered identity as young men. He took their concerns and the ideas they volunteered very seriously. While it was evident that there were areas of discomfort for the boys in thinking

through their masculinity and how they were embodied (as will become apparent in the next chapter), it was also noted that most of the boys seemed to find it useful to talk through some of the tensions of their lives and to identify coping mechanisms and future aspirations.

3.7 Considerations on Methodological Rigor

Although with a qualitative study, ensuring reliability and validity may be more difficult than in a quantitative study, it is nonetheless an important consideration. The collected data was transcribed and analysed according to recognised steps in thematic analysis. As indicated above the supervisor of the project also looked at three of the interviews independently and ideas and notes about themes were discussed. Difference in observations were debated. As far as possible, direct quotations were employed to substantiate analyses. The researcher also tried to remain aware of ways in which his contributions may have influenced the data collections and analysis and to comment on this where appropriate. It is hoped that the coherence of the themes will also become evident in the write-up of the material.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

This chapter introduces the findings arising out of the interviews, focusing on specific and evident themes that emerged across all of the interviews. Sub-themes that are derived from some rather than all of the interviews but that are nonetheless important to consider, are also presented. Both descriptive material and deeper analysis and interpretation of the themes are discussed in this chapter. The researcher's meta-observations on the interview process and on the interview data will conclude the chapter, including a focus on latent themes that emerged from the data. It must be noted that some of the theme content may overlap, however, the themes were identified in terms of what arose from the data and what appeared to make sense in terms of sorting observations into coherent categories.

In order to have some sense of the participant group on which the findings are based. The table below provides some of the biographical details of the research participants, including the nature of each participant's disability. This may assist the reader in conceptualising and gaining a deeper understanding of the disabilities they presented with, and may also assist in conceptualising the subjective experiences that the participant's may have in respect of their disabilities. It will be shown in the analysis of the themes that the participants' disabilities seem to influence their understandings of and identification with masculinity.

Three of the participants were aged 15 and two of the participants were aged 14. One was in Grade 8, three of the participants were in Grade 9, and one of the participants was in Grade 7. For reasons of confidentiality, the researcher thought it better to not name each participant's disability, but rather to mention that all of the participants were inflicted with disabilities that affected their mobility.

Looking at this biographical information, it becomes apparent that the nature of each boy's disability is that it predominately affects the lower limbs (specifically mobility and strength in the legs, including weakened muscles, and making fluid movement difficult). Where Cerebral Palsy (CP) is indicated, it must be noted that the type of CP that each boy has does not affect their mental and intellectual capabilities, but rather affects their mobility, as well as the speed at which they are able to communicate (the CP makes it harder for them to speak fluently, and it appeared to take some time for the boys with CP to articulate the words they wanted to express).

Although discussed further in the section on "Limitations of the Study", at the outset of the discussion it should be noted that some of the boys appeared to struggle with articulating

their understandings of the term “masculinity”. The data also suggests that despite having volunteered to take part in the study, some of the boys seemed reluctant to divulge and express their opinions and views when asked. Although their opinions were solicited in a number of different ways so as to attempt to gain an understanding of their life experience with regard to their masculine identities it was nevertheless evident that some of the boys were quite inhibited or stilted in their responses.

The major themes that emerged from the data, apparent across each of the interviews, are discussed below.

4.1.1 Central Findings

4.1.1.1 Body Image and Physicality

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, given the boys’ disabilities, one of the dominant markers of masculinity that emerged in their talk was the possession of a strong, fit and muscular body. Not only body appearance, but also body stamina was emphasised. In addition, and perhaps more specifically for these physically inhibited boys, agility and the ability to move fast and well were also viewed as indicative of an admired masculine identity. Aspects of this theme are more thoroughly elaborated below.

4.1.1.2 Fitness and Exercise

The importance of body image to masculinity, including both the physical morphology of the males body, as well as the idea of keeping oneself physically “fit” and healthy was expressed by all the boys. It is apparent that the boys seemed to view a strong, fit and healthy body as imperative to a masculine identity. Types of exercise, such as walking and running, appear to be important, in order for men to stay strong and powerful. As participant C stated when asked about the reasons that men may do exercise, following a comment of his about this:

“To get fitter... strong... power”

As suggested above, body size and morphology, specifically related to muscle mass, appears to be an important marker of masculinity for the boys. With regards to body size and morphology, participant A stated about his brother, who he views as masculine:

“He’s like, nice built, he’s tall, he can do anything”

It was apparent through the interviews, as evidenced in both examples, that there was a perceived link between physicality and potency. Looking at the word “power” and the phrase “he can do anything”, it seems that the fit body is viewed as a useful and perhaps even imperative tool, allowing for a sense of agency and position in society. However, it is not only having power and agency within society that is important. Being fit appears to allow men to keep on pushing themselves to attain increased fitness and to do more taxing exercise, according to the participants. Participant A suggests the following:

“It’s eating, you need to eat good, you need to work out, but you first need to build the fat and then you need to be very strong”

Being “very strong” allows for more weight lifting, which in turn opens men up to becoming more masculine. So, being fit and strong not only allows for a healthy body, but it opens up opportunities for men to embody another aspect of masculinity, exhibition of muscle mass and definition. Thus, a cycle appears to emerge of the building of strength and stamina that in turns leads to a better capacity to continue to do this. However, what is also being suggested is that breaking the cycle will lead to the breakdown of masculinity. Men need to push themselves and to continue with the “masculine” regimen if they are to retain this gender identity. Connell (1995, p. 51) refers to the term “body-reflexive practices” to describe how the body is used as an agent that becomes a symbol for masculinity (as cited in Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 221).

Participant B stated that the purpose of going to the gym was for men to obtain a body size and mass that is bigger than they currently have:

“I think maybe to be more bigger I suppose”

In relation to weight training participant A ventured:

“...You telling yourself that you can pick it up and you will pick it up, and you will pick it up”

Later, the researcher enquired about the following:

“So it sounds like maybe what you are saying is that maybe if you could push yourself...”

His response was the following:

“Then I could have been like them... You need to be aggressive to pick up the weights”

In this quotation it is suggested, in part by the repetition, that determination and mental effort are also important in order to prevent failure and to preserve self esteem both in one's own eyes and perhaps in the eyes of other men. The researcher suggests, however, that perhaps this hegemonic idea of masculinity is never attained, as men will never be big enough, strong enough, or lift enough weights to guarantee success, as men are constantly having to push themselves to achieve new targets in order to better their own and other's existing achievements. This is again reiterated by Participant B is the following:

“Most it's to do with your mental ability. Just ability you know what I am saying. Like, your thinking of your ways and so on and so on”

Participant C stated that boys who do not fall into the masculine ideal are those who do not push themselves, but rather they remain “too lazy”:

Researcher: “...So why do you think some of the [boys] wouldn't want to kind of follow that path?”

Participant C: “I think too lazy... I think they become weak... to keep them going, to keep them going to the fitness”

The idea that mental abilities, or the internal strength to push oneself is mentioned in the following by Participant E:

“...Because I struggle to do certain things, but I don't think that affects my mindset, coz I believe anything is possible”

What is thus being suggested is that firstly as a “man” it is important to push oneself to become strong, fit and healthy, despite certain draw backs, such as having a disability. Secondly, some of the participants suggest that an internal “strength” or mindset is imperative to masculinity. Perhaps with the latter it is a case of assuming an internal strength, which becomes more important than physical strength. Thus, it appears as if compensation for physical disabilities occurs, so that essentially ego strength or internal cues become important to disabled boys, which in turn is a type of masculinity that is operating.

4.1.1.3 Body Mass and Size

The importance of body-image and body size was also evident in the examples of famous people that the boys provided as embodying masculinity. Celebrities such as Arnold Schwarzenegger (mentioned by two participants) due to “*keeping himself all man-like and [keeping] himself very strong*” (participant D), and the fact that “*He’s nice, big*” (participant A); and Christian Renaldo for being “*strong built*” (participant B) were proffered as ideal models of masculinity. These examples suggest that even when thinking about role models that are especially masculine in the eyes of the participants, muscle mass and a large, strong body-type are important markers.

As participant B stated when asked about what characteristics define masculinity:

“... *muscle, gym, body-building, that kind of stuff*”

Thus, what emerges is that the boys view masculinity as being embedded “on” the body (being able to see masculinity visually through the evidence of muscles, a toned body and pushing oneself to make physical effort), as well as thinking about masculinity as being embedded “in” the body (keeping the body itself healthy, lest it suffer another “disability”). Research available seems to corroborate what these boys describe when thinking about muscle mass and body-size as components of masculine identity. Martin and Govender (2011) state that there are masculine ideals that operate within schools, to which adolescent boys aspire. Greater body mass and stronger bodies appear to be desired by most adolescent boys. In their study, Martin and Govender (2011) found that 87.3% of the participants were unhappy with their bodies and desired a larger and stronger body. The findings obtained from this current study, suggest that the participants also do indeed desire a body type that is larger, fitter, stronger and more powerful than their current body, however their aspirations to this were clearly exaggerated by their experiences of physical disability. Martin and Govender’s (2011) research with these adolescent boys suggests that boys view the body as a “symbolic tool” (p. 220) that represents masculinity. It is apparent that the boys in this research felt that they had to manage living with a flawed tool in this respect, although this was often inferred rather than directly stated.

What became apparent during the course of the interviews was that each boy’s disability was linked in quite direct ways to their views on the ideal body. Thus, their views about what type of body practices and body morphology were most masculine were related to what they themselves might not adequately be able to perform or embody. For example, not being able to walk or run as a non-disabled boy would be able to do, became an important marker

regarding masculine activity. Participant E stated the following regarding limitations to his mobility:

“...Well obviously it affects me in a way, um, because I struggle to do certain things”

Participant C stated the following after being asked by the researcher about celebrities that are masculine (Participant C provided the singer “Flo Rider” as an example:

“Exercise, gyming, um, I think walking... He is always running in the mornings”

Participant D mentioned the following:

“... but some of the children, they tease each other, they carry on with each other, they say ja you can’t even walk straight... you can’t even keep your balance to yourself”

Later, when asked about celebrities that are especially masculine to him, Participant E gave the following example:

“Like, this boy, what’s his name, like becomes a soccer manager, he [wants] to become like that because he not actually, he can’t play soccer physically because he got this other thing in his legs... so he can’t actually kick the ball properly”

Given the reality of the adolescent boys’ disabilities, it is possible to have greater understanding about how some degree of idealisation may be operating in their portrayals of a physically fit and able masculinity. When discussing Participant C’s views of masculine celebrities, choosing “Flo Rider” appears to relate in part to the fact that he is able to utilise his legs, thus he further able to exercise and keep healthy through the use of his legs. This reiterates the opinion that some idealisation is occurring. When asked to further elaborate, Participant C stated that Flo Rider is “always running in the mornings”, and later when asked about males who may not fit into the masculine hegemonic mould, again Participant C mentioned that these individuals may not be sticking to a type of fitness regime, resulting in a less masculine ideal to Participant C.

Participant B had similar views regarding an ideal masculinity, stating that:

“Like my brother is of course fit, soccer, gym, he is active so”

Participant B eluded to regarding his brother a role model, which seems to allow for some degree of idealisation, firstly regarding his brother being able to utilise his legs and thus allowing him to participate in certain sports, and secondly the idea that keeping fit and healthy is an important marker to Participant B of masculinity.

Participant A mentioned that keeping one's body healthy is important:

"It's eating, you need to eat good, you need to work out, but first you need to build the fat and you need to be very strong"

Although this quote was used previously to illustrate a different theme, it is cited here again to emphasise how important being healthy is to this participant, which in turn provides further avenues (such as being strong allows for aggression and self-confidence) related to a masculine identity.

The data seems to suggest that ensuring that one is physically healthy, through exercise, is a way for the boys to limit the impact of their disabilities. Although their disabilities have an obvious effect on their daily activities, one way to possibly counteract this impact is to ensure that nothing else may go astray within the body. Another way of thinking about limiting the impact of the disability is to consider that the boys may somehow feel that compensating for their disabilities with a healthy body is important. Thus, they may also view their bodies as symbolic tools, and reframe what might be important or valued as epitomised in the healthy body", using this alternative idea to represent their masculinity. However, the researcher also observed that the hegemonic ideal of a muscular and strong body as an important symbolic tool in the personal and public construction of masculinity remained prominent in their discourse, despite their not necessarily being able to belong to or join with this hegemonic version.

Participant B was the only boy who mentioned the importance of physical attributes other than size or muscularity, and hormonal changes, as important markers of masculinity. Thus, being masculine and being a man is recognised as evident in becoming more man-like in look:

"To be a man, facial hair, muscles, ja, that's a man... deep voice"

When considering the boys' understandings of "power" and potency, what became apparent was the fact that some boys were able to view power as connected to qualities that were not based purely in a person's physiology, i.e. to appreciate that potency might be psychological as well as physical. Power for these participants related to a type of emotional functioning or way of relating to people and to society. This emotional potency appeared to be linked to a

type of emotional maturity and emotional insight, exercised both on behalf of oneself as well as for others.

For example, Participant E had the following to say when asked about what it means to be a young man:

“Yeah it’s being able to do anything that’s possible and being mature and strong... being sensible is making the right decisions, and maybe sometimes getting help from other people”

Later Participant E stated the importance of taking other individual’s emotions into account:

“Yeah well growing up as a person um, being independent yeah, aaa being respectful towards other people yeah”

Participant E not only mentions a type of masculine maturity related to psychological aspects, but also mentions in the following quote that it is important for a man to recognize their limitations and having the insight to ask for help:

“...and whether I will be independent... um, but I have groups of friends that are very supportive so I think they will be willing to help me in a way, um, like um, to be independent by myself”

However, physical strength was generally conveyed to be pivotal to masculinity and was associated not only with adolescent identity but also with projections of manhood into the future. Taking care of future partners and children, as expected of a man, was also viewed as predicated on being physically strong. As participant C mentioned when asked about why it is important to be “strong” as he had suggested:

“To encourage their wives and children”

This example, upon first glance, seems to specifically describe being able to provide support for the hypothetical family that Participant C imagines having, however what became apparent is that having a strong and fit looking body seems to boost and encourage self-esteem and motivation, allowing for a sense of agency in the world, and in this particular example, agency within the family unit. This agency seems to position the hypothetical man as having a valued and recognised status within a hierarchical structure, being the “head” of the family unit and taking responsibility for wives and children. Participant D stated having

agency within the family unit is important, and to him it appears as if providing support and encouragement is imperative:

“Always caring for my children... Whenever they need me I will be there”

Although he mentions support, he also eludes to having money which allows for status and power, whilst having insight into the implications of having money:

“Do not pretend like your richness cannot be taken away from you at any moment”

Having money as well as supporting the family, both emotionally and materialistically are masculine markers for Participant D.

When asked about what it means to be a man, Participant C stated the following:

“For men to encourage their wives and children... For children they must encourage them with education... And for wives... I think for designing, like a fashion model”

Interestingly, two ideas are presented here. Firstly, it is imperative for men to take an active role in the family, where they offer support to their wives and children, but also that secondly, that the family does in a way have to be presented as elevated on a pedestal. Participant C mentions a “fashion model” wife, reminding the researcher of the term “trophy wife”. So although support is an essential component of being a man, it is equally important for a man to show off his prized family. This idea leads into the next themes that emerged from the data, the idea of dominance and being the Alpha Male.

4.1.1.4 Sport

Although discussion of participation in sport and sporting prowess might be understood to fall under the overarching discussion of body image and physicality, it was evident that discussion of sport and how this related to masculinity warranted a theme of its own

Sport was identified as a relevant theme that emerged throughout the data, being mentioned by all the interviewees at some point and also taking a fairly prominent position in the discussion. Although several sporting activities were mentioned in association with masculinity, for example cricket, swimming and tennis, it appeared that soccer was

especially admired by the boys. There appeared to be particular admiration of types of sport that would require higher levels of speed, mobility and coordination. For example, Participant A mentioned specifically soccer as a sport that he cannot participate in, whereas Participant B highlighted soccer as a sport that he is able to participate in. Participant B also specified Christian Ronaldo as a celebrity that he admired:

“Strong built, fast, quick, yeah that kind of, clever”

Participant D pointed out people who cannot play soccer, stating that:

“... he (a disabled student at the school) can't play soccer physically because he got this other thing in legs, got CP in both of his legs, so he can't actually kick the ball properly, so he said he would rather become a sports manager”

The participation in soccer appears to be a masculine ideal, and the quotes provided above highlight the importance of being able to play soccer, and the sadness that occurs if a male is not able to play soccer.

An interest in sport seemed to be one of the defining features of masculinity for the boys. Participant B, when explaining differences between males and females, stated the following:

“Ja, ja they (guys) are quite similar, guys will think about sport... but guys will think about sport”

This example suggests that hegemony seems to have already been conditioned into B's way of thinking. He presupposes that men are either supposed to appreciate and be interested in sport, or that they are somehow expected to enjoy sport and that this in some respects distinguishes them from girls. Pleck (1995, as cited in Phillips, 2006) speaks of how gender roles have predominant themes, and that through these stereotypes, gendered practices emerge. These ways of being are imposed onto boys as they develop, resulting then as boys acting “as boys should” (p. 407). The data suggests that this may be operating within the given sample. The quote above provides an example of gendered practices having been imposed onto boys; the participant states as if it were a known fact, that “guys will think about sport”.

Attwell (2002) and Epstein (1998) suggest that within South Africa, adolescents have been encouraged to participate in sporting activities. What has occurred thus is a widely accepted discourse around the notion that masculinity is intimately related to interest and participation in sporting activities. In South Africa what is apparent is that many schools “have produced

identities based on... participation in 'acceptable' team sports" (as cited in Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007, p. 29). Sport related activity is then invariably a marker of masculine identity. Sport acts as an activity that "[operationalises] the masculinization of male... bodies as agents and objects of gendered practices" (Martin & Govender, 2011, p. 221). So, within South African schools, participating in sport is valued, and as a boy it becomes expected that one will take part in some kind of sport. This clearly poses some challenges for physically disabled boys.

Interestingly, only Participant A in the current study mentioned that he indeed participates in sporting activities, specifically being involved in the activity in some way because he cannot physically participate:

"My brothers, we play everything... It's not just soccer. But if it is they will tell me to be a ref or something like that... So I am always included"

Other participants mentioned that sport is an important marker regarding masculinity, although they did not state that they participate. Participant B stated the following when generalising about males:

"Ja, ja they are quite similar, guys will think about sport, and girls will think about clothes and art and celebrities, but guys will think about sport"

They also happened to mention certain famous people who they feel are especially masculine, who themselves are famous for their sporting abilities, for example, Christian Ronaldo, who was described by participant B as:

"Strong built, fast, quick, yeah that kind of, clever"

Participant B inferred that although he is able to participate in sporting activities such as "swimming, cricket, other sports", it is soccer that he especially would like to be able to participate in, stating "... but like soccer, so I am cool with it". What is being described here is the fact that he is reconciled to the fact that he cannot play soccer due to his disability. Shortly after this, he mentioned his brother who is:

"of course fit, soccer, gym, he is active..."

Participant B seems to be somewhat envious of boys who are able to be fluidly mobile, and who are able to utilise full coordination to not only run around the field, avoiding opponents, but to also navigate the ball to the necessary goal posts. Participant A speaks about playing sport, for example table-tennis, but of all the sporting activities he could have chosen to provide as an example of what he cannot participate in, he chose soccer, stating that:

“My brothers, we play everything... It’s just not soccer. But if it is, they will tell me to be a ref or something like that”

There is something quite poignant in this quotation in which A acknowledges in the act of speaking that there are limits to his inclusion in sporting activities and most particularly in soccer. Although a role is found for him, and he implicitly defends his brothers’ concern for him, he is perforce allocated a role on the sidelines and cannot really be ‘in the game’.

The discussions of sport participation suggest that disabilities limit the opportunities to comfortably perform this masculine ideal, but what is interesting is that perhaps this masculine ideal is in part reinforced precisely by the very boys whose disabilities stifle their chances of engaging in certain activities. In this case, the sample of disabled boys all experience difficulties with mobility in their lower limbs, making many sports difficult, and making soccer playing almost impossible or futile. However, it appeared that some kind of idealisation of that which was aspired to might be taking place. The boys seemed to convey that those sports that they cannot partake in, are exactly what best constitute masculinity. Thus, what they cannot attain is what they have created as ideal masculinity. This is not to say that they cannot identify with sports such as soccer. It appears as if compensatory behaviours occur, so that they may still be able to be part of this hegemony, even if not physically taking part in the sporting activities. Participant D described how two of his “friends” (possibly identificatory objects) aspire to masculinity that is related to soccer, but rather than being able to play soccer, he states that:

“...this boy... like becomes like... a soccer manager... he can’t play soccer physically because he got this other thing in legs...so he can’t actually kick the ball properly, so he said he would rather become a sports manager”

And later he states that another of his friends, being in a wheel chair, is unable to play soccer, so his decision has been to “*rather manage a team and make it [his] own team*”. By managing a team and owning the team, this hypothetical scenario suggests that the “alpha-male” status that men may aspire to can in fact still operate, even for a not physically mobile boy or man. It is interesting that in a sense the team becomes the extension of the individual, becoming his ‘legs’ for him and shoring up his masculine identity almost vicariously. Being a manager suggests a hierarchical relation to others, the manager being the “head” of the team, the boss. It seems that as is perhaps the case with physical versus mental strength, in these examples it is suggested that a sporty masculine identity may be obtained in an alternative way and perhaps even a superior way. Perhaps by positioning themselves as identified with those who are a step-above, they are operationalising what strengths they do have to maximum effect in order to still fit within the broader hegemonic ideals of society.

Interestingly, admiration of soccer players extended beyond reference to their prowess to a different kind of dialogue related to transcending hardship or pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps, another kind of masculine associated set of practices. Participant E, when speaking about famous people he admires for their accepted masculine status, stated the following:

".... I would also mention football players who come from poor backgrounds... their fame and are successful they are, how they have always stood up for themselves"

A few points are worth mentioning regarding this interview material. Firstly, soccer as a sport again appears as an example of masculinity, now operationalised and extended into a career. Sport in general is not mentioned, but rather soccer is specifically singled out as a game in which it is possible to transcend one's circumstances. So, again we have the idea that soccer is an important part of hegemonic masculinity, however, in this instance this is related to the idea that poor boys, boys from the wrong side of the tracks might be able to succeed or get ahead. It is possible to achieve an admired masculine status through soccer even if one's origins are poor. Soccer seems to become further idealised in this respect. The researcher also finds interesting participant D's use of language, particularly his statement *"they have always stoodup for themselves"*. This brings to mind the possible unconscious wish of literally being able to stand up, to be able to play soccer, to utilise coordination and mobility, to become successful despite circumstances (in this case, poor backgrounds, but perhaps another example of a metaphor for personal disabilities), so as to achieve the masculine ideal. It is not that they play football that is important, but rather that their disadvantages are managed in such a way so as to work for them. Hence, soccer represents or symbolises all that is possible.

Sport thus is an important marker of masculinity, and seems to be important for boys and males in general, despite whether physical disabilities are present or not.

4.1.1.5 Aggression, Dominance and Alpha-Malehood

Research conducted by Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix (2005) suggested that the boys that they interviewed felt that aggression and fighting were essential components of a masculine identity. Within this current study, after asking participant D who he felt was especially masculine, he stated Sylvester Stallone. The reasons he gave for this were as follows:

"He is always getting into fights... he is always keeping himself a big-shot"

When asked about what a “big-shot” means to him, his answer was the following:

“You always keep yourself, like no one can touch you... you are unstoppable... they can’t touch you or anything... even mentally”

Participant D also provided an example of a family member whom he feels is quite masculine, stating that this member “*brings himself a big-shot*”.

It is interesting that participant D was the only boy to refer specifically to expression of aggression as associated with masculinity. He appears to suggest that physical size and the willingness to express aggression bring one a particular kind of power and status, one becomes a ‘big-shot’, an object of admiration and possibly fear. For the majority of boys interviewed, however, physical potency was not directly associated with the willingness to dominate others, if necessary, in aggressive ways. What is important to note is that participant D mentions that a true man, like Stallone, is resistant to any challenge to his person, physically as well as mentally – ‘*they can’t touch you*’. In the quotation above one almost has the sense that what is being talked about is a machine rather than a man, and it is possible that in this boy’s mind Stallone has taken on a kind of super-human or super-man identity.

As mentioned previously, however, almost all of the boys mentioned mental strength as also important to masculinity. The researcher suggests that it is perhaps precisely because the participants may never be able to attain “big-shot” statuses, nor to fully attain the desired hegemonic body-type, that mental resistance becomes important. It must be noted that Pattman, Frosh and Phoenix’ study (2005) was conducted with non-disabled boys, however even when considering the data from the disabled participants the hegemonic ideal of display of dominance and aggression is apparent as put forward by D. What seems to occur, however, is that D (and possibly other disabled boys like him) realises the limitations presented by his disability (making the display of physical aggression not entirely plausible or possible), and a distance or split is set up so that the hegemonic ideal remains (aggression), however it changes shape. What is then created is a focus on what is possible (mental capability), so the aggressive ideals are paired with one’s mental strength, creating a new hegemonic ideal and a new discourse within this grouping of boys. The disabled boy may then cultivate a kind of mental aggression and mental resistance to other forms of aggression that they may be presented with. Thus, disabled boys appear to realise their limitations, however, defensively they try to stick as close to hegemonic forms of masculinity as possible. This is reiterated by Participant A when he mentions that being able to mentally “push yourself” is important (although not specifically about aggression, it is possible that “pushing” oneself in gym requires a type of aggressive stance to “carry on”). Participant A

appears to infer a type of aggression that “normal” men are endowed with, that he himself cannot access or is not privy to, because of his disability:

“They can push themselves, and I can’t, and... they like try to do normal things, but they are getting it right, they getting the body... Then I could have been like them”

Related loosely to body-image were the concepts of self-esteem and self-confidence, both of which were seen as important markers of a masculine identity. Linked to the idea of mental strength or resilience, some of the boys felt that assertiveness and being strong-willed, or being able to stand-up for oneself, was an important aspect of masculinity. Although loosely associated to body-image, this emphasis on more psychological strengths will be discussed further under the sub-heading “Self-confidence” as this appeared to encompass a somewhat broader focus.

4.1.1.6 Girls

Research suggests that sexual practices and sexuality are markers of a masculine identity, gaining particular prominence during adolescence and early adulthood. Hegemonic masculinity is still clearly generally related to heterosexuality, thus masculine men are viewed as desiring and wanting women. Homosexuality on the other hand is viewed as weak, abnormal and feminine and thus tends to be positioned against or outside of masculine ideals. Research by Philaretou and Allen (2001) suggests that men are conditioned through “gender role socialization” to express high amounts of sexual-prowess and an “unrealistically high standard of male sexual performance and satisfaction” (p. 303). This suggests that hegemonic masculinity is associated with being a sexual “beast”, painting a picture of wanting, craving and using women. Men have to satisfy women sexually in order to maintain their standard of masculinity. Phillips (2006) suggests that the media and advertising play an important role in the maintenance of masculinity as a gendered practice. Phillips (2006) mentions that famous adolescent males and “media stars” (p. 416) are most often seen positioned next to an attractive looking female, where both the female and the male are often idolised by the general public. This only serves to reinforce masculine ideals that celebrate heterosexuality and position women as “objects and resources” (p. 416). Given that this hegemonic idea is prominent in most contemporary Western societies, the researcher

thought it important to ascertain the extent to which this ideal may be operating within the given sample.

Girls were mentioned throughout the data, however the researcher had to probe to try and understand and ascertain to what extent relationships and girls are important to these particular boys. It appeared as if the boys approached the topic rather tentatively, and seemed shy to speak about girls.

The data suggests that the literature related to girls, sexual appetite and masculinity may not be necessarily be universal, insofar as this hegemonic ideal did not appear to be operating within the participants' discourse of masculinity. When asked about their experiences, thoughts and relationships with girls, the boys' ideas related specifically to an asexual way of being. Sexual experiences, sexual practices and opinions were never divulged or discussed, and what emerged was a sense of reluctance or avoidance to assume a proactive or "pro-sexual" role in relation to girls. One must be mindful of the possibility that sexual or partner interest in girls was not evidenced because of a homosexual identification, however this again was not discussed or hinted at by any of the participants, nor did the researcher feel that this avenue of exploration was indicated, given the participants' general avoidance of any topics related to sexuality. One participant, B, when asked about his relationships with girls, stated the following:

"[I talk] to girls, [I am] friends with girls, I am a man you know!"

This statement does not contain any overt content that points to a sexual interest in girls, although there is a latent implication that a man is somehow supposed to like girls, is supposed to have relationships with girls and is supposed to enjoy being with girls. Thus heterosexuality is endorsed, but largely in the abstract. It must be noted that only participant B made an inference of this nature, whereas the remaining participants implied a more platonic, friendship-relationship with girls. It appears as if there is shyness around speaking about girls and about possible relationships with girls.

Participant A mentioned that he has a girlfriend, and that she is what he termed "normal", implying that she does not have a disability. When enquiring as to whether there may be some difficulties in dating a girl who doesn't have disabilities (the researcher was also attempting to understand if there may be some sexual aspects that participant A may have wanted to divulge), he stated the following:

"I think she appreciates that I have a disability and so do I, so it's fine"

Later, he mentioned what it is like being with her, as well as responding to the researcher's question about intimacy:

"My experiences... It's just like any normal, ja we go to the malls, we go to a movie maybe, ja and she doesn't mind so"

"She's not shy to be seen with me, ja"

In the second statement it is implied that when thinking about intimacy, the participant inferred not sexual/erotic intimacy of any kind, but rather a type of physical closeness without sexual connotations. He also infers by referring to her non-shyness that it might be anticipated that a girl might feel self-conscious in some way to be seen as attached to a disabled boy. This also suggests that perhaps one of the reasons for not thinking about girls in a desiring way is that the boys have some doubts as to whether they can be constructed in this way by girls. Another example of the emphasis on platonic relationships with girls is provided by participant E who responded as outlined below when asked about his experiences with girls:

"I, well, have four best friends, and the two of them are girls... we have known each other since we were children... and, yeah, I get on with them... at school I also get along with them, and yeah, um I think they see me as being a good guy, well, yeah I hope so"

Again, there is no hint of any romantic or sexual interest in girls on E's part, although it may be inferred that he was indicating the hope that girls find him at least interesting. Perhaps this reference also indicates his awareness that girls are supposed to find men attractive, and that masculine identified adolescent boys are supposed to be liked and desired by adolescent girls. On the otherhand it could be that he wants to be seen as primarily likable and decent by these female friends.

Interestingly, participant C appeared embarrassed and shy when the topic of girls was mentioned. When asked to talk to the researcher about his relationship with girls, participant C stated the following"

"(laughs and is shy)... I don't like that relationships"

Participant C stated that he does not find it easy to speak to girls either. When prompted for further information, and when asked about how being rich would make it easier, as he had suggested, he stated that:

"When you are rich it is easy"

“Money, clothes... and all those cool things... caps”

Implied here is the fact that material goods, and the ability to access and own material goods allows for greater agency in society and for a more attractive identity. Having access to these goods seemed to imply greater likelihood of recognition that masculinity has been achieved, and closer ownership of a masculine identity. It appears as if having a disability may restrict the participant's sense of being able to access an acceptable masculine identity, and it is only through compensatory assets (material goods) that masculinity may be obtained. Interestingly the participant does not suggest that money will be spent on women, but rather will be used to enhance his own appearance, which in turn possibly might enhance his self-esteem and his attractiveness to girls. Although evidence of material wealth and access to money and other resources is often seen as important to a masculine identity, particularly with regard to being able to attract the interest of women, it is possible that these boys have an even stronger sense of having to demonstrate capacity to lay claim to such assets given that their bodies are 'less masculine' in certain respects.

This lack of reference to any sexual content was interesting given that many other South African based studies on adolescent males have identified a preoccupation with sexual conquest and experimentation. It needs to be considered that some of the boys' hesitancy in this regard may have been in part due to being asked questions about relationships with girls by an older male (although a young adult person) who may have been positioned in a teacher-like role in their minds. However, as indicated earlier, the lack of apparent interest in or reference to this kind of content was somewhat unexpected given other research findings.

Harrison (2002) mentions that behaviours such as “sexual prowess, risk taking and control over women” (as cited in Davies, 2007, p. 2) are typical of adolescent boys. The researcher suggests that the somewhat atypical presentation of the boys in this study in this regard may be attributable to two possible reasons. Developmental theory may suggest that these boys are not yet biologically mature enough to conceptualise and understand their biological impulses and their development into more adult men via the development of secondary sexual characteristics. It is possible that the fact that they were in fairly early adolescence, aged 14-15, as opposed to later adolescence or young adulthood, may have meant that they were not yet ready to engage in romantic or erotic ways with girls. The boys may not yet feel physically and psychologically ready for sexual activity.

Research suggests that “gender intensification- the increased stereotyping of attitudes and behavior” (Berk, 2009, p. 546) occurs earlier and more intensely in adolescent girls. Girls are more likely than boys to experience hormonal changes, related to an increased awareness

and awakening of sexuality, earlier on in puberty or adolescence. What is also known, according to Erikson is that during the adolescent period, “identity versus identity confusion” takes place. Adolescents are thus attempting to position themselves within their societal and cultural group and also to establish a sense of identity with which they are. A personal identity is to be established (Berk, 2009). The researcher postulates that disabled adolescent boys may have to invest more psychic energy into establishing their identity due to having a disability that may place them at an initial disadvantage relative to their non-disabled peers. The boys are attempting to not only understand their disabled identity (at this new developmental stage), but also attempting to establish an adolescent identity, including a gendered identity as would normally be expected. Given the added pressure in establishing an acceptable adolescent identity for boys with physical disabilities, the researcher suggests that perhaps little or less psychic energy is left for the boys to explore their sexuality. This may only take place at a later stage, due to the extended time it takes for them to establish an identity as both a young adult male, and as, a disabled male.

The second possibility is that due to their disabilities, the participants place less value on sexuality and sexual activity due to the possibility of feeling inadequate when thinking about having to “perform” sexual acts. Watermeyer (2009) speaks of non-disabled people possibly creating a construct that disabled individuals are somewhat weaker, and cannot by any means utilise their bodies. Although it is suggested by Watermeyer (2009) that disabled people then try and compensate for this by feeling pressure to “disprove” these stereotypes, the researcher believes that another possibility may be present. It may be that the participants in this study in fact internalise the projections of non-disabled people. Rather than negating these stereotypes, they may rather have introjected them. Thus, what they may then experience is in fact the idea that because they are disabled, they cannot experience sexuality as “normal” males do. It may be better to then discard this hegemonic ideal or aspiration to sexual conquest and prowess, and rather to concentrate on friendship-relationships, the kinds of relationships portrayed by the participants in this study when referring to girls. Perhaps then, there is an avoidance and reluctance to take on a “proactive” role for fear of failure or embarrassment, resulting in diminished interest in romantic and erotic experiences. As participant A later states, it is not important to have a girlfriend to be masculine: “*No, no you don’t need it*”.

Participant D mentioned that his relationship with girls “*is not good*”. It appears as if this is due to his personality and behaviours that he demonstrates at school. He mentioned the following:

“...they say I am short tempered... I once stabbed this child... I stabbed this girl... they always tease me”

According to this participant, rather than his aggressivity and toughness being viewed as masculine and as a means to being able to attract women, he becomes ridiculed for this behaviour (which it must be acknowledged sounds inappropriate and extreme). There is something in the reference to ‘teasing’, as opposed, for example, to ‘fearing’, that suggests that D sees himself as diminished in some way for being out of control and that the censure is particularly strongly felt from girls.

One final point is perhaps worth noting which is the possibility that because of the nature of their disabilities, the boys’ sexual functioning may be physically compromised (perhaps they are not able have an erection, ejaculate, or feel sexual sensations). Without knowing more about the way in which the disability impacts upon this area of functioning it is difficult to know whether this dimension may play a role. Again, however, even if this were the case it is interesting that no reference to sexual functioning was made at all and there appeared to be a greater degree of inhibition in discussing this issue than almost any other.

Having explored the themes of relationships with girls and aspects of sexuality and sexual activity, the discussion moves on to look at the third?significant theme that was identified in the data, that of projections of self into the future and adult masculinity.

4.1.1.7 Future Aspirations

The researcher asked an open-ended question related to the participant’s thoughts, fantasies and ideas about their future. Across all transcripts a general theme emerged related to ideas oriented around imagining having a wife, children and a house. This image appears to be a type of standard masculine ideal that the participants expressed. What is interesting is that it appears as if the participants have subscribed to a conventional and perhaps hegemonic ideal, that it is expected from adult males to be married, to have children and to own a house. This does, however, appear to be a stereotypical construction of male adulthood, and one that may also seem abstract to the participants at this point in time. Given that when asked about girls, a platonic, asexual way of relating was described, it is interesting that the boys without exception constructed themselves as having a female partner in the future. This future-oriented projection of self seems to be an ideal that is expected and is rather abstract

in that it is about occupying quite a formulaic template rather than about a particular kind of individualized partner, home and family life. How can individuals imagine a future that is not easily generated out of current circumstances?

The participants in the study allude to the concept of being an alpha-male provider in their future, taking care of their wives, their children and their family's general well-being. This includes looking-after not only emotional well-being, but also their material well-being, meeting more than their instrumental needs.

Participant D stated the following:

*"But where I picture myself I don't know, a big house... I picture myself
1having nice cars"*

Clearly this example shows an hegemonic masculine identity being created, in that it seems important for participant D to own a large house and to own symbols of masculine status, such as "*nice cars*". This example is reiterated in participant A's statement that he can envision himself in the future with the following:

"Maybe a big house, or just a normal house, ja, my wife, my children"

What is interesting about this example is that D pulls together having a house and having a family. Thus, it almost appears as if one cannot exist without the other; the hegemonic ideal is that a man needs both a house and a family to occupy the house.

Although not related to the researcher's enquiry into future plans, Participant B had the following to say, related to the difference between what males and females spend their time thinking about:

"...guys think differently... and they want this house and that house, ja"

Again, the house seems to represent masculine status, associated with the idea of men somehow being the "breadwinners" or providers within the family unit. What is interesting is that throughout the interviews, no mention was made to women's earning capacity or investment in securing property. It appears as if in the minds of these boys thinking about, planning to acquire, and ultimately owning a house rests upon males within gender role division of responsibilities and practices.

Related to what the participants envision doing after school, it transpired that the participants would like to study at a tertiary institution, preferably at a university. What is apparent is that

a few of the participants would like to study something so that they will be able to invent “gadgets” that will be able to assist people in their daily living, but more specifically “gadgets” that may be able to assist other disabled people with their disabilities.

Participant D stated the following related to his future:

“...like I picture myself in IT but like inventing new programs for whatyoucallit, for Microsoft... you can just tell a computer and then it can just type everything for you... coz some people don’t have arms, some people do have arms... some people can’t use their arms”

Participant A mentioned that he would like to invent cars that would be able to assist disabled people in their daily activities:

“I want to design cars... I would make a car that like disabled people can drive and people that is not disabled, and it can even work with like a voice, so you can tell it to take you to the mall and it will... so if you blind you can just tell it where to go”

From the above two examples, several things may be suggested. Firstly, what appears to occur is a type of compensatory behaviour. The participants that mentioned designing things that would assist people in the future with their disabilities seem to operate within a reparative framework. Through the fantasy of designing these inventions they can envisage transcending not only their own disabilities, but perhaps also helping others transcend different disabilities, as if they collectively belong to a “culture of disability” that they identify. Within these fantasies the boys are able to imagine being potent and helpful to others. Secondly, the participants seem to not only consider the wellbeing of disabled people, but they realise that non-disabled people may also be able to make use of their inventions. It appears then that it is a general concern for society that these participants speak of. This suggests perhaps a sense of being able to “make up” for the fact that they have a disability, or a way of making sense of their disabilities. Perhaps they realise that while they may not be able to change the nature of their disabilities, through shifting their focus to think about what they can do, they may be able to turn their experience of living with disability into a positive focus that may assist other people. This may not be seen as particularly masculine, given the research on hegemony, however it may also be inferred that their sense of becoming innovative inventors allowed them to imagine occupying an “alpha-male” or “Bar-One-Man” position. It is not merely *anything* that they are inventing, but rather something that could position them as a hero, as someone whose status has been elevated.

Participant B and participant C were the two boys who implied that they did not know as yet what they wanted to study, and did not devote attention to talking about inventions that may assist people. Participant B stated the following in relation to his ideas about his future:

“No idea... I am thinking of studying, I am thinking of studying design... I don't know which, maybe curtaining, or graphics, or computerised or, something with graphics”

It is apparent that he has some idea about his interests, although it is unclear in which way he thinks he should channel them. What is interesting, taking into account all the examples provided above, is that the participants do not have an idea of what exactly they would like to study, or what career path to pursue. Although they expressed wanting to invent some very novel things, they may also be viewed as slightly far-fetched, and thus related to a fantasy of the future, more than a concrete plan.

Participant C stated that he would like to be “successful”, but was not able to elaborate further. Again the idea that a future masculine identity may be an abstract concept for the boys at this point in time comes into play here. What is worth noting however, is that C mentions wanting to be successful, resonating with the previous comments about wanting a house in the future. The reader should also bear in mind that this particular participant stated earlier that it becomes easier to have a relationship with a woman when the man is “rich” so that he may be able to purchase material goods. A link may be made here between masculinity and success/ material goods.

Participant E stated some uncertainty and fear surrounding his future. He described wanting to attend a university, but not knowing exactly the career he would like to pursue:

“... I'd like to study at university... I don't really have a picture of what is out there in university so I think I would be quite scared in a way to see what the future holds”

When asked to elaborate on what specifically makes him nervous, participant E stated the following:

“Whether I will live a good life... and whether I will be independent... but I have groups of friends that are very supportive... so I think they will be willing to help me in a way, like um, to be independent by myself”

In this quite poignant section of the interview participant E indicates that he has considerable anxiety about the implications of his disability for his life in adulthood, particularly as regards

independence. It must be difficult for these young men to envisage a time when it is no longer really acceptable to live with and depend upon their families. Participant E indicates that he hopes that his friendships will endure and that there will be people beyond his family circle who will be willing to support him where needed. When asked about what would make him independent, he stated that being “*comfortable and happy*” is important, and upon further exploration, he stated that to make him comfortable and happy, he would need to “*pay the bills... [buy] food and... things*”. Here again there is an inference that he will need to be responsible beyond himself in order to sustain a household as suggested in the reference to “*bills*” and “*food and... things*”.

Without wishing to endorse the idea that disability is necessarily associated with problems with self esteem and lesser agency there was some suggestion that projection of a male/masculine identity into the future evoked some disquiet for the boys. They appeared to manage this either by acknowledging some anxiety as in E’s comments or alternatively by embracing a somewhat abstract idea of occupying the husband, father, provider role or of becoming an inventor of tools to overcome disabilities. What was evident is that for the participants, being able to anticipate owning a house and having a wife and children is important. This seems to be linked not only to subscription to a fairly conventional masculine identity, but also to wanting to acquire the status of an “alpha-male” in terms of material possession and provision of instrumental needs.

4.1.1.8 Independence and comparative relationships to peers

Another theme that emerged as important, as suggested in some aspects of the discussion of the previous theme was some preoccupation about the need to be independent, as part of demonstrating a masculine identity. This seems to be intricately linked to their sense of dependence because of their disabilities. For those participants who mentioned independence, this appeared to become essential to their relating in order to position them as masculine identified. What is apparent also is that they may be attempting to become independent in two different ways. The first is related to acquiring the status of “breadwinner” and “alpha-male”, or being able to position themselves as equal to or even above others, thus gaining a sense of self sufficiency. The second approach to this concern involved positioning themselves as superior in some respects in relation to males who do not have disabilities, gaining a sense of self-esteem, linked to independence. More on independence will be elaborated below.

As mentioned above, independence appears to be an important part of a masculine identity according to the participants. Although thus far independence has been discussed in relation to their future aspirations, the data suggest that the participant's current ideas about being independence are also important. Independence seems to be conceptualised in a number of ways by the participants. Firstly, what transpires is that independence may be relative, according to the type of disabilities that the participants have. Participant B alluded to independence relative to his brother who is also disabled, but appears to require more help than he does. Thus, in relation to his brother, he is more independent, and one may then infer that perhaps he has a greater sense of masculinity. He stated the following:

“... my brother, he has more of the balance (balance issues) than me, he needs to hold someone when he walks... I don't, I can normally walk... So that's where we help him”

Participant D expressed some sadness during the interview process. He stated that the interview reminded him of a deceased member of his family to whom he was closely attached:

“But it just reminds me like when my, when my like when we talking about all of this things of when you becoming a man all of that, it reminded me of my one cousin that got shot, when he won't become a man, like he was still in his 20's, that year he was supposed to get married, they shot him, and that's like, that was my closest cousin, then he was shot through the head, my heart got sore when I think that all these things kick back to all of that”

The participant eluded to the fact that this family member was viewed as masculine, having the potential to become **more** masculine. This however was never “achieved” because of his untimely death in his 20ties. D seemed to see this young man as a role-model who encompassed masculinity in his eyes. Thus there was something interesting in this discussion that suggested that masculinity could only fully be achieved in adulthood.

4.1.1.9 Non-disabled Boys

The majority of the participants stated that they do not find themselves comparing themselves to boys of their age who are not disabled. This suggests that they may consider themselves to be part of a culture separate or distinct from non-disabled boys. Two of the participants, however, stated that there are times that they do compare themselves to non-disabled boys. Participant C stated the following when the researcher enquired:

"I think sometimes... For example like, the other people can walk properly but I can't... I think if that... You wish that you, you wish that, maybe you would just looking like them... To kick, to run... To stand up for, I don't know, maybe minutes"

Participant D had the following to say:

"... like, just sometimes, I do, but I just learnt to deal with it because like maybe I can't eat with my [one hand] I can eat with [the other]... So you don't actually say that you have a disability... you can make yourself stronger, actually that the normal people can't do things that disabled people can do"

What is implied here is that although there may be periods when he feels he compares himself to non-disabled boys, D tries to transcend his disabilities by rationalising that there may be certain things that non-disabled boys won't be able to do that he is able to do. What the researcher is reminded of here is research pertaining to the idea of "positioning". Although classically used to understand masculinity in opposition to femininity, Johnston explains, "opposed identities... are not only constructed in relation to each other, they always carry... some version of the Other" (cited in Pattman, Frosh & Phoenix, 1998, p. 126). What appears to be happening in this piece of discussion is that participant D appears to position himself against the "other" (in this case represented by non-disabled boys). So, his understanding of himself encompasses some version of the other (non-disabled boys who are able to perform certain acts that he himself may not be able to perform), as well as a positioning against this other (making sense of his masculinity by thinking of ways he can perform certain tasks that the other may not be able to perform).

Participant D made another interesting comment related to non-disabled boys. Although this was not specifically related to the researcher's enquiries into any comparisons he may make between himself and other boys, he had the following to say when speaking about what characteristics young masculine men should embody:

"But now I want to change that, I want to be a better person... no one will like me... I just want to be a normal boy... I think they just relax, they don't keep themselves too high and mighty... I just want to be a normal child... I don't care if I am in a disabled school, but people treat me like a normal child, that's why I don't care what people say"

Several things come out of this example. Firstly, participant D infers that he has in the past acted out, and performed aggressive, rude acts and behaviours (he did allude to this earlier in the interview). He feels that these behaviours are uncharacteristic of “*normal boys*” (contradicting research stating that hegemonic masculine ideals are those of aggression and fighting). Secondly, he feels that it may not be his disability that positions him as abnormal, but again rather that his way of behaving makes him unacceptable to others. Thus, he implies here that masculinity is related to assuming the identity of a person who does not act out, is not aggressive, is not “*high and mighty*”, but rather is someone who is well-behaved. He appears to compare himself to both disabled boys, as well as to non-disabled boys and suggests that a degree of conformity and a lack of arrogance might bring him recognition as a young male. He appears to recognise that although aggressive behaviour may be valorised as part of masculinity, in excess it is alienating of other people and may bring disapproval rather than admiration.

4.1.1.9 Disabled Boys

Interestingly, and perhaps understandably, it appeared as if the boys' primary comparison group was the other boys in their school who also have disabilities. Although this was to some extent denied it appeared that a fair degree of comparison within the school seemed to be operating. Participant B stated that he does not compare himself to boys who are disabled, yet then went on to say:

“...I don't know, not really, here I can walk, they are in wheelchairs, so I can't compare myself to them, they can't compare themselves to me”

This example illustrates how, through not comparing, he has in fact provided examples of ways he is not like other disabled boys, creating a kind of downward comparison. Again this is shown in the example by participant A:

“... It's just they maybe worse than me or better than me. Like some of them can't do the stuff I can... Like some CP children can't even walk they can't even stand. I can still pick up my bag”

What seems to be being created in these two comments are ways of relating to masculinity that are relative depending on how the participants position themselves relative to others, including to more disabled or incapable others. In comparing themselves to boys who may be seen as “worse off” regarding their disabilities, these boys feel better off, and thus possibly more masculine, because they are able to perform more tasks than the comparison

group. There is some resonance here with the theorisation of how heterosexuality is defined in contrast to homosexuality (where homosexuals are seen as weaker, at a disadvantage and less masculine). Thus even if one might be lower on the masculine hierarchy in general as a heterosexual man one can assume oneself to be more masculine than a homosexual man. Homosexuality may stand for those who are worse off with their disabilities, so the more “heterosexual” / “better off” disabled boys are thus more masculine, and at a relative advantage.

Disabilities thus appear relative to the participants, and the other disabled boys who are seen to have worse disabilities are seen to be at a disadvantage and to be less masculine. Virility may be relative in their environment. A metaphor seems to be operating here where “mine is less “bad” than yours” stands in for some kind of phallic superiority, although this is clearly quite a speculative conjecture. It makes sense that the boys compare themselves to those who they encounter most immediately, but it also seemed that this was a safer kind of hierarchy within which to position oneself in terms of masculinity.

4.1.1.10 Bullying and Emotional Building

References to bullying appeared throughout the interviews. These references appear to relate not only to bullying about disabilities, but also to an emotional type of abuse that the participants feel they have transcended in some ways.

Participant D mentioned that he feels he is bullied at school as well as in the ‘public eye’. At school it appears that he is bullied because of his aggressive and rude behaviour, whereas in the public, he suggests that people view him as mentally challenged because of his disability:

“I am disabled but I am not, do not have the right to be treated like a dog... I am not a dog for you, I am a normal human being. I maybe have a physical disability but it is part of life, God made you like that so you don’t have to treat other people like dogs... They look at you like you did something wrong they look at you funny in the malls... they look at you like you are mental or something... they don’t think that you are a normal human being inside, they just look at you on the outside and they think you are not a good person and they think you are just a disabled child that can’t do this, that’s what other people think of yourself, you can’t eat you can’t do this...”

Participant E stated the following:

“... well obviously I get teased in public... and people are saying this, I seem funny... and that used to affect me but now it doesn't affect me, now, coz I just ignore those people, and well I think that really makes you stronger in a way”

It appears that both boys have had to endure shaming experiences. Later E stated:

“... being a man would... mean being independent, yeah and taking control of your own life, your own way, or living life to its fullest”

In this latter quotation he suggests that one may be able to transcend such experiences and take control of one's life in particular ways. Participant A, when asked about people who may not fall or fit into the hegemonic masculine ideal, stated the following:

“They get bullied and stuff coz they like small, they don't look that strong... It's just they shy (the bullies) that they masculine but they just shy that if they can try and bully someone, that someone will bully them... and they will try and pick on someone that has two arms (if they have one arm), but this person will bully them instead because he has two arms... the one will think he is bigger than the other so he will take orders from no one... he will think he is the boss... they can say something that like hurt your feelings... but there is something wrong with them, that is why they are picking on you... Like maybe someone bullies them at home so they come to school and bully you”

In this quotation it is evident that A appreciates that bullying may be a compensatory activity designed to shore up an insecure (masculine) identity. However, he also seems to recognise that size, stature and capability might make one more or less vulnerable to bullying and also to feeling insecure. He goes on to say:

“Like, the children can tease you, but after a few years it won't like break your heart or hurt your feelings... you will become stronger, like not physically yes, emotionally you will become stronger, you won't... listen to them anymore... you must build yourself inside, not the outside”

What these examples suggest is that bullying appears to be rife, sometimes in school but most often in public spaces. More “masculine”, non-disabled boys appear to attempt to

elevate their status, dominance and their power in part by humiliating disabled boys. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) mention that hegemonic masculinity, over the years has been a “pattern of practice... that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Given that this statement suggests that women were dominated because they were perceived as weaker or lesser in some way, it is possible to imagine that disabled boys may be feminised in a sense because of perceptions that they are weak or dependent.

Picking on the “under-dog” seems to be one way to elevate one’s masculine status. Davies (2007) suggests that projection is used to discard “intolerable feelings, impulses or thoughts [which are attributed to] another and the individual then views the other as representing that projected part of [themselves]” (p. 118). Perhaps then in the context of bullying, those who bully are using projection to shore up their own sense of invulnerability. In fact the projections may go deeper than this to encompass intolerable feelings about physical damage and mortality, that then are completely disowned. What also becomes apparent is that although the bullying affects these participants, there is also a part of them that acknowledges where it may come from, and this insight enables them to utilise such experiences to make them “stronger” emotionally. Their self esteem is predicated to some extent on the claiming of insight and emotional maturity. Perhaps this is how masculinity is reframed for these boys. It seems that the importance lies in “taking control” (as participant E stated), and trying to transcend or overcome, firstly one’s disability, and secondly the adverse consequences that may occur as a result (bullying being an example). This appears to be in large measure what a positive masculine identity entails for the participants. Given that they may have considerable difficulties in performing a physically strong or powerful male identity it appears that their constructive adaptation is to celebrate the kind of emotional endurance or strength they have had to cultivate as a consequence of living with a disability.

Having discussed the central themes that emerged prominently from what the boys said during the interviews, the final section of the chapter presents some, what might be termed, meta-observations related to the researcher’s overarching engagement with the boys and the study.

4.1.2 Meta-Observations

Although not explicitly stated by the boys, it seemed important to discuss and describe some observations made in setting up the study, conducting the interviews and in transcribing and analysing the data.

Firstly, it was noteworthy that it proved very difficult to set up the actual interviews with the boys despite support from the school for the project and apparent interest from several of the boys and their parents. Over time this came to be understood as more than a logistical problem and perhaps as indicating some reluctance to spend time thinking in a focused way about a masculine gender identity as a disabled adolescent boy. Although this might be understood as an ethical issue then, all of the boys who ultimately did take part were willing volunteers. As noted previously, it was also fairly striking how the participants tended to avoid certain topics, for example anything related to sexuality, sexual interest and sexual behaviour. Also, they appeared to avoid engaging in a deeper level of discussion with the researcher, and their answers often appeared to remain at a fairly surface-level". In this way they perhaps resisted approaching material that might be particularly difficult or painful and in a sense managed their own level of contribution and potential discomfort.

As mentioned previously, it is possible that being older than the boys and conducting the interviews in the school environment the researcher may have been positioned as a teacher in their minds, thus creating some barrier or boundary in what could be easily discussed. It is also important to take account of the fact that the researcher is a white able-bodied individual, whereas the interviewees were obviously disabled, and were either African or Indian and that there was some anticipation that he might not understand their experience because of his different identity characteristics. However, the inhibition in the discussion appeared to relate primarily to the topic or subject matter than more interactional dynamics.. It seemed that the participants felt largely unprepared for the difficult task of conceptualising a topic as broad and in their minds as abstract as masculinity. It seemed that certain topics had never been previously considered before the interviews even though they might directly affect their everyday lives. It was not readily apparent whether some of the "thinness" of the responses was to do with a kind of gender immaturity and lack of capacity to think more abstractly about gender identity or whether this reflected some degree of unease with the subject matter and a degree of resistance or avoidance. Perhaps both were evident.

A further observation of interest is that topics related to the participant's families or other possible support structures or systems were rarely mentioned. Peer relationships were discussed, but this was the extent of discussion of relational elements of their lives. Although

it is difficult to know quite what to conclude from this kind of absence of older support figures from their narratives, it does appear to suggest that perhaps they have little assistance with the mediation of experiences relating to their (gender) identity formation as disabled adolescent boys. They seemed pretty much on their own in terms of trying to make sense of the world, certainly as evidenced in their response to the research questions and probes.

However, the participants all appear to have a level of insight and emotional maturity that the researcher believes is linked to having to live with and experience a disability on a daily basis. Perhaps this puts them more strongly in touch with their own fragility, and even mortality, in a way that other boys of their own age are not challenged to do, meaning that they have had to become somewhat more emotionally resilient and to think through different kinds of issues related to their often marginalised status. In this respect the researcher was struck by the level of insight expressed by the participants at points, and felt this was in excess of what might generally be expected of boys of their age. The participants were thoughtful and engaged with some of the topics and were able to think about some issues, such as bullying, on a more abstract level. Although this may seem to contradict what the researcher stated above about avoidance, it appears as if certain topics were discussed with greater emotional maturity and insight, whereas other topics were met with greater avoidance. This may reflect something about these boys having to deal with somewhat different kinds of priorities from more able bodied adolescent boys.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1 Central Findings

In summarising the main findings of the study it is perhaps important to revisit the context within which they were generated. As had been mentioned previously, it proved considerably more difficult than anticipated to generate a research sample and to obtain the data for the study. Having gained the cooperation of the school for disabled scholars and permission to conduct the study from the Department of Education and the School principal it initially appeared that there was strong support for the study. Teachers were cooperative and indicated that they thought this would be a worthwhile and important study. A number of parents willingly gave permission for their sons to take part. However, over time it emerged that there appeared to be some reluctance amongst the boys to be interviewed and even to collect the data from the five participants whose data is used in the study proved taxing. For example, boys did not turn up for scheduled appointments and changed their minds about participation. In addition, even for those who volunteered to take part, three out of five of the interviews proved rather frustrating in that the boys volunteered very little and the interviews became rather stilted question and answer sessions. The boys appeared inhibited in their responses and often struggled to think about and articulate ideas pertinent to the topic. Although some of the reluctance to take part and the paucity in responses may reflect a degree of deprivation in these children's backgrounds, many of them appearing to come from quite impoverished homes, it was surmised that there may also have been considerable defensiveness amongst the boys in relation to talking about their masculinity. While the researcher was aware of the ethical sensitivity of interviewing disabled boys about subject matter that might be somewhat difficult for them, the kind of resistance that seemed to emerge in relation to the project was not fully anticipated and was difficult to work around. The interviewer attempted to remain respectful of the interviewee's boundaries at all times and to some extent this accounts for the rather thin data set. Although suggested by omission rather than what was volunteered it could be argued that the disengagement from the study and from the topic of masculinity reflects a degree of avoidance and repression that is indicative of a fairly profound struggle with regard to identity for many of these adolescent boys. Some of this struggle is reflected in the material that was generated and proffered but it is also worth noting that perhaps much remained unsaid. Against this backdrop some of the key themes to emerge are re-emphasized.

Several important themes appeared throughout the data. These themes were reiterated by most, if not all the boys who participated in the study. Some of the themes confirm existing

findings and observations discussed in the literature provided, for example, the fact that rather conventional, stereotypic, dominant views on what constitutes masculinity, seemed to be congruent among these adolescent boys, despite their disabilities.

The boys appeared to be aware of and to subscribe to a hegemonic ideal of masculinity. Some of the hegemonic ideals or themes that emerged are congruent with literature, for example the idea that a strong body, with muscles and definition, is important in the attainment of a valued male identity. It was noteworthy that this aspect of masculinity was given such prominence in the study. Arguably it is precisely because of an awareness of limitations to the embodiment of masculinity that these boys appeared to be rather preoccupied with physicality and brought this very quickly into conversations about what constitutes masculinity. It also appears that participating in sport (in whatever way) is an important marker of masculinity. Soccer was the sport most often mentioned, with the suggestion that participation in this kind of sport was intrinsic to a masculine identity. Some of the boys expressed some distress about not being able to physically play sport, especially soccer, due to their disabilities. Although some of the boys appear to compensate for this lack by being active in other ways, such as acting as a referee in the game, it was evident that lack of physical strength and mobility left these boys feeling somewhat emasculated by implication. There is some irony in their subscription to convention in regard to physical potency, as illustrated, for example, in those whose masculinity they most idealized, since despite being male they appeared unquestioning of the very thing that might bring their own masculinity/ies into question.

Slightly incongruent with the literature were the findings that emerged with regard to sexuality and girls. Most of the boys spoke about the topic on a surface-level, and appeared to be reluctant to engage with any discussion of girlfriends, partner relationships and possible sexual engagements. This is somewhat in contrast to findings from some of the other research into young masculinities in which securing the interest of girls and sexual conquest is foregrounded as an aspect of masculine identity at this stage of adolescence. These boys acknowledged some friendships with girls and projected themselves into a future in which they would have a wife, but in rather an abstract manner. Without conveying any judgement on this, it could be argued that in this respect they appeared almost developmentally immature. It is suggested that this lack of engagement with (hetero)sexual relationships may be related to feelings of inadequacy, assumptions about lack of desirability, or possibly fears of not being able to perform sexually due to their disabilities. Their avoidance may be defensive in that anticipating rejection or difficulties they choose not to engage in this arena at all. Again, given that the boys did not explicitly talk about the impact of their disabled status in this area of their lives, the links are inferred more strongly from

what was not said and from some degree of reluctance to engage with this kind of subject matter. Despite the lack of engagement, however, it appeared as if heterosexuality and virility were entertained as important markers of masculine identity, even if at the level of the assumption that as future men they would have wives and children.

Concern about independence and self-sufficiency was a further central theme that emerged from the data. Masculinity was tied closely with being able to provide for oneself, not only instrumentally, but also physically, and to not relying on another individual for assistance. Thus, despite their disabilities, and possibly precisely because of the greater dependency that disability often brings, the boys went along with the notion that masculinity is associated with self-sufficiency. In fact their identifications went beyond this to assumptions about or fantasies of being able to provide for others beyond themselves. Future aspirations showed that having a family and being able to provide for family members, instrumentally and emotionally, was extremely important. These future identifications, often based upon fantasies of inventive and occupational success, seemed to allow the boys greater purchase on masculinity in the present and also to shore up self-esteem.

The boys made some reference to bullying amongst boys in schools and between men, appearing to accept that bullying was something that allowed for the creation of masculine identities. It was understood that masculinity might be established through the demonstration of dominance over other men. Instead of succumbing to sadness or anxiety about this, boys who spoke about being bullied because of their disabilities suggested that it made them "stronger" emotionally. While they were able to identify incidents in which they had been demeaned they resisted such positioning and in this understood themselves to be psychologically resilient, which in turn allowed for some independence, self-esteem, confidence and a stronger masculine identity. The boys felt that being bullied may in fact have given them an opportunity to demonstrate their masculinity, because of the emotional insight, fortitude and maturity they evidenced in response to this. This was one of the few areas in which these disabled boys positioned themselves as perhaps superior to non-disabled boys, interpreting their life experiences as having led them to cultivate a more thoughtful and less primitive kind of gender identity.

Another pertinent theme that emerged related to the fact that the boys explicitly stated that despite their disabilities, they feel that they are able to do exactly what non-disabled boys are able to do. They asserted that their disabilities were not something that prevented them from living a non-disabled life in the sense that they could take part in the world. Without knowing more about their daily lives and the constraints their lack of lower body strength and of mobility imposed on them it is difficult to know how accurate this assertion might be.

However, given some of the comments made about disability impact and the fact that they were being schooled at a special school for the physically disabled it seems very unlikely that they honestly view themselves as the same as non-disabled boys. It is interesting that there was some downward comparison with boys who were more severely disabled than themselves and it seems likely that assertions about the 'normality' of their lives were somewhat defensive. They may also have been designed to communicate to the researcher some reluctance to engage with something painful or something which they assumed might make them lesser in his eyes.

Overall it seemed that the boys subscribed to a fairly conventional picture of masculinity and oriented themselves to a future in which they would take up conventional masculine roles. There was surprisingly little engagement with their disability and the manner in which this might constrain or modify their expression of masculinity. The one area in which there was some explicit engagement with these issues was in the discussion of bullying and stigmatisation and the mental strength required to deal with this. In this sense the boys appeared simultaneously somewhat naïve, for example in their engagement with heterosexual coupling, and somewhat mature, having learned to endure and survive ridicule. As in other of the studies on young masculinity, it was noteworthy that projections of self into the future allowed for positive identifications and achievement fantasies.

5.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Given the qualitative nature of the study, the sample size was relatively small. This suggests that external validity may be compromised. Although qualitative research is wary of generalisation and this was not the intention of the study, it is important to note that the group who took part in the study occupied a particular class position (attending a government-funded school), experienced a particular set of disabilities (involving leg and movement problems) and were particularly raced, amongst other features. The findings must be understood in this light. This possibly shows where a gap exists and, where future research into disabled-masculine studies should perhaps be focused. For example, it would be interesting to compare the impact of sensory disabilities such as deafness or blindness as opposed to physical disabilities such as lack of muscle strength and mobility. Deaf boys are still able to take part in active sports perhaps whereas the other groups are not. This has interesting implications for masculine identity. On the other hand, the themes that emerged were mostly congruent with existing literature on masculinity, suggesting that there may be

areas of commonality across quite different groups of young men, not only in south Africa, but also in other countries internationally. Again it would be interesting to explore more precisely where points of commonality and difference lie.

A second limitation is the quality of the data generated and the way in which this limited the depth of analysis. At times the boys were unable to, or struggled to reflect on some of the questions or ideas posed to them and, as is evidenced in some of the illustrative quotations and has been discussed previously their answers were often brief and fairly concrete. This created gaps in terms of description and interpretation and meant that the analysis had to rely on a fair amount of inference. This may in turn limited some of the findings and the conclusions need to be entertained with some circumspection. The evidence of gaps, however, also point to areas that may be fruitfully explored more closely and intimately. For example, remaining aware of ethical practice, it might be important to explore why these boys were quite so incapable of or unwilling to engage more obviously with their male and masculine identities.

In part because of the inhibited nature of the boys' engagement in the interview process, it is possible that the interviews may have been at times over-structured. The researcher felt that the creation of some structure was important however, given the possibly sensitive nature of masculine identity, firstly, and, secondly, that the informants were from a vulnerable population. The researcher attempted to strike a balance between asking questions in quite matter of fact ways but also in opening issues up for more open discussion where possible. The researcher was mindful that the topic of masculine identity and disability may have been sensitive for the boys and was as respectful as possible of the boys contributions and their reluctances to engage with some subject matter.

5.3 Reflexivity

It is important to note that the researcher was an able-bodied young male, interviewing disabled boys. This may have in some way impacted the data, or perhaps left the boys with some (conscious or unconscious) resistance related to the researcher being able-bodied and attempting to collect data from them. The researcher was aware of feeling some discomfort in this regard and conscious of a greater appreciation of his own 'abled-bodiedness'. Also, it is important to note that all the boys were either black African, Indian, or Coloured and the researcher is White. This may have further exacerbated some of the power dynamics in the room. Despite the fact that the boys are educated in English and all chose to speak English in the interviews, this may have inhibited particularly the African language speaking

participant from contributing as richly as he might have in his home language. Lastly, the researcher felt that the boys may have in some way approached the interview as if the researcher was in an authority position, such as that associated with a teacher. At times the boys would address the researcher as “Sir”, showing that they may have made a distinction between statuses, the researcher being in a “higher” position than the boys and requiring some deference. Although the researcher is quite soft spoken and gentle in his manner he was aware of some constraint in his interaction with the boys that may well have been related to some of his identity attributes. With hindsight it may have been useful to have attempted to spend more time with the boys at the school before conducting the interviews, or to have employed follow up interviews. However, given how difficult it was to hold even the interviews that were conducted this was not necessarily feasible.

5.4 Implications for Intervention

Given that references to experiences of bullying appeared in the data, it is suggested that interventions should perhaps be put in place to address this issue. Perhaps the school should engage with the likelihood of vulnerability to bullying and consider putting an anti-bullying policy in place, amongst other interventions, recognising that much of this may take place outside of the school environment. Secondly, it is suggested that the school could more carefully and explicitly address gender role identity issues, as well as sexuality and sexual-education. From the boys’ contributions it appeared that there was very little adult mediation of their life experiences, particularly with regard to gender identity and developmental challenges, such as potential engagement in sexual activity. This kind of adult intervention and containment may allow for the boys to manage gender issues better, and to manage the expression of sexuality (especially within a disabled context) more capably. These suggestions will be made in the broad feedback to the school principal.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

Dear Potential Participant

My name is Martin Dutton and I am conducting research for the purpose of completing my masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research area is the topic of masculinity, with a particular focus on how adolescent boys with physical disabilities construct masculinity, experience, and position themselves according to hegemonic forms of masculinity, or dominant types of masculinity. Although there are international studies about masculinity, as well as some South African studies about masculinity, very little research is available that deals with the relationship between masculinity and physical disabilities. The research is important, as it will hopefully provide information about boys with disabilities, and how they experience their masculinity, as well as hopefully allowing more research to follow in the future. For these reasons, I invite you to participate.

Participating in this research will mean making yourself available for an individual interview with me, which will be about 60-90 minutes long. I will ask you to bring along about five photographs that you think represent and show your experience of being a boy in South Africa, which we will then discuss. The photographs will be returned to you at the end of the interview. If you do not have access to photographs, I will provide you with a disposable camera to take photographs. I will make sure that the interviews take place during a time that is convenient to you, and does not disrupt any activities or school work. The interviews will take place either at school, or we will arrange to meet somewhere that is convenient to you.

With your permission, I will record the interview using an audio-recorder, which I will use to transcribe the conversation. Depending on the information received, I may ask you to return for a follow up interview. During the interview/s, you may refuse to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and no information will be able to be traced back to you. I may have to use direct quotes from the interviews in my report, however pseudonyms will be used to disguise your identification. The transcribed material and recorded information will be kept in a safe place. I may have to consult with my supervisor, however anonymity and confidentiality is ensured. There are limitations to the confidentiality, such as if I feel you are a harm to yourself, or to others. This will be discussed further with you at the beginning of the interview.

There are no personal benefits that you will gain from participating in this research, and there will not be any compensation for participating. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in the research, however, if it becomes evident that pathology is present (such as depression) I may refer you to an organisation or psychologist, who will be better able to assist you.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and if you feel that you would like to withdraw from the study, you may do so without any consequences, and your information will not be used.

All results obtained from the interviews will be used in my dissertation, and may possibly be reproduced in a psychology journal. Results can be obtained from the WITS library once the report has been completed, and participants may request a summary from myself.

Should you wish to participate in the study, kindly fill in your details on the provided form, and leave it with me now. I will contact you shortly to arrange a meeting and discuss your participation. Alternatively, I can be contacted at either the telephone number (where you can leave a message for me) or at the email address below.

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Martin Dutton

Tel: (011) 717 4513

Fax: (011) 717 8324

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PARENT/ GUARDIAN INFORMATION



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

Dear Parent/ Guardian

My name is Martin Dutton and I am conducting research for the purpose of completing my masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research area is the topic of masculinity, with a particular focus on how adolescent boys with physical disabilities construct masculinity, experience, and position themselves according to hegemonic forms of masculinity, or dominant types of masculinity. Although there are international studies about masculinity, as well as some South African studies about masculinity, very little research is available that deals with the relationship between masculinity and physical disabilities. The research is important, as it will hopefully provide information about boys with disabilities, and how they experience their masculinity, as well as hopefully allowing more research to follow in the future.

The principal of The Hope School has given his permission for me to approach learners at the school. Your son has indicated that he is interested in participating in my research and I would like to tell you a little more about what the research entails.

Participating in this research will mean your son making himself available for an individual interview with me, which will be about 60-90 minutes long. I will ask him to bring along about five photographs that he thinks represents and shows his experience of being a boy in South Africa, which we will then discuss.

I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and no information will be able to be traced back to him. I may have to use direct quotes from the interviews in my report, however pseudonyms will be used to disguise his identification. The transcribed material and recorded information will be kept in a safe place. I may have to consult with my supervisor, however anonymity and confidentiality is ensured.

There are limitations to the confidentiality, such as if I feel his are a harm to himself, or to others. This will be discussed further with him at the beginning of the interview.

There are no personal benefits that he will gain from participating in this research, and there will not be any compensation for participating. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in the research, however, if it becomes evident that pathology is present (such as depression) I may refer him to an organisation or psychologist, who will be better able to assist him.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and if he feels that he would like to withdraw from the study, he may do so without any consequences, and his information will not be used.

All results obtained from the interviews will be used in my dissertation, and may possibly be reproduced in a psychology journal. Results can be obtained from the WITS library once the report has been completed, and participants may request a summary from myself.

Your son has been given a letter of invitation which contains more specific details of what his involvement in the research will entail. If you assent to allowing your son to participate in this research, please kindly indicate this by completing the attached form.

Your son's participation in the study would be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Martin Dutton

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW ASSENT FORM



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050
Johannesburg, South Africa
Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

I _____, in my capacity as parent/guardian of _____ (participant) hereby give my assent to his participation in the research to be conducted by Martin Dutton.

I understand that all that all information will be kept confidential, unless the researcher feels that confidentiality has to be broken, in the case of harm to the participant, or harm to others, as explained to me in the information letter. I also acknowledge that there are no personal benefits gained from participating in the research, and the participant will not be compensated in any way. If the researcher feels that the participant will benefit from therapy, due to the presence of pathology (such as depression), I give consent for the participant to be referred to the appropriate parties.

I understand that the participant has the option to withdraw from the study at any time, should he wish, with no negative consequences. I also understand that participant does not have to answer any questions that he does not want to.

I understand that the researcher may be using direct quotes from the interview/s, however the participant's will not be used, and no information will be used that could directly identify him.

Signed _____

Dated _____

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW CONSENT



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community
Development

*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

I _____ in grade _____ hereby give consent to participate in the research conducted by Martin Dutton.

I understand that all that all information will be kept confidential, unless the researcher feels that confidentiality has to be broken, in the case of harm to myself, or harm to others, as explained to me in the information letter. I also acknowledge that there are no personal benefits gained from participating in the research, and I will not be compensated in any way. If the researcher feels that I will benefit from therapy, due to the presence of pathology (such as depression), I give consent to be referred to the appropriate parties.

I understand that I have the option to withdraw from the study at any time, should I wish, with no negative consequences. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I do not want to.

I understand that the researcher may be using direct quotes from the interview/s, however my name will not be used, and no information will be used that could directly identify me.

Signed _____

Dated _____

APPENDIX E: RECORDING ASSENT



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

I _____, in my capacity as parent/guardian of _____ (participant) hereby give my assent to the audio-recording of the interview/s conducted by Martin Dutton.

I understand that the information recorded during the interview will be used for transcription purposes. I understand that the material/information will be kept in a safe place, and that access to the material will be restricted to the researcher and his supervisor.

I understand that the participant's identity will be protected, and acknowledge that the hard-copy of the information (the recordings) will be destroyed once the research report has been completed.

Signed _____

Dated _____

APPENDIX F: RECORDING CONSENT



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

I _____, in grade _____ hereby give my consent to the audio-recording of the interview/s conducted by Martin Dutton.

I understand that the information recorded during the interview will be used for transcription purposes. I understand that the material/information will be kept in a safe place, and that access to the material will be restricted to the researcher and his supervisor.

I understand that my identity will be protected, and acknowledge that the hard-copy of the information (the recordings) will be destroyed once the research report has been completed.

Signed _____

Dated _____

**APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM (FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, HEAD, OR
APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY)**



Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
*Private Bag 3, Wits 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Email: participatemasculinity@gmail.com

I _____ in my capacity as _____ at The Hope School,
give my consent to Martin Dutton to conduct his research, as set out in his proposal, with those
learners who consent to participate and whose parents give assent to their participation.

I understand that the information provided by the participants is confidential, and will not be reported
back to any part at the school, unless the researcher becomes aware of harm to the participant's self,
or harm to others.

I also understand that neither the school or the participants are receiving compensation or
reimbursement for the participation in the research.

Signed _____

Dated _____